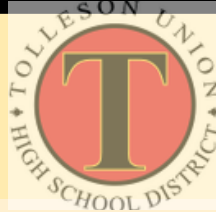


#TUHSD STRONG NEWSLETTER

APRIL



2023

DO IT WITH PRIDE



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A MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT NORA GUTIERREZ

It's been quite a year so far. I love the dedication of our teaching staff to encourage, challenge and support our students to do the best they possibly can in school, the performing arts, sports and all other extra-curricular activities. I appreciate our employees, support staff, para pros, security personnel, cafeteria workers, bus drivers and custodians, who all have a hand in the success of our students. It takes all of us working together with a united focus to keep all of the schools in the Tolleson Union High School District functioning at a high level. As Superintendent, I can assure you that I am extremely proud of everything that we have accomplished together and continue to do here at TUHSD.

With that said, I would like all of you to know that I tendered my resignation recently and I will be leaving the district that I have grown to know and love over the last seven years. As I embark on my retirement, I can honestly say that it has been an incredible journey and my heart is full.

I want to thank my wonderful Executive Assistant, Judith Jameson, who herself is retiring. Judith's attention to detail, her focus and her life-long commitment to education and service to me and the Governing Board is beyond exceptional. She is a big part of the work that we've achieved. I truly value her friendship and support.

I leave the district with a sense of pride in knowing that we have all done great things together. As Mr. Jeremy Calles, Interim Superintendent, takes the reins moving forward over the next year, I want you all to know that I will always have a special place in my heart for the Tolleson Union High School District! Thank you!



READ ALL ABOUT IT!

TUHSB IN THE NEWS



West Point High School teacher, coach writes children's book

Kevin Ivory, a teacher and coach at West Point High School, recently released a book titled "Queen Leilani." The children's book features Leilani, "an adventurous and sometimes mischievous girl" who must use courage to "find her kingdom and take her place as queen." Ivory said he based the book on his ex-wife's story in order to inspire his child who has special needs. Although Ivory's books are for sale for \$15.99, his mission is to promote literacy and providing for those in need.

To achieve this mission, Ivory is working to create a nonprofit partnered with The Arizona School Boards Association and The Black Alliance to donate some of the books to classrooms. He plans to donate 70% of all proceeds to charity.



Beyond the Finish Line: A STEM meets Sports Experience

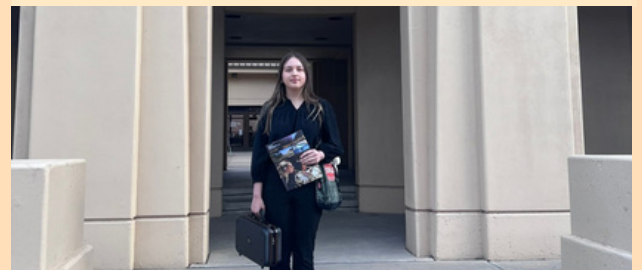
In February, students at West Point had the opportunity to meet two NASCAR drivers, Lavar Scott and Rajah Caruth as well as former Arizona Cardinals player, Larry Fitzgerald. Students also had a chance to drive race cars in an XBOX simulator. Sponsors of this event included: The Larry Fitzgerald Foundation, Microsoft, Phoenix Raceway and NASCAR.

Thank you Board Member Devin Del Palacio, for collaborating with the sponsors to provide a unique experience for the students.



Tolleson Union High School Football Super Bowl Experience

The Tolleson Union High School football team was invited to an interactive day at the Super Bowl Experience. The Wolverines participated in a modified NFL combine experience, where the players got to test their skills in the same events the pros do. The event tested their individual 40-yard dash and shuttle drill times, as well as their vertical and standing long jump scores. In the end, Nike and the Arizona Cardinals donated new jerseys to the team for the next football season.



Sierra Linda's Adrianna Valenzuela makes district history

A senior and clarinet section leader at Sierra Linda High School made district history as she became the first student to make it into the All-State band. After auditioning against hundreds of other students, Adrianna was selected to advance. She has been participating in band since middle school, and led the Bulldogs to two state championships as head drum-major, winning their second title this past fall. She plans on becoming a band director after graduating at the top of her class and being accepted to Arizona State University's School of Music.



Dick's Sporting Goods

Recently, Dick's Sporting Goods presented Copper Canyon High School with a check for \$10,000 to purchase sports supplies to supplement their athletic programs. This marks the second year in a row that Dick's Sporting Goods has selected Copper Canyon High School. The school has used the funds to assist primarily with athletic programs including boys/girls tennis, track and field, softball, baseball, cross country, and boys/girls golf.

Thank you Dick's Sporting Goods for your support of our district and of Copper Canyon!

Staff APPRECIATION

Ms. Katherine Phillips, who teaches English at Copper Canyon High School, got quite a surprise from Sun-Tec Concrete. She was nominated by a student at Copper to receive school supplies for her classroom. Sun-Tec provided approximately \$2,000 in class supplies. Needless to say, Ms. Phillips was very appreciative of the donation to her class and the recognition is well-deserved.



Congratulations to Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Ms. Mindy Westover, Honor Roll recipient of the Carolyn Warner Women in Leadership award! Your hard work does not go unnoticed.

Bravo!



Photos courtesy of Ms. Christina Boston

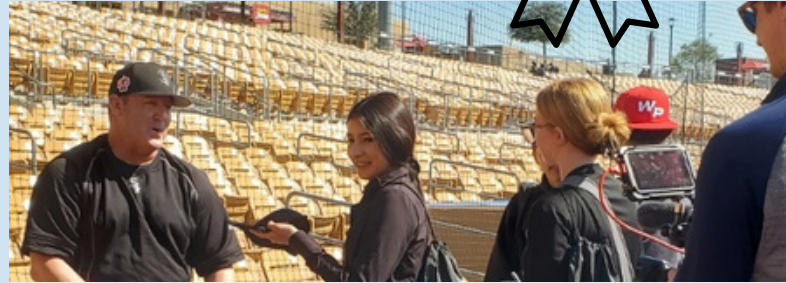
Photos courtesy of Ms. Christina Boston

Student ACHIEVEMENTS



Trees Matter

In early March, first year students at University High School worked with a local group called Trees Matter to plant trees on the Tolleson campus. Arborists were on-site to work with the students to educate them on the process of tree planting; students also conducted a tree inventory on campus. The City of Phoenix Department of Forestry and Fire Management coordinated this activity and spoke to the students about potential career paths in Forestry and Sustainability.



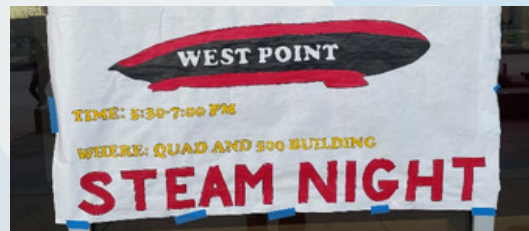
Behind-the-scenes with the Chicago White Sox

Members and coaches of the West Point High School Baseball and Softball teams were special guests of the Chicago White Sox at their Spring Training facility. The White Sox personnel gave the West Point students a behind-the-scenes look at what encompasses a major league sports team. Students met many of the employees throughout the day including, media, marketing, and videography personnel. The White Sox staff shared their educational journey of what it's like working for a Major League Baseball team. The students got an up-close look at practice and warm-ups before a game, including on-the-field access to meet many of the players. Students received a swag bag, and lunch, and attended the game as guests of the White Sox.



94.5 KOOL School Salute

The Kool 94.5 School Salute is designed to recognize high school musicians and their musical studies. 94.5 KOOL gifted Mr. Ricardo Laborin with a check for \$1,000 as recognition for all his hard work and dedication to the students and programs at Sierra Linda. The Bulldog Nation is proud of Mr. Laborin and the continuous work coming out of the Performing and Visual Arts program.



West Point STEAM Night

West Point High School held its 2nd Annual STEAM Night in March. The event was student-produced and the theme this year was "Dragons in Flight" which focused on airplanes and aeronautics. There were interactive activities for all ages.



NASCAR Field Trip

Sierra Linda's FBLA students and their advisor ventured down to the Phoenix Raceway to get a closer look at the NASCAR experience. Mr. Joseph Dean, FBLA Advisor and CTE Department Chair expressed how great of an experience it was for the students. They hope to make this an annual event for future marketing and business students.



Lobo Media SkillsUSA

La Joya Lobo Media and photo students competed in the Region 5 SkillsUSA competition and placed in several regional competitions, securing a place at the State level competitions. Students qualified or placed in areas such as photography, broadcasting, audio production, and digital cinema.

Congratulations to La Joya students!



Ed Rising

Students from the Sierra Linda Future Teachers program traveled to Tucson for the Educators Rising State Leadership Conference. Nine of the students that attended qualified for the National Leadership conference in Orlando, Florida. This year was the largest Ed-rising state conference. A special thanks goes out to Jannell Zegler, Lynn Trembly, Lorin Sempkowski, and Deanna Franciotti who've gave feedback on the presentations contributing to the students' success. Thank you to the Sierra Linda High School CTE department for being so supportive. A final special thanks to Ms. Beck, Ms. Leon, and Ms. Rose for helping to make the trip run so smooth.

Student LEADERS



FBLA Aztec

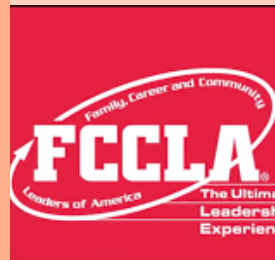
Congratulations to Copper Canyon's FBLA Media chapter for earning a Gold Chapter Award from the FBLA CTSO's State Conference. In the previous year, they earned bronze—they sure have come a long way! Aztec Media was the only TUHSD Chapter, and one of only 10 high schools statewide, to achieve gold-level status for the 2022-23 school year. To achieve this award, the student organization had to attend multiple FBLA events, conduct a community service project, invite guest speakers from the business and education community to class, create a chapter budget and have students complete their Business Achievement Awards program, among other requirements.

Go Aztecs!

FCCLA Knights

Westview's FCCLA team has a total of nine students competing in Nationals! They have seven Gold First Place students and 20 second place Silver students. Students earned awards in categories such as Interpersonal Communication, Fashion Design and Entrepreneurship. This year, Nationals will be held in Denver, Colorado in early July.

Go Knights!



Exceptional STUDENT



West Point Senior, Marcos Ruiz, was nominated by Ms. Amanda Conrad for this month's City of Avondale Exceptional Student Award.

Each month, the City of Avondale works with the school district to nominate an Avondale student to be recognized at a City Council meeting to celebrate their achievements; achievements can be academic, extracurricular or personal. Marcos is the Executive Officer of the West Point Leadership Government and a student-athlete. He also diligently maintains a 3.25 GPA.

Ms. Conrad has expressed how hardworking and dedicated Marcos is. She states that he "quickly embraces the five leadership pillars of self-awareness, self-direction, self-reliance, self-discipline, and self-confidence." On multiple occasions, Marcos has proved himself to be a dependable, kindhearted natural born leader.

Keep up the great work!



The future AWAITS



VALYNCIA WRIGHT

Valyncia Wright, a senior at Sierra Linda, has recently been accepted to three nursing schools. She has decided to attend Arizona College of Nursing after she graduates because she wants to help people.

Valyncia is a motivated student who leads by example. She will be a straight A student by the time she graduates. Currently, she has 3 A's and 1 B.

RIO SALADO COLLEGE AND SIERRA LINDA

Rio Salado College and Sierra Linda High School have partnered to provide dual enrollment opportunities for high school students to get a head start in college. Sierra Linda students Daniel Medina and Crystal Porras are earning an Academic Certificate in Foundations of Sports Medicine. Both students will be attending the Rio Salado College 2023 Commencement Ceremony early next month.

Research has shown that students who earn college credit while still in high school are more likely to go to college, finish college and have better G.P.A's.

Congratulations to Daniel and Crystal!



West-MEC

We are proud to announce that there are a total of 350 students that were accepted to West-MEC for the 2023-24 school year!



68 students



60 students



35 students



45 students



28 students



70 students

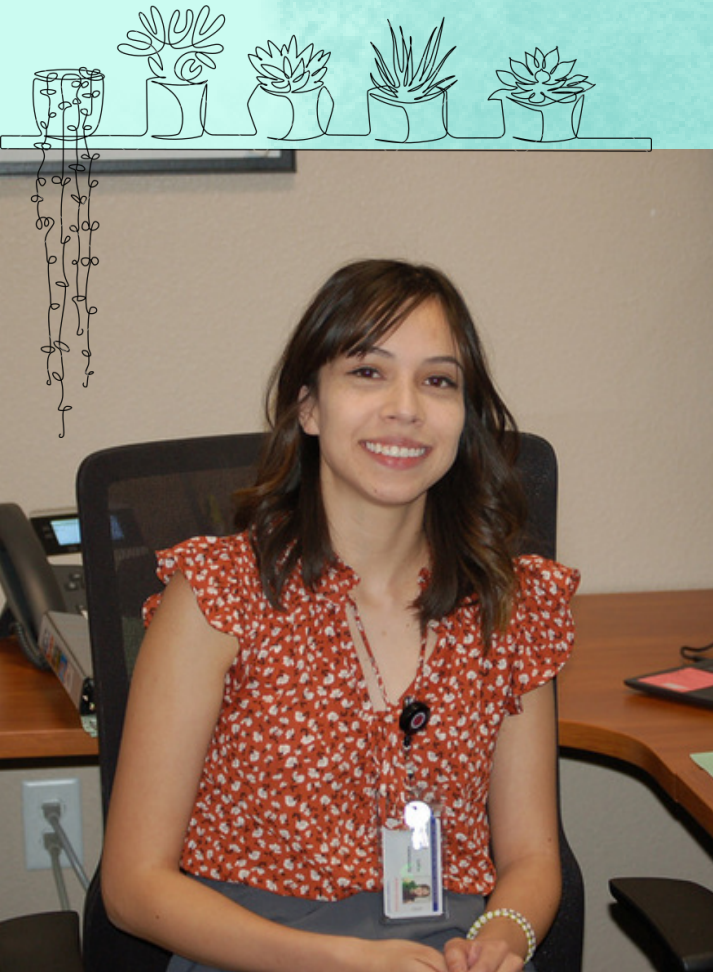


43 students

LIGHTHOUSE ACADEMY

1 student

LIDIA VALENZUELA



Lidia Valenzuela is an Arizona native, though she did spend some time in Durango, Mexico for two years as a child. She has been at the district for four years, starting at Copper Canyon as a guidance clerk, then moving on to athletics as the Administrative Assistant, and is now working at District as an HR Specialist for athletics and extracurricular. Lidia says she enjoys the TUHSD culture, as well as “how our staff cares about the students, which is the main purpose of it all.”

Lidia is also a licensed cosmetologist who, in her free time, does hair at her own suite. Other jobs have included handling claims for State Farm insurance and doing administrative work for Affiliated Dermatology and Foothills Sports Medicine. Lidia currently lives in Goodyear, but she has lived throughout the West Valley, including Buckeye, Avondale, and Tolleson.

Lidia is the youngest of four siblings. She is a big-time Arizona sports team supporter. The Cardinals, Diamond Backs, Phoenix Suns, Phoenix Mercury, the Coyotes – anytime they’re on, she’s watching! Hockey and baseball are her go-to sports that she watches. When not watching sports or doing hair, she is volunteering with local non-profit organizations. Lidia likes exploring new hiking trails and loves to paint, although she says she's horrible at it!

WELCOME LIDIA VALENZUELA!

JENNIFER ZORGER



Tolleson Union High School District would like to spotlight new employee, Jennifer Zorger, who joined us at the end of February as a Grant Writer. Jennifer has over 27 years of experience in education. She taught elementary in her home state of Wisconsin, before also teaching in Colorado. Some positions Jennifer has held in Arizona include instructional coach, assistant principal, executive director in overseeing special education, EL, homeless and migrant programs, and counselors. She also worked with the Arizona Department of Education as an Education Program Specialist traveling across the state in support of failing schools.

Jennifer is originally from Germantown, Wisconsin. She lived there for 25 years before journeying to Colorado Springs for four years and then settling in Goodyear, Arizona. Just like Supt. Gutierrez, Jennifer believes that the Tolleson Union High School District is a hidden gem. Tolleson's commitment to student achievement and the well-being of students is what drew Jennifer to work at TUHSD, in addition to the strong community and the positive, supportive working environment.

Jennifer has a family of five. Her husband teaches 9th grade Science at Tolleson Union High School. She has one son, 24, two stepsons, 23 and 16, and one stepdaughter, 21. Her favorite is her dog, with the obvious name of Lambeau. Jennifer loves to read detective and mystery novels. She binge watches great TV shows, and pays homage to her home state of Wisconsin by supporting all Wisconsin sports teams. Jennifer says she is a cheesehead at heart.

Jennifer is enjoying her time here at the Tolleson Union High School District.

WELCOME JENNIFER ZORGER!



JADA FLEMING



Please welcome Jada Fleming, who just started on March 6 as Administrative Assistant to Mr. John Brown in the Curriculum and Instruction Department. Jada is surely a long way from home! Having only moved to Arizona from Schererville, Indiana three years ago, she is still finding her way around. Jada loves the friendly people here at the district office and believes the very close teamwork is what makes the environment great. Before moving to the district, Jada worked as a medical administrative assistant for a neuropsychologist.

During her free time, Jada is all about sports. With her dad's family living in the Indiana and Chicagoland area and her mother's family from Baltimore, Fleming is a huge Baltimore Ravens, Chicago White Sox and Golden State Warriors fan.

WELCOME JADA FLEMING



Editor: Joseph Ortiz

Interns: DeAsiah Ball and Elias Johnson

**HAVE A
GREAT
SPRING!**

DO IT WITH PRIDE!



SOCIAL MEDIA

