



#TUHSDSTRONG

Do iT with Pride!

TUHSD Staff Monthly Newsletter from the
Superintendent's Office



NOVEMBER 2021

In This Issue



Records Set at 2021 AIPA	Pg. 2
Transportation Grant	Pg. 3
Fiesta Bowl for Teachers Grant	Pg. 4
West Point's First FAFSA Event	Pg. 5
TUHSD Family Event	Pg. 7
Sierra Linda's JAG Ceremony	Pg. 9
Outstanding TUHSD Students	Pg. 10
Senior Signings	Pg. 11
Faculty Spotlight	Pg. 12
TUHSD In the News	Pg. 13
Celebrate TUHSD with the PHX Suns	Pg. 14

Copper Canyon & La Joya Digital Media Students Set Records at the 2021 Arizona Interscholastic Press Association

Congratulations to the students and advisors, a part of the La Joya and Copper Canyon digital media CTE programs, for setting new records at the Arizona Interscholastic Press Association 2021 high school journalism awards on October 26.

With a total of 48 state awards, this makes TUHSD one of only two districts in the state to have two programs with 20 or more state awards. Even more impressive was the range and diversity of the awards, with students at both schools winning in the yearbook, audio/visual and newspaper categories.

We are so proud of these talented students and their incredible teachers!



"I was so proud of the hard work, dedication, and perseverance that my students continued to show despite the circumstances we faced."

-Heather Eaton, La Joya Advisor



"I couldn't be more proud of my Aztec Media staff. Many of them were new to media and hadn't even met each other when we started. They didn't even get to work together in person most of the year, but they still made it work remotely and found creative ways to tell our school's stories."

-Stephen J. Truog, Copper Canyon Advisor



TUHSD Awarded Transportation Grant

We would like to acknowledge and thank our CFO, Mr. Jeremy Calles, for his great work in obtaining a Transportation Grant for the District. We have been awarded \$2 million to help provide additional transportation for our students from the A for Arizona funds projects.

There was only \$20 million given out Statewide to all public entities and \$2 million was the maximum award possible. HopSkipDrive will be providing transportation for students who are outside of our boundaries and most of them would not normally receive transportation from the District.

Thank you again Mr. Calles for ensuring that Tolleson Union High School District and our students are supported through this generous grant!

Congratulations to TUHSD!

Click [here](#) to read the Daily Independent story written about the Arizona education transportation grants.



TOLLESON UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

PROVIDING ROBUST OPEN ENROLLMENT AND SPECIALIZED CAREER PATHS

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW

Tolleson Union High School District (TUHSD) is a predominantly Hispanic school community with high demand for in-district and out-of-district open enrollment due to the specialized career paths offered in their high schools.

PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Thousands of students in and out-of-district seek transportation options to pursue their educational interests with TUHSD. Eliminating access barriers to transportation is essential to achieving equity in educational opportunities and outcomes. The district aims to give all students the support they need to succeed which requires targeted solutions for both small and large groups of students. Getting TUHSD's most vulnerable students, particularly those who are homeless and have high mobility in foster care, to school is critical to meeting every need. But bus transportation has limitations, including driver shortages.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION & WHY IS IT SO URGENT?

TUHSD is expanding transit options by bringing in a proven and safe third-party partner to scale ridesharing for students that need a safe, customized solution as well as creating pick up and drop off hubs for students coming from outside the district. Distance is a key barrier to accessing any school but particularly one that is out of a child's neighborhood. By bringing thoughtful mass and micro transit solutions to the district's portfolio, TUHSD can serve more kids and help them access the education that inspires them and gives them the tools they need to escape homelessness.

Grant Award

\$2,000,000

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 78.5% of the student population is predominantly hispanic, and 93% of students identify as non-white
- Nearly 70% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch

WHAT THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE

Tolleson will track participation, academic success, attendance, travel time for students and cost to ensure the program is reaching its goals for students and their revamped transportation model.





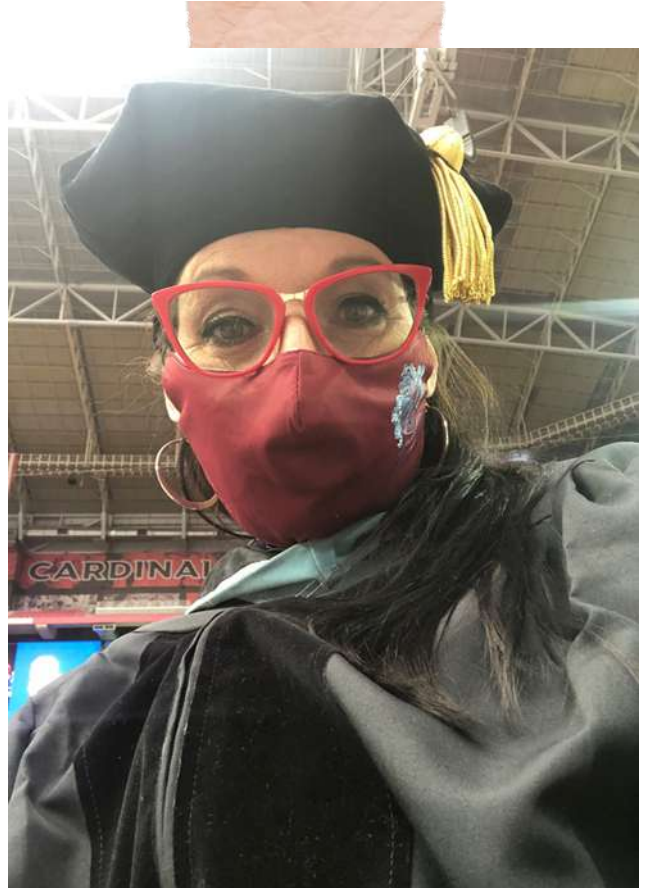


Dr. Chavez awarded Fiesta Bowl Wishes for Teachers Grant

Sierra Linda's very own Physics teacher, Dr. Petra Chavez, has been awarded the Fiesta Bowl Wishes for Teachers \$2,500 Grant. This is the second time she has been awarded this grant!

The Desert Financial Fiesta Bowl Charities Wishes for Teachers program grants classroom wishes to teachers across the state of Arizona, as a way to support, celebrate and honor Arizona educators.

Dr. Chavez said she would like to create a lab environment on Sierra Linda's campus to emulate a university level physics and engineering lab in hopes that students will develop a sense of excitement that promotes forward thinking in the realm of physics and engineering.



This year, Dr. Chavez plans on purchasing a 3-D printer and materials with the grant money. The students will learn how to design and create their own resources, which can be used in their physics classes.

Eventually, Dr. Chavez would like to offer a number of dual enrollment courses in science, in combination with the other required courses, so that students can obtain an associates in science upon graduation from Sierra Linda.

Congratulations Dr. Chavez on a job well done!



Copper Canyon Receives Sports Grant

Copper Canyon was selected to receive a \$10,000 Sports Grant from the Dick's Sporting Goods Sports Foundation and the Goodyear Distribution Center! The DICK'S Sporting Goods Foundation proudly created a Sports Matter Community Grant Program that enables DICK'S Distribution Centers & Stores across the U.S. to choose local youth sports organizations or schools. This year, the Copper Canyon athletic program was selected!

The grant will be used to purchase new equipment for CCHS athletic teams and leadership development.

TUHSD is incredibly honored that one of our schools was selected for this sports grant. Congratulations to the Copper Canyon Community!



West Point's First FAFSA Event

Each year FAFSA, the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*, opens on October 1st and over 20 million students apply for federal grants, work-studies, and loans to assist with the costs of college or career school. For many, understanding and filling out the in-depth FAFSA forms can be overwhelming. Which is why hosting a FAFSA event is an incredible way to prepare and inform students and parents who may not know where to begin.

Congratulations to West Point on the success of hosting their first ever FAFSA event!

Click [here](#) to stay up to date on all the latest FAFSA updates and deadlines.



Sierra Linda's Community Beautification Project

Students at Sierra Linda High School's Jobs for Arizona Graduates program (JAG) decided that they would like to improve the community and their campus with a community beautification project. The students decided that the best place to start is right outside their own campus.



JAG students began on the South end of the campus by painting a wall that has been repeatedly tagged with graffiti and drawn on over the past years. The students, along with their Best Buddies from the school's Sped Department, were able to bring back the wall to its original luster.

Thanks to Ms. Shiya Pillars, JAG sponsor, and the JAG students for their thoughtful project.

West Point Celebrates Dia de los Muertos

The Spanish 1 / 2 and Spanish 3 / 4 students at West Point celebrated Dia de los Muertos in a big way. The students made "ofrendas" or altars dedicated to deceased loved ones as a tribute. The beautifully decorated "ofrendas" were showcased at the Innovation Center and the lower level of the 300 building.

Lessons were planned to learn about the holiday, its Aztec origins, and the elements that are used when creating an ofrenda. The students did a great job of capturing the essence of Dia de los Muertos.



University High School Continues to be Recognized for their National Blue Ribbon Award

Recently, staff, including Mr. Juan Ceja, Assistant Superintendent for HR, Ms. Susan Renner, a teacher at U-High, and Ms. Vickie Landis, principal at U-High, flew to Washington D.C. to receive the National Blue Ribbon award in person.

University High School also enjoyed front page placement on their recognition in the West Valley View newspaper, in addition to an article by an ASU Cronkite student that was picked up online.



Congratulations to the accomplishments of U-High!

TUHSD Family Event



On Saturday, November 13th, eligible families participated in a TUHSD Family Resource event. Invited families were able to shop in a store-like setting for free clothing, hygiene items, blankets, and school supplies. We had various donors that helped to make this event successful: Homeless Youth Connection, Richard and Rita Mendoza from Valley Homestead Builders LLC, Redeemed Ministries of Tolleson, and Native Coffee Co. We are grateful for our partnerships that help our families and students. Thank you Dr. Rosalva Lagunas, Director of Grants & Federal Programs, and your team for coordinating this special event for our families.

West Point Surprise Squad's First Surprise

On October 28th, the West Point Surprise Squad completed their first surprise! The West Point Surprise Squad worked with the school Social Worker to find the families with the highest needs: three single mother families who were facing homelessness.

The West Point Surprise Squad was able to give each family the following Surprise Gifts:

- \$100 QT Gas Card – sponsored by the West Point Surprise Squad
- \$75 Cracker Barrel Thanksgiving Meal Gift Card – sponsored by the Valor Belles
- 3 Sonic Coupon Cards – sponsored by the Valor Belles
- \$50 Walmart Gift Card – sponsored by Veterans First Ltd.
- \$25 QT Gas Card – sponsored by Veterans First Ltd.
- \$15 Gift Basket – sponsored by the Isham Family

Each family broke down in tears and were definitely shocked by the surprise, with each family being presented their gifts separately to protect privacy concerns.

It was an amazing experience and the West Point Surprise Squad is currently working on and planning for their second surprise!

We commend the incredible work the West Point Surprise Squad is doing for their community.



Sierra Linda hosts JAG Installation and Initiation Ceremony

On November 9th, Sierra Linda High School had its Jobs for Arizona Graduates (JAG) Installation and Initiation ceremony at the new Performing Arts Center.

The evening consisted of the students getting their certificates, reciting their oaths, and listening to their keynote speaker, Mr. George Charles III. The wonderful celebration highlighted the kind of event that the Sierra Linda PAC was built for.

Congratulations to Ms. Shiya Pillars and her JAG students on their accomplishments.





Senior Signings

VIVIANA MARTINEZ

Tolleson Union High School's Viviana Martinez has signed to play softball at the University of Texas!

Viviana is ranked as the No. 1 infielder and No. 3 overall in Extra Inning Softball's Class of 2022 Player Rankings as well as No. 7 overall in Softball America's 2022 Top 100 Recruiting Rankings.

Mike White, head softball coach at the University of Texas, said "Vivi is a dynamic offensive and defensive player with tremendous speed. That's why she's ranked as the No. 3 overall player in the 2022 class."

Congratulations Viviana! Best of luck next year!



CHRIS PACHECO

West Point High School's Chris Pacheco has signed to play baseball at Glendale Community College!

Chris is the first senior athlete to sign at West Point. The signing took place at the Innovation Center on campus.

Chris was surrounded and congratulated by his friends, family, and teammates.

Congratulations Chris! We know you will represent TUHSD with pride.



Spotlight on Daniel Pham, Network Systems Support Specialist

This month, we wanted to shine a spotlight on our Network Systems Support Specialist, Daniel Pham.

Daniel has been a part of the Tolleson Union High School District for one and a half years. He enjoys working for the district because of the great benefits and the fact that teachers and support staff are treated equally.

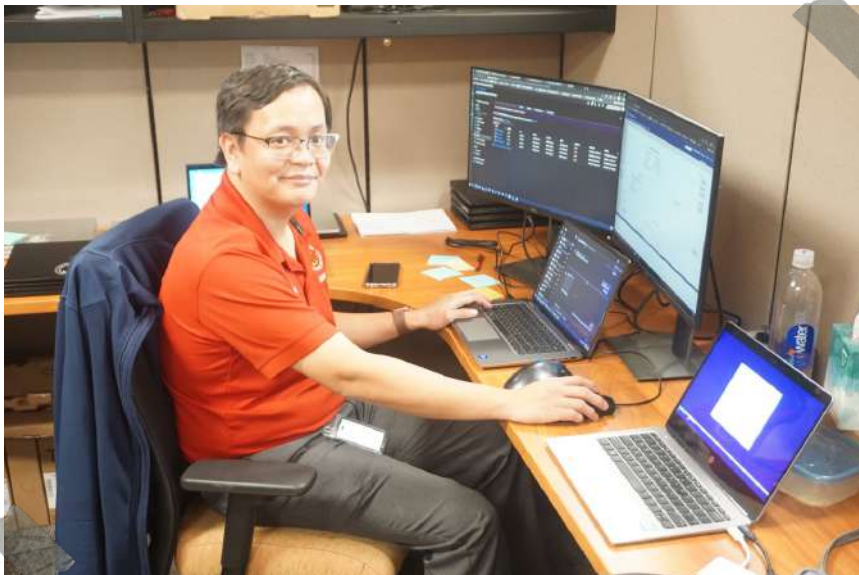
"I started as Technology Support Specialist II, then got promoted to Network Systems Support Specialist," said Pham. "Before coming to Tolleson Union High School District, I worked at Tolleson Elementary School District."

An Arizona native, Pham grew up in Tempe where he attended McClintock High School then graduated from Arizona State. He currently lives in Avondale with his family and has twin girls that are in Kindergarten.

Before working in education, Pham was in the U.S. Army.

"I was an Infantryman and left with the rank of Sergeant. I was stationed in Friedberg, Germany and deployed twice to Iraq and once to Afghanistan" explained Pham.

We are so glad to have you as a part of the TUHSD family, Mr. Pham. Thank you for all the hard work you do for the district.



TUHSD In the News

WEST POINT'S SURPRISE SQUAD ON CHANNEL 3

Right before Fall Break, Channel 3 sent out a camera crew to West Point High School to do a story on the Leadership Academy students wanting to replicate Channel 3's Surprise Squad. The news station's Surprise Squad does random acts of kindness for someone when they are recommended by a member of the public.



The students at West Point liked the idea and wanted to do it at their school for students and staff. Channel 3 came out to cover the story, but what neither the students nor their sponsor, Mr. Isham, knew was that Channel 3 was going to surprise the class with a \$3,000 check to help get their program started.

Click [here](#) to take a look at the story that aired!

UNIVERSITY HIGH RECOGNIZED IN THE WEST VALLEY VIEW



University High School made the front page of the West Valley View for being the only high school in Arizona to be recognized as a 2021 National Blue Ribbon School.

Congratulations to the students and staff at U-High for this incredible academic achievement!

Click [here](#) to read the full West Valley View article.

ON DECEMBER 10TH, CELEBRATE TUHSD WITH THE PHOENIX SUNS!
GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!



**TOLLESON UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
NIGHT WITH THE PHOENIX SUNS!**

**Celebrate your School District with
the Phoenix Suns**

*Teams, Families and Friends are all welcome
to the attend the celebration!*



VS



DEC 10th | 8 PM

GAME DETAILS

Come enjoy the game with friends & family! Pick wherever you want
to sit with your School District's Discount!

ORDER DEADLINE

12/10/2021

For more information contact Skyler Roope – sroope@suns.com or 602-379-7525



Check out [Suns.com/Groups](https://www.suns.com/groups) for more
information on Group Outings

THANK YOU VOTERS FOR YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE BOND!

Once again, we are so grateful for our voters who continue to support the good work we are doing at TUHSD. The Bond passed!

We appreciate our voters who unwaveringly support public education and the Tolleson Union High School District.

Thank you!



HAVE A HAPPY THANKSGIVING BREAK!



**EDITOR: JOSEPH ORTIZ, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
AND MARKETING**

INTERN: LAUREN SUBIA