

CocoNuts win Engineering Inspiration Award at World competition

April 24, 2023

The CocoNuts Robotics team won the Engineering Inspiration Award at the World competition in Houston, Texas, on April 22.

Earlier this month, the team qualified for the FIRST Robotics Championship, making it their 16th consecutive year, the same number of years they have existed.

Christine Sapio, science, CIT teacher, and CocoNuts coach, said this year was challenging because of all the snow days.

"We went to our first event in early March with an untested robot and ended up playing defense because our mechanism didn't work as intended," said Sapio. "[The team] didn't qualify until our third event on April 1 when they won the Monterey



Members of the CocoNuts Robotics Team pose for a photo after winning the Engineering Inspiration Award at the World competition in Houston, Texas, on April 22, 2023. (Photo submitted by Shannonlynn Chester)

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CocoNuts win

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A message from our **SUPERINTENDENT**

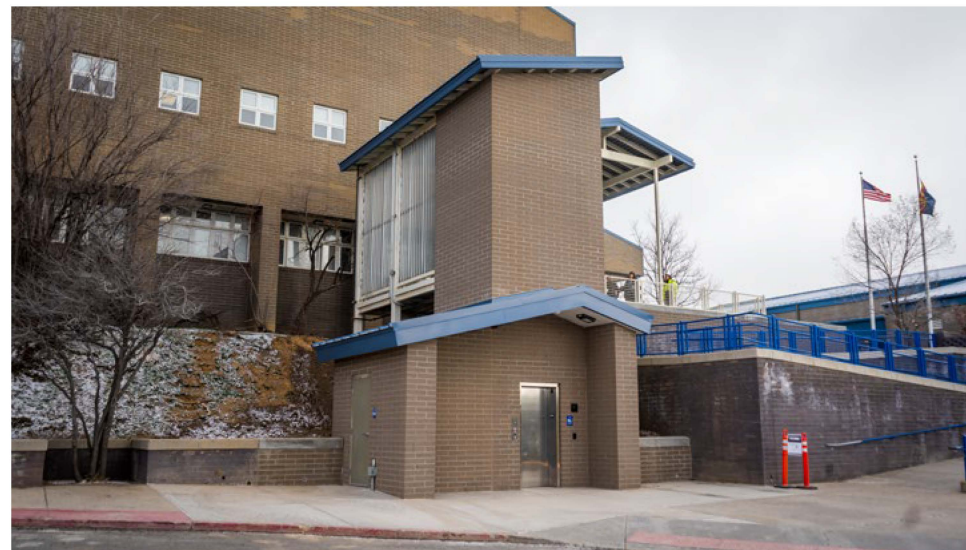


Superintendent Michael Penca toured the new elevator at Sinagua Middle School with the Bond Oversight Committee on April 26, 2023. Photo, left to right: David Binderim with CORE Construction, Superintendent Penca, and Scott Overton, Bond Oversight Committee member.

It is hard to believe we are entering the final month of the 2022-2023 school year. I am so proud of each student of the Flagstaff Unified School District for persevering through the month of April with no early releases and several state assessments. In May, we will have many opportunities for students to engage in outdoor and community experiences, and celebrations of their many accomplishments. Graduation preparations are underway, and I invite FUSD families to join us in honoring the Class of 2023 from

Coconino, Flagstaff, and Summit high schools on May 25-26.

The first week of May each year is a designated time to express appreciation for the teachers and entire staff of the Flagstaff Unified School District. Please consider sending a note or email to your student's teachers to express your gratitude for the time, care, and dedication they demonstrate or to share how they are making a positive difference for your student and family. 🌲



New elevator at Sinagua Middle School

A new elevator was constructed near the front entrance of Sinagua Middle School thanks to district voters who approved a \$75 million bond program in November 2018.

The elevator project is just one of many projects that have enhanced FUSD's services and programs. The new elevator improves accessibility at the site. 🌲

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Fisher named 2023 Teacher of the Year, Teegardin Rookie Teacher of the Year

April 22, 2023

Congratulations to the 2023 Coconino County Teacher of the Year and Rookie Teacher of the Year! Emily Fisher, 5th Grade teacher at Marshall Magnet Elementary School, was named the 2023 Teacher of the Year and Josie Teegardin, a social studies teacher at Mount Elden Middle School, was named the 2023 Rookie Teacher of the Year during an awards ceremony in Flagstaff.

FUSD is honored to have such inspiring teachers that make a difference in the lives of our students.

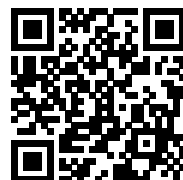
All the nominees for Teacher of the Year and Rookie Teacher of the Year were all Flagstaff Unified School District teachers. The Teacher of the Year finalists were Lisa Barnard from Sinagua Middle School, Emily Fisher from Marshall Elementary School, and Kate Haynes from Knoles Elementary School. The Rookie Teacher of the Year finalists are Kellen Brandel from Flagstaff

High School, Crystal Busath from Kinsey Elementary School, and Josie Teegardin from Mount Elden Middle School.

Each finalist will receive cash prizes and automatic nominations for the Arizona Teacher of the Year award and other prizes. The Coconino County Teacher of the Year also wins a one-year leased vehicle from Flagstaff Findlay Toyota. A total of 19 teachers were nominated this year for Teacher of the Year, and eight teachers were nominated for Rookie Teacher of the Year.

The annual awards ceremony is organized and hosted by the Coconino County Superintendent's Office. 🌲

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Flagstaff Unified School District teachers filled the nominees list with Emily Fisher being named the 2023 Teacher of the Year and Joshie Teegardin being named the 2023 Rookie Teacher of the Year during an event hosted by the Coconino County Superintendent's Office on April 20, 2023. Photos, top, left to right: Janelle Reasor, principal of Marshall Elementary School; FUSD Superintendent Michael Penca, Emily Fisher; and County Superintendent Cheryl Mango-Paget. Top right: Tammy Nelson, principal of Mount Elden Middle School, Superintendent Penca; Josie Teegardin; and Coconino County Superintendent Mango-Paget. Bottom photo: Trish Eberlein, assistant principal of Flagstaff High School; Kellen Brandel, nominee for Rookie Teacher of the Year; Libby Miller, principal of Flagstaff High School.



Cross Categorical program at Marshall Elementary School

April 20, 2023

The Cross-Cat programs at Marshall Elementary School provide the best individualized educational experience for each student through a dedicated team approach.

Janelle Reasor, principal at Marshall Elementary School, explained that Cross-Cat has a highly effective team.

"[Our] team of certified teachers, paraprofessionals, special service providers, program specialists, general education, and special area teachers work tirelessly and collaboratively to meet each student where they are and elevate them to their highest potentials," said Reasor. "We value the Marshall community that allows our general education students to learn from and grow with our [Cross-Cat] students. Together, we rise!"

Emily Cartwright, a special education teacher at Marshall

Elementary School, said they embrace and celebrate each student's unique qualities and abilities while empowering learning opportunities for all.

"We provide the best individualized educational experience for each student through a dedicated team approach," said Cartwright. "The highly effective team and parents work tirelessly."

Marshall Elementary has unique inclusion opportunities.

"The special education and general education teams work together to provide hands-on experience allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of communication devices (AAC) in efforts to bridge the communication gap existing between those who communicate in different ways," said Cartwright. "Miss Emmy

***Continued on page 5 /
Cross Cat***



Students in the Cross-Cat program at Marshall Elementary School participate in class lessons and projects on February 21, 2023, and on April 20, 2023, at Marshall Elementary School.



MEMS students win National History Day competition, now headed to Washington, D.C.

April 27, 2023

Students from Mount Elden Middle School won first place at the National History Day competition on April 15 in Tempe, Arizona. The winning team included Elizabeth Green, Juliet Coffman, and Abigail Burnhart.

Lee L. Irby, the Pre-AP social studies teacher and sponsor of the National History Day group, explained that the state competition featured 21 middle schools from throughout the state that competed.

"Each year, there is a different theme, this year, it was New Frontiers," said Irby. "The kids get a lot of voice and autonomy in their project, and they can choose their groups and topics. These girls decided to do their topic on Elizabeth Blackwell. They had to connect their topic to the theme... how Blackwell connected to New Frontiers."

Irby said the girls worked hard on their research and source analysis.

"Being able to articulate their

argument under the theme was challenging for many students, and they were able to overcome it through their hard work, and they were recognized for that," she said. "They connected with their team, created an argument, and showed excellence in their research."

With the win at the state competition, the group qualifies to compete at the national competition scheduled on June 11-15 at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Irby said the group plans to attend the national competition.

"This is my second group of kids that have competed at the national competition," Kirby said.

National History Day is a non-profit education organization improving the teaching and learning of history, according to its website. Learn more about National History Day at www.nhd.org.

...Cross Cat/ From Page 4

and [I] have gone into classrooms to provide these hands-on experiences using restorative practices."

The takeaways from students of all grades, K-5, have included: Talkers are really hard to use; It takes a long time for students who use these devices to answer on their talkers, now I know why; We need to be patient when talking to others; I never knew talkers were a thing or that people may need to use them because they can't use their mouth.

"To create a more inclusive school environment while continuing the opportunities to learn about devices, core boards, pictures of the front page of a talker, have been placed around the school," said

Cartwright. "These core boards have aided in minimizing behavioral and emotional experiences by providing visual alternatives to express wants and needs in a more inclusive and less demanding way."

In other activities, Cartwright explained that students have come together for the first time at Marshall Elementary to compete on a unified basketball team consisting of students with special needs and their same-age peers in the general education classrooms.

"Our unified team comes together weekly to practice the sport in preparation for the final competition in March," she said. "Inclusion is a model which benefits all students while teaching the importance of celebrating differences, finding the strengths in others, and fostering diverse relationships. These inclusion opportunities allow students to

discover their similar interests and build connections."

Denise Hauer, a program specialist at Marshall Elementary School who works with Cross-Cat, explained the day-to-day in the specialist programs.

"[There's] high expectations [of] building independence [and] presuming competence. Students have made leaps and bounds on their individualized goals through high expectations and being taught effective communication skills," said Hauer. "Students are gaining new academic skills in the areas of reading, math computation, technology applications, writing to pen pals, acts of kindness, [and] gaining independence."

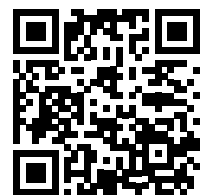
"The power of yet — every student is capable of learning [and] we focus on teaching skills in the way the student learns," added Hauer. "Working on academics, individualized to meet the student's needs [while] fostering independence. At Marshall, we are proud to foster a school community that feels like a family where all staff and students are accepted and valued, creating an environment where students are known by name."



**We provide
the best
individualized
educational
experience for
each student
through a
dedicated team
approach.**

— Emily Cartwright

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Photos, top left: Dancers compete Friday night in the 44th annual Powwow sponsored by the Flagstaff High School Native American Club. Top right: Lonewolf Joe, 11, dances during the 44th annual Powwow on Friday sponsored by the Flagstaff High School Native American Club. Bottom left: Clayton Benally, left, Maurice Begay, center, and Tanner Benally, 8, from the Indian Creek drum circle, play Friday night during the 44th annual Powwow hosted by the Flagstaff High School Native American Club. Bottom right: Mark Roan Horse dances during the golden age section of the 44th annual Powwow sponsored by the Flagstaff High School Native American Club Friday night.

(Photos by Jake Bacon, Arizona Daily Sun)

44th Annual Powwow at Flagstaff High School

April 27, 2023

The 44th Annual Powwow at Flagstaff High School (FHS) was a success. The event was held on April 21-22, and the Native American Club at FHS hosted it.

Darrell Marks, the Native American academic advisor at Flagstaff High School, explained that the powwow is the longest-running powwow in Flagstaff.

"Students from Flagstaff High

School took over hosting this event after the City of Flagstaff discontinued hosting it after nearly 65 years," said Marks. "Powwows allow the Native [community] to come together and highlight some of their sacred cultural expressions."

"Powwows continue to be a celebration of Native American ceremonial exhibition through various styles of dances and drum-expressed music. Each style and song hold their own special significance

and maintain that Indigenous People's culture and music are still intact," he added. "The skill and attention that each participant brings to the event demonstrate the importance and commitment to self while uplifting the community spirit."

Marks explained the Native American students at FHS understand that powwows are one of the few opportunities afforded to them to bring their communities together and celebrate their own

Indigenous identities by hosting various tribes and styles of dance from across the Indigenous country.

"The student-organized event held this past weekend was a well-attended event and will be documented as a success," said Marks. "The students are already beginning their organizing process for next year's annual powwow." 🌲



...State Championship/ From Page 1

Bay Regional FIRST Impact Award, the highest award at the tournament."

With the win, the team became eligible to compete for the FIRST Impact Award at the World Championship in Houston, where they won the Engineering Inspiration Award.

Sapio said the judges of the Impact Award had some encouraging words for the team.

"Here's what the judges had to say during the award ceremony when they won the Impact

[Award]: This team has organized outreach events, led workshops, hosted competitions, and sponsored teams, building strong FIRST linkages everywhere they go," she said.

"Their strong advocacy for STEM with their local government has impacted countless people and driven real change. Their focus on mentorship and accessibility reaches many in their surrounding isolated communities. They are truly nuts about the FIRST mission, and they

are the change we love to see! Way to go Team 2486, the CocoNuts!" 🌲

**Their strong
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20 Under 40

Lawrence Watson

Assistant Principal
Mount Elden Middle School

The Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) had two winners of the 20 Under 40: Madison Pompeo, communications specialist with the FUSD Communications Department, and Lawrence Watson, assistant principal at Mount Elden Middle School.

The following content is from the Arizona Daily Sun and contains a series of interview questions published in their 20 Under 40 publication.

What makes you passionate about your work?

I love working with so many people from so many backgrounds. All of these students, families, educators, and other community stakeholders each play an essential part in making Flagstaff a unique and beautiful place

to live. It's an enriching experience to work with families who have deep roots in the Flagstaff community and to learn from community partners who've been sharing their time and energy with our students for years. It is inspiring when I think of how our students will be the future leaders and neighbors that will continue to make this community a special place. My own kids joke that everywhere we go, we run into people I know from work. That's one of the things I love most; that I feel like an invested and engaged partner in the Flagstaff community.

What's an accomplishment you are proud of?

I am proud beyond words of all of our staff here at MEMS, and the active role they play in making MEMS a safe and supportive place for our students. I think we all know that this is a challenge nationally as well as locally, and we deal with the pressure daily. For us, it was clear that there were needs and challenges at the beginning of the school year that needed to be addressed. We invested time toward educating and empowering our students and staff to know how to respond to situations and to take care of each other. We've been honest about our concerns and creative in solving challenges.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

Outside of work, I really enjoy working out. I feel like about 50% of my time outside of work this winter has been spent shoveling snow, so these last few weeks of sunny warm weather have been rejuvenating. One of my kids is learning how to play guitar, so it's been especially fun getting to work with him on that and being able to plug in and have someone to play with. If that gets too

**Continued on page 11 /
Watson**



20 Under 40

Madison Pompeo

Communications Specialist
FUSD Communication Department

What makes you passionate about your work?

As the Communications Specialist at FUSD, I am passionate about highlighting the incredible accomplishments of our students and staff. Throughout the year, I attend a wide variety of events across our school district, including the first day of school, field trips, athletics, concerts, award ceremonies, graduation, and so on. In my role, I love capturing these moments via photography and videography to share with our community.

What's an accomplishment you are proud of?

Throughout my four years at FUSD, I have been able to learn and grow immensely in my career. I'm proud of the amount of new skills and knowledge I have gained over the

years to get where I am today. When I started my current role, I was fresh out of college and new to the communications and public relations field. Additionally, the only previous experience I had in the education field was at an after-school program that I worked at in high school. Now, four years later, I am able to use the knowledge and skills I have learned to act as a reliable asset to my team and help improve FUSD.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

Outside of work, I enjoy traveling and creating new experiences. Whether I'm on a road trip around the states or exploring a new country, I truly enjoy creating new memories that I can look back on for the rest of my life. Other than traveling, you can often find me hiking around Flagstaff with my dog or spending time with my family and friends.

Do you volunteer? If so, for who and why?

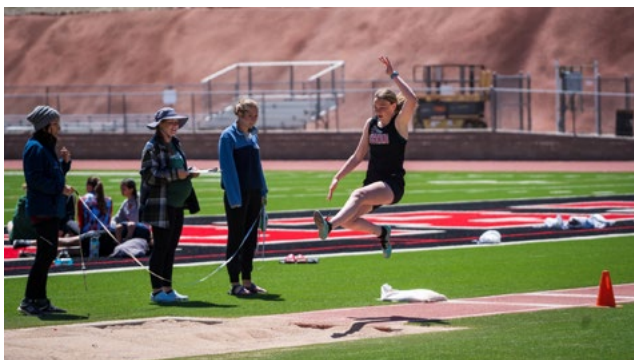
I love to get involved in my community whether it is volunteering to plan and work a local event, helping to sandbag during a flood, or packaging food at the food bank. Notably, volunteering to plan and work the Annual STEM Celebration is one of my favorite volunteer activities that I look forward to each year. It is incredibly rewarding to plan the STEM Celebration, a free community event, from the ground up and then see our community members enjoy the event firsthand.

What would you say is the most important thing you've learned so far?

One of the most important things I have learned in my life so far is to never stop learning. Learning doesn't

**Continued on page 11 /
Pompeo**

Spring sports season winding down



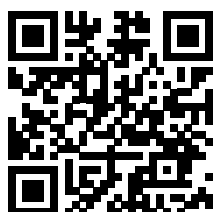
Photos from the Flagstaff JV City Championships held at Coconino High School on April 19, 2023.

(Photos by FUSD Communications Department)

Coconino High School vs. Flagstaff High School Varsity Baseball game on April 24, 2023, Flagstaff High School.

(Photos by FUSD Communications Department)

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Flagstaff High School vs. Coconino High School Tennis game on April 14, 2023, at Coconino High School.

(Photos by Rachel Gibbons Photography)



Preschool students from across the Flagstaff Unified School District are having fun with their activities and lessons. Photos, top left to right: A police officer with the City of Flagstaff reads a book to preschoolers at Kinsey Elementary School. Top right: Firefighters with the City of Flagstaff visit preschoolers at Kinsey Elementary with their fire truck. Bottom, left to right: Preschoolers at Knoles play with slime while wearing smocks during their farm-themed lessons. Right: Preschoolers at Killip playing with stamps and cups.

Preschool classes learning and having fun

April 8, 2023

Preschool classes around the school district are learning and having fun.

Sara Owen, preschool teacher at Flagstaff Unified School District, shared some activities from the

Preschool Programs at Knoles, Kinsey, and Killip.

Owen explained preschool students at Knoles were happy as "pigs in mud" playing with slime during their farm-themed project. "Kinsey Preschool had local police

and fire teams visit their school in March," she said. "They have been exploring community helpers and their jobs. They have enjoyed making community helper crafts and reading books about a variety of jobs in the community."

Owen said Killip Preschool celebrated their 100th Day of preschool with all kinds of fun activities with the number 100.

FUSD FOOD SERVICE

Fueling for the Future

March 1, 2023

Food is a part of our everyday lives. Our food choices and eating behaviors matter. The way we nourish ourselves impacts not only our health but also the environment.

We encourage a healthy lifestyle that encompasses nutrition, healthy habits, and sustainable eating. There are many ways to eat a balanced diet while saving money, keeping the environment in mind, and most importantly, fueling our health.

Below are some tips you can use to Fuel for the Future:

1. Use leftovers: In the United States, nearly 40% of all food is wasted. Reusing food is a great way to save money and reduces pollution emitted in our beautiful Flagstaff community. Consider freezing leftover fruits and vegetables before they go bad and use them in smoothies,

soups, or stir-fry recipes. You can also use your leftovers as ingredients for your next meal. Dedicate a day to using leftovers and involve your child(ren) in the cooking process. This can be a great bonding experience and can help your child build their confidence in the kitchen.

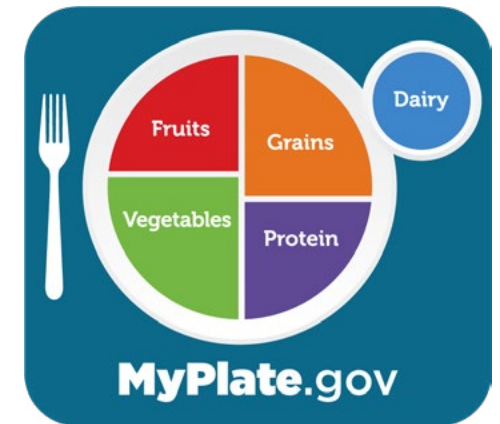
2. Variety: By eating a colorful array of fruits and vegetables, you are more likely to meet your intake of vitamins and minerals. Nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, vitamin A, omega-3, iron, and B12 are important for your child's development. It also encourages your child to explore new flavors and textures and helps develop their relationship with food.

3. Plan your meals: Balanced meals provide your child with energy so your kid(s) are fueled for success. Packing snacks with carbohydrates and protein in mind is a great hunger-crushing combo that will keep your child

focused. Whole grains contain fiber that provides fullness and satiety. Fruits and vegetables are packed with antioxidants to support your child's immune system. Consider adding dairy products to your child's meals to help support strong bone development.

4. Mindful eating: mindful eating can help your child develop the skills to tune in with their hunger and fullness cues and build healthy eating habits over time. You can practice mindful eating with your kid(s) by reducing distractions, i.e., watching TV and phone usage during mealtimes, and encouraging your kids to take their time to eat during meals.

Creating a healthy lifestyle for your kid(s) and yourself is challenging, especially as a busy parent. However, small behavior changes over time become habits that can impact the health of you and your family in the long run. A healthy lifestyle is unique to your needs. Remember to start slow and implement small behavior changes, whether it be introducing



a new fruit or vegetable in your kid's lunch, or prioritizing family dinners without distractions. 🌲

...Watson/ From Page 8

cognitively demanding, I can take a Lego or Mario break with my younger son. Right now, my wife, Annie, is in the dissertation stage of her Ph.D. program, and we are all very excited for her graduation in December!

Do you volunteer? If so, for who and why?

My kids are still young, so most of my volunteering revolves around supporting their activities. We are doing the whole "bring snacks on game day, help with the potluck

celebration, coach the AYSO team" thing right now. In my role, but outside of the scope of my regular work, there are tons of opportunities to step up and help. For example, I serve on the AZ ACT Council, do some work with the district CTE department to improve career development for students, and I usually end up with a few side projects going at one time, like working on employee onboarding, improving pay rates for club sponsors, or working with community partners for out of school opportunities.

What would you say is the most important thing you've learned so far?

The most important thing I've learned is that there are a lot of people out there who care about you and who will be there to help you. I am grateful in my life that I've always been surrounded by exceptional people who've told me what I needed to hear at the right times and helped me discover who I wanted to be. It's a blessing to be in a public school and community where I can share some of the good things in my life for the good of Flagstaff. 🌲

...Pompeo/ From Page 8

just happen in school but during all walks of life. We continue to learn every day whether it's teaching yourself new skills at work, meeting someone from a different culture or background than you, traveling to a new place, or trying a new hobby. I think it is essential to be open-minded and continue to learn things from ourselves and others that could possibly change the outlook we have on life. 🌲



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