



FLAGSTAFF UNIFIED
School District

NEWSLETTER

April 2024

Celebrating Our Planet: Earth Day at Flagstaff Unified School District

April 23, 2024

On April 22, a day globally designated to honor our planet and advocate for its health, Flagstaff Unified School District joined in solidarity to celebrate Earth Day. In 1970, Earth Day became a worldwide movement, emphasizing the need for conservation, sustainability, and respect for the life-sustaining resources our Earth provides. It is a time for us all to pause, reflect, and recalibrate our actions towards a more sustainable future.

This year's Earth Day theme resonated through the hallways of our schools and the actions of our students and staff. Each campus became a bustling hub of eco-friendly activities. Teams of enthusiastic individuals took to the grounds, clearing debris, arranging stones along pathways, and planting greenery that beautified our space and will contribute to our ecosystem's health for years to come.

Innovative minds came together to craft feeders for our feathered friends and furry visitors, turning our schools into sanctuaries where

local wildlife can thrive. These small, thoughtful gestures echo the spirit of Earth Day — nurturing the environments in which we live, learn, and play.

The lessons learned and the practices adopted on Earth Day are stepping stones towards a continuous journey of environmental stewardship. Each recycled bottle, each seed planted, and each watt conserved weaves into the larger tapestry of conservation efforts championed by our school district.

We are immensely proud of the work done by our students, staff, teachers, and supportive families. Your participation and enthusiasm are vital to fostering an educational environment that values sustainability. Together, we are not just celebrating a day but contributing to a legacy of a cleaner, greener world for generations to come.

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Photos, top: Students at DeMiguel Elementary School use push brooms to clean up the sidewalks around the school. Bottom: Students created bird feeders and hung them up on the trees around the school grounds at Cromer Elementary School on Earth Day.

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A message from our SUPERINTENDENT

Recap of Profile of Learner Skills

Throughout this year, this newsletter has highlighted the incredible work happening in our schools. The Flagstaff Unified School District is committed to developing the skills our students need to thrive not just in the classroom but as future global citizens. We focus on five key skills that define our "Profile of a Learner": Critical Thinking, Communication, Empathy, Initiative, and Resilience. These skills are essential for success in a complex and interconnected world.

Let us explore what these skills look like in action:

- **Critical Thinking:** Imagine students researching, analyzing data, debating solutions, and refining their ideas.
- **Communicators:** Students confidently presenting their discoveries, collaborating on written proposals, and utilizing technology to share their findings.
- **Empathy:** Students working together to understand different cultures, appreciating diverse viewpoints, and fostering inclusive school communities.
- **Initiative:** Students setting goals for academic achievement, managing their workload, and demonstrating a lifelong commitment to learning.

- **Resilience:** Students tackling rigorous math problems, persisting through setbacks, and embracing challenges as opportunities for growth.

I am incredibly grateful for the dedication of our FUSD staff. They create positive, inclusive environments where students feel seen, supported, and empowered. Just like gardeners nurturing a beautiful garden, our staff cultivates the conditions for each student's potential to flourish. They see the hope, wonder, and ability within every child, and they honor the trust families place in us.

We invite you to explore the many exciting programs and initiatives happening in our schools. In our monthly newsletter, we will continue highlighting student and staff achievements that exemplify our "Profile of a Learner" in action. 🌲

FUSD Governing Board Member Kristine Pavlik Announces Resignation

April 18, 2024

Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) is announcing the resignation of Governing Board Member Kristine Pavlik, effective May 23, 2024. Pavlik, who began her term in January 2023, has decided to step down due to increasing family and professional commitments.

In her resignation, Pavlik expressed her deep appreciation for the opportunity to be part of the FUSD governing board.

"I have truly loved learning about our incredible school district and working together to support and guide our school community," she said. "I regret this decision, but due to increasing family and professional responsibilities, I am no longer able to devote the time needed to represent and serve our community fairly."

FUSD Superintendent Michael Penca acknowledged Pavlik's contributions with high regard.

"It has been an honor to serve with Ms. Pavlik," Penca said. "While her advocacy for public education and perspective as a FUSD parent will be missed on the Governing Board and advisory committees, I know she will remain an engaged parent and supporter of our district."

In response to Pavlik's upcoming departure, Coconino County Superintendent Cheryl Mango-Paget seeks applicants to fill the position until December 31, 2024. Applicants must be Arizona registered voters,



residents of the school district for at least a year prior to the appointment, and not employed by the school district or married to someone who is.

Interested parties can find application forms on the Coconino County website at www.coconino.az.gov/2855/Governing-Board. The completed applications should be submitted via email, fax, or mail by 5 p.m. on May 20, 2024. For more details on the application process or eligibility, contact Michelle Despain, program coordinator for the Coconino County Superintendent of Schools office. 🌲

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CONTACT

FLAGSTAFF UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
3285 East Sparrow Avenue
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

(928) 527-6000 | www.fusd1.org

FUSD Talent Celebrated at the Viola Awards

April 5, 2024

Flagstaff Unified School District staff members, the pride and joy of our community, shined brightly at the 2024 Viola Awards on March 23, 2024, an annual event that celebrates artistic and educational excellence within the Flagstaff community. The awards ceremony, held at the historic Orpheum Theater, drew a large and enthusiastic crowd to honor the achievements of individuals and organizations in various disciplines.

At the heart of this year's accolades were our very own educators and artists, whose significant contributions have enriched the cultural and educational landscape of our district. The Excellence in Performing Arts Award was bestowed upon Ballet Folklórico de Colores, co-directed by Jessica Kitterman, ELL Specialist at Puente de Hózhó Elementary School, and Sergio Padilla, FUSD Dance Instructor and founder of the ensemble. Their dedication to preserving and promoting cultural heritage through dance has inspired and touched many lives within our community.

In the realm of music education, Owen Davis, a music teacher at Sinagua Middle School and Coconino High School, stood out as a finalist for Excellence in Education. His commitment to fostering musical talent has been instrumental in enhancing our students' educational experience.

Diane Immethun and the Flagstaff Symphony Orchestra captured the Excellence in Collaboration Award. Diane's work as a music teacher at Cromer Elementary School exemplifies the synergistic power of working together to achieve a common goal—enriching our students' lives through music.

Kim Robinson, a substitute and PTO President at Puente de Hózhó Elementary School, was recognized with the Community Impact



Photos, top: Jessica Kitterman accepts the award on behalf of the Ballet Folklórico de Colores, with some of the dancers joining her on stage during the 2024 Viola Awards on March 23, 2024, at the Orpheum Theater. Bottom left: Kim Robinson accepts her award for Community Impact Individual Award. Bottom right: Diane Immethun accepts the award for Excellence in Collaboration Award.

Individual Award. Kim's multifaceted contributions have created a lasting impact on our district, echoing the ethos of the Viola Awards — to celebrate those who give back to their community.

The Viola Awards, a demonstration of the enduring legacy of Viola Babbitt, a tireless advocate for the arts and a key figure in establishing Flagstaff's first community arts

center, embody the spirit of creativity and community service. Creative Flagstaff, the organization behind the awards, underscores the importance of recognizing individuals like Babbitt, who laid the foundation for a thriving arts community.

The legacy of Viola Babbitt lives on through the Viola Awards and the countless individuals who continue to foster a love for the arts and

education. As the Coconino Center for the Arts stands as evidence of her efforts, so do the endeavors of our educators and staff honored this year. Their unwavering commitment to excellence upholds the values Viola cherished and propels our community into a future where arts and education remain integral to our shared experience. 🌲

CHS's Architectural Interior Design Chapter Triumphs at State Conference

April 11, 2024

Coconino High School's (CHS) Architectural Interior Design Chapter has achieved remarkable success at the recent Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) State Leadership Conference, held on April 1, 2024. The chapter received the prestigious "Gold Chapter" recognition and saw its dedicated teacher, Laura Locke, honored as the "Arizona FCCLA Advisor of the Year."

Janeille K. Buckley, a culinary arts instructor at CHS, expressed her excitement.

"Our CHS Architectural Interior Design Chapter received recognition for being a 'Gold Chapter!'" said Buckley. "This award is earned with intentional choices of being a chapter with a growth mindset and building community."

Buckley highlighted the significance of these awards.

"These awards given by our FCCLA Arizona State Leadership demonstrate the level of time and dedication Mrs. Locke has poured into her students," she said. "It shows the students that their hard work, determination, and ability to set goals for themselves and as a group can be achieved. They see their personal growth and how it impacts their community at CHS, in Flagstaff, and in the entire state of Arizona."

Superintendent Michael Penca, on behalf of the Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD), congratulated Mrs. Locke and her students, indicating the district's pride in their achievements.

Laura Locke, recipient of the Advisor of the Year and also the Family & Consumer Science Teacher



at CHS, acknowledged her students' hard work.

"The students worked very hard over the course of the year to earn this distinction by planning and participating in activities that support the purposes of FCCLA and promote Career and Technical Education," Locke said. "Students set goals and worked as a team to accomplish tasks in five categories: strengthening family, career exploration, building community, leadership skills, and civic responsibility."

"One of their tasks for building community was to recognize those who helped them in their FCCLA journey," said Locke. "The task they

chose was to nominate me for Arizona FCCLA Advisor of the Year, and we were all very surprised when they announced me as the winner during the opening session."

The FCCLA conference results were impressive, with several CHS teams winning gold and silver medals.

The winners were Jatzia Narvaez, Kendyl Adams, Megan Rankin, Amy Rodriguez, and Faith McCabe, who won gold medals in the Level 3 Interior Design STAR event. Alexa Morgan and Sarabeth Hardister earned silver in the Level 2 event, while Emily Rodriguez won a bronze in the Repurpose/Redesign STAR event.

Tom Safranek, director of College & Career Development at FUSD, emphasized the significance of CTE.

"It is such a great testimony of what you and CTE do for our kids," said Safranek. It also gives me tons of leverage and support for what I tell other administrators all the time—that CTE is the premier and most holistic educational delivery model available to American students." 🌲



Photos, left: Ivy Huffmon, Hallie Poulson, Leah Thompson, Camille Warke, and Shelly Stearns. Right: Shelly Stearns, Leah Thompson, Hallie Poulson, Camille Warke, and El Smith.

FHS Continues to Honor Veterans Through Established VHP Chapter

April 12, 2024

Flagstaff High School (FHS) celebrates its ongoing commitment as a chapter of the Veterans Heritage Project (VHP) since 2013. The chapter, led by Shelly Stearns, continues to offer students the rare opportunity to preserve the precious first-person accounts of our nation's heroes, enhancing both character and civics education.

Michelle DiMuro, the executive director of the Veterans Heritage Project, acknowledges the unwavering support for the project.

"Thank you for supporting Shelly Stearns in sustaining the Veterans Heritage Project Chapter at Flagstaff High School," remarked DiMuro. "The VHP has been recognized by the Arizona Department of Education as a character education program since 2024 and has the distinction of being the first program in Arizona approved

in all four categories for the Arizona Seal of Civics Literacy."

FHS's long-standing role in the VHP allows students to record oral histories for the Library of Congress, enriching their writing, communication, and leadership abilities. Participants in the project gain the honor of becoming published authors in the annual book "Since You Asked.™" The project's legacy culminates in a community reception and book signing event, to which DiMuro cordially invites the community, scheduled for April 28, 2024, at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Veterans Heritage Project's impact at FHS is significant and measurable. The program statistics overall demonstrate a 100% graduation rate for involved students and progression to higher education.

Remarkably, 90% of VHP participating seniors demonstrate notable improvement in critical 21st-century skills, with 95% reporting a greater appreciation for military service and civic responsibility.

VHP is an exemplary educational model that extends learning beyond the classroom, encouraging civic engagement, digital credentialing, and eligibility for exclusive scholarships after two years of participation.

Since 2004, the Veterans Heritage Project, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has fostered these impactful student-veteran relationships. Its dedication to character education and civic literacy is celebrated at the state level.

DiMuro reiterates her dedication to the enduring legacy of the program.

"Our experienced team is on

hand to discuss and provide further information," she said. "Thank you for all that you contribute to your students!"

FHS proudly acknowledges the enrichment that the Veterans Heritage Project continues to provide to its students and the community at large.

Shelly Stearns reflects on the enduring importance of the project:

"Our mission of preserving both the oral and written histories of veterans and Gold Star families is the most powerful and momentous outcome of VHP," said Stearns. "We get to celebrate their service each year, and the bonds that students form with their veterans are ones that last a lifetime." 🌲



Flagstaff Middle School: A Legacy of Learning and Community

April 10, 2024

Flagstaff Middle School (FMS) holds a special place in the hearts of many in the Flagstaff community. The building, which opened its doors in 1970, served as a hub of education and community engagement for decades. As the school is currently undergoing demolition, which began on April 18, 2024, to make way for a new era with the construction of Marshall Elementary School, former FMS administrators Bob Kuhn, Kent Powell, and Bill Williams reflect fondly on their time at FMS and the impact it had on generations of students.

Bob Kuhn taught at FMS for

seven years, five years as a teacher from 1992 to 1997, and then as the principal from 1997 to 1999. He reminisced about the building's unique design, which still stands out today.

"The building opened in the early 1970s as an open podular system," said Kuhn as he reflected on his time at FMS. "It was neat... it was designed with interconnected pods for different subjects like English, math, and history. This layout encouraged team teaching and collaboration among teachers. But as teachers moved on, it became too loud for some. It was a very popular system in the '70s and '80s, but most people

[eventually] got rid of it."

Kent Powell, who began his tenure at FMS as a history teacher in 1972 and eventually principal, echoed Kuhn's sentiments.

"It was an open concept. We had pods, and each pod had four classrooms," Powell recalled. "Acoustically, my kids could hear me, and I could hear them. Unless the teacher was really, really loud, you didn't have the feedback with other teachers and everything."

Bill Williams, who served as the principal of Flagstaff Junior High School, the predecessor to FMS, from 1970 to 1976, highlighted the educational philosophy of that era.

"We were totally involved in working together, a lot of cooperative kinds of stuff, and making that work, and I think we did," Williams recalled. "The building was an open-space school, and we had several pods that accommodated teaching teams, particularly for English and social studies. It was more than an experiment—it was what we were all about."

Despite its unique design, FMS fostered a sense of camaraderie among students and staff.

"It was a great place to work. The esprit de corps, with the faculty and

Continued on page 7 / FMS



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the kids, it was really a good fit at the time," Powell remarked. "A lot of fun, a lot of people got to know each other."

Over the years, FMS underwent changes in response to shifts in enrollment and educational needs.

"[FUSD] did a big restructuring in 2009 and closed down or retired a number of schools," Powell explained. "That was it. When Sinagua closed as a high school, and we dropped back, I think we dropped back to about 650 students at that point."

Despite its closure in 2010, FMS's legacy lives on through the memories and achievements of its students and staff.

"A lot of students have had so

much success in so many different fields," Powell reflected. "We've had doctors, lawyers, and a couple of generals in the military. We've had politicians, and we've had all kinds of students who have gone through FMS."

As the community watches the ongoing demolition of FMS with a sense of nostalgia and anticipation for the future, there is a collective gratitude for the memories and relationships forged within its walls.

"It was such a special place, a good educational place. It was excellent," Powell concluded.

Though the building may soon be gone, the spirit of Flagstaff Middle School will continue to inspire future generations of learners in Flagstaff and beyond. 🌲

Kent Powell, a principal of the former Flagstaff Jr. High and eventually Flagstaff Middle School, shared his archived student yearbooks spanning back to the early 1970s to 2008, a few years before the school was retired.



DeMiguel Students Gear Up for Odyssey of the Mind World Finals

April 9, 2024

DeMiguel Elementary School students will be traveling to Iowa in May to compete in the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals Championship.

Representing their school and community with immense pride, the DeMiguel Odyssey of the Mind Vehicle and Technical teams have showcased exceptional talent, securing top positions at both the regional tournament in Flagstaff and the state tournament in Tucson. Both teams clinched first place at the regional tournament, demonstrating their ingenuity and problem-solving skills. Their stellar performance continued at the state tournament, where they secured second place, solidifying their position as formidable competitors.

Comprising a group of dedicated students, the Vehicle Team includes

Sam Allred, Brinley DeRosa, Henry Gifford, Juliet Howard, Dominic Ortiz, Aubrey Smotek, and Jackson Teague. Meanwhile, the Technical Team consists of Bryce Bordwell, Kate Buzzard, Amelia Engbring, Jesse Ledbetter, Abigail Martin, Eloise Pickup, and Ava Ryan. These students have worked tirelessly to hone their skills and develop innovative solutions to complex problems, earning their place on the international stage.

The teams are coached by parents of DeMiguel Elementary. Shilo Gifford and Amanda Teague coach the Vehicle Team, and Rebekah Ryan and Rosie Schmidt coach the technical team.

As the students gear up for the World Finals Competition, they are reaching out to the community for support. This is an amazing opportunity for these students, who

have worked tirelessly to reach this level. Now, they need the funds to cover their travel expenses to Iowa State University.

Their goal is to raise \$24,000 to cover the expenses of sending 14 students and two coaches to Iowa from May 21-24, 2024. Your contribution, regardless of size, will make a meaningful difference in empowering the students to shine bright at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals.

To show your support and contribute to their fundraising efforts, please visit [GoFundMe.com](https://www.gofundme.com/deMiguelOdysseyoftheMind) and search for "DeMiguel Odyssey of the Mind" or scan the QR code below. Your generosity will not only help the students realize their dreams but also inspire future generations with their creativity and ingenuity. 🌟

MAY 2024

5/7: Bond Oversight Committee Meeting

Governing Board Meeting

5/21: Governing Board Meeting

Sinagua Middle School Promotion Ceremonies, 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

5/22: Mount Elden Middle School Promotion Ceremonies, 4 p.m. and 6 p.m.

5/23: Last Day of School

Summit High School Graduation

5/24: Flagstaff High School Graduation

Coconino High School Graduation

5/27: Memorial Day (Holiday) All Facilities are Closed

5/30: Transportation Ad Hoc Committee Meeting



Coconino High School Yearbook Club's National Recognition

April 1, 2024

Coconino High School's Yearbook Club has achieved a prestigious accolade that marks a historic first for the school. The 2023 yearbook, themed "Leaving our Tracks," has been selected for inclusion in the 2024 Jostens Look Book, recognizing it as one of the top yearbooks nationally. This is a significant honor, as only 480 yearbooks across the country receive this distinction each year.

Kelly A. Marquez, the dedicated yearbook and digital photography teacher at Coconino High School, expressed her immense pride in the students' accomplishments.

"I am so proud of these students and how much they have accomplished since I became the Yearbook advisor at Coconino High School," Marquez stated.

She described the creative process behind the 2023 yearbook, explaining how the students aimed to encapsulate the essence of being a Coconino Panther through their theme, "Leaving our Tracks." This concept highlights the impact and legacy of the students within the Coconino community, fostering a deep connection with the school.

"The students decided that being a Panther means what you do, making an impact, and leaving a trace on our Coconino community," she explained. "This helped the students create the cover and the theme throughout the entirety of the book. Identifying a deeper meaning behind the book helped us capture the school in a way that has never been done. The kids' innovation and positivity must have stood out to the judges. I will forever be grateful to this yearbook class and am so proud of them."

The Jostens Look Book is sent to over 11,000 high schools nationwide as a model of excellence. Being featured in this publication is not only a local but a national recognition, signifying the highest quality standard in yearbook design and content as evaluated by a team of experts.

The following students were part of the Yearbook Club that contributed to this outstanding achievement: Nora Duran, Amadiana Maestas, Anahi Garcia, Tori Collins, Hannah Canady, Kendall Hart, Marlena Reyes Estrella, Leanna Tsosie, Myrah Munoz, Letzia Wellerling, Sarina Castruita Sanchez, Unique Sarracino, Brianna Mendez, Natalie Hernandez, Marius Parrish, Miracle Woka, Lilah Hunter, Kyle Tsosie, Analicia Bobadilla, Maricela Alonzo, Emir Cruz Sedillo, Jaxson Tutay, Alexander Mortimer, Jordan Snider,

Erik Bedford, Palik Rilometo, and Jacob Snider.

Each student has played a pivotal role in this project, bringing unique ideas and perspectives that have clearly resonated with the judges.

As the Coconino High School community celebrates this accomplishment, the Yearbook Club continues to set a high standard for future cohorts, inspiring other students to leave their own tracks in the archives of the school's history. Congratulations to all the students and Ms. Marquez for this remarkable achievement and for representing our school district on a national platform! 🌲

The Artistic Vision of Vaidehi Patel: A Roadmap to Opportunities, Success

April 16, 2024

In the bustling halls of Coconino High School, a senior with an artistic vision has transformed a plain wall into a roadmap of opportunities for her peers. Vaidehi Patel, a name now synonymous with both talent and community service, is the creator of a mural that does more than adorn a wall—it informs and guides.

Vaidehi, an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma student, conceived the mural as part of her Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) project.

"I wanted to do something for the school," she said.

Her mural is not just art—it is a visual encapsulation of the school's myriad programs.

"It was kind of hard to see what programs were offered here," Vaidehi remarks, reflecting on her time as a new student. "I thought I'd make a mural to showcase the different branches and programs."

This mural is more than just a splash of color and logos — it is a meticulously designed tree with branches that represent the diverse programs such as IB, AP classes, Caveat, CTE, and honors classes. Each branch is an avenue for exploration, an opportunity for growth. It is a visual guide that invites students to delve into the wealth of opportunities the school offers.

Located in the counseling office, the mural proudly symbolizes the school's commitment to providing a well-rounded education.

"It is not just a tree—it is the school itself, with the different branches representing the diverse educational



offerings," she explained. "I wanted it to be a tree because the tree is the school itself, and the different branches are going to be the different things that we have."

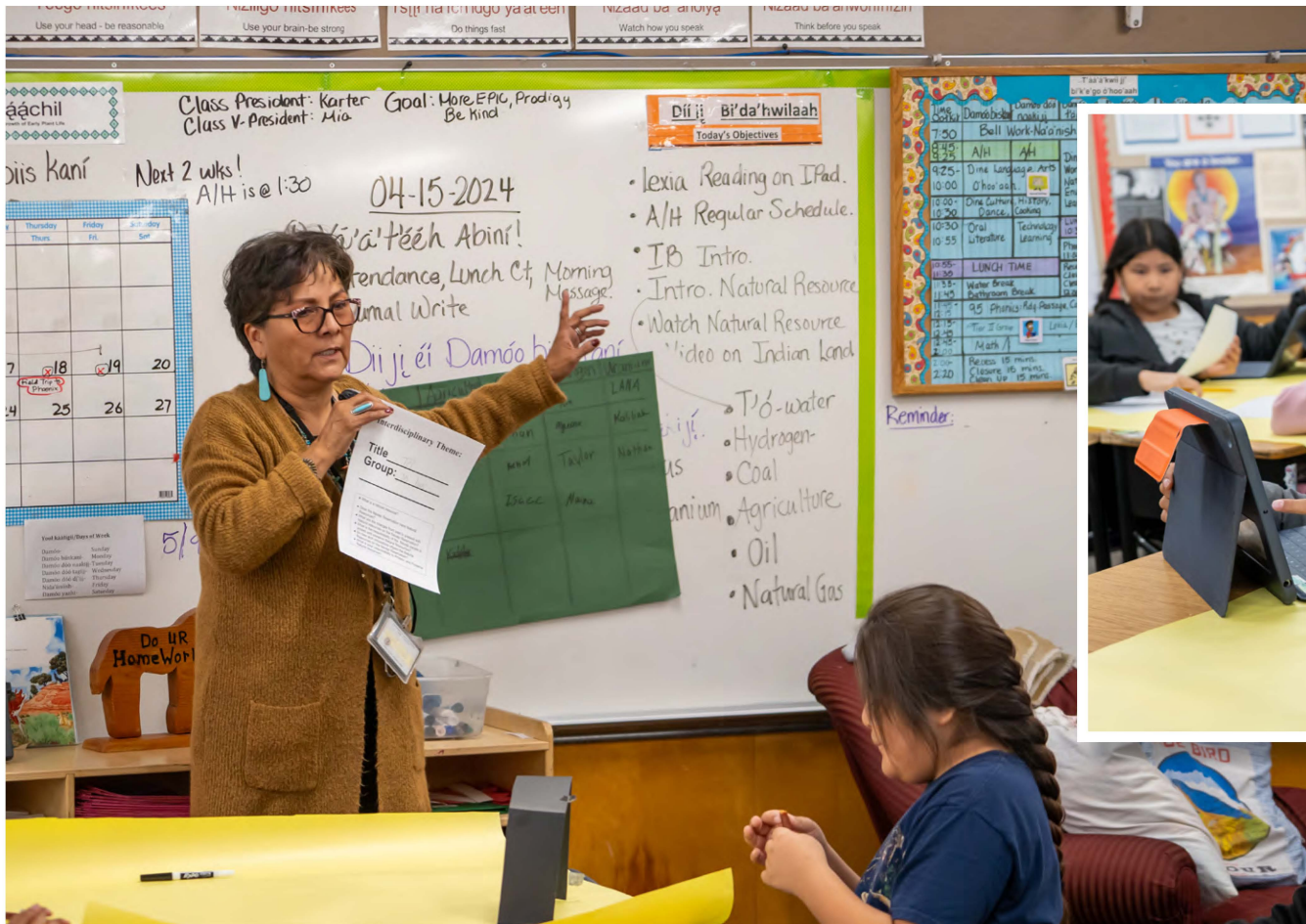
As graduation looms, Vaidehi looks forward to her next chapter at a university in California, choosing between UC Riverside and UC San Diego. Her ambition does not stop at a bachelor's degree in liberal studies. She aspires to a career as a cardiologist, a field she's chosen not just because of cultural expectations but because of a genuine desire to help people increase their health.

Born in Washington State and hailing from a family with roots in India, Vaidehi brings a world of perspectives to Flagstaff. After spending her first two high school years in Anaheim, California, she expresses a deep fondness for the subjects that let her showcase her personality, particularly art. When speaking of influences, she remembers to mention Mr. Joseph Ortiz, her English teacher, who has provided significant support during her time at CHS.

Vaidehi Patel is not just leaving behind a mural. She is leaving a

Coconino High School Senior Viadehi Patel painting the CAVIAT logo on the mural on April 16, 2024. The mural is displayed in the CHS Counseling Office.

legacy—a visual invitation to discover and participate in the wealth of programs her school offers. As students walk by, they will see not only a beautiful piece of art but also a senior's gift that will guide many future students toward their passions and aspirations. 🌳



Ms. Gorman teaches third graders about natural resources during an IB unit they were studying called "How We Share the Planet." Students had to work in groups and use the internet to aid in their research.

Celebrating Language and Culture in Education: The Classroom of Roberta Gorman

April 16, 2024

At Puente de Hózhó Elementary School, Roberta Gorman's inspiring teaching approach brings together young minds to explore and respect their Navajo cultural heritage through language and communal learning.

Roberta Gorman, an educator with over 24 years of experience, has spent the last 14 of those years with FUSD. Her journey began as a bilingual teacher aide, and she has since taught various grades, including second, third, and fourth. Gorman's commitment to education goes beyond conventional

methods—she integrates the Navajo language and perspectives into her curriculum, offering students a unique lens through which to view their world.

During an IB or International Baccalaureate unit of study themed "How We Share the Planet," Gorman's class delved into concepts that resonate deeply with the Navajo people.

"We don't call it a planet, but we call it the universe, the Mother Earth," she explained.

Gorman emphasized the connection with nature and living things, a view that diverges from the traditional scientific or mainstream

outlook yet is essential to her students' cultural fabric.

In her classroom, technology is embraced as a tool for exploration and learning. With a simple voice query, iPads come alive, providing the young researchers with a plethora of information about the natural resources on the Navajo reservation, which they eagerly discuss and analyze in groups.

Her teaching approach is student-centered and collaborative. Gorman shared how students choose their topics of interest, form groups, and take on roles such as leaders, writers, or illustrators. This structure teaches them not only about natural resources but also about teamwork and leadership.

While other classes are researching economic development

and natural resources in Arizona, Gorman's Navajo students are doing the same, but with a little modification, as she teaches them about the history of natural resources and their impacts on the Navajo reservation.

"I have the students understand natural resources in our Mother Earth, how they're very sacred, and how we use them today versus how they were used historically," she said.

Their assignments culminate with a presentation to an audience that often includes parents. Here, students share their insights on "the four worlds" in Navajo culture, leaving parents astonished at the depth of understanding their children possess.

Continued on page 12 / Gorman



FHS Culinary Team poses for a picture at their ProStart National Invitational on April 26, 2024, in Baltimore, Maryland. Pictured back row, left to right: Kyle Crowe and Maximillian Stan. Front, left to right: Dennis Parra, Zane Stiffer, and Ryder Meyers.

FHS Culinary Team Sets Sights on National ProStart Invitational

April 19, 2024

The Flagstaff High School's (FHS) culinary team is abuzz with anticipation as they gear up for the ProStart National Invitational in Baltimore, which runs from April 25 to 29. Under the guidance of their teacher, Courtney Prajapati, the team has been putting in remarkable efforts.

"They've really earned their spot to represent Arizona, and so I hope they do really, really well in nationals," Prajapati said.

Despite a last-minute roster change, with Ryder Meyers stepping in to fill Jennifer Catalan Aguirre's vacancy, the team's resolve is stronger than ever. Junior Dennis Parra, the team's leader, is a linchpin

in maintaining the team's focus and execution, proving that the challenge is as much about time management and teamwork as it is about cooking.

The team's rigorous preparation for the competition is evident in the long hours they spend perfecting their culinary creations. Kyle Crowe, one of the team members, underlines the importance of creativity and teamwork.

"The competition requires a lot of creativity and a lot of teamwork," said Crowe, who also detailed the team's rigorous practice schedule, which aims to replicate the intense competition environment.

Maximillian Stam expressed both excitement and nerves about competing against 49 other teams from across the states.

He confidently believes in their prospects.

"Yes. I'm confident that we will be able to do well in this competition," Stam said.

Drawing inspiration from their surroundings and personal preferences, the team has crafted a tantalizing Mexican-Italian fusion menu.

Zane Shiffer gave an insight into the team's three-course menu, which starts with a burrata tostada appetizer, moves on to an elote risotto, and culminates in a 'churromisu' dessert—a fusion of churros and tiramisu that promises to be a highlight of their menu.

Shiffer is responsible for creating the appetizer for their three-course meal. Ryder Meyers will take on the

...Gorman / From Page 11

"Parents were just surprised by how much their kids have learned and what they, as parents, have forgotten," said Gorman.

This educational model has its challenges. Gorman notes the delicate balance of teaching cultural traditions alongside various mainstream beliefs. However, she firmly believes in the value of this Navajo traditional knowledge.

"Navajo tradition and cultural knowledge are not a belief or religion," she explained. "They're a way of life, and they continue and preserve our language and culture."

Gorman's classroom is a testament to the success of cultural integration in education. The results speak for themselves, with parents expressing pride and admiration for their children's newfound knowledge. As Gorman's class shows us, when students are connected to their roots and empowered by their heritage, the learning experience is enriched, impactful, and lasting.

Roberta Gorman's classroom stands as a beacon of how embracing cultural heritage and language can create an educational experience that resonates on a profound level, fostering a sense of pride and a strong foundation for the future. 🌿

dessert course, which indicates his readiness to join the team at such a pivotal moment.

"I'm really excited. I'm looking forward to the competition and mostly just having fun," Meyers said.

With each member bringing their unique skills and passions to the table, the FHS culinary team embodies the spirit of collaboration. They are not just cooking to win — they are cooking to learn, to bond, and to leave their mark on the culinary world. As they refine their dishes and techniques, they are also cultivating invaluable life skills that will serve them well beyond the kitchen. 🌿



Coconino High School's Star Decathlete – Cole Hagan

April 19, 2024

As the school year gallops towards a close, the students and faculty of Coconino High School (CHS) have another exceptional reason to feel proud. The name Cole Hagan, a senior student-athlete at CHS, is buzzing through the corridors with a blend of awe and inspiration. This remarkable young man has made an indelible mark on the track and in the classroom.

A month ago, Cole made a statement at the 2024 Ron Mann Classic held at Northern Arizona University that reverberated across the athletic community. Competing against collegiate athletes as a high schooler, he soared beyond

expectations, securing fourth place in the finals.

"I came in just expecting to get some extra practice...and ended up getting fourth place," Cole said.

His proud mother, Celeste Hagan, said her son has been an amazing student-athlete. He competes in track and field and football, where he plays the positions of receiver and safety.

"He just broke the 110-meter school record at Coconino High School, and today at Mingus, he's going to try to break the 300-meter record," Celeste said.

But Cole's ambition isn't confined to the track hurdles. He's a dedicated decathlete, mastering not one but 10 grueling events.

"My favorite events are definitely the hurdles," he says with a spark of passion in his voice. "The decathlon is two days with five events each day, a total of 10 events. On the first day, you do the 100-meter dash, long jump, shot put, high jump, and then the 400-meter. On the second day, you do the 110-meter hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin, and 1500 meters."

It is proof of his exceptional talent and relentless work ethic, honed through years of training in rain and snow, that he can compete and thrive in such a demanding discipline. What makes Cole's achievements all the more remarkable is his balance of athletics with his outstanding academic prowess.

"I have a 4.1 GPA, so I think that Coco has been a good environment for me to excel in all areas," said Cole with immense pride. "Coco does a really good job of making sure that you're successful in the classroom, as well as on the field or on the track. They provide you with a really good way to be a good overall person, whether it's on the sports team or in the classroom."

This dual excellence embodies the true spirit of a student-athlete and showcases the holistic approach Coconino High School nurtures in its students.

Celeste Hagan's voice brims

*Continued on page 15 /
Hagan*

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

Taryn Kunkel-Lykins honored with Prestigious Community Partner Award

April 9, 2024

We are thrilled to announce that Taryn Kunkel-Lykins, director of Food and Nutrition Services at Flagstaff Unified School District, has been recognized with the Nutrition and Foods Community Partner of the Year Award by Northern Arizona University's Health Sciences' Nutrition and Foods Program during a ceremony on April 19, 2024. This accolade is a demonstration of her exceptional dedication and contribution to the field of nutrition education.

Taryn has played a pivotal role in nurturing the future of nutrition by welcoming both undergraduate and graduate students from NAU into the school district's food service operations. Her commitment extends beyond routine oversight. She actively engages with students in meaningful projects that are crucial for their professional development and mastery of practical skills. Her efforts ensure that students are not only ready to advance in their careers but are also equipped to contribute effectively in their fields.

"As a strong advocate for child nutrition, I was excited to be recognized as NAU's Food and Nutrition Community Partner of the

Year," said Kunkel-Lykins. "I'm equally excited to share this award with my hard-working team at all 16 school sites we serve."

Her dedication to the program and her team shines through her leadership and commitment to excellence. Her unwavering support and enthusiasm for student success have significantly enriched the community and school district's food service programs.

"I look forward to building upon and creating new partnerships with additional community entities to further improve the quality of our nutrition services department

at FUSD," she added, underlining her forward-thinking approach to expanding the program's reach.

Taryn's sincere appreciation for the collaboration with NAU underscores the shared benefits that arise from it. She credits the alliance with the ability to execute excellent programs, such as Mood Boost and Student Choice, which actively involve students and broaden their culinary horizons with new flavors and foods. This acknowledgment highlights the cooperative spirit that is fundamental to the district's achievements. 🌲



L-R: Aimee Stone, McKenzie Bevirt, and Codi Dunlap

Celebrating Excellence: School Nurses Achieve National Certification

March 27, 2024

We're excited to highlight a significant accomplishment within our school nursing team at Flagstaff Unified School District. Codi Dunlap, the nurse at Coconino High School, Aimee Stone, the nurse at Puente de Hózhó, and McKenzie Bevirt, the health services coordinator, have all achieved success by passing the National Certification Examination for School Nurses.

The national certification is a rigorous test that assesses advanced knowledge, competence, and dedication to excellence in the specialized field of school nursing. Achieving national certification is a demonstration of the hard work, dedication, and expertise of these nurses.

Board certification in school

nursing is a personal accomplishment and a formal recognition of commitment to providing high-quality healthcare services to school-age children. It is a commitment to ongoing professional development and a desire to enhance the health and educational outcomes of students in our community.

In December 2023, the three nurses were accepted into the Arizona School Nurse Access Program's National School Nurse Certification (NCSN) Candidate Program. This program, made possible by the Arizona Foundation for the Future of Nursing and the Arizona Department of Education, provided an 8-week preparation program for the National Certification exam. In March 2024, the nurses

Continued on page 15 / Nurses

Explore the Great Outdoors with Camp Colton's Summer Program

April 8, 2024

This summer, Camp Colton is thrilled to offer an adventurous outdoor experience for rising 4th and 5th graders from the Flagstaff Unified School District and the broader Flagstaff community. The Colton Adventure Camp is a week-long program that provides a perfect setting for children to make new friends, learn about the environment, and explore the stunning natural landscapes of northern Arizona.

The camp runs for two sessions, the first from June 24-28, 2024, and the second from July 8-12, 2024. Each day begins with a drop-off at Sechrist Elementary School between 8-8:30 a.m. and ends with a pickup between 4:30-5 p.m.

Camp activities are based at Camp Colton, but participants will also have the opportunity to venture out on expeditions to nearby areas, including the beautiful Sedona. The cost for one week is \$320, which covers all activities and provides snacks. Campers need to bring their own lunches, and need-based scholarships are available to ensure no child misses out due to financial constraints.

Registration is open now for parents interested in enrolling their children. You can sign up by visiting <https://bit.ly/ColtonAdventureCamp>. If you need more information or wish to apply for a scholarship, please contact Camp Colton at info@friendsofcampcolton.org.

Do not miss this opportunity for a memorable summer experience at Camp Colton, where fun and nature go hand in hand! 🌲



...Hagaman / From Page 13

with pride as she talks about her son's journey,

"He has worked year-round, training and lifting and going to the track when it's snowing and raining to accomplish these goals," she said. "Just seeing his drive, his excitement, the highs and lows, and his determination is so encouraging."

As Cole gears up to join Grand Canyon University, he carries with him not just the hope to continue his athletic journey but also the ambitious dream to dive into the world of engineering. With a focus on construction or industrial engineering, Cole is set to apply his skills beyond the tracks and into the fabric of our society, a future that holds immense promise.

For now, Cole is just trying to enjoy the last moments of high school.

"I'm really excited to compete at the next level in college," he said. "It is sad that it's coming to an end, but I'm also really excited for the next level." 🌲

...Nurses / From Page 14

successfully met the requirements to become Nationally Certified School Nurses (NCSN).

"It is a huge achievement," said Bivert. "Preparing and studying for the exam was a lot, and the certification exam was a doozy, but we did it!"

According to the National Board of Certification of School Nurses, to earn an NCSN, a registered nurse must demonstrate a high level of education, clinical practice experience, and knowledge. Further, board certification in school nursing is highly valued and provides formal recognition of school nursing knowledge and competence.

As of the end of 2022, there were 5,130 NCSNs in the United States, with just over 100 school nurses nationally certified in Arizona. 🌲



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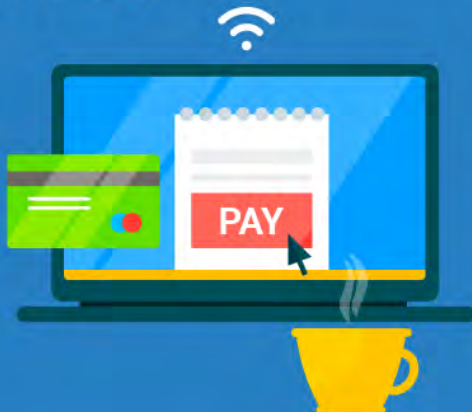
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