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## IMPORTANT DATES

Jan. 28 - Feb. 4  
Catholic Schools Week

Feb. 18 & 21  
No School President's  
Weekend

Feb. 25 - End of Term 2

Feb. 26 - Evening Under  
the Stars

## Annual ACS Fun Run

### Surpasses Fundraising Goal

The ACS Fun Run took place on October 15. The weather was beautiful, the students and staff enjoyed the event and our first major fundraiser of the year surpassed it's goal with pledges and donations coming in from across the country. Our school families did a great job spreading the word and we are thankful that so many were willing to support our school by donating to this event.

This year the friendly fundraising competition between our principal, Dr. Sharon Pristash, and our pastor, Fr. Chad King raised over \$4,000, with Dr. Pristash taking the winner's crown.

We are immensely grateful to our event Chair, Chelsea Cordell, and some of her key helpers who volunteered their time to pull off this fun event. Special thanks to Paige Hill, Rob Brittain, Tiffney Beffort, Christina Cave, and Jeff Cordell.

Thank you to all who donated water and those who turned out to help keep the kids safe while they completed their laps. Fr. Chad participated with the students and we are grateful for his time and commitment to our school.

See page 7 for more pictures and details on our fundraising impact.



Kindergarten students enjoying the color Fun Run!



A very smiley 4th grade class!

## The Mission of Annunciation Catholic School

Within our strong Catholic community, we develop children to their fullest God-given potential - spiritually, intellectually, morally, socially, and physically.

## The New Year Brings New Teachers to ACS

Senora Motola's return to a career in engineering left ACS in need of a Spanish teacher. God always provides, and we are happy to announce the addition of Senora Vanessa Ribadeneira as our new K-8 Spanish teacher. Vanessa is the mother of Sophia in 4th grade. She and her family are active members of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish.

Vanessa is an experienced Spanish teacher and is excited to join a Catholic school where she can share and deepen her faith along with teaching a foreign language. Welcome, Senora Ribadeneira!!



With the departure of Mrs. Diaz from 4th grade, we are so blessed to have Mrs. Judi Gale join our staff to finish the year. Mrs. Gale is a retired Catholic school teacher who moved here from Illinois last summer and since August, she has come every Thursday and helped out in Kindergarten and the art room. In fact, she has been assisting in 4th grade art all year, so your children already know and respect her. Mrs. Gale has an amazing resume. She has taught grades K-3 over 40+ years. She has experience as both a classroom teacher and a support teacher for students with special needs. She has a master's degree in education. Best of all, she has taught in Catholic schools and is committed to our mission. She and her husband are active members of St. Gabriel the Archangel Parish. Welcome Mrs. Gale!

ACS welcomes back a familiar face this month. Many of you will recognize her as Miss Shawn who served as a personal aide to an ACS student for 8 years. When that student graduated in 2020, Miss Shawn sadly took leave of ACS. Now she is back in a different role. Miss Shawn is now Mrs. Waggoner, a full time teacher assistant and COVID liaison. Her duties include supporting kids who are quarantining at home, assisting students with make-up work when they return to school after an absence, and substitute teaching for teachers who are absent for illness. She is a certified substitute teacher with eight year's experience assisting students and teachers. We are so blessed to have her back, and she is happy to be here! Mrs. Waggoner's position is funded by Emergency Aid to Nonpublic Schools (EANS), which is a COVID relief fund administered by the Arizona Department of Education. Welcome home, Mrs. Waggoner!





## Veteran's Day Celebration Hosted by American Heritage Girls

The St. Gabriel's chapter of American Heritage Girls hosted a Veteran's Day Celebration. It began with Mass and included a reading of the "Table for One" memorial prayer for soldiers who did not return home. Veterans' were in attendance with the entire student body. The American flag was raised on our newly installed flagpole.







## The Vibrant Vinnies were Filled with Christmas Holiday Spirit!

The ACS Vibrant Vinnies had a great time volunteering at the St. Vincent de Paul Hope Chest Thrift Store! Check it out if you haven't been there!

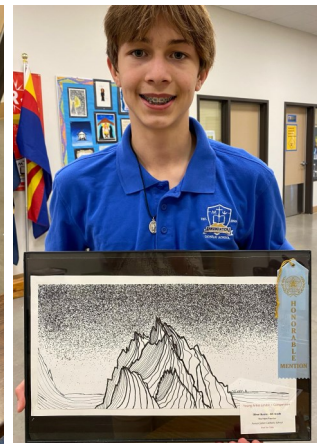
They also assembled 175 Christmas stockings for the children of the working poor and passed them out the Christmas party.

Our Vinnies love to share the Christmas spirit!



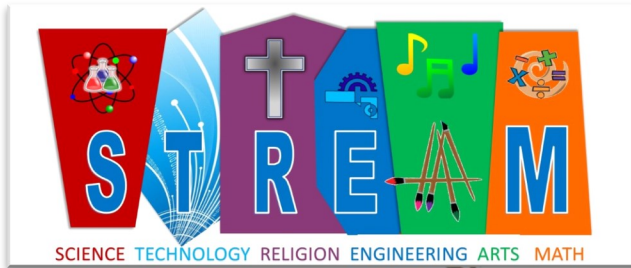
## 3 ACS Students Win Honors at Tempe Festival of Arts

Each year ACS Art teacher, Mrs. Debbie Himmelein, enters some of our students artwork in the Tempe Arts Festival. This year competition amongst youth was fierce! 3 of our students were recognized at the event. Mrs. Himmeli is proud of these students who represented our school so well and all of the entries we had from our students which represented our school beautifully in the festival!



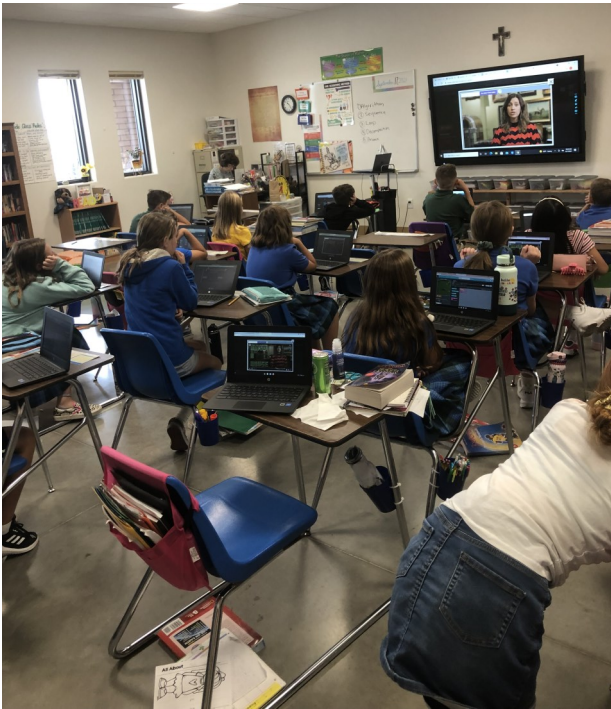
Left to right: Amelia Wicker (5th grade) - 3D Sculpture, Oliver Bueno (8th grade) graphic landscape, Ava Niemi - 3D Sculpture





## ACS STREAM

The first half of the school year has been full of STREAM activities. Students have engaged in coding, robotics, Project Based Learning Units, and STREAM challenges. Our Halloween STREAM event brought to life the story of "The Biggest Pumpkin Ever". by Steven Kroll, where the students had to design an object to move a pumpkin. For our Thanksgiving all school STREAM event, we participated in the celebration for the success of the Fun Run by designing solar ovens to cook smores. The students designed their own solar ovens out of recyclables and a limited list of materials. It was an educational and delicious event! The elementary classes learned all about coding through Minecraft, and continued their fun with our Dash Robots. Early December, ACS participated in the Hour of Code which is celebrated throughout the world. 2022 will bring even more STEMtastic events such as two more all school events occurring during Catholic Schools Week and the End of the Year, Engineering Week (Begins February 20th), even more coding and robotics, and STREAM challenges. STREAM is such an integral part of the classroom, and our students are now "Pros" after the addition to our curriculum 7 years ago. STREAM creates tools for our students such as creativity which leads to innovation, problem-solving, collaboration with classmates, tech use and experimentation. In a world where technology is always changing and STEM careers are highly needed, we are preparing our students to be very successful in the future.





## School Field Upgraded to Artificial Turf

Over the Christmas break our grass play area was transformed to bright green artificial turf. No more grass stains or muddy pants. This project was made possible through the generosity of school parents who wish to remain anonymous. We look forward to many years of use on our new field.





## ACS Fun Run Success!

Our annual Fun Run fundraiser kicked off on October 5 with an amazing pep rally and ended with the Run on October 15. It was a fabulous day and so much fun for our students and families. The run was full of music, dancing, running and best of all COLOR! Our goal was to raise \$58,000 to expand our resource program. The ACS Resource Program helps us achieve our mission to develop all children to their fullest God-given potential. This year, our Fun Run fundraising efforts were more critical than ever. I am pleased to announce that not only did we reach our goal of \$58,000 we blew our goal out of the water and raised \$78,000! This could not have happened without all of our families help. Each and every single donation, sponsorship, and pledge, they collected will make a huge difference in our school. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank each and every family for the many things that make this event happen. From making a pledge, reaching out to family and friends to ask for pledges, donating water and donating time. Let's just say ACS ROCKED the FUN RUN this year!

Thank You and God Bless,

Chelsea Cordell (Fun Run Chair)





## ACS Fun Run Chair Wins Booster Volly of the Month Award



Novembers Winner:

**Chelsea Cordell**  
**Annunciation Catholic School, Cave Creek Arizona**

Parent volunteers from around the country are nominated by their peers, school administrators or school staff for the Volly Awards.

The 5th grade class celebrates with Mrs. Cordell!

Congratulations to ACS mom Chelsea Cordell for winning the November Booster Thon Volunteer of the Month award for her work on our Fun Run event. Parent volunteers from around the country are nominated by their peers, school administrators or school staff for the Volly Award. Thank you Chelsea for your hard work and dedication to our school!





## Dominic's Travels to Egypt!

Frist grader Dominic LaBrake and his family traveled to Egypt in November. He is pictured below at the Great Pyramid, the Sphynx, and at the well which is built above the cave that Joseph, Mary and Jesus rested at the end of the journey into Egypt. Thank you Cara, Bryan, and Dominic for sharing your photos!





# Alumni News

Congratulations to ACS alumni Qiliana Garcia, ACS class of 2017, who recently earned her Stars and Stripes award from the American Heritage Girls.

Stars and Stripes is the highest award in American Heritage Girls. It includes a service project that gives back to the community, plus a spiritual walk essay, resume, and minimum of 15 badges completed at the Pioneer/Patriot level (7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades). The award is a culmination of the pillars of the AHG program, faith, leadership, emotional & social, outdoors, citizenship and life skills. Qiliana was approved as a Stars and Stripes candidate May 2019. At the time, people complimented her idea while inside she struggled with her false witness. Here are her project notes...

Junior year of high school (2020), "There was fire in my soul! A new love for my faith and for Christ. I realized to survive; I needed a prayer life. I began attending Eucharistic adoration and prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet weekly. As I talked to Jesus, expanding myself in Him. I grew most fond of the Stations of the Cross - the markers of Jesus' footsteps to death. They were poetic and gruesome; however, incredibly healing for me. I figured there should be something made to show how much I've grown as a child of God. A light-bulb went off - I can provide the most beautiful and true meaning of sacrifice."

"Implementation weekend (July 29&30, 2021) didn't go as planned. At mid-day, only 1 pillar completed and 2 bulging at the seams. I asked my father; how can this be improved?" A mesh wire was added to the corners of each station and additional crosswire every 2 inches to hold the outside shape. Plus, the rocks had to be layered with more care. "I learned an invaluable lesson – ask for guidance, pray, don't give up, be flexible, communicate and know family will always be there for you."

The project was completed on August 5, 2021, with over 800 hours from over 40 volunteers from parishioners of St. Gabriel, students, staff and parents at ACS and sister AHG Troops! "This truly was a community project." September 9, 2021, Qiliana was accepted and approved by AHG as the 856<sup>th</sup> Stars and Stripes Recipient, the 7<sup>th</sup> in Arizona and the 2<sup>nd</sup> in St. Gabriel's Troop AZ0015. The Stations of the Cross were blessed by Fr. Chad King on December 12, 2021.



Qiliana graduated from Xavier College Prep in 2021 and is a freshman at Franciscan University, Steubenville, OH. Thank you Qiliana, for your amazing effort to bring these outdoor Stations of the Cross to our campus. We appreciate you!





DINNER, DANCING, AND SILENT AUCTION

COCKTAIL HOUR: 6:00 pm

DINNER: 7:00 pm

PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE

<https://annunciation.schoolauction.net/eus2022/>



## School Administration

### Pastor

Fr. Chad King  
[frchad@stgacc.org](mailto:frchad@stgacc.org)

### Principal

Dr. Sharon Pristash  
[spristash@acsphx.org](mailto:spristash@acsphx.org)

### Dean of Students

Ms. O'Keeffe  
[lokeeffe@acsphx.org](mailto:lokeeffe@acsphx.org)

### Director of Development/Marketing

Mrs. McCann  
[kmccann@acsphx.org](mailto:kmccann@acsphx.org)

### Office Manager

Mrs. Schwartz  
[lschwartz@acsphx.org](mailto:lschwartz@acsphx.org)

### Office Support

Mrs. Garcia  
[office@acsphx.org](mailto:office@acsphx.org)

### School Nurses: [nurse@acsphx.org](mailto:nurse@acsphx.org)

Joann Perraut  
Bridget Primavera  
Megan Hefflinger

For the complete staff directory visit

[http://acsphx.org/about us/](http://acsphx.org/about_us/)

## ANNUNCIATION CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Office Hours 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Find us on [Facebook!](#)



*Pictured above: Dr. Justin Kohls and his daughter, Ashley (6th grade).*

Annunciation was the recipient of a grant from the Kiwanis Club of Carefree. This latest grant was for the purchase of new bleachers, team benches and a scoring table for our athletics programs. We are thankful to Kiwanis for their continued support of our programs. They have been instrumental in providing the funds for Chromebooks and some of the new interactive panels installed in our classrooms.

The Kohls family gave of their time by assembling the new school bleachers, athletic team benches, and scoring table for our athletics program. This was no small task especially since the hardware needed didn't arrive with the other boxes. Thank you Justin, Michelle, Ashley and Kyle! You went above and beyond to get this done. We appreciate your service!

## BOX TOPS MADE EASY!



Help support ACS with Box Tops for Education. All you need is your phone! Download the Box Tops app, shop as you normally would, then use the app to scan your store receipt within 14 days of purchase. The app will identify Box Tops products on your receipt and automatically credit your school's earnings online. **Twice a year, your school will receive a check and can use that cash to buy whatever it needs!**