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Welcome Back to ACS for Year 15!

Students and staff returned to the campus on August 9. Year 15 brings another year of record enrollment, improvements to the campus, and some amazing new staff members (see inside!).

The first day began with our annual First Day Prayer Service in the parish hall. Dr. Pristash welcomed the students, staff, parents, and our eighth grade students led the prayer. As always, our welcome back theme was JOY — to find true joy in life, you must think first of Jesus, then Others, and finally, Yourself. Some eighth grade boys helped get the message across with giant J O Y balloons!

Welcome to all our new students and parents! We are so happy to have you join the ACS family. We look forward to a great year ahead!

See page 12 for more photos from the first week.



IMPORTANT DATES

September

- 1 Early Dismissal 12pm
- 4 Labor Day, no school
- 22 Fun Run Splash n' Dash
- 28,29 Parent Teacher Conferences, No School

ACS School Calendar



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.

What's New on Campus?

Several additions and improvements to our campus took place over the summer, all focused on safety and hospitality.

The fence on the east side of the school building has been moved so that students can now access the school office and nurse's room through the back door without leaving the safety of the fenced area.



New signs have been installed on campus to better help visitors and new members find where they are going.



Two beautiful, larger-than-life angels now stand guard on either side of the church doors where they can watch over the playground.



Our new monument sign on Cave Creek Road was installed on Saturday. A similar sign is at the Rancho Paloma entrance.



New Staff

We are very happy to welcome our new staff members this year.



Mrs. Melinda Vines is our new second grade teacher. Mrs. Vines has 9 years experience teaching kindergarten and first grade and a Master's degree in education. She lives in Cave Creek with her husband, Michael, and has three grown children. Her son attended Notre Dame Prep where Mrs. Vines was an active volunteer. Mrs. Vines has several connections to ACS. She has known Keli McCann and Maria Garcia for years, and she lives in Christina Shen's neighborhood. She is so excited to be joining ACS.

Mr. Matt Raiff, our new fifth grade teacher, is no stranger to ACS. His wife is Nurse Stephanie in the school office, his son is currently in 3rd grade, and his sister is Mrs. Cunningham! After an accomplished decades-long career as an Executive in Operations, Mr. Raiff is following God's calling to a new career in education. He went to school for Economics, graduated with a Masters in Industrial Engineering and is eager to bring his love of math and science to young minds.



Mrs. Reynolds, K-2 music, is also a familiar face on campus. She is the daughter of Mrs. Trayer, who will continue to teach 3rd-8th music. Several years ago, Mrs. Reynolds was a student aide for a special needs student at ACS. She has a degree in Special Education and Sociology and is an accomplished musician. Mrs. Reynolds has teaching experience at the preschool level and looks forward to working with lower elementary students.

Mrs. Christy Brown is the new teacher aide in Kindergarten. Her son Benjamin is in second grade and DJ is in eighth. Her daughter, Betsy, graduated from ACS in 2022 and is now a sophomore at Notre Dame Prep. Mrs. Brown has an Arizona substitute teacher certification and is enrolling in a program to receive full certification.



Meet Our New Athletic Director

Coach David Lauria was our middle school PE teacher last year, and this year he has expanded to grades K-8. He is also our new Athletic Director and liaison to the Catholic Youth Athletic Association (CYAA). He has experience as a former D1 strength and conditioning coach, and seven years of running a PRO multi-sport team and DCL360COACHING. He will be looking for coaches for all our sports teams soon.

You can contact Coach Dave at 215-284-1391 or athletics@acsphx.org



We are excited to announce the annual Fun Run theme this year is World Changers! With so many future "World Changers" here at ACS, we are asking for your help in reaching our fundraising goal of \$85,000! These funds help to enhance the learning experience and provide the teachers with learning resources needed within the classroom.

STEP 1: HELP US GET SPONSORS

If you or someone you know owns a business and would like to support ACS through sponsorship, the attached flyer has all the benefits of becoming a sponsor for the ACS World Changer "Splash 'n Dash" Fun Run!


STEP 2: SAVE THE DATE

- Registration Begins: 8/30/23
- Official Kick-off: 9/13/23
- "Splash 'n Dash" Fun Run: 9/22/23

Be a Volunteer! Join the Fun Run Chair, Tasha Aronson for the first committee meeting on **Monday, August 28, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.**



ST. GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL
YOUTH MINISTRY
PRESENTS



**MIDDLE SCHOOL
END OF SUMMER
KICK OFF NIGHT!!!**

REGISTER YOUR TEENS!!!
stgacc.org/youth
-ministry

**A NIGHT TO
DETERMINE THE LAST
MAN STANDING!!!**

The night starts at 6pm to 7:30 pm
Meet in the Youth Center!

September
11th, 2023

Contact Erik Ochoa:
youth@stgacc.org
480-595-0883 X 8219

DOUBLE FEATURE WITH JASON EVERT



PURIFIED AND **GENDER**
AND THE THEOLOGY OF YOUR BODY

ST. GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL CATHOLIC CHURCH
32648 N CAVE CREEK ROAD
CAVE CREEK, AZ 85331



ONE DAY - TWO TALKS \$25
FREE RESOURCES FOR EVERY ATTENDEE!

<p>PURIFIED A LIFE-CHANGING EVENT FOR FAMILIES (AGES 13+)</p> <p>SUNDAY October 29, 2023 1:00 - 2:30 PM</p> <p>The innocence of the family is under attack like never before. Come and discover how to protect and heal yours. This chastity presentation is for teens, parents and adults.</p>	<p>GENDER & THE THEOLOGY OF YOUR BODY (AGES 13+)</p> <p>SUNDAY October 29, 2023 2:45 - 3:45 PM</p> <p>What's the meaning of sex, gender, and the human body? The truth of masculinity and femininity are being questioned like never before. Discover how your body as a man or woman reveals your identity and calling.</p>
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Brunch 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM | Break 2:30-2:45 PM
Sacrament of Reconciliation & Eucharistic Adoration 3:45-4:15 PM

Tickets: chastity.com/purified
Info: rebekahpolkoski@gmail.com

Purchase Tickets with QR Code:



Join the Health & Nutrition Team!

Who

Parents/Grandparents with a background and experience in nutrition

What

Join our nurses to make nutrition education a priority at ACS.

How

Contact nurses@acsphx.org or spristash@acsphx.org

Good Food
FOR A
Better Life



ACS Student & Class

Picture day

Wednesday, October 4

Student Uniform Attire:

K- 7 students wear blue school polos

Girls wearing jumpers should wear white peter pan collared blouse

8th graders in light blue school polos

Order information coming soon!

Dorian

Parents Need to Know

Sextortion Online (From FBI.gov)

The FBI has seen a huge increase in the number of cases involving children and teens being threatened and coerced into sending explicit images online — a crime called **sextortion**.

Sextortion can start on any site, app, messaging platform, or game where people meet and communicate. In some cases, the first contact from the criminal will be a threat. The person may claim to already have a revealing picture or video of a child that will be shared if the victim does not send more pictures. More often, however, this crime starts when young people believe they are communicating with someone their own age who is interested in a relationship or with someone who is offering something of value.

After the criminals have one or more videos or pictures, they threaten to publish that content, or they threaten violence, to get the victim to produce more images. The shame, fear, and confusion children feel when they are caught in this cycle often prevents them from asking for help or reporting the abuse. Caregivers and young people should understand how the crime occurs and openly discuss online safety.

[Click here to read the rest of this article . . .](#)

What's Inside Takis?

([Foodbabe.com article](#))

There are 3 forms of MSG in Takis:

1. MSG (monosodium glutamate)
2. Hydrolyzed Soy Protein
3. Yeast Extract

It's awful that they add MSG because this entices you (and your kids) to eat more Takis...and the next thing you know you're inhaling handfuls of artificial dyes and unhealthy processed ingredients. MSG is added to make you crave Takis, so you keep eating and eating and eating their product. There is simply no other reason for food companies to use MSG. I don't like to eat products that trick my brain into craving them, and I especially don't want to give snacks with MSG to my kids.

MSG is linked to weight gain.

It's been shown that MSG can help you gain weight, even if you don't eat more calories. (1) This is why MSG is fed to rats in animal studies to make them obese!

Takis are also spiked with added "Flavors" that make you crave their product.

The natural and artificial flavor chemicals that flavor manufacturers engineer are contributing to what David Kessler (former head of the FDA) calls a "food carnival" in your mouth. (2) The inability to stop eating because the flavors they have synthesized trick your mind into wanting more and more. **In America, Takis contain Artificial Colors and TBHQ.**

Artificial colors come with so many health risks and are in a lot of foods that parents buy for their kids. Artificial colors (like Red 40 and Yellow 6) require a warning label in Europe that states they cause hyperactivity in children. (1) This is why most foods in Europe don't contain them! Artificial colors have also been shown to disrupt the immune system. Any product with artificial colors in it is an automatic NO GO in my house. I'm teaching my kids how to spot artificial dyes and why we don't want to eat them.

Another major ingredient to avoid is TBHQ. This preservative may increase the risk of food allergies. Scientific research has shown that TBHQ negatively affects "T-cells" in the body (which are generally used to fight infections) in a way that promotes allergies to tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat and shellfish. It's banned for use in food in other countries including Japan.

[Click here to read this complete article](#)

The TRUTH about Takis



INGREDIENTS: Corn Flour (Processed With Lime), Vegetable Oil (Palm And/Or Soybean And/Or Canola Oil), Seasoning [Salt, Maltodextrin, Citric Acid, Sugar, Monosodium Glutamate, Hydrolyzed Soy Protein, Onion Powder, Yeast Extract, Red 40 Lake, Yellow 6 Lake, Natural and Artificial Flavors, Sodium Bicarbonate, Soybean Oil, Chili Pepper (Chile), Disodium Inosinate, Disodium Guanylate, TBHQ].

FOOD BABE
Your Best Friend

Matthew 19:14 Project Supports Special Needs at ACS

Last school year, ACS received two mini-grants from the Matthew 19:14 Project at the Diocese of Phoenix. The Matthew 19:14 Project was first established in 2014 as the Arizona Catholic Schools Disabilities Fund (ACSDF). Its new title refers to the scripture quote, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” The goal of the project has always been simple – to provide Catholic schools in Arizona with the funding, resources they need to properly accommodate and serve students with special needs.



The Matthew 19:14 Project

In the fall of 2022, ACS received a \$5,000 grant to equip the Math Resource Room. We also used some of the grant to provide professional development for our teachers. In the spring of 2023 we received an additional \$5,000 that was used for hands-on math materials, the Touch Math program, a handwriting expert, and additional materials for the Wilson Reading program. All of these materials benefit students who need extra assistance in math, reading, and fine motor skills. A new funding cycle begins August 28, and ACS will submit another grant request to support our special needs program.

To learn more about the Matthew 19:14 Project, visit their website at <https://matthew1914project.org/>.

Kiwanis of Carefree Awards Two More Grants to ACS!



The Kiwanis Club of Carefree has been very generous to Annunciation Catholic School for the past 7 years, with grants totaling over \$100,000 to support technology, special needs, and athletics. Kiwanis recently approved two more grant requests totaling \$40,000. The first grant, received in July, was used to purchase new laptops for all the teachers. The second grant, awarded in August, is a \$10,000 gift to the ACS Garden Project. We are forever grateful to Carefree Kiwanis for their tremendous support which has provided all of our students with such a high level of STREAM experiences.

Please support Kiwanis of Carefree by donating to and shopping at their thrift store, the Kiwanis Marketplace. It is located in Cave Creek across from Dairy Queen. The Kiwanis Marketplace is also in need of volunteers. It's a great place for our middle school students to provide service hours to our community.

Learn more about Kiwanis at <https://kiwaniscarefree.org/>.





The vision of the Catholic Identity Committee is to promote and enrich Catholic values, while supporting families and faculty in their efforts to instill a deep love and reverence for our faith in children who attend ACS.



Catholic Identity Committee



COMMUNITY PRAYER

All ACS students gather on the Last Tuesday of each month for Community Prayer. A designated class leads the prayer service which includes the upcoming Sunday Gospel, a special talk by Dr. Pristash, and music.

The Fruit of the Spirit Award recipients are recognized for their excellence in portraying the Fruits of the Spirit.



ALL SCHOOL ROSARY

All School Rosary is held in the church on the second Friday of each month. Students gather with their buddies and are led in prayer by a different class each month.



DID YOU KNOW?
All ACS Students visit the Perpetual Adoration Chapel at least once a month

ALL SAINTS DAY

School Celebration
Friday, November 3, 2023

All Saints Day is a Catholic celebration, and Holy Day of Obligation, on November 1st to honor all the saints of the church...anyone who has entered heaven. All Souls Day, on November 2nd is dedicated to all those who have died and not yet reached heaven.

ACS students study the saints throughout the school year. They are assigned a special project leading up to All Saints Day, which is then displayed for special guests at our school celebration, Grandparents Day.

Chair: Sarah Cupo cic@acsphx.org

Join us! First Wednesdays, following school Mass



Parent-Teacher Conferences

**K-8 Conferences
Thursday & Friday
September 28 & 29
No school for students**



SAVE THE DATE FOR THE FIRST-EVER

CATHOLIC NIGHT AT CHASE FIELD



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 @ 6:40PM

\$5.00 from every ticket sold thru the link will go to Catholic School Support 365. Ticket includes a free cap.

fevogm.com/catholicdiocese2023

dbacks.com 602.462.4600



Scan for tickets





ACS School Library Opening Soon

The school library has been brought out of storage where it was housed during the four-year building project. It is now housed in the new Youth Center (previously the school K-3 building). Volunteers Kate Hill and Valerie Lederer, both parents of ACS alumni, spent the last eight months unpacking the books and setting up the physical space.



The school library is now ready to welcome students and staff to check out books. Haide Casey (mother of Grace, Zac, and Tom) and Colleen Brennan (mother of Dylan) have volunteered to serve as librarians. This volunteer role consists of helping students check out books, shelving books as they are returned, and entering new books into the online catalog.

Thank you Colleen and Haide! We look forward to seeing you in the library!



Alumni News

ACS Grad Accepted to Two Prestigious Medical School Summer Programs

Christian Bax graduated from ACS in 2021 and is beginning his junior year at Brophy College Prep. Christian was accepted to the Harvard medical school summer program and Northwestern medical school summer program. Ultimately, he decided to attend Northwestern to get exposure to a wide variety of medical disciplines (Harvard was limited to cancer research). Christian spent 10 days living on campus and attending the medical school.

After his experience at Northwestern, Christian performed an autopsy for a doctor investigating the cause of death of a person hit by a fire truck. During his summer experience, Christian made friends with people all over the world, including Italy, Brazil, India, and Vietnam. We look forward to a visit from Dr. Bax in the future!



SCHOOL ACCREDITATION UPDATE



Our Journey toward re-accreditation continues. We are finalizing our timeline for the WCEA accreditation visit scheduled for Fall 2024. Committees have begun working on various aspects of the Self Study process. They are gathering the information and data needed to assess our strengths and identify our areas for growth. At the end of October, various surveys will also help us to gather the data needed to assess our overall school program.

A primary focus of this process is the assessment of our Catholic Identity as a school and how effective we are at infusing this Catholic Identity into our entire curriculum and school culture to enhance the high achievement of all students. Catholic Identity is defined as “the distinctive religious dimension found in Catholic schools which emphasizes message, community, service and worship centered in Eucharist as found in the Catholic tradition.”

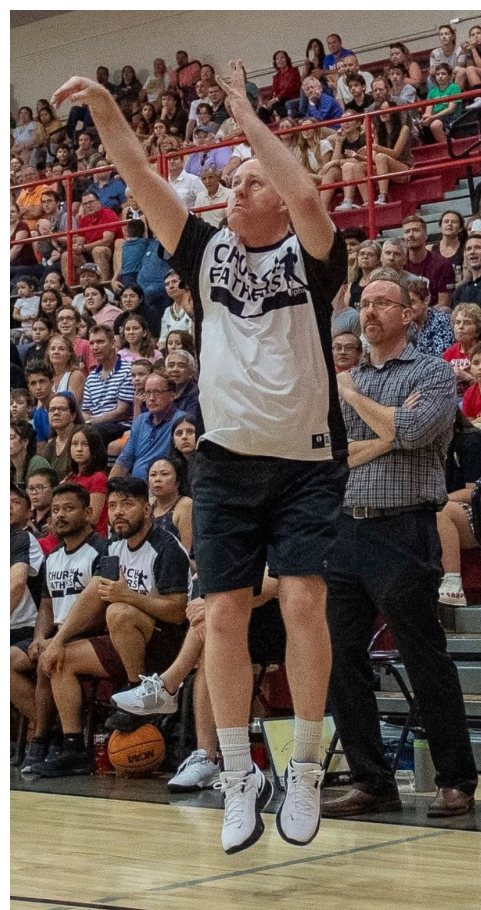
Another primary focus is our school mission and philosophy statements. The accreditation protocol includes a community-wide review/revision of our mission and philosophy.



Fr. Chad Represents St. Gabriel at the Annual Priests vs. Seminarians Basketball Game

The 9th annual Diocesan JPPII classic, Priests vs Seminarians basketball game, was held on Friday August 11. This year, due to the popularity and fun, it was held at Brophy gym with over 1500 spectators! It was a great game, though the priests lost in overtime! This was Fr. Chad's only official shot attempt. Despite the great form, the 3- pointer rimmed out (but he did have 2 blocks!).

Way to go, Fr. Chad!



School Administration

Pastor

Fr. Chad King
frchad@stgacc.org

Principal

Dr. Sharon Pristash
spristash@acsphx.org

Dean of Students

Ms. Lynne O'Keeffe
lokeeffe@acsphx.org

Director of Development/Marketing

Mrs. Keli McCann
kmccann@acsphx.org

Director of Operations/Facilities

Mrs. Lynn Schwartz
lschwartz@acsphx.org

Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Maria Garcia
office@acsphx.org

School Nurses: nurse@acsphx.org

Mrs. Joann Perraut
Mrs. Bridget Primavera
Mrs. Stephanie Raiff

For the complete staff directory visit

<http://acsphx.org/about-us/staff-directory>

ANNUNCIATION

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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www.acsphx.org

E-mail: office@acsphx.org

School Hours 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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

Find us on [Facebook!](#)



WELCOME
BACK TO
SCHOOL

