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IMPORTANT DATES

March

- 28 Early Dismissal
- 29 No School, Good Fri.
- 31 Easter Sunday

April

- 1-5 Easter Break
- 13 Evening Under the Stars
- 15-26 ITBS testing
- 19 ACS Field Day!

May

- 1 May Crowning
- 8 Spring Concert 6:30pm
- 17 8th Gr. Graduation 1pm
- 22 Kinder Promotion
- 23 Last day of school!

8th Grade Boys Win C.Y.A.A. Basketball Tournament



Pictured above: Left to right: Dean of Middle School - Ms. O'Keeffe, Coach Brown, Yeshua, Grant, Monte, Liam, Cameron, Jackson, Alex, DJ, Drake, Coach Warner & Mrs. McCann. Principal Pristash and Benjamin Brown in front!

On January 24, Annunciation history was made when our 8th grade boys basketball team won the championship game against St. Timothy's of Mesa in the Catholic Youth Athletics Association annual small schools tournament. The game was held at S.S. Simon & Jude Catholic School. Coaches Shane Warner and Doug Brown couldn't be more proud of their team.

Coach Warner was thrilled with his team's performance and said, "Coaching the 8th grade boys basketball team to Annunciation's first-ever CYAA Championship was an absolute blast! Coach Doug Brown and I coached this squad for the last several years, and it was bittersweet to have met our ultimate goal of 1st place in the tournament. " Congratulations to the team and the team parents!

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.

Christian Service Award Winner — Lucia Garcia



Congratulations to Lucia Garcia, 8th Grade, who received the Christian Service Award from the Catholic Community Foundation at the Diocese of Phoenix.

Since 1998, the mission of the **Christian Service Award (CSA) Scholarship** is to acknowledge students who demonstrate exemplary Christ-centered behavior through volunteer service to their parish, school, and community. Recipients display a love and understanding of their Catholic faith and articulate a commitment, not only to perform acts of service but to live a service-focused life. They recognize their God-given gifts and provide persuasive evidence of their maturity, humility, and leadership.

Students awarded the scholarship receive an annual \$2,000 payment during each year of high school for a total of \$8,000. Lucia will be attending St. Mary's High School in the fall.

POLYNESIAN Paradise
 EVENING UNDER THE STARS DINNER & AUCTION
 SATURDAY, APRIL 13 | TROPICAL ATTIRE | 5:30 TO 10PM

half past 5 🌺 we drink
 half past 6 🌺 we eat
 half past 7 🌺 we bid
 half past 8 🌺 we dance

TOGETHER WE CELEBRATE CATHOLIC EDUCATION
 PLEASE RESERVE YOUR SEAT OR TABLE BY MARCH 28.
annunciation.schoolauction.net/eus24/

Evening Under the Rooftop

Treat yourself to
EVENING UNDER THE STARS
 We'll sit with the kids!

\$45 first student
 \$15 each additional student

Saturday, April 13
 Drop-off at 5:20 pm and Pick-up at 10:15 pm
 Located at K-5 STREAM Area
 Deadline to Register: Friday, March 28

Pizza-Drinks-Movie-Popcorn-Crafts
 Wear your jammies!

Join us Saturday, April 13, 2024 for the 8th Evening Under the Stars: Polynesian Paradise! The evening will kick off at 5:30 p.m. in the St. Gabriel Parish Hall. Please [purchase your tickets online](#) by April 6. Attire is Polynesian casual or formal, your call!

Back by Popular Demand The Evening Under the Rooftop will be open for all children whose parents attend the dinner. Doors will open from 5:15 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. \$45 for the first child, \$15 for each additional student.

New this Year - Pre-order your fresh Hawaiian lei for \$20. Fresh Hawaiian leis will be overnighted just in time for you to wear at the event. They are available to purchase online only. You can also purchase a centerpiece and take a bit of paradise home!

The Evening Under the Stars will be full of fun with a dinner, silent and live auction, a paddle raise, and dancing! Live Auction: includes a trip to Hawaii and a chance to drive on a racetrack with a professional driver and instructor, Dominic Starkweather.



STREAM steamrolled into the new year. From building tables to a ping pong ball challenge to Noah's Ark, the students have been immersed in STREAM. The Back-to-School STREAM event featured a buddy challenge in designing and creating a table out of recyclables to hold a certain weight while the elementary grades had to design a device to pick up a ping pong ball. For Catholic Schools Week, it was a "collective" effort among all the grades. Middle School designed an Ark out of the cans collected for the canned food drive while the elementary grades truly thought outside of the box designing animals out of recyclables. It was amazing to see how imaginative the students were in creating their animals, from large giraffes and elephants to birds, serpents, and penguins.



Our 7th grade students showed off months of hard work and preparation at the Annunciation Science Fair that was held on February 9. These enthusiastic and talented students showcased their individual or group projects to their fellow classmates, teachers, and judges. The students' projects, which were completed over many months, were well done, and the range of the ideas surpassed our expectations. The science fair is an opportunity for students to apply the scientific method while conducting independent research on a subject of their choice. We could not be more impressed by all of their hard work! Congratulations to James O. for his 1st place winning entry titled "What plane will produce the most drag".

Next up in STREAM...creating a viewer for the partial solar eclipse which will occur on Monday, April 8 starting around 10:08 a.m. The maximum eclipse can be seen around 11:20 a.m. Make sure to ask your child about this and don't forget to view it for yourself. The next solar eclipse that will be as visible as this one won't be until 2045!



ACS Science Fair winner James O.



Catholic Schools Week 2024 was a Blast! Thank you Catholic Identity Committee!





Left: We honored our nation and First Responders with a flag ceremony.

Below: Catholic musical group **Floriani** came to sing with our student choir at school Mass and performed for the students afterwards.

Sr. Esther Pilar from Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary came to visit and speak on vocations day with our students.

Dr. Pristash speaks at community prayer.



A Call to Faith: The Journey of Becoming Catholic



On Sunday, February 25, Annunciation students and staff celebrated the baptism and Rites of Christian Initiation for Mr. Elijah Morford, IT Coordinator for the school and parish.

Elijah came to work at Annunciation in the fall of 2017. He was 18 years old and fresh out of high school, We were very fortunate that God brought Elijah to us in our time of technical need, and over the course of the past 6 years, he has become an integral part of our staff and school family.

In 2021, he felt a calling to the Catholic faith and thus embarked on 2 years of preparation for this joyous occasion. It was a beautiful morning full of smiles and happy tears for all who attended. Elijah's was the

first baptism in the new baptismal font which was recently installed in the church. We are grateful for all who attended and witnessed this special event. We are especially thankful for Mrs. Angel Vogelsang, his sponsor, and Mr. Michael Garibaldi, Executive Director of Discipleship & Misson, who both played a major role in his conversion to the Catholic faith.



St. Gabriel's Parish Picnic—Don't Miss the Fun!

Please join us on Sunday, April 21, after the 10:30am All School Mass, for the St. Gabriel's Parish Party Planners inaugural event: The Spring Parish Community Picnic!

There will be a cash bar; hot dogs, hamburgers & chicken on the grill; games for people of all ages and a live DJ & DANCING!

Bring your family & friends and join us for the Fun, Food & Fellowship for the whole family! Admission is free!



Click the link to [RSVP Today](#)



Another Grant from our Friends at Kiwanis!

The Kiwanis Club of Carefree and Cave Creek have made another generous gift to Annunciation. A grant totaling \$24,671 will be used to replace the Chromebooks in 2nd and 3rd grade. This is the third grant from Kiwanis this school year. Since July ACS has been gifted with \$63,795 for technology.

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/>





School Accreditation Update March 2024

Parent Survey Results

Our parent survey had a 63% response rate (WCEA considers 30% a good response rate), and the results indicate that our parents have a very high satisfaction with the school in terms of Catholic identity, academics, school staff, and administration.

The survey also highlighted areas where a significant number of parents have little or no knowledge. Some of those areas were clarified in the Winter 2023 newsletter. Additional items appear below.

- ◆ 97.7% of respondents feel that the school mission statement clearly expresses a commitment to Catholic identity.
- ◆ 95.6% of respondents feel that teachers help students think critically and ethically about the world around them, using the lens of Gospel values and Catholic doctrine and beliefs.
- ◆ 94% of respondents feel teachers use different teaching approaches to meet the diverse needs of all students.
- ◆ 19% of respondents don't know if all administrators, faculty, and staff engage in ongoing professional development.
 - ⇒ **Answer:** Most of the noon dismissal school days for students are dedicated to professional development for staff in the afternoons. In addition, teachers and staff meet for professional development activities for a week after the school year ends and for the week prior to a new school year. Twice a year the teachers attend all day diocesan professional development (fall and spring Educator Day). Support staff receive professional development training related to technology, safety/security, finances, and development. ACS teachers receive professional development through *Teach for Transformation*, a program designed to support academic and affective dimensions of learning, such as intellectual and social dispositions, relationship building, and habits of mind. Teachers also participate in an annual retreat, diocesan level professional development, and individual activities chosen by teachers. ACS teachers continually seek ways to improve their teaching.
- ◆ **Some parents are unaware that all teachers hold an Arizona teaching certificate, as required by the diocese.**
- ◆ **Some parents are also unaware that teachers are continually observed and evaluated. The principal stops by every classroom at least once a day except the few days when she is off campus. The principal conducts 3-minute walk-through observations regularly and completes a checklist that is sent to the teacher. The principal also conducts formal classroom observations annually. The school partners with Teach for Transformation who provides professional development activities for the entire faculty several times a year and provides teacher coaching/mentorship with individual teachers throughout the year.**

Accreditation Timeline

Feb. 15, 2024	Complete first drafts of chapters 1-3 for the Self Study Report
Feb. 28, 2024	Send the drafts to the Commissioner of Accreditation at the Diocese
Apr. 30, 2024	Begin writing the Educational Improvement Plan
Aug. 31, 2024	Send the Final Self Study to the Commissioner
Sept. 15, 2024	Complete the Educational Improvement Plan
Nov. 6-8, 2024	Onsite Accreditation Visit

Alumni News

Luis Mata, Class of 2021

ACS is proud to claim Luis Mata, class of 2021, as one of our own. Now a junior at Brophy College Prep, Luis is excelling academically, spiritually, and physically.

Luis is currently the president of the Pro-Life Ministry at Brophy. He recently attended the March for Life where he saw some of his classmates and ACS teacher, Mrs. Cullen. Luis has a successful academic career at Brophy taking honors level courses and AP courses. His favorite subject in school is math.



On the soccer field, Luis is a superstar, playing for Batavia, a non-profit youth soccer club based in the north valley. He was recently Coach Rick's 06 Boys Navy team Player Spotlight Pick! Coach Rick says, "Luis has been with us for 7 years and is the perfect example of what one can achieve with hard work, consistency, and dedication. From being a somewhat limited goalkeeper in 2016 to becoming an outstanding, top-notch, super reliable, Advanced League goalkeeper without any weaknesses who wins games for his team on a weekly basis. Luis has a bright future in the game and makes us all very proud."

We are proud of the good work Luis is doing in high school! He is another shining example of an ACS alum.

Alexander Motola, Class of 2021

Alexander Motola, ACS graduate of the class of 2021, is now a junior at Brophy College Preparatory. Alexander is part of the CubeSat team at Brophy which recently launched a high-altitude weather balloon to the edge of the earth. CubeSat's objective is to launch a satellite into space, with the purpose of monitoring Valley Fever in Arizona. On Friday, March 8, Alexander and his team traveled to Tonopah, Arizona to launch a high-altitude balloon. The balloon soared to an altitude of approximately 80,000-84,000 feet, outfitted with a camera and two GPS trackers. The team utilized cutting-edge AutoCAD and 3-D printing technology to design the payload. The mission, called DesertSky-1, was a success and they were able to retrieve the payload and were

given amazing footage and invaluable data about their prototype. Alexander and his team are now planning to use infrared cameras and AI algorithms to determine where valley fever is most likely to occur and issue a warning to nearby residents. The team has already had a few meetings with NASA and Alexander and his team are excited to pursue their next steps. Alexander's career goal is to be an aero space engineer.





Catholic Schools Week Food Drive

The Catholic Schools Week food drive was a great success! Together we collected 15 full boxes of food weighing almost 3000 Pounds!

Thank you parents, students, and parishioners for your generosity!

Special thanks to the Vibrant Vinnies for their hard work in promoting and assisting all week!

St. Vincent de Paul, Pray for Us!



Vibrant Vinnie's Holiday Spirit



Vibrant Vinnies have had a busy holiday season! They packed 250 Thanksgiving food bags for people in need at Foothills food bank.

They headed over to the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store where the officers' wrapped presents for the inner-city children who got to pick out one gift for a family member!

They finished out their holiday giving by helping out at St. Bernadette for a Christmas party for children in need. The Vibrant Vinnies had a great time making cookies helping in the bouncy house and face painting. God bless the Vibrant Vinnies! St. Vincent de Paul, pray for us!



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](http://acsphx.org/about_us/staff_directory)

ANNUNCIATION

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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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!](#)

Feast of the Annunciation



The feast of the Annunciation is March 25. This year that date falls during Holy Week so the church has moved the feast day to April 8 for this year only. At ACS, we will celebrate the feast day on April 10, beginning with morning Mass.

St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church

Easter Week Services

Palm Sunday, Mar 24

Regular weekend Mass Schedule

Holy Thursday, Mar 28

6:30pm Mass of the Lord's Supper
Adoration after Mass until Midnight

Good Friday, Mar 29

8:00am Living Stations of the Cross
3:00pm Confession and Private Prayer
6:30pm Veneration of the Cross

Holy Saturday, Mar 30

12:00pm Blessing of Easter Food
8:00pm Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday, Mar 31

Mass Times: 7:00am, 9:00am, 11:00am

Important Dates 2024-2025 School Year

Aug. 5	1:00-4:00 Open House 4:30 New Family Orientation
Aug. 7	First Day for Students, 12pm dismissal
Nov. 27- 29	Thanksgiving Break
Dec.21- Jan. 5	Christmas Break
Mar. 31 - Apr. 11	ITBS Testing
Apr. 12 - 21	Easter Break
May 23	Last Day for Students, 12pm dismissal