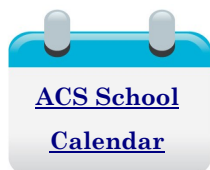


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### IMPORTANT DATES

#### July

- 28 Used Uniform Sale
- 29 Used Uniform Sale
- 30 First Day for Teachers

#### August

- 4 Open House 1-4
- 4 New Family Orientation, 4:30pm
- 6 First Day for Students
- 8 All School Rosary, 2:20pm
- 9 ACS Family Mass, 4:30pm
- 9 Back to School BBQ, 5:30pm
- 25 Community Prayer, 2:20pm
- 29 Noon Dismissal, Staff Day

### Introducing Vice Principal, Mr. Matt Raiff

ACS will be adding a new Vice Principal position to our school leadership team beginning in the 2025–26 school year. This role will allow the school to expand leadership capacity, foster greater collaboration across grade levels, and further strengthen support for both teachers and students.

This new position will be filled by our current 5th grade teacher, Mr. Raiff. Over the past two years, Mr. Raiff has become a valued member of our school community, known for his dedication to students and commitment to lifelong learning. Mr. Raiff brings more than 25 years of leadership experience in management, operations, and program implementation, as well as a Master of Science in Engineering and Management. His strong organizational skills, systems thinking, and collaborative mindset will be valuable assets in this new role.

Mr. Raiff's unique blend of professional experience, commitment to growth, and care for our students will make him a strong and effective addition to our leadership team and help our school continue to grow and improve.



### 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.



## Lenten Traditions at Annunciation - 7th Grade Live Stations of the Cross

On March 28, our 7th grade class presented Live Stations of the Cross for the student body, and again in the evening for St. Gabriel parish. Mrs. Cullen, with the help of volunteer, Mr. Les Hardie, spent many weeks preparing the students for this special performance, which has become an Annunciation tradition.





## 2025 Lenten Retreats



8th grade toured the diocesan pastoral center and had Mass and a tour of St. Mary's Basilica on downtown Phoenix.



Mr. Raiff's 5th grade class visited Mt. Claret Retreat Center.



Mrs. Cunningham's 4th grade class (pictured above and to the left) visited The Casa de Paz y Bien, at the Franciscan Renewal Center. The students spent time in prayer and meditation and also prayed the Stations of the Cross. It was a beautiful day!





Annasophia Bowers \*  
St. Mary's Catholic



Kayla Brady  
Xavier College Prep.

## ACS Class of 2025

We are proud to present the tenth graduating class of Annunciation Catholic School. Like the nine classes before them, all students who applied to Catholic high schools were accepted, many with honors, scholarships and other distinction. We look forward to seeing where these amazing students go in the next four years and beyond. We hope to see their faces around campus in the future.

Congratulations, Class of 2025!



Liam Burgess\*  
Bourgade Catholic



Liam Cave  
Brophy College Prep.

\* Accepted with Honors

\*\* Accepted with Highest Honors - Brophy designation

\*\*\* St. Thomas Aquinas Scholarship

† Recipient of the Catholic Community Foundation Christian Service Award scholarship



Sawyer Cordell  
Notre Dame Prep.



Shane Dean  
Chaparral High School



Charlie Dulcich  
Brophy College Prep.



Franco Fonseca  
Notre Dame Prep.



Wyatt Haiflich  
Notre Dame Prep.



Matthew Himlin \*\*†  
Brophy College Prep.



Nicholas Humphrey \*  
Brophy College Prep.



Shaan Iyer \*\*  
Brophy College Prep.





Jay Johnson  
Brophy College Prep.



Leray Nachman\*  
Cactus Shadows



Madison Mills  
Xavier College Prep.



James O'Neill \*  
Brophy College Prep.



Brody Powers  
Notre Dame Prep.



Jude Putrus  
Brophy College Prep.



Harris Richardson\*  
Brophy College Prep.



Bennett Riley \*\*  
Brophy College Prep.



Elena Scagnoli  
Notre Dame Prep.



Evagrace Shen  
Notre Dame Prep.



Monte Smith  
North Valley Christian



Kellan Tilley  
Notre Dame Prep.



Josephine Titze  
St. Mary's Catholic



Amelia Wicker\*\*\*  
Notre Dame Prep.



Abigail Wright  
Notre Dame Prep.



Gabriella Zullo ✕  
Notre Dame Prep.



## 8th Grade Class Trip: St. Michael Indian School and Flagstaff!



This year our 8th graders had the unique and incredible opportunity to visit the students at St. Michael's Indian School, one of the many Catholic boarding schools that St. Katharine Drexel founded. Established more than 120 years ago near the NE Arizona/New Mexico border, St. Michael's was created to care and educate the whole student, as a Child of God, created with dignity and love. To this day, St. Michael's continues to educate children in grades Pre-K-12. Annunciation has been supporting and in partnership and friendship with them for nearly a decade.

This May, our 8th graders were able to make the long drive up and visit their students, see the school, and work on art projects with the children. Our students were also able to see life on the Navajo Reservation.

Though the trip was long, and they encountered snow and hail and rerouting, the students, teachers/staff and chaperones had a memorable and amazing time and want to continue the trip for future 8th grade classes.

After their visit with St. Michael's, our students continued on to Flagstaff where they enjoyed a group dinner and an overnight stay. The following day, they had a blast navigating the ropes course at Flagstaff Extreme, and lunch and rides at Canyon Coaster in Williams.

Special and grateful thanks to the chaperones and medical staff of Mrs. Cullen, Mrs. Pope, Ms. O'Keeffe, Erik Ochoa, Elijah Morford, and Dr. and Mrs. Iyer. And a very grateful thank you to the financial donors who helped make this trip, many years in the making, come to fruition. We are blessed.





*Class Of*

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# Alumni News

Notre Dame Prep seniors Emma Wicker and Mason Carter, both alumni from the ACS class of 2021, were commissioned Kairos leaders by Fr. Bona, Chaplin at NDP. Kairos leaders plays a significant role at the Kairos retreats that Notre Dame Prep. and many Catholic high schools offer to students during their junior and senior year. These retreats are a series of structured talks, meditations and activities followed by small group discussions. Students describe these retreats as life-changing by bringing their faith to the center of their lives while they reflect on their relationship with God, family, and friends. It is an incredible growth experience.

In the fall, Emma plans to attend Seton Hall University while Mason recently signed his letter of intent to play football at Concordia University Wisconsin. Congratulations Emma and Mason!



## AHG Stars and Stripes Project Honors The Holy Family

Congratulations to Zariah Garcia, ACS alumni from the class of 2021, on her graduation from St. Mary's Catholic High School and also on her completion of her Stars and Stripes project for the American Heritage Girls (AHG).

Zariah attended ACS from kindergarten through 8th grade. She joined AHG when she was a in 1st grade. She has remained committed to the values and goals of the scouting group. During her senior year, her goal was to reach the penultimate achievement of AHG, earning the Stars and Stripe badge. She began the process during her junior year by formulating her plan to bring a statue of the Holy Family to the St. Gabriel campus. She presented it to Fr. Chad for approval. She then designed the project, acquired the funds through outreach to the parish and community. With the help of her family, friends, and fellow AHG scouts, the grotto was built, and the statue was installed. It is a beautiful addition to our church grounds.

Thank you Zariah for your hard work and dedication to American Heritage Girls and your love for St. Gabriel Catholic Church.





## Thank You Carefree Kiwanis - Middle School Gets New Chromebooks

The Kiwanis Club of Carefree has been very generous to Annunciation Catholic School for the past 8 years, with grants totaling over \$150,000 to support technology, special needs, and athletics.



**Kiwanis**  
CLUB OF CAREFREE

Middle school classes will be getting new Chromebooks in August funded by a recent Kiwanis grant of \$32,000. Due to the Kiwanis Club's generosity, ACS is able to update student Chromebooks and teacher laptops every three years.

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.



**Make an Impact in Your Community ...  
Shop at the Kiwanis Marketplace Thrift Store!**

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## 2025 Lenten Retreats continued...



Middle school science teacher, Mrs. Shen, and St. Gabriel youth minister Erik Ochoa took the 7th grade class to St. Bernard's of Clairvaux



Mrs. Vines' 2nd grade class visited St. Joan of Arc parish.



Mrs. Nelson's 3rd grade class visited Canaan in the Desert where they prayed in their beautiful desert prayer garden called the Garden of Jesus's Suffering and Resurrection.



July 7-11: [Art Angels Camp](#) for rising K-5 students. 9-3pm

July 14-18: [Art Angels Camp](#) for rising K-5 students. 9-3pm

July 14-18: Theater Camp for K-8 from 9-3pm with a half day option for K-2





# Service Spotlight

## Michael Khoury, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Reading at grade level by the end of third grade is the single most important predictor of academic success, but only 41% of Phoenix area third graders are achieving this goal, with even lower rates among those facing economic and housing insecurity.

Michael Khoury, a 5th grade student at Annunciation Catholic School, believes that easier access to a wide variety of books can make a difference in the lives of struggling students. In February and March of 2025, Michael organized a book drive hosted by the St George Antiochian Orthodox Church in Phoenix, Arizona to collect new and gently used reading materials so that kids in his community could share in the thrill of learning a new word, or help solve a mystery set in ancient Egypt, or to own a personal set of a series of books, even when they don't have a place to call home. Michael enlisted the help of his peers in the Vibrant Vinnies, a youth conference of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, to help him sort and organize the almost 1,000 books which were donated, far exceeding his initial goal of 350.

Michael's outstanding leadership and commitment to community service are hallmarks of his initiative, hard-work, and compassion. Michael approached his mentors and asked, what is something I can do? And then he went out and did it, showcasing his motivation to help others gain access and foster a love for reading.

The donated books were distributed through the St Vincent de Paul Society to multiple child, veteran, and homeless resource agencies throughout the Phoenix area - creating a lasting impact and inspiring his peers to echo, "what is something I can do?" when planning future service projects.

*"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." -Aesop*





## ***School Administration***

### **Pastor**

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

### **Principal**

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

### **Vice Principal**

Matt Raiff  
[mraiff@acsphx.org](mailto:mraiff@acsphx.org)

### **Dean of Students**

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

### **Director of Operations/Facilities**

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

### **Director of Development/Marketing**

Ms. Dena Wholey  
[dwholey@acsphx.org](mailto:dwholey@acsphx.org)

### **Administrative Assistant**

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

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

For the complete staff directory visit



Student Council speeches and elections were held on Monday, May 19. Congratulations to the eleventh Student Council of Annunciation Catholic School!

### **Student Council 2025-2026**

5th Grade Reps - Nolan Dyer and Lukas Gessel

6th Grade Reps - Alli Cave and Amelia Shen

7th Grade Reps - Charlie Pope and Connor Cunningham

8th Grade Reps - Talia Aronson and Max DiPasquale

Kindness Ambassador—Georgie Rindahl

Commissioner of Religious Affairs - Delaney Flowers

Yearbook Coordinators - Gabriella Muth and Sami Vitolo

Vice President - Allison Kavanaugh

President - Ellie Dyer

**ANNUNCIATION**  
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E-mail: [office@acsphx.org](mailto:office@acsphx.org)

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

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

Find us on [Facebook!](#)

### **2025-2026 School Year Important Dates**

Aug. 4: 1:00-4:00pm Open House for all families.

Aug. 4: 4:30pm New Family Orientation & Dinner

Aug. 6 : First Day for Students, 12pm dismissal

Nov. 26 - 28: Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 22- Jan. 2: Christmas Break

Jan. 5: Classes resume

Apr. 13 - 24: ITBS Testing

Apr. 3-10: Easter Break

May 22: Last Day for Students, 12pm dismissal