



Tempe council race heads to runoff with 4 candidates

By Madeline Bates

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The final update of unofficial results has been announced for the Tempe City Council race, with one winner, two who lost and four stuck waiting until May 19 to determine whether they can take a spot on the dais in the council chambers.

On March 11, Arlene Chin was declared elected after receiving the most votes of the seven candidates and clearing the minimum amount needed to be elected.



Arlene Chin

Brooke St. George, Berdetta Hodge, Bobby Nichols and Jennifer Adams will compete for two seats on the council at the May 19 runoff election.

The final results were to become official after a vote of the council on March 26.

Elvis Taska and Joe Forte were

• See **Runoff** on page **GG**



Faith Frame passes a volleyball over a net. (Desert Financial Credit Union)

Credit union's 'Changemakers' celebrate female student athletes

By Madeline Bates

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Arizona State volleyball player Faith Frame usually can be found on the court diving for balls and passing them off.

Frame, a libero volleyball player at Arizona State University, is also a Desert Financial Changemaker, a brand ambassador who posts online and shares financial literacy tips as she navigates life as a student athlete.

Desert Financial has been supporting student athletes for many years through scholarship, employment and other opportunities. Frame says the position doesn't feel like a job.

"I really enjoy taking pictures and making content, and I've learned that I actually am really creative," Frame said.

Frame has almost 13,000 followers on Instagram and more than 70,000 on TikTok — some of her posts have even garnered

• See **Frame** on page **31**

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ON YOURVALLEY.NET**Tempe accepting lifeguard positions applications**

The city of Tempe is looking for lifeguards and swim instructors at Kiwanis, Escalante and McClintock pools this summer. Pay starts at \$18.50 per hour and all applicants must be 15 or older to apply.

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/359e3mcb>

Police arrest suspect in 2024 Tempe burglary

After months of investigative work, the Tempe Police Department has arrested a suspect in an ATM burglary that stole more than \$150,000 from a Wells Fargo ATM in Tempe.

Detectives used forensic evidence, including DNA analysis, to identify 36-year-old Diego Arriagada Cornejo of Chile as a suspect in the case. With assistance from partner agencies, authorities located and arrested Cornejo last month in Los Angeles.

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/2uu5epn8>

SRP will look to lower residential power rates over summer

Salt River Project aims to lower power bills for customers about 3% over summer by adjusting a portion of residents' bills that covers fuel costs.

The Tempe-based utility and water provider in March announced the proposed move, which it estimated would save about \$5.57 per month on residential bills from the May through October billing cycles. The utility's board was set to vote on the proposal during its March 26 meeting.

Go to <https://tinyurl.com/2vtwmyb9>

IMPROVEMENTS**Grand Canal pathway gets timeline update****Independent Newsmedia**

The city of Tempe will begin improvements on the Grand Canal Pathway and surrounding areas in late March.

The project includes upgrades to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, accessibility improvements, new lighting, landscaping, drainage enhancements and pavement treatments.

Construction will occur in phases across several key corridors, including 56th Street, Lake View Drive, Washington Street, Priest Drive and the segment between Washington Street and Mill Avenue. Work will continue through summer 2026.

Construction schedule by segment (subject to change):

- See **Canal** on page 5



Bicyclists pedal along the Grand Canal in Phoenix, with a vehicle and pedestrian bridge over the canal shown in the background. (Courtesy city of Phoenix)

DEVELOPMENT**Application rescinded for 2-story neighborhood casita****By Madeline Bates**

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Tempe resident Dawn Sinclair and contractor Tim Linklater in September went before Tempe City Council with one question: could the owners of 36 E. Cairo Drive in Tempe build a two-story casita in their backyard?

During the March 5 city council meeting, no further discussion was needed, as the design was changed to a one-story unit and the application was rescinded.

The question arose after Tempe's Development Review Commission heard requests and voted to move the situation forward to council. Linklater portrays the Harvey residence as a couple with an adult son.



Tempe recently approved an ordinance to make accessory dwelling units more affordable. (Courtesy City of Tempe)

The owners of the property contacted Linklater, who drew plans for a two-story unit. He suggested that

to accommodate both a living space and a storage area, the unit be two

- See **Casita** on page 5

Canal

• From page 4

• 56th Street section: March-July — Crews will begin installing storm drains, headwalls, electrical foundations and lighting conduits, as well as grading the new pathway. Landscaping and pavement treatments

Casita

• From page 4

stories, with only the first floor as a living space.

“All in all, the second story doesn’t meet the approval criteria in the ordinances. It is detrimental to the people living in Greater Broadmore, in the vicinity of the (accessory dwelling unit) and to greater Broadmore as a neighborhood,” Sinclair said on Sept. 18 before the council.

However, Sinclair was not the only one who had problems with this.

will follow, with permanent striping and lighting installation scheduled through early July.

• Lake View Drive section: April-August — The longest-duration portion of the project includes new curb and gutter, sidewalks, Americans with Disabilities Act ramps, retaining walls, pathway installation, a new shade structure,

lighting infrastructure, landscaping and resurfacing.

• Washington Street Section: June — This short-duration segment includes concrete removal and replacement.

• Priest Drive section: June-August — Northbound Priest Drive will be reduced by one lane during barrier wall replacement and new pathway

construction.

• Washington Street to Mill Avenue: June-July — Work includes lighting infrastructure, pathway grading and installation and landscaping. In addition, a new signalized crosswalk will be installed on Mill Avenue, affecting traffic throughout construction.

Three other homeowners from the NuVista neighborhood spoke out.

“The overall Tempe housing supply isn’t about ‘NIMBY,’ not in my backyard, versus ‘YIMBY,’ yes, in my backyard. It is about responsible urban planning and urban growth, where density is located at key locations where transportation and amenity infrastructure exist,” said Tempe resident Mike Zamora.

During the Sept. 18 regular council meeting, Sinclair presented a petition of more than 300 signatures and argued that even though her property is not near the proposed site, she was

concerned about her property values and overall adjustment to the neighborhood.

“Even though the ADU is half a mile away from me, it’s in what I and hundreds of others think of as our neighborhood collectively,” she said in her presentation to the council. “What happens in the greater Broadmore affects me and my investments and my house.”

She claimed that since all of the homes in the area are single-story, a second-story unit would not comply with the Alameda Character Plan and the overall aesthetics of the

neighborhood.

The Harveys were not present at the September or March meetings and could not be reached for comment. Linklater was not present during the March 5 meeting and could not be reached for comment.

The council approved the appeal as moot as the original application was withdrawn. When asked to comment, Sinclair said she had no objection to the change.

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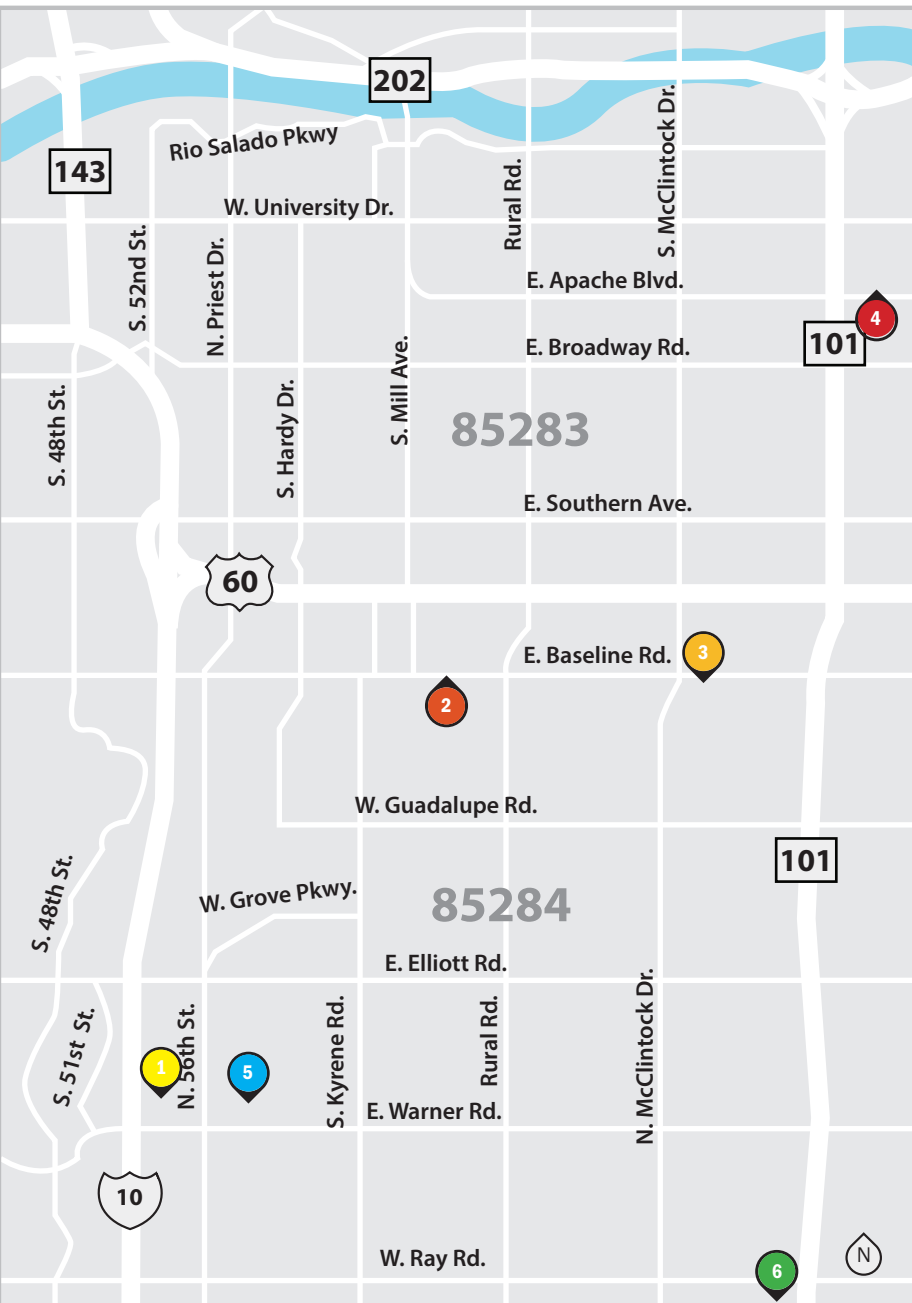


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BUSINESS MOVES



Compiled by Richard H. Dyer
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

ANNIVERSARIES

1 **C2 Tactical**, 8475 S. Emerald Drive in Tempe, on March 7 marked its 13th anniversary celebration. Events were held there and at its Scottsdale site with demos, vendors and food. “We look forward to being your go-to

for range, training and firearms for many, many more years and locations,” it states in a release. Go to <https://c2tactical.com>.

REOPENED

2 **U.S. Egg**, 131 E. Baseline Road, which had been closed



since an October 2024 fire, on Feb. 18 celebrated the reopening to the public. The restaurant started more than 40 years ago when Ilhan and Oscar Gebran bought the first location after living across the street with their daughter and four boys.

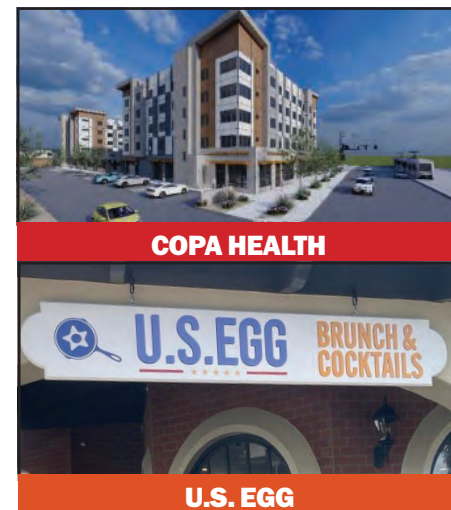
LIQUOR LICENSES

The Tempe City Council on March 5 was slated to a recommendation to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control for the approval for:

3 A series 7 beer and wine bar liquor license for Peter Piper LLC, dba **Peter Piper Pizza No. 1293**, 1805 E. Baseline Road in Tempe. Ryan Witner Anderson is the agent. This is an established business currently licensed and operating with a series 12 restaurant liquor license.

COMING SOON

4 A **Copa Health** clinic and café will open later this spring at



the La Victoria Commons affordable apartment community that recently opened at 2320 E Apache Blvd. in Tempe. The clinic is to offer primary care and behavioral health services. The housing development offers rentals that are now leasing and will soon add homeownership options, offering nearly 125 new affordable housing units in Tempe. Go to <https://copa-health.org>.

NOW OPEN

5 **Dolce Vita Gelato and Grocery** in Mesa recently opened a Tempe site at 1342 W. Warner Road No. B108. Call 480-508-6192, email info@gelatodolcevita.com or go to <https://www.dolcevitagroupaz.com>.

IN THE NEWS

6 Xrewind has rebranded as **BelAfia** at 3245 W. Ray Road in Chandler. It offers authentic Indian cuisine; cereal-infused ice cream; and matcha, boba and specialty drinks, it states at <https://www.azbelafia.com>.

If you have a new business that has just opened, is under construction or is celebrating an anniversary, please email rdyer@iniusa.org

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First U.S. Egg location reopens following 2024 fire

By Madeline Bates

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

On an October night in 2024, the Gebran family was having dinner, grieving the loss of their father Oscar, who had opened the breakfast restaurant in 1986. Then, phones started ringing one by one. The longtime family diner's first location was gone, engulfed in flames and smoke from a malfunctioning water heater.

After months of insurance investigations and disputes, the Gebran family began rebuilding the original restaurant they spent decades perfecting. On Feb. 18 it celebrated the reopening to the public to share the same food and service that customers know and love.

"Anyone can build a building, anyone can create a menu, but it's creating that vibe of magic and family, that's why we're here," said George Gebran, COO of U.S. Egg.

Family is one of the biggest values for the Gebran family, and over the years they have welcomed more customers to join their family for pancakes and company.

Regulars Darline and Bob Grainger went to a U.S. Egg after moving to Tempe more than 13 years ago. They found the location after they were driving by and have been coming at



The Gebran family stands with Tempe Mayor Corey Woods and the Tempe Fire Department to cut the ribbon for the reopening of the restaurant. (Independent Newsmedia, Madeline Bates)

least three times a week since then.

"We enjoy the camaraderie that we have with all of the people that we visit with, the servers, the owners, and everyone, and to top it off, the food is great," Darline said.

Bob Grainger worked for the Douglas Fire and Police departments for 26 years and said he admires the work Tempe firefighters did to put

out the flames.

"For the amount of fire they had in the kitchen and they were still able to save the building, I think they did an amazing job," he said.

Tempe Fire arrived to the scene after a call from a passerby saying they saw smoke. Several responders were able to celebrate the reopening today.

"It looked like a catastrophic con-

struction site," Tempe Fire Deputy Chief Doug Myers said.

He and others responded to the call. What was left was a foundation of what used to be a restaurant.

"First, we dealt with the grief, then we had to pivot fast and start our staff at different locations and begin the process of reopening," said Carmine Manfredi, regional manager U.S. Egg.

After 15 months of employees who had relocated and almost \$2 million in updates, the Tempe U.S. Egg was rebuilt.

The restaurant started more than 40 years ago when Ilhan and Oscar Gebran bought the first location after living across the street with their daughter and four boys. Now, the four look forward to continuing the legacy and traditions with their own families.

U.S. Egg celebrates 40 years of ownership from the Gebran family this year with specialty plates, drinks and other menu items to the six locations spanning Chandler, North Phoenix, Moon Valley and two in Scottsdale.

Guests can visit the newly rebuilt location at 131 E. Baseline Road.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@iniusa.org.



Radio That Rocked the Valley

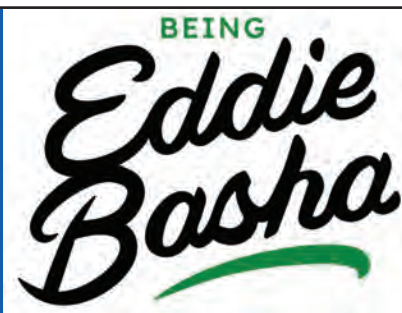
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EDUCATION

Tempe Prep's athletic leaders strive for a competitive program

Tempe Preparatory Academy's athletic program is experiencing growth and renewed energy under the leadership of Athletic Director Chris Guyll and Assistant Athletic Director Trevor Tucker.

Together, they bring experience and a shared philosophy and vision, centered on character and community, for the future of Tempe Prep Athletics and its role within the Tempe community, according to a release.

Guyll has spent the past decade building athletic programs across Arizona. His career began coaching cross country and soccer at a charter school, where he discovered his passion for youth sports. He later worked as athletic director at several schools and with the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley before joining Tempe Prep, 1251 E. Southern Ave. in Tempe.

"I missed being part of a close-knit school community and working directly with student-athletes," Guyll said in the release. "Tempe Prep has been the perfect opportunity to return to what I love most, which is leading, building and serving through athletics in a city that values education, youth development, and community involvement."

Tucker also brings extensive experience to Tempe Prep, having coached basketball, baseball and football, and working as an athletic director.

"I chose to come to Tempe Prep because I felt this was a school with tremendous potential for athletic excellence," Tucker said in the release, "as well as a strong connection to families across Tempe and the East Valley."

Both directors share a vision for a strong, inclusive and competitive program that reflects Tempe Prep's liberal arts mission.

Guyll hopes to "build a community-first athletics program that competes and operates at an elite level," while Tucker emphasizes growth in participation, expansion of sports offerings, and continual improvement of athletic facilities that benefit both students and the school's neighbors.

An 11-passenger practice shuttle is serving student-athletes, with two new 14-passenger minibuses on the horizon, helping students travel safely to competitions throughout Tempe and the greater Phoenix area.

The school has added three batting cages for baseball and softball and completed locker room renovations. Middle school softball is returning this year, and tackle football is being explored for the future.

Both directors view athletics as an essential part of the school's mission to develop well-rounded young men and women of character.

Their coaching philosophies align closely as well. Both believe in developing the whole person, not just the athlete.

"Winning is great," said Guyll, "but the real goal is to help young



Chris Guyll



Trevor Tucker

EDUCATION

Prep

• From page 10

people build habits and character that last far beyond the game.”

Tucker added, “We are not training them to be future professional athletes, but future professional adults. The lessons that have the most value are those about teamwork, resilience, and personal growth.”

To strengthen school spirit and community, both directors are creating new ways to bring families and alumni together.

A new booster club has launched, and plans are underway for pep rallies and themed game nights, which are open to families and help foster connections across Tempe Prep and local community.

Kyrene celebrates employee benefit costs not increasing for the second year

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Kyrene Elementary District governing board recently approved the district benefit plan for the 2026-27 school year, which includes a stagnant employee contribution cost for over five years and mental-health resources for all employees, not just those covered by a plan.

All Kyrene employees are also able to meet with a mental health professional seven times per calendar year at no cost.

“For our employees, this is really going above and beyond,” said governing board president Triné Nelson.

“This is a sweet spot as it allows us to keep offering quality benefit plans

while maintaining costs to provide benefits for the district,” said Lisa Gibson, assistant superintendent for the Kyrene Elementary School District.

One plan was required by the IRS to increase the family deductible. The recommendation made to the board would increase the Health Savings Account, or HSA, match for employees.

The district has not raised the employee contribution for health plans since the 2020-21 school year.

Kyrene employees are also eligible for a pension with the Arizona State Retirement System following retire-

ment from the district.

“The fact that you and your team have been able to turn this around and make it a staple program for the past few years, thank you so much for that,” said governing board member Kevin Walsh.

The governing board approved the changes to benefits for the 2026-27 school year,

with Vice President Amy Satre abstaining due to a professional conflict of interest.

Open enrollment for the district opens April 13 for coverage beginning July 1.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@iniusa.org.



Triné Nelson



Lisa Gibson



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Meet your Neighbor: Gethsemane Church Pastor Jacob Boessling



Jake Boessling is the new senior Ppastor at Gethsemane Church in Tempe. (Divina Stennfeld Photography)

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Gethsemane Church in Tempe has a new senior pastor who loves all things Southwest. Jacob Boessling is a father, husband, and follower of Christ and hopes to help others in their journey of faith.

Name: Jacob Boessling

Occupation: Senior pastor, Gethsemane Church in Tempe.

Hometown: Born and raised in Houston, Texas and says that he feels most at home in the Southwest.

Family: Boessling has been married to his wife, Nicolette, for 18 years and has three children.

When and why I moved here: Boessling lived in Gilbert after grad-

uating from Concordia University of Irvine in California.

What is something many people don't know about you?: "Nothing, I'm a pretty open book," he said. Boessling did say he loves the Houston Astros and barbecuing for others, but that is not a secret.

What originally brought you to the Valley?: Boessling was originally called to serve in Gilbert after graduating from college in 2005. He served at Gilbert's Christ Greenfield Church before moving to Austin, Texas, at Concordia University. He worked in campus ministry for four years before returning to the Valley in 2026.

How are you involved in the lo-

cal community?: Boessling helped start La Mesa Ministries during his time serving in Gilbert. Though he is not involved currently, he plans to be more involved to help the organization's mission of serving the homeless and providing meals for those in need.

What drew you to your community?: "I love how Arizona has such a diverse climate," he said. He enjoys taking walks and celebrating God's creation of the desert, forest and the other landscapes in the state. He says out of all of the places he's been, the southwest feels most like home.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AZOpinions@iniusa.org.

Council, staff honor employees leaving their roles

By Madeline Bates

INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Emotions were high as Tempe Mayor Corey Woods honored his assistant and Tempe City Manager Rosa Inchausti honored the city engineer leaving and retiring from their roles.

Woods teared up as he read a proclamation recognizing his assistant, Mariana Pena, for her service to the city.

"Mariana Pena has offered a vital behind-the-scenes role in ensuring that the mayor's office operates with integrity, efficiency and excellence," Woods

said in his proclamation.

Pena was part of Woods' campaign team when he ran for mayor in 2020 and again in 2024. She is his longest serving aide and a friend of Woods and his team.

"Not only is she my aide but she's my friend," he said with tears as he addressed the audience.

Following his statement, he asked Inchausti if she had any announcements and she honored City Engineer Mark Weber for more than 22 years of service to the city and his input on infrastruc-

ture and projects such as the Mill Avenue Streetscape and broken pipes that required quick actions at inconvenient times.

"Thank you so much Mark for your dedication to the city and thank you for stepping into this role a few years ago when things started changing. We are going to miss you so much," Inchausti said.

City engineers are often in charge of large projects involving pavement, plumbing, electrical issues and more.



Mark Weber retires from his role as city engineer. (Screenshot via YouTube)



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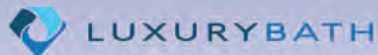


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AFTER



MARCH 26

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MARCH 27-29

SkyFire Environmental Film Festival

The three-day festival across Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa showcases environmental storytelling alongside community engagement and sustainability initiatives. The event will present 100 films selected from more than 200 submissions from filmmakers around the world, highlighting themes including climate action, food systems, conservation, and community resilience.

Tickets are available at SkyFireFF.org.

APRIL 2

Footnotes Walking Club

Join Tempe Public Library every first Thursday of the month at 10 a.m. for a one-hour casual yet refreshing stroll. Meet at the parking lot by Kiwanis Lake. For directions, enter "The Cloud at Kiwanis" into Google or Apple maps. Go to tempepubliclibrary.org

APRIL 12

Open Streets Tempe

The vibrant community event that transforms public roads into car-free spaces for recreation, connection and play, is back for its second year. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. a section of downtown Tempe — Rio Salado Parkway from Ash Avenue to Hardy Drive — will be closed to motorized traffic, inviting community members to experience Tempe from a new perspective.

The event encourages people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike, roll, dance and socialize in the heart of the city. By prioritizing people over cars for one day, the event highlights the possibilities of a more connected and sustainable Tempe.

Go to <https://openstreetstempe.org>

Tempe educator encourages sustainable shopping habits

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

A local fashion expert says the low price and poor quality of some clothing lines create a mindset that leads consumers to believe that the items are disposable, creating thousands of pounds of waste every year.

"Fashion is one of the biggest culprits of ruining the planet," said Angela Johnson, CEO of Tempe's FABRIC Incubator. "It's an urgent problem that needs to be fixed, and it really comes down to the consumer."

FABRIC is a nonprofit in Tempe that helps students design and develop their own fashion brand using sustainable practices and find a niche in the fashion industry.

Arizona State University has more than 50,000 in-person students and more than 5,300 who participate in Greek Life. Many of these events have themes that require specific garments that are often only used



Tempe Marketplace is hosting the third annual reFABRICate Fashion Show on Saturday, April 19. (Courtesy Tempe Marketplace)

one time.

Johnson says this has become a trend around the world and that consumers will often only keep something for six months to a year

before giving it away or discarding it.

Having a brick-and-mortar location is better than an online-only model, as it cuts down on fossil fuel

• See **Fashion** on page 18

TCAA's 20th annual Vicinity fundraiser in March

Tempe Community Action Agency will host its 20th annual Vicinity fundraiser at the Arizona Heritage Center in March.

It is to be held 6:30-9:30 p.m. Friday, March 27, at 1300 N. College Ave.

The event facilitates a community-oriented space for Valley change-makers to gather, dine, shop and empower TCAA to fuel lasting change for vulnerable populations, it states in a release.

This year marks TCAA's 60th anniversary, and Vicinity will kick-



TCAA hosts Vicinity Tempe on March 27. (TCAA)

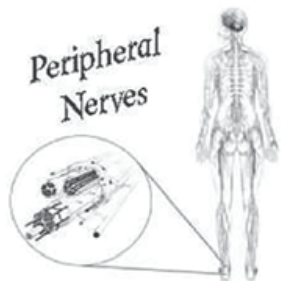
• See **Benefit** on page 18

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

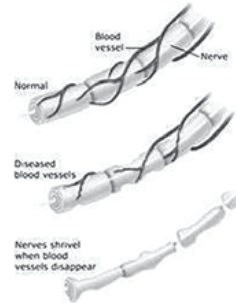
PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY AND CHRONIC PAIN WARNING!

Mesa, AZ — The most common method your doctor will recommend to treat your chronic pain and/or neuropathy is with prescription drugs that may temporarily reduce your symptoms. These drugs have names such as Gabapentin, Lyrica, Cymbalta, and Neurontin, and are primarily antidepressant or anti-seizure drugs. These drugs may cause you to feel uncomfortable and have a variety of

Chronic pain and/or peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves often causing weakness, pain, numbness, tingling, and the most debilitating balance problems. This damage is commonly caused by a hands and feet which causes the nerves to begin to degenerate due to lack of nutrient flow.



As you can see in Figure 2, as the blood vessels that surround the nerves become diseased they shrivel up which causes the nerves to not get the nutrients to continue to survive. When these nerves begin to "die" they cause you to have balance problems, pain, numbness, tingling, burning, and many additional symptoms. The main problem is that your doctor has told you



to just live with the problem or try the drugs which you don't like taking because they make you feel uncomfortable. There is now a facility right here in Mesa that offers you hope without taking those endless drugs with serious side effects.

(See the special neuropathy severity examination at the end of this article) neuropathy three factors must be determined.

- 1) What is the underlying cause?
- 2) How much nerve damage has been sustained.
- 3) How much treatment will your condition require?

NOTE: Once you have sustained 95% nerve loss, there is likely nothing that we can do for you.

The treatment that is provided at Aspen Medical has three main goals.

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- 3) Decrease brain-based pain

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The amount of treatment needed to allow the nerves to fully recover varies from person to person and can only be determined after a detailed neurological and vascular evaluation. As long as you have not sustained at least 95% nerve damage there is hope!

Aspen Medical will do a chronic pain and neuropathy severity examination to determine the extent of the nerve damage as a public service to you and/or your family and friends. This neuropathy/pain severity examination will consist of a detailed sensory evaluation, extensive peripheral vascular testing, and a detailed analysis of the findings of your neuropathy.



Aspen Medical will be offering this chronic pain and neuropathy severity examination from now until May 31, 2026. Call 480-796-1136 to make an appointment to determine if your chronic pain and peripheral neuropathy can be successfully treated.

Due to our busy office schedule, we are limiting this FREE consultation to the first 15 callers. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SUFFER ANOTHER MINUTE, CALL. Call 480-796-1136 ... NOW!

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OPINION

SPEAK UP

Here are some comments about stories happening in your area:

Missing Tempe man's body found in Mesa

"Just so sad. My heart breaks for the family." — **Steph Richards via Nextdoor**

"Lost for words, but oh Lord we need you. Prayer for the family." — **Latrece McKinney via Nextdoor**

Voting information for the March 10 election

"Need to clean up the voter rolls first." — **Robin H. via Nextdoor**

Police investigate a hit-and-run allegation that involved Tempe Councilmember Berdetta Hodge

"Headline: Fox investigates chicken coop break-in." — **kurb sebler via Nextdoor**

"Sounds like intimidation "not pressing charges" yet this type of incident does not require the person to pursue charges. it's up to the authorities. I thought. Hmm." — **Jerome B. via Nextdoor**

"Jerome, It depends on what actually happened. Often the officer will ask if you want to file charges. If you do not, they may leave it at that. They still can if they want to." — **Leonard M. via Nextdoor**

TCAA announces Vicinity Fundraiser

"I think for their fancy expensive charity function they should give everyone there a food box and ask them to make one meal from it." — **Jim T. via Nextdoor**

Phoenix Zoo to host St. Patrick's Day event

"We are looking forward to the event." — **Robert Broch via Nextdoor**

Arizona officials, ASU students split over Iran strikes

"American political-focused people oppose our involvement while Iranian people praise us for our help." — **Peto G. via Nextdoor**

Bill would pave way for residents to vote on photo radar

"Long overdue. Let's get rid of this intrusive abomination once and for all." — **Roland Murphy via Nextdoor**

"A large percent of tickets are given in error, so have fun with that." — **brock d. via Nextdoor**

"I'll vote down any photo radar if it's going to be used for speeding. Red light running. I'm a maybe." — **Glenn F. via Nextdoor**

"Glenn, I tend to agree. Except every school zone should have a speed camera." — **James Panzer via Nextdoor**

"No cameras anywhere! Put more officers on the streets if anything." — **Roland Ochoa via Nextdoor**

"Long overdue and the clearing of city surveillance should continue until gone." — **josh barkley via Nextdoor**

"I think making it a non-moving violation with a

small fine but no points on their license would get drivers' attention and make them more inclined to pay the fines." — **Geralyn Weil via Nextdoor**

"Lots of accidents in Maricopa County but photo tickets are like an ATM for the city or county. I support our laws, but we as taxpayers are paying for these machines they use for revenue financed by taxpayers as a method to balance budgets is (wrong)." — **Dennis Marino via Nextdoor**

"No, on photo radar. It's our constitutional right to face our accuser. No camera is going to show up in court to have questions asked of it." — **Les Smith via Nextdoor**

"Cameras are cheap compared to the damage a red-light runner causes." — **Steve Dill via Nextdoor**

"We need photo radar. Way too many people have no clue how to drive." — **Dee S. via Nextdoor**

SRP will look to lower residential power rates over summer

"I'll believe it when I see it." — **Tom T. via Nextdoor**

Take the Civility Pledge

Yes, I will do my part to help my community become a safe place for people to engage in civil discourse about public issues. Visit iniusa.org/civility-pledge/ to take the pledge.

Your Opinion

Our opinions page is to provide an open forum for our readers. We hope to stimulate debate, not to dominate or control it. We reserve the right to edit our opinions, and we insist on civility. Please include your name and phone number, so we can contact you for clarification or confirmation. We welcome your photo. All opinions must be no more than 300 words.

Those that are judged as personal attacks or complaints about neighbors, businesses or other opinion writers will not be considered. No person may submit more than two opinions for publication during a calendar month.

Two submissions in the same issue will not be published. The content of a submission is the responsibility of the person who submitted it.

Speak Up

We support the use of pen names. Too many people don't speak up because they fear intimidation or even danger to their families and/or careers. Pen names are an important part of our nation's history.

"If it happens I will let you know." — **Robbie Youngblood via Nextdoor**

"Someone has to give us a break, gas is going to be \$5 a gallon before you know it." — **Sharon Spurlock via Nextdoor**

"Thanks SRP!" — **Katherine Herrick via Nextdoor**

"That would be great." — **Ana Q. via Nextdoor**

"I truly hope SRP does lower the rates because everyone else keeps increasing them and we are being squeezed." — **Jessica Pechette via Nextdoor**

Arizonans are carrying more documents to prove citizenship amid ICE arrests

"I'm literally fine with this." — **Ben G. via Nextdoor**

"Ben, I'm not. Why should I have to carry 'papers' in my own country. This is what Nazis used to demand you do. We are repeating history. Ask the Jewish people when you say it can't happen here." — **Cindy Ward via Nextdoor**

"I was under the impression the people they are 'rounding up' have an order to vacate. They aren't just swooping up people like fish hoping to catch one." — **Dawn J. via Nextdoor**

"Dawn, most of their operations are targeted, which means they know who they are after. During the operation they find others who are in the country illegally and those are 'collateral damage.' I really don't see what is controversial. They arrested thousands in Minneapolis alone." — **Ben G. via Nextdoor**

"Anyone whose ancestors showed up on a boat has no right to shame those that came on foot." — **Mario Acosta via Nextdoor**

"Mario, depends. My ancestors came legally at the time. If you come illegally we have a problem. I literally don't understand dying on the hill that illegal immigrants didn't do anything wrong and shouldn't face consequences." — **Ben G. via Nextdoor**

Speak Up: Arizona legislator seeks to name Loop 202 after Charlie Kirk

"I vote absolutely not." — **WakeUpAmerica via Newsbreak**



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March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States in men and women combined – but it doesn't have to be. Regular screenings make early detection, and in some cases even prevention, possible.



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Fashion

• From page 14

els as fewer packages are sent. It allows consumers to touch and feel the product before committing to it, she said.

Johnson said the most sustainable shopping options often come with a bigger price tag, and while many consumers can only afford to buy from certain brands, they can still change habits to shop more sustainably.

"We used to pay \$2 for a hamburger, and now we pay \$20 for one. That's because we care about the cow, we care about the restaurant owner, we care about how it got there and we have to wrap our brains around that because the fashion industry is the same way," she said.

Johnson says trends often drive the market and create a culture of anxiety around finding the next new trend.

For consumers looking for better shopping practices, Johnson said that buying local, shopping second-hand, and repairing or repurposing garments is the best way to improve sustainable shopping habits.

"There's no perfect answer at this point, but thrifting, keeping things in circulation longer as well as buying things only when you need them and from small brands are the best things brands are the best things you can do," Johnson said.

FABRIC Incubator will be educating the public about sustainability and shopping at Eco Fashion Week from April 18-25. The event will feature fashion shows, educational opportunities and a clothing swap for those who are looking to refresh their wardrobe.

To learn more, go to <https://fabricincubator.com/community/eco-fashion-week>.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AZOpinions@iniusa.org.

Benefit

• From page 14

start a year-long celebration and expansion of services for the nonprofit. The anniversary will culminate in fall during the planned opening of a new 23,000-square-foot facility at 2425 E. Apache Blvd.

The new building will serve as a regional hub for human services, featuring green technologies, trauma-informed design elements, permanent transitional housing for adults and seniors, a market-style food pantry, and a new commercial kitchen for TCAA's Meals on Wheels and shelter program.

This year is also the 20th anniversary of TCAA's Interfaith Emergency Lodging Program, which will be commemorated through community gatherings throughout the year.

"For 60 years, TCAA has been working to provide the basic needs of families, adults and seniors in our

community. From filling empty plates and providing a safe place to sleep to helping families stay in their homes, we help our neighbors through their toughest times," said Carrie Aranda, director of mission advancement at TCAA. "None of this would be possible without Vicinity. It is more than just our largest fundraiser; it is the heartbeat of our organization, providing the vital support we need to take care of our community's most basic needs."

Donations collected during the fundraiser will benefit countless individuals and families in need across the East Valley. During 2025, TCAA served 18,750 unique households and served 752,347 meals to people experiencing food insecurity through its various meal assistance programs.

Tickets to this year's Vicinity fundraiser begin at \$125 for a single ticket and \$230 for two tickets. To purchase tickets visit <https://tempeaction.org/get-involved/vicinity.html>.

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Kyrene school staff concerned, hopeful about career future

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Following the unanimous decision of the Kyrene School Board to close six schools in the district, staff have conflicting narratives about the future of their jobs and the inevitable changes of the closures.

The elementary schools Colina, Estrella, and Manitas will close in the 2026-27 school year with the kindergarten through eighth grade school Kyrene Traditional Academy, Akimel A-al Middle School and Pueblo Middle School will all close in the 2027-28 school year leaving four remaining middle schools in the district.

Michael Lamp, principal of Milenio Elementary School, recently spoke to the board and held a neutral tone.

"No one wins tonight," he said. "The only way we win is in our response. A winning response is going to be collaborative, and it has been happening be-



Milenio Elementary School principal Michael Lamp speaks to the governing board. (Screenshot from Kyrene School District YouTube)

hind the scenes and at the district level to put parents and staff's mind at ease."

Lamp encouraged the board to think about the best way to support parents, students and staff as the vote on a closure begins new procedures for new boundaries and changes in operations.

He also asked the adults to be a role model for the students during what could be an emotionally difficult time.

"We have too many examples in the nation today where adults are not modeling how to handle conflict," Lamp said.

Others encouraged the closures of the schools seeing that the district could benefit from the savings and thrive with fewer schools operating.

"I have been through a school closing, and my school family was torn

apart by that," said Cathy Zinkhori Matsumoto, a preschool special education teacher at Ninos elementary school and is also a mother of two students in the district.

Matsumoto urged the board to close all eight of the originally proposed schools to balance the budget to save the district.

"We will be okay, all of us," she said.

Others were less tearful but still concerned about their students.

"My job was saved, but my daughter is up in the air and I don't know what comes from that," said Rachelle Erb, a third-grade teacher at Milenio Elementary, with students at Akimel Middle School and Milenio, both set to age out of the school in 2027.

Following the vote to close four elementary schools and two middle schools many were tearful and hugged as the board left the room.

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South Tempe

Gilbert

Meet Your Business: Hart founder of Communiscape

Brittany Hart, born and raised in Tempe, is a communication strategist and founder of Communiscape, which launched in 2025 on a mission to help organizations stop leaving communication to chance.

Hart volunteers with the Kyrene Mirada PTA and serves at Tempe Nazarene Church, where community and connection are at the heart of everything.

Name: Brittany Hart

Age: 38

Occupation: Communication strategist and founder

Hometown: Tempe — born and raised.

Family: Happily married to David Hart, and mom to two energetic boys, Lukas and Caleb.

What brought you to Tempe? After years in New York City, my husband and I made the intentional decision to come home. We moved back in

late 2019 to be close to my parents and to raise our boys in the same community that shaped me. Tempe is where I live and where I belong. Go Aztecs!

Business: Communiscape

Hours of operation: By appointment — we work on your timeline. Contact: clientservices@communiscape.com | 602-345-0590 | communiscape.com

How long have you owned Communiscape and what services do you offer? Communiscape launched in 2025 on a mission to help organizations stop leaving communication to chance. We offer IT implementation risk mitigation, change management, team and executive coaching, and corporate workshops, all designed to turn resistance into results.

What are you currently promoting? We're currently welcoming new clients and offering corporate workshops for teams ready to transform the



Brittany Hart (Communiscape)

way they communicate. If your organization is navigating change, a technology rollout or simply needs better alignment, let's talk.

What is something many people don't know about you? I've set foot on six of the seven continents. Antarctica, you're next.

How are you involved in the lo-

cal community? I volunteer with the Kyrene Mirada PTA and serve at Tempe Nazarene Church, where community and connection are at the heart of everything.

What drew you to your community? Tempe raised me, and I feel a deep responsibility to give back to it. Raising my boys here means they get to grow up with the same roots, the same neighborhoods and the same sense of belonging that shaped who I am today.

What do you most cherish from your childhood? My earliest "business venture" was selling painted rocks and handmade jewelry to my neighbors. Looking back, it was the first sign that I was born to connect with people and build something of my own.

What is your most quirky talent? I can identify people's superpowers, usually within the first conversation. It's not magic, it's just what happens when communication is your life's work.

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Anti-Defamation League, ASU partner for regional conference

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Anti-Defamation League has partnered with Arizona State University for the Desert Regional conference, where hundreds of patrons gathered in downtown Tempe for a day of education, reflection and advocacy combating antisemitism.

Speakers included Gov. Katie Hobbs, Tempe Vice Mayor Doreen Garlid and a discussion with ASU President Michael Crow and ADL CEO Johnathan Greenblatt.

"Whether it's standing up for one another, elected leaders or even speaking out, our institutions are committing themselves to being safe and welcoming spaces for all," Hobbs said.

Crow and Greenblatt discussed the need to combat extremism and create a safer and more welcoming environment for people from all backgrounds, but especially those who follow the Jewish faith.

Rhetoric in opposition to the nation's involvement with the Israeli government has created a larger movement of anti-Israel and pro-Palestine protests.

Several protesters holding the Palestine flag and signs condemning the actions of the Israeli government stood on the corner of Mill and University outside of the Omni Hotel. They declined to answer questions from the media.

"Just because someone is walking into a Russian Orthodox church doesn't mean that they're responsible for the actions of Vladimir Putin, so why would Judaism be any different?" Greenblatt said.

In 2024 and 2025, there were numerous pro-Palestine protests at ASU following the war between Israel and Hamas, a radical organization that occupied the Palestinian government. When protesters occupied campus areas past 11 p.m., ASU Police asked



ADL CEO John Greenblatt and ASU President Michael Crow take questions from the press at a conference room at the Omni Tempe ASU Hotel. (Independent Newsmedia, Madeline Bates)

them to leave.

In January 2025, the Trump Administration threatened to withhold funding from 60 colleges and universities across the country if they "failed to protect Jewish students."

Crow commended this in a discussion with press at the ADL conference and said that all people need to be protected from hate and that it was the government's job to protect people from this hate.

Greenblatt also supports this, as the ADL has a Campus Report Card where it graded more than 135 schools based on Jewish student life, religious education, disclosed administrative actions and more.

The full report explains how ASU responded to several hate crimes and vandalism messages. Crow says this is to combat hate and bigotry across the board.

"The projection of violence, death, is violence is unacceptable. Words matter and we don't allow you to project violence or threaten other people for any reason," Crow said.

To read all of the ADL report cards, visit <https://www.adl.org/es/node/76351>.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

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Arizona Baseball Museum opens at historic Lehi auditorium

The Mesa Historical Museum recently opened the Arizona Baseball Museum, dedicated solely to Arizona's baseball history.

Located in the historic Lehi auditorium at 2345 N. Horne in Mesa, the museum shares the story of the origins of baseball in Arizona from early military posts and mining towns to community teams and the rise of spring training. The museum explores the birth of the Cactus League and the role Arizona communities played in making the state a spring training destination.

Visitors will see historic photographs, memorabilia and personal stories that highlight both well-known players and the many people behind the scenes — groundskeepers, team staff, local organizers, and fans who helped baseball thrive here.

"This is a story that hasn't been told in one place before," Mesa Historical



The Mesa Historical Museum recently hosting the grand opening of the Arizona Baseball Museum, dedicated solely to Arizona's baseball history. (Independent Newsmedia, Richard H. Dyer)

Museum Executive Director Susan Ricci said. "Arizona helped shape the game of baseball — from barnstorm-

ing teams to the creation of the Cactus League. We are excited to finally give that history a permanent home."



The Arizona Baseball Museum provides a year-round destination for residents, baseball fans, and visitors. The museum will also offer special programs, guest speakers, and seasonal exhibits tied to spring training and Arizona baseball milestones.

Go to <https://www.arizonabaseballmuseum.org>.

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If you thought you have been to a Mexican restaurant lately you probably need to reconsider and visit La Casa De Juana. The fare is authentic Mexican, and when we say authentic we mean it. Upon entering you'll be dazzled by the colorful decor, the tables and chairs are beautiful, Mexican painted mural, colorful banners hanging from the ceiling and the gracious service. Warm orange and yellow tones echoing throughout the restaurant will make this your favourite Mexican Restaurant.

Take advantage of the great lunch and dinner specials, a bar with freshly made drinks. TV's and live guitar music for all ages on the weekends. Don't forget about the happy hour from 2 pm to 6 pm every day, with \$4 beer (domestic and imports) and \$5 margaritas this place is a must. The flavourful salsa, the delicious margaritas, the extraordinary and well-priced food will definitely keep you coming back.

Mention this article and receive one free dessert or appetizer when you purchase two entrees and two drinks at regular price (restaurant will provide options for appetizer or dessert)



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FROM THE COVER

Runoff

• From page 1

the two candidates who received the fewest votes and did not make the runoff. Forte received the fewest votes at 6,781.

After the first round of preliminary results, Forte posted to Instagram saying that he was “at peace with the results,” and he was grateful to be part of the election and for the support he received during the campaign.

April 20 is the last day to register to vote for the runoff. All previously registered voters will be sent ballots on April 22. All ballots must be mailed in or dropped off at the Tempe History Museum by 7 p.m. May 19 in order to count.

Chin, along with the other two who win the runoff election, will be sworn in at the July 1 regular council meeting.

“Over the next four years, I’m committed to working hard on the issues that matter most to our residents and to helping move our city forward,” Chin said in a statement to the city after it was announced that she would keep her seat.

Register to vote or update your registration at <https://azmvdnow.gov/vr>.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

Frame

• From page 1

over 1 million views.

She started her collegiate career at the University of Cincinnati as a Bearcat. At the end of her first season, she entered the transfer portal and moved to Tempe to be a Sun Devil.

The other two Changemakers are basketball players Marley Washenitz from ASU and Audrey Taylor from Northern Arizona University.

“Leaning into an all-female cohort just made sense for us,” said Amy Steele, director of strategic partnerships with Desert Financial Credit Union.

Desert Financial began the Changemaker program in 2023. Each athlete chosen must commit to one school year of work with the company.

Frame is pursuing a degree in entrepreneurship and hopes to open a business after graduation. She says the personal finance skills she’s learned as a Changemaker give her the confidence to continue to ask questions and learn more about banking and financial issues that she may encounter in the future.

“I’m learning new things every day and I’m excited to keep growing my brand and social media,” she said.

Go to <https://www.desertfinancial.com/en/changemakers>.

To voice your opinion on this story, connect with us at AzOpinions@iniusa.org.

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SPORTS

Tempe Diablos present nonprofit grant funds during Angels game

By Madeline Bates
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Tempe Diablos presented more than \$660,000 in grant funding to organizations like Ryan's House, Tempe Care 7 and The Centers for Habilitation by honoring them at the Tempe Diablo Stadium, where the Los Angeles Angels took on the Cincinnati Reds.

Before the game March 13, members from all three organizations joined members of the Tempe City Council and the Tempe Diablos as they shared a ceremonial check with the organizations.

"We gave over \$660,000 to over 94 different nonprofits and programs this year and it's amazing to see how it affects the community," said Russ Holmes, chairman of the Tempe Diablos Charities board, a Tempe organization that gives back to the community through scholarships and fundraising.

Tempe Care 7 works through the city to assist the needs of vulnerable communities — everything from children who need school supplies to victims of domestic violence who need to be relocated.

Anastasia Stinchfield, the social services supervisor for Care 7, says the funding will help in small ways to make a big impact in the lives of Tempe residents.

"With this money we are able to provide a continuum of care to serve any age of individual that might be in crisis.

Stinchfield says that the funding helps fund daily necessities like hygiene products and sometimes



The Tempe Diablos, City Council, and members of Ryan's House, Tempe Care 7, and The Center for Habilitation stand on the field at Tempe Diablo Stadium. (Independent Newsmedia, Madeline Bates)

housing needs to help fill gaps in the lives of those in need.

The Center for Habilitation helps people with disabilities participate in volunteering, special events and daily activities with help from staff.

"Our main campus is in Tempe so we're as local as it gets, and to be supported by a local organization like the Diablos is incredibly gratifying and we're very appreciative of it," said Jeff Bernick, CEO of TCH.

Ryan House offers respite to par-

ents who have children who need round-the-clock care. Ryan House services cost \$1,000 per child but is available at no cost to parents for up to 28 days each year.

One of the Ryan House families was in attendance and had a chance to speak with the players and coaches.

"For them to be able to have this experience down on the field is so special and something they may not normally be able to do, and that's what we love to see," said Alyssa

Tidwell, senior development manager for Ryan House.

The Tempe Diablos says that they received applications totaling up to over \$1.6 million but they hope that each new year will also come with more funds to help the community.

"Seeing the money in action and knowing our community is being taken care of means the world," Homes said.

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Tempe Coalition is a grant-funded project of  a 501(C)3 nonprofit

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