



Ak-Chin Members Shine during their Graduations-Promotions

Story & photos by Runner Staff



Yale graduate, Jeremy Johns with proud mother, Carla Carlyle, following graduation in New Haven, Connecticut.

May is graduation month, whether it's preschool, elementary, high school, higher education or online, it's a time to celebrate and recognize all our students for a job well done!

This year, 2026, the Ak-Chin

Community distinguished a number of ceremonies, promotions and graduations, which may have seen the most ever take the steps onto the next level of education or the beginning of their next professional level of employment.

Grandparents, parents, siblings and other family members packed many venues over the past weeks to honor their children from Ak-Chin.

Whether they were moving from preschool to kinder, or moving up to be a Panther, Puma, Ram or Thunder, or even taking their education to the post-secondary level to become a Fighting Artichoke, Cougar, Sooner or Bulldog... we are very proud to recognize and celebrate you all!!

We celebrated a very prestigious occasion, as our first ever Ivy League Graduate, Jeremy Blayne Johns received his PhD in Linguistics, 'O'odham Neo'oki' E-Da:mcuda, Doctor of Philosophy, from Yale University.



Jeffery Ruelas shows his excitement after receiving his diploma from MHS.

We celebrate two graduates who earned their Bachelor degrees; Desiree Carra



Cousins, Amber (left) and Angel (right) Antone received their Fire Fighter I & II certificates from Central Arizona College.

Antone's Receive their Firefighter Certificates

Story by Robert Miguel, photos submitted

The desire to be a resource and help members of their community, is what inspired and encouraged Ak-Chin's Amber Antone and Angel Antone to pursue their professional job careers in the Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician field.

The two most recently obtained their Firefighter I and II certification from Central Arizona College a few weeks ago; they are now awaiting results from their EMT test that they took.

The daughter of Fred Antone and the late Lori Allen, Amber had ambitions of becoming a Firefighter/EMT ten years ago, when a program was developed to recruit interested Ak-Chin members in pursuing a profession in Fire Science for the Ak-Chin Fire department.

She missed enrolling into the program, which Ak-Chin members who did enroll, were able to complete, and most are currently employed with the Ak-Chin Fire department to this day.

Despite having to wait that long, which obviously was trying times for Amber, she knew that in due time, the opportunity would present itself again. So, when the program was re-established in June of last year, she pounced on the chance.

As she waited for the opportunity, she committed to employment for her community in various capacities.

Amber's father, Fred, was

one of the first members to be employed with Ak-Chin Fire, when it began in 1986.

For Angel, whose parents are the late Genero "Nano" Rodriguez and Ann Marie Antone, the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of her late father, who was employed in various agencies, including Ak-Chin Fire department, and her brothers, Jacob and Jace Dickerson who were recruited 10 years ago at Ak-Chin Fire, was the motivating factor in her decision to enroll in the program offered.

Following high school, Angel began her educational career studying in the medical field, which led to working as a medical assistant for the Gila River Health Care Corporation for two years.

When the opportunity to enroll in the Ak-Chin Fire Department program was announced, she also jumped at the opportunity.

The Ak-Chin Fire department created two positions within the program and ten signed up to participate with hopes of nabbing the two spots.

The ten went through a series of training that included rigorous physical activities, interviews, first aid and CPR training, and learning of the Fire I and II handbook, all to prepare the two that were to be selected.

The training was spearheaded by Ak-Chin Fire Captain, Jennifer Boehm, with assistance from other Ak-Chin

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Ak-Chin Preschoolers make their exit following their graduation from Ak-Chin Child Development Program.

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Livestock Owners Partake in U of A Workshop

Story & photo by Robert Miguel

In cooperation with the University of Arizona College of Agriculture & Life Science, the Ak-Chin Indian Community's Animal Control, held a Livestock Resources Workshop at the Old Ak-Chin Rodeo Grounds on Thursday, May 28th.

Throughout the morning and afternoon, the team of Dr. Elizabeth Greene, Dr. Christina Brownlee, and Biologist Lucy Li, from U of A, explained the many diseases that livestock can obtain during their existence. With the diseases, livestock owners can combat this sickness with up-to-date vaccination for each illness.

During the workshop, three vaccines which included the kill vaccine and de-wormer, were used on livestock owned



Dr. Christina Brownlee of the University of Arizona, gives a steer a vaccination shot during a workshop with Ak-Chin Livestock Owners at the old rodeo grounds.

by Earl Justin Sr., Delbert White, Clayton Antone, Sally Antone and Dorissa Garcia. Following a physical demonstration by U of A staff of giving the needle to the cattle, members and others were given the opportunity to give shots to cattle.

What motivated and inspired Animal Control Ranger, Harry Grizzle to put this workshop together, was the opportunity to put together an event that was something new with the livestock owners, something that was never done before.

"I am trying to get more available resources for our

livestock owners and to keep the livestock herd within the community healthy and protected," Grizzle said.

"There is a lot of new sicknesses and pests such as the Screw worm that is a coming threat to livestock here in the United States health and protection of the livestock herd within the community is one of my utmost priorities as a Ranger. If I am able to get ahead of these sicknesses and viruses for the better of our community's livestock, I will."

The information given throughout the entire clinic was different types of

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Elders Dinner and Movie Night

Submitted by Leslie Carlyle-Burnett, Elder Center Director

On Friday, May 29, 2026, the Elder Center staff hosted another successful dinner night! We served delicious hot dogs (not the BAR S kind, but the good ones!), hamburgers, all the best condiments, macaroni salad, chips, and cookies.

week, enjoy a meal, and watch a great show. The Elder Center staff truly enjoys organizing these dinners! We hope more elders will join us for Dinner Night to enjoy a night of no cooking, and spend time with friends and family.

The featured film for the evening was the documentary about Sitting Bull, which is currently streaming on Netflix. It was a great night for the elders to gather at the Elder Center after a long

It is marked on your calendars for the next dinner on Tuesday, June 30th—it's TACO TUESDAY! We would love to see all the elders there!



Elders take field trip to Ghost Ranch Exotics

Story and photos by Robert Miguel



One of the hidden secrets as far as a trip to a small zoo-themed park is the Ghost Ranch Exotics, located between Picacho Peak and Marana.

The main feature in animals is the capybaras; throw in some porcupines, warthogs, exotic birds, goats, llamas, peacocks, and huge bulls, and you have encountered the family of animals and birds who make Ghost Ranch Exotics home.

For nine Ak-Chin elders

and two staffers from the Ak-Chin Elderly department, the trek to the ranch began early morning Friday, May 15th.

The group took I-10 south to Tucson and then exited Pinal Air Park Road and then followed different residential routes before taking a dirt road into the desert, which at one point seemed as if the group was to become deserted into a lost area.

But, after a couple of more miles, the 16-acre

ranch was in plain sight with its external closure of vegetation, trees and fences.

Upon entrance, elders were excited to see, feed, and pet the number of capybaras who quickly gathered around them and were eagerly excited to see the group.

Following a good time with the capybaras, the group then made their way through a shaded trail and then met up with two porcupines, who also were

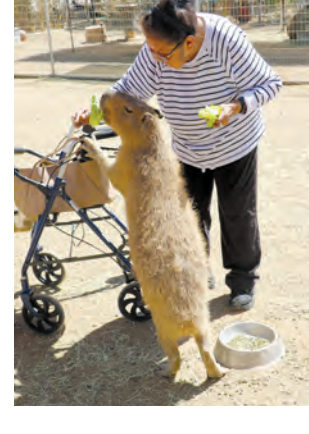
happy to host the Ak-Chin elders.

A warthog, goat, llama and bull visit, concluded the trip as the Sonoran Desert heat began to peak. After a brief break under shaded picnic structures with water mists sprinkling down, a visit to the gift shop for souvenirs before heading back home was a must.

The capybaras were somewhat of a mystery to me as what they were. I looked at them as a cross between a small pig/beaver/otter. But in reality, they are semi-aquatic mammals found throughout South America.

They live in groups near rivers, ponds, and marshes. They are excellent swimmers and can remain submerged underwater for up to five minutes to evade danger.

Before getting back home, the group had a great time eating lunch at everyone's favorite, What-A-Burger!



Elder Fathers 55 and Older,
You are invited to the Elder Center for a delicious meal featuring ribeye steak, beans, rice, tortillas, and chocolate cake! Join us for a feast until you are stuffed.

A special gift will be provided for all attendees.
We look forward to seeing you there!
Sincerely, The Elder Center Staff



June Elder Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Breakfast Served from 7 AM to 8:30 AM Lunch Served 12 noon to 1 PM Craft Room is OPEN from 8 AM to 3 PM Menu Subject to Change without Notice			For Transportation Call Georgia at 520-568-1760 Call After Hours 24/7 520-858-5043 Calendar is Subject to Change & Cancel without Notice		6/5 Breakfast Burrito, Salsa & Sour Cream, Fruit & Yogurt Northern Beans, Baked Chicken (D), Quinoa Salad, Moon Bread, Tropical Fruit	
	6/8 Oatmeal, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Banana Bar-B-Que Chicken, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Biscuit, Peaches	6/9 Scrambled Eggs, Hashbrown Casserole, Bacon / Toast, Fruit & Cottage Cheese Ground Beef Tacos, Shredded Green Leaf, Tomato, Brown Rice, Cauliflower, Churros	6/10 Migas (Scrambled Eggs with Corn Tortillas), Refried Beans, Salsa & Avocado, Fruit Salad Pinto Beans, Vegetable Soup (D), Carrots, Corn Bread, Fruit Cocktail	6/11 Cereal, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Apples Sandwich Bar, Green Leaf/Tomato, Pea Salad, Pickle, Tomato Juice, Plums	6/12 Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Fruit Salad Red Chili Indian Taco, Corn on the Cob, Ice-Cream Sandwich	
	6/15 Chicken Fried Steak, Scrambled Eggs, Biscuit, Fruit & Cottage Cheese Split Peas Angel Home Health w/ Erin Kariuki 12 p Beef w/Vegetable (D), Butternut Squash, Crackers, Grapes	6/16 Cream of Wheat, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Banana Broccoli Cheese Soup, Turkey Sandwich, Green Leaf/Tomato, Pickle, Jell-O/Apple	6/17 Breakfast Sandwich, Hashbrown, Fruit & Yogurt Baked Chicken, Baked Potato, Sautéed Cabbage, Cantaloupe/ Honeydew	6/18 Oatmeal, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Fruit Father's Day Lunch Ribeye Steak, Refried beans, Mexican Rice, Chumath, Chocolate Cake/Apple	6/19 Juneteenth Holiday Elder Center Closed	
	6/22 Cereal, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Fruit Goodwill Shopping Leaving @ 8 AM Tuna or Chicken Sandwich, Green Leaf/ Tomato, Chickpea Salad, Pickle, Vanilla Pudding	6/23 Biscuits & Gravy, Scrambled Eggs, Peaches & Cottage Cheese Potato Soup & Salad, Whole Wheat/ White Rolls, Mandarin Oranges	6/24 Potatoes with Chorizo, Refried Beans, Tortilla, Fruit Salad Hot Dogs, Cole slaw, Baked beans, Apple/ Orange	6/25 Cream of Wheat, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Banana Squash Casserole, Romain Salad, Wild Rice, Crackers, Pears	6/26 French Toast, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Fruit Salad Fried Chicken Steak, Mashed Potato, Green Beans, Biscuits, Peach Cobbler	

Debbie Salmons Celebrated at Farewell Luncheon



On Friday, April 24, friends hosted a farewell luncheon and birthday party for Debbie Salmons, where everyone was able to share best wishes on her birthday and retirement.

Debbie was a longtime finance accountant for the Ak-Chin Indian Community. She shared a few of her fondest memories working with the community, below.

“All the times you had events for the families, my grandkids really enjoyed them. I miss Bruce Beadle. He never put his hearing aid in his ear. It was always ringing in his pocket, and his bad jokes. The most thing I will miss here are the friendships I have made.”

“I have enjoyed my time here. I will miss you all. I appreciate everyone who spent the time with me

today and for my 20 years of service here at Ak-Chin Indian Community.

I hope that I leave you with good memories. Don't hesitate to call me. I look forward to hearing from all of you.

God Bless all of you, you're in my prayers.

Take care,
Debbie Salmons
Accountant

AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY
Capital Projects Office

April 22, 2026

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION NOTICE for WATER SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT 266 HOMES, AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS

Project Description:

This project will replace the water service lines between houses and the water mainline for 266 houses throughout the Ak-Chin Indian Community in Maricopa Arizona. The service waterline replacement will include new service tap connection to the water mainline and installing new water meters. The old service line will be disconnected and the old water meter will be removed. The disturbed areas within the construction limits will be resorted to original position.

Purpose of the Project:

This project will replace the old service lines with new more dependable water service lines and new water meters. The project will improve the water service quality to the houses by minimizing water line breaks and repeated repairs on the old service waterlines.

Safety Precaution:

During construction activities, residents should take extra precautions around the construction areas and keep clear from moving construction equipment.

Timeline of the Project:

The project started construction March, 2026, and will continue for 8 months. Currently working in Greasewood subdivision. Water service lines for several houses were successfully replaced.

Flyer notices will be distributed to the individual houses prior to starting construction on the houses' new water service lines replacement.

Project Team:

Owner/Applicant: Carlton Carlyle Water Operation Manager Ak-Chin Indian Community Phone: (520) 568-1148	Design & Construction Engineer Marcus Felter Indian Health Service Western Arizona District Office Phoenix, AZ Phone: (480) 280-6341
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Special Community Meeting

Date:
Tuesday, June 16, 2026 and
Wednesday, June 17, 2026

Time:
6:00PM to 7:00PM

Location:
Ak-Chin Circle Entertainment
Center
Theater 2

Special Meeting Presenting:
Dialysis Center Company



(18+) Welcome



Graduation Shout outs!

*Congratulations Ulani!
I'm so proud of you and excited to see this next chapter you'll be starting.
My oldest but biggest baby, I love you, continue to work hard pretty girl!*

Congratulating Nevaeh Jensen for completing kindergarten!

Congratulations Tahlia Johnson (with brother Salvatore Johnson) for promoting to kindergarten at Stanfield Elementary and receiving Honor Roll!!

ATTENTION Community Members Past Due Fines/Restitution

If you are delinquent on your fines/restitution, or not sure if you have an outstanding balance. Please contact the courts at (520) 568-1385 at your earliest convenience to avoid the following penalties:

- Withholding of Annual Distributions
- Garnishment of Wages for those working within the Community

You can void any of the above collections by the following:

- You may come and make a payment arrangement and must be consistent.
- You may come to the court and dispute the matter and request a hearing.



NOTICE TO CAREGIVERS ATTENDING THE ELDER ALBUQUERQUE BALLOON FESTIVAL, OCTOBER 2026, FIT for TRAVEL

Important Information for Caregivers Attending the Albuquerque Balloon Festival!!

- Please NOTE:** Caregivers are required for:
- Elders on dialysis
 - Elders who are limited in walking and have balance issues
 - Elders in wheelchairs and/or walkers
 - Elders that have a medical diagnosis that requires a caregiver
 - Elders who are 70 yrs or older

Caregivers - as you prepare for the Albuquerque Balloon Festival in October, please keep the following important information in mind: The Balloon Festival Trip can be physically demanding.

All caregivers are required to bring a "Fit for Travel" note from their doctor. This ensures that you are in good health and capable of providing care for your loved one throughout the event.

Physical Demands

- 1. Balance and Mobility:** The launch field covers over 80 acres of grass and unpaved terrain. - Caregivers should have the stamina for long periods of standing and walking, as well as the ability to navigate large crowds effectively.
- 2. Upper Body Strength:** You will need to manage and carry luggage. - Be prepared to climb up to 60 steps within 3 to 5 minutes.
- 3. Sitting and Standing:** Lower body strength is essential for caregivers. - There will be considerable sitting and standing, both for short and long periods. You should be able to move quickly and assist with wheelchair mobility when necessary.
- 4. Bus Travel:** The bus ride will last 8 to 9 hours. - Ensure you can sit for extended periods and assist your loved one in getting on and off the bus comfortably.
- 5. Medications:** Inform your doctor about any medications you are taking, as certain medications in combination with travel and altitude can have unexpected effects.

These are just some of the travel demands that we anticipate. We want you to be fit and prepared for this great adventure.

Important Notes

Schedule your doctor appointments early, as it may take weeks to secure an appointment. This will help you obtain the necessary health documentation for the trip.

Thank you for your efforts in caring for your loved ones! We appreciate you.

Elder Center Staff
520-568-1760



Newspaper of the
Ak-Chin Indian Community
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16600 N. Maricopa Hwy.
Maricopa, Arizona 85139

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The "Runner" is delivered to all residents and departments of the Ak-Chin Indian Community, as well as surrounding community businesses, interested groups and subscribers.

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Ak-Chin O'dham Runner
42507 W. Peters & Nall Rd.
Maricopa, Arizona 85138

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Announcements and wishes may be dropped off, phoned in, or e-mailed.

ARTWORK, LETTERS, STORIES
The Ak-Chin O'dham Runner is a Community Newspaper and encourages Community involvement.

If you have artwork, photos, poems or a great story that you would like to share, please contact us so we can include it in "YOUR" newspaper.

If you have suggestions or comments about "YOUR" newspaper, please let the Runner Staff know that too.

All submitted letters MUST be signed by the author and are limited to 200 words.

Authors must also include their name, address, and phone number. Names can be omitted by request. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted.

We reserve the right to edit all submitted material for clarity, grammar and good taste. All submissions should be received as typed or non-cursive writing. Please do not submit UPPERCASE or formatted paragraphs.

Submitted pictures need a return address and brief description. Pictures with no address will remain on file. Allow 2 weeks for return.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE
2026 Subscription rate is \$45.00. If you would like to receive the "Runner" by mail, please send a \$45.00 check/money order to:
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Make check/money order payable to:
AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY

NEXT DEADLINE
Don't forget the DEADLINE for the June 19 - July 2, 2026 issue is due by **FRIDAY, JUNE 12TH**

Please submit all announcements, wishes, etc. no later than **FRIDAY, JUNE 12TH**

Material submitted after the **JUNE 12TH DEADLINE** cannot be guaranteed placement. If appropriate and relevant, it will be included in the next issue.

PD's Peace Officers Memorial Run

Story and photos by Megan Quintero



The Ak-Chin Police department held their annual Peace Officer Memorial event during National Police Week, in honor of the Ak-Chin police officers and all law enforcement.

The event started at 7am the morning of Saturday May 16, and had approximately 45 participants. Memorial t-shirts were provided as well as water and refreshments.

Breakfast was also served after the event was over.

The fastest runners for their age groups were recognized and include the following: Jack Sutterfield, Jacob Sutterfield, R.J. Talkalai, Sarah Zabawa, H. Grizzle, T. Wear, D. Garcia, and Leon Potter.



Schools out for the Summer!


Story by Kristen Villegas, photos by Runner Staff



Summer is here and everyone is in search of good vibes and much fun! The Ak-Chin Police department helped students and families celebrate summer break with their yearly PD Luau, held at the Ak-Chin Parks and Recreation Pool on May 28, 2026.

Students and their families enjoyed time in the pool, trips down the slide, and of course, delicious food courtesy of the Ak-Chin PD. A time to hangout with friends and create lasting memories, this Luau was much fun for all who attended.





Ak-Chin Child Development

Accepting applications for
Preschool 2026-2027 SY
Deadline is July 13th, 2026

Our office is open
8am-5pm
Monday-Friday
Register now!
First day of Preschool is
August 10th, 8:30am-2:00pm

Ak-Chin Child Development offers:

- A High Quality Early Education Experience
- Health/Developmental Screenings
- Disability Services (Through M.U.S.D.)
- Kindergarten Readiness
- *Story time (Provided by Ak-Chin Library)
- *Cultural Activities/Events (Provided by Language Program/Cultural Resources)*
- *Physical/Nutrition Education (Provided by Ak-Chin Health Ed. Program)
- *Fire Safety Education (Provided by the Ak-Chin Fire Department)*
- *Field Trips/Fun activities throughout year*
- Health and Safety Protocols in Place

Enrollment is based on availability and children are selected in the following order:

1. Child is an enrolled member of the Ak-Chin Indian Community
2. Child is a non-enrolled member, but he/she is the Legal child of an enrolled member of the Ak-Chin Indian Community
3. Child is living within the Ak-Chin Indian Community boundaries.
4. Child is living outside of the Ak-Chin Indian Community boundaries and is enrolled with another federally recognized Native American Community.
5. Child of a parent who is an employee of the Ak-Chin Indian Community.
6. Non-member children based on availability.

If you have any questions please contact the Preschool at
48251 W. Farrell Rd.
Maricopa, AZ 85139
(520) 568-1700
Ak-ChinChildDevelopment@ak-chin.nsn.us

Pick up a 2026-2027 Enrollment Packet at Ak-Chin Child Development.
Please bring in the following documents to be considered for enrollment

- Completed Application
- Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) if applicable
- Child's Certified Birth Certificate
- Child's Current Immunization Record

(returning students only need the current Immunization Record and a completed Returning Student application)
Only completed applications with required documents will be accepted. Children registering must be three (3) years old prior to September 1st of the current year.

Beat the heat at the Preschool Water Day

Story and photos by Megan Quintero

What is a better way to end the school year, than with a little fun in the sun!

Friday, May 15, Ak-Chin Child Development Program preschool teachers and staff put together a day full of water activities for the kids to enjoy. The outdoor fun included a 20 ft slide a few splash pads, a couple of kiddie pools, and LOTS of water and bomb pops to keep the kids cool!






CELEBRATING
250
YEARS OF
INDEPENDANCE

JULY 4, 2026

ALL WELCOME

MUSIC, VENDORS,
FIREWORKS AND MORE!

4:00 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.
FIREWORKS - 8:00 P.M.
AK-CHIN CIRCLE ENTERTAINMENT CENTER
16000 N MARICOPA RD, MARICOPA, AZ 85139

QUESTIONS?
(520) 568-1072 OR EVENTS@AK-CHIN.NSN.US

McCartney Elementary Learns of Ak-Chin History

Story by Robert Miguel & photo by Norah Ortiz

For third grade students at McCartney Ranch Elementary in Casa Grande, the opportunity to hear about the history of the Ak-Chin Indian Community and learn about other tribes throughout the United States, was of much interest and excitement during a classroom visit from former Ak-Chin Indian Community Chairman, Robert Miguel.

“hello” or “how are you doing?” He had students say “hello” in O’odham, which thrilled them.

One of the more popular photos, was a picture that featured Ak-Chin elder, Janice Miguel, who was making homemade frybread. Students quickly identified the delicious frybread and stated that they’ve eaten it before.

Other photos of interest involved a variety of animals, birds and plants that were consumed back in the early 1900’s by Natives, which included; cattle, dove, quail, jackrabbit, squash, beans, and wild spinach.

Photos of adobe homes and how cactus fruit were picked, cleaned, cooked, and consumed were also shared.

Traditional dancers’ photos from various Arizona tribes were also showcased. A video clip of the San Juan Church Kwaliaya Dancers was shown; the group featured young Miguel family dancers.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Robert was able to show and describe how a traditional basket was made, and how long it may take to complete. He also described what sacred eagle feathers were used for in the traditional ways of the community.

Before providing a traditional song with a gourd, Robert, donned in a traditional shirt, encouraged students to learn more about Native American people and how they lived their lives.

Robert was able to meet with five classrooms during two sessions, where he showed a video clip, which highlighted the size, location, places of interest and the cultural and traditional traits of the community. Prior to the start of the video, Robert introduced himself in the Papago/Pima language, “Sape Mas Ma”, which meant,



Ak-Chin Photojournalist, Robert Miguel, shows off a hand made traditional basket, which was made by his mother, Janice Miguel, during a presentation to third graders at McCartney Elementary in Casa Grande.

Livestock continued from Front

sicknesses and pests that can harm or threaten livestock in the community and State of Arizona, such as the common pink eye and different types of respiratory sicknesses.

Ranger Grizzle has plans to hold another event later this year, and would like to include not just livestock owners from the community, but to all community members in general.

Many members who have never owned livestock may take interest in owning livestock here in the community,” he said. “My job is to protect and educate all members within the community. If I can help in anyway, I will.”

The exciting part of the workshop, was the resources and knowledge that was shared by U of A staff with the livestock owners of the community.

“The next livestock health clinic, I will not only like to invite livestock owners, but open it up to all community members.

Ranger Grizzle would like to thank all those from the University of Arizona who came to help.



Ak-Chin Lady Hao Nad: O Kam Nab: Top left to right: Head Coach Raymond “Bunch” Whitman, Mya Pico, Johanna Peters, Nyaila Miguel, Auciana Miguel, Analei Pico, Sophia Peters. Bottom left to right: IlianaPerryman, Adrena Peters, Stella Miguel, and Tatum Campbell.

Lady Hao Nad: O Kam Nab Place Third

Story & photo by Robert Miguel

For the Ak-Chin girls basketball club team, the Lady Hoa Nad: O Kam (basket makers), a third-place finish in the Santa Rosa Boys & Girls High School Basketball Tournament, solidified their belief that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, if they continued to work hard as a unit.

Most times, a ten-point deficit for the Basket Makers, meant a time to fold and succumb to defeat.

But, today’s version of Ak-Chin, meant a time to tighten their shoe laces and take a defensive stand.

With minutes remaining, the Basket Makers slowly chipped away at the deficit and eventually tied the score with two minutes remaining.

As the two teams exchanged baskets, Ak-Chin was able to go up two with under one minute remaining, and with strong defense, were able to come away with a 30-28 win and a second-round position in the winner’s bracket.

In the second round, Ak-Chin was pitted against Sacred Hoops, a group of experienced ballers who played club basketball in the Tucson area and were eventually crowned champions of the tournament.

Ak-Chin fell into a twelve-point deficit early in the first half, before making a run and closing the gap to four points.

Sacred Hoops made runs

to widen their lead, but the Basket Makers continued to fight back. When the buzzer sounded to end the game, Sacred Hoops pinned a 43-29 defeat to the Basket Makers.

Although they suffered defeat, the Basket Makers knew that they didn’t play their best game, so they were optimistic of another shot against Sacred Hoops in the finals.

In their final game against Ho ho Kimel, Ak-Chin looked for an opportunity to advance into the winner-take-all finals, if they defeated Ho ho Kimel. Ho ho Kimel, jumped out to a five -point lead, before the Basket Makers tied the score.

This was another nail-biter, as leads exchanged and no one led by more than five points throughout the game.

With under two minutes left, Ho ho Kimel, held a four-point lead. Ak-Chin, shut down Ho ho Kimel defensively in the two minutes, but the Basket Makers, couldn’t score and suffered a heartbreaking loss and a spot in the finals. The final score was 28-24.

Trash to Treasure - Recycled Bottle Drip Waterers

June is here, and the desert heat is turning up! Instead of tossing things out, let’s get creative and reuse everyday items to stay cool, save money, and protect our environment.

This month is all about smart summer solutions, turning “trash” into something useful when we need it most.

Keep your plants hydrated during the hot summer days using something you’d normally throw away, a plastic bottle!

- Option 2**
1. Clean out your bottle
 2. Punch several small holes around the lower half of a plastic bottle
 3. Bury most of it beside your plant, leaving the top exposed
 4. Fill the bottle with water and let moisture slowly seep directly into the roots while reducing water waste.



Why It’s a Great “Trash to Treasure” Project?
Summer in the desert means water is precious. Reusing materials like bottles:

- Helps conserve water with slow irrigation
- Reduces plastic waste in landfills
- Keeps plants alive during extreme heat
- Saves you time and money

Desert Tip
Water early in the morning or later in the evening to reduce evaporation and avoid watering on the leaves, water at the base of the plant where it meets the soil. Pair that with your DIY drip system and your plants will thank you!

Use this Trash to Treasure? Please email photos to **Brandy Nelson** at BNelson@ak-chin.nsn.us at Environmental Programs with results.

- Supplies (Use what you have!)**
- Empty plastic bottles
 - A small nail or pin
 - Water
 - Soil & plants

How to make it. There are two different ways (choose what works best for your needs and ability):

- Option 1**
1. Clean out your bottle
 2. Poke a few small holes in the cap
 3. Fill the bottle with water
 4. Flip it upside down and place it into the soil near your plant
 5. Let it slowly water your plant throughout the day



Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pima Agency cordially invite you to

PROBATE COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT

Ak-Chin Service Center
48227 W. Farrell Road
Maricopa, AZ 85139

June 13, 2026 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

PROBATE

Case Status Updates: Provide real-time progress on active probate cases.

Document Review: Accepting and reviewing supporting documents, Death Certificates, Wills, and Birth Records to move cases toward completion.

Process Education: Explaining the federal probate timeline and requirements for heirs.

BTFA

Trust Reporting: Generating IIM and ITI reports for account holders.

Digital Enrollment: Assisting community members with registering their email addresses for the Fall 2026 Digital Wallet Launch.

Community members are encouraged to bring any available vital records or probate-related documents including:

- Birth Certificates and Death Certificates for heirs, beneficiaries, devisees, or lineal descendants.
- Marriage certificates or marriage licenses
- Divorce decrees
- Adoption or guardianship records, if applicable
- Any will or testament
- Names and contact information of potential heirs or family members

For more information

Phone: (480) 744-4868 | Email: western_region_probate@bia.gov

CALL US:
(520) 562-3321



Gila River
HEALTH CARE

VISIT US ONLINE:
GRHC.ORG

JUNE IS MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Source: <http://menhealthmonth.org/>



MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

JUNE 15 - 21, 2026

FATHER'S DAY
JUNE 21, 2026

June is Men's Health Awareness Month and a great time to check in on your physical and mental health. Get your screenings, stay active, eat well, and reach out if you need support. Small steps today can make a big difference tomorrow. Gila River Health Care Primary Care Departments are here to help.

Men's Health Tips

Eat Well - Prioritize a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains.

Prioritize Mental Health - Take care of your mental well-being by practicing stress management techniques and seeking support when needed.

Regular Check-ups - Don't skip routine health screenings and check-ups, including prostate exams and screenings for conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Keep track of key health indicators like blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and body mass index (BMI) through regular check-ups.

Stay active - Engage in regular physical activity to maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of heart disease, and improve overall well-being.

Wear Blue Days

Wear Blue Days continue to raise awareness and support men's health initiatives while reinforcing that care for men's mental & physical health is a shared responsibility.

Wearing blue is a visible reminder that men's health matters - not just to men, but to families, workplaces, & communities.



- Friday, June 5, 2026
- Friday, June 12, 2026
- Friday, June 19, 2026
- Friday, June 26, 2026

We Are HIRING!

GILA RIVER HEALTH CARE

Where Care Meets Community



Explore Careers at:
GRHC.org/Careers

Medical Assistant

Assists in the provision of quality health care by performing a large variety of patient care activities such as preparing patients for visits, assist in basic procedures, and enhancing patient flow. Supports department activities by performing duties such as maintaining inventory stock and laboratory supplies, completing regular safety checks, and cleaning and sanitizing relevant surfaces and materials. The Medical Assistant (MA) will perform various office and clinical duties to keep the department running efficiently. Records and inputs pertinent data into the Electronic Health Record (EHR) and reports abnormalities to Health Care Provider.

Human Resources
(520) 562-3321 Ext. 1342

Community Health Representative

Under the direction of a licensed or registered nurse provides basic health and lifestyle assistance to assigned patients within their residences and within a given service area by performing the following duties personally. Responsible for ensuring that all critical tasks are fulfilled on a timely basis.



988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE: CALL OR TEXT 988

Gila River Indian Community CRISIS HOTLINE: 1-800-259-3449



JOB OPENINGS

CURRENT JOB OPENINGS:

- Child and Family Therapist (part-time)
- Communication Officer
- Plant Electrician
- Plant Electrician & Instrumentation Technician
- Police Officer (non-certified)
- Police Officer (certified)
- Security Guard
- Therapist

Open to Enrolled Ak-Chin Members Only

- General Worker (Temp Worker)
- Museum Technician
- Oral Historian (part-time)

www.ak-chin.nsn.us

To review the full job description and apply visit www.ak-chin.nsn.us, Job Openings, and apply online. ALL positions close at midnight (12:00 p.m.) on the closing date. Great benefits. If you need assistance, please call the Human Resources Dept. at 520-568-1050.



Ak-Chin Scholarship Program

2026 June

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

DEADLINE (written across the calendar)

June 30th (written across the calendar)

Application Packets can be hand-carried, mailed, or emailed to:
 Ak-Chin Education Department
 Attn: Lenny Dempsey, Enrollment Counselor
 42507 W. Peters & Nall Road, Maricopa, AZ 85138
 Email: LDempsey@ak-chin.nsn.us

Do you qualify for WIC?
 • Pregnant
 • Breastfeeding women
 • Infants
 • Children under the age of 5

WIC foods include: yogurt, fresh fruits & vegetables, baby foods and other favorites such as milk, peanut butter, cheese, cereal and eggs

Tuesday, June 02, 2026
 8:30a-2:30p
Ak-Chin Service Center

Questions? Need to make an Appointment?
CALL: (520) 562-9698
 Gila River Indian Community WIC Program

ZUMBA

Ak-Chin Service Center
Tuesdays - 6:00pm -7:00pm

June.02.2026
June.09.2026
June.16.2026
June.23.2026
June.30.2026

Questions?? Please call Health Education at: (520) 568-1080
 *Open to All Ak-Chin Community Members, Ak-Chin Community Residents, Employees and Employee Family Members

FOOD HANDLERS CLASS

TUESDAY, JUNE 09, 2026
AK-CHIN SERVICE CENTER
10 AM - 12:30 PM

Who Should Attend??
 • Food Service Workers
 • Volunteers
 • Interested Community Members

Logos for Ak-Chin Indian Health Service, Maricopa County Health Services, and Public Health Dept.

Questions?? or to Sign-Up... Please call (520) 568-1083

Employee Updates

Sarah Zabawa
 Senior Gaming Agent
 Tribal Gaming Agency

4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION

COMMUNITY MEMBER VENDORS WANTED

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 26TH, 2026

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
 BMARTINEZ@AK-CHIN.NSN.US OR (520) 568-1640

FOR AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS ONLY.

APPLICATIONS FROM NON-MEMBERS ARE NO LONGER BEING ACCEPTED AND WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY REJECTED UPON SUBMISSION.

Pilates

With Vickie
Ak-Chin Service Center
Wednesday
6:00p-7:00p

June 03, 2026
June 10, 2026
June 17, 2026

Questions?? Please call Health Education at: (520) 568-1080
 *Open to All Ak-Chin Community Members, Ak-Chin Community Residents, Employees and Employee Family Members

UNEARTH A STORY™ SUMMER EVENTS

June 2026 Programs @ the Ak-Chin Library

- 5 Summer Reading Kickoff Dino Party**
Food and fun for all ages! 4-6pm
- 9 Puzzle Competition**
Bring family and friends to compete in a 1 hour puzzle challenge. Ages 10+ 5-6pm
- 10 Storytime T-Rex Tea Party**
Ages 2-7 years old 10am-11am
- 13 Crafternoon**
Come create a card and craft for father's day. All ages 1-3pm
- 15 Recyclosaurus**
Come create your own Dinosaur from recycled materials All Ages 4-6pm
- 23 Library After Dark**
Come for a light dinner & Trivia night 5-7pm Ages 15+
- 24 Storytime Books and Bubbles**
Ages 2-7 years old 10-11am

Programs and events open to Ak-Chin Indian Community members, residents, and employees. Minors under 15 must be accompanied by an adult over 18

CONTACT US 520-568-1675 LIBRARY@AK-CHIN.NSN.US

Happy Birthday Bubba!

We can't believe our baby boy's already turning 2!! Literally our last baby! You're growing so fast papa and learning something new each day. We love you handsome and are thankful we get to continue to see you grow each day. Love Mom, Dad, Brothers and Sissys

Happy birthday Brother Bear! Love P

Happy Birthday to my grandsons Xadrian, Benjamin, Joseph III, Myles and Justin Love, Grandma

Happy Birthday Drakey!

We can't wait to celebrate you, you're such a smart, caring dude. We're glad we get to spend your big day with you, we'll try our best to make it the best! Watching you grow into the kid you are today has been a great blessing. Love Dad, Delila, Brothers and Sisters

Employee Birthdays 6/7 - 6/21

6/7 Marissa Antone, Elderly Kashmir Miller, Police	6/13 John McCullouch, Human Resources
6/8 Hermalinda Mavis, I.S	6/16 Daniel Antone, Security
6/10 Thomas Hoetzlein, Fire Ashley Vincent, Cultural	6/20 Mayra Bandin, Preschool Daniel Jimenez, Sanitation Juanita Miguel, Elderly Raymond Vaca Jr, Prosecutor
6/12 Jesus Espinoza, Parks & Rec Dwayne Yazzie, Education	6/21 Sarah Zabawa, TGA

JUNE 6/5 - 6/20 BIRTHDAYS

JUNE 5 Alyssa Wind Haedin De Paola Jessica White Mario Luz	JUNE 10 Ashley Vincent Holly Kaniatobe	JUNE 17 Clorenda Humeyumptewa Kali Wind Anelia Jacuinde Mauktho Sehongva' Jose
JUNE 6 Uriayzz Antone Marie Thomas Ramona Kaniatobe Cameron Villegas-White	JUNE 11 Benjamin King Alex Bowman Joseph Zabawa III	JUNE 18 Myles Peters Shanna Narcia
JUNE 7 Marco Thompson Marissa Antone Zylen Silas-Antone	JUNE 13 Richard Villegas Samuel Justin	JUNE 19 Kellen Hoffman Josefa Lewis Michelle Soke
JUNE 8 Mylauni Antone Xadrian Miguel	JUNE 14 Amorie Narcia Ralph Martinez Brenley Hackney	JUNE 20 Juanita Miguel Julianna Smith Justin Zabawa Sayra Montero-Zamudio
JUNE 9 Jason Smith Consuelo Marquez	JUNE 15 Saul Ruelas Cecil Miguel Jr.	JUNE 16 Manuel Ortega Daniel Antone

NEW HOURS! Library Hours

Mon-Fri: 9am-6pm
 Sat: 9pm-4pm
 Sun: Closed

6/2026 JUNE

UNEARTH A STORY™ SUMMER READING JUNE 1ST-JULY 30TH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			StoryTime (Ages 2-7) 10-11am		Dino Party All Ages 4-6pm	Family StoryTime 10-11am all ages
7	8 Little Dinos (birth-5) 10-10:30am	9 Puzzle Competition 10+ 5-6pm	10 T-Rex Tea Party (2-7) 10-11am	11	12	13 Family StoryTime 10-11am Crafternoon 1-3pm
14	15 Little Dinos (birth-5) 10-10:30am Recyclosaurus All Ages 4-6pm	16	17 StoryTime (Ages 2-7) 10-11am	18	19 June teenth Closed	20 Closed
21	22 Little Dinos (birth-5) 10-10:30am HAPPY FATHER'S DAY	23 Library After Dark 15+ 5-7pm	24 Puppet Show Bubble Party (2-7) 10-11am	25	26	27 Family StoryTime 10-11am Poppicles 1-2pm
28	29 Little Dinos (birth-5) 10-10:30am	30 Crafternoon 3-5pm All Ages	Programs and events open to Ak-Chin members, residents, and employees. Minors under 16 must be accompanied by an adult over 18.			

Call us: (520) 568-1675 or Email us: Library@ak-chin.nsn.us

June 5 - 18, 2026

Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino Celebrates 2026 Caesars Founders Award Recipients and Team Members for Caesars Entertainment Years of Service



Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino honored its 2026 Caesars Founders Award Recipients at its Years of Service Gala on May 5. From left: Founders Award Honorees included Gilbert Bandin, Juan Covarrubia, Laurie Youngling, Brian Gutherman, Taylor Johns, Andrew Haynes, Linda Savage, Edgar Garcia, Robert Loewen

Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino hosted its annual Caesars Entertainment Years of Service Event at The Events Center on May 5.

In addition to acknowledging 60 Team Members with tenures from 5 to 30 years, the occasion also celebrated the 2026 Caesars Founders Award recipients.

The 2026 Caesars Founders Awards recognize the outstanding achievements and exceptional contributions of exemplary Team Members.

This year's awards recognized individuals who regularly and consistently delivered best-in-class service to Harrah's Ak-Chin guests and internal Team Members while demonstrating Caesars core values in three

- categories:
- **Blaze the Trail:** Team Member exemplifies leadership, integrity and ownership
 - **All-In On Service:** Team Member exemplifies fun, service and connection
 - **Together We Win:** Team Member exemplifies inclusion, care and teamwork

"Recognizing our employees during the Founders Awards and Years of Service celebration is one of the highlights of the year," said Michael Kintner, Senior Vice President and General Manager.

"This event gives us the opportunity to honor the individuals whose loyalty and hard work have helped shape our organization from the very beginning.

It's also a chance to

celebrate team members whose passion and commitment create exceptional experiences for every guest.

The recipients of the Founders Awards represent the very best of our culture, and we are grateful for the impact they make every day."

The 2026 Founders Award honorees are:

- **Blaze The Trail**
- Andrew Haynes, Facilities Supervisor (85139)
- Juan Covarrubia, I.T. Market Engineer II (85139)
- Brian Gutherman, Culinary Room Chef (85139)

All-In On Service

- Edgar Garcia, Security Supervisor (85138)
- Laurie Youngling, Gift Shop Clerk (85139)
- Gilbert Bandin, Warehouse Supervisor (85138)

Together We Win

- Linda Savage, Beverage Supervisor (85138)
- Robert Loewen, Casino Operations Assistant Manager (85143)
- Taylor Johns, Convention Services Coordinator (85284)

Team Members from the past year who have reached significant Caesars Entertainment employment milestones were also recognized during the event:

- 18 Team Members celebrating 5 years
- 18 Team Members celebrating 10 years
- 7 Team Members celebrating 15 years
- 10 Team Members celebrating 20 years
- 3 Team Members celebrating 25 years
- 4 Team Members celebrating 30 years

347 GRILL

FATHER'S DAY Meal Special

BBQ SMOKED BRISKET WITH BAKED BEANS AND MAC N CHEESE

Served with Hawaiian Rolls

\$20

SUNDAY JUNE 21

Ak-ChinCircle.com

347 GRILL

NATIONAL

MARGHERITA PIZZA DAY

THURSDAY JUNE 11TH

Ak-ChinCircle.com

COME PAINT WITH US

WED. JUNE 17 | 7PM-9PM

in the Hollywood Room Inside Ten Pins Down

www.TheAriandSip.com

Ak-Chin Circle ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS

16000 N. Maricopa Rd. Maricopa AZ 85139

ARROYO GRILLE 520.426.6832 | ARROYOGRILLE.COM

PATIO VIEWS | DINE IN | ORDER TO GO

18456 WEST HWY 238 IN MARICOPA

JUNE BUY ONE GET ONE

NATHAN'S ALL BEEF HOT DOG

Play #miniDunes and get a Nathan's Famous All Beef Hot Dog BOGO. Must present coupon to server. No substitutions. Not valid with any other specials, offers, discounts or Harrah's Rewards. One coupon per order, no split checks. Does not include alcohol. Non-transferable. Offer expires 6/30/26.

Proudly owned by the Ak-Chin Indian Community

ALL NEW SUMMER GOLF PROGRAM WITH \$350+ POTENTIAL SAVINGS!

THE Summer Steal PROGRAM \$579

10 ROUNDS OF CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 5/18-10/11
then \$29 Mon-Thurs & \$39 Fri-Sun rates for remainder of the program

20% OFF GOLF SHOP TEN \$10 FOOD & BEVERAGE VOUCHERS

12 CALLAWAY ARIZONA TRU VIS GOLF BALLS

UNLIMITED ACCESS TO #miniDunes PLUS 3 GUESTS

SIX DAY BOOKING WINDOW

LIMITED OFFER. Some restrictions apply. Does not include tax. Must be 21 or older to purchase alcohol. Valid through 12/31/26.

Proudly owned by the Ak-Chin Indian Community

480.367.8949 AKCHINSOUTHERNDUNES.COM

Harrah's AK-CHIN CASINO

JUNE 2026

CAESARS REWARDS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
PAVE YOUR WAY TO PLAY MORE! JUNE 1 - AUGUST 31, 2026 BEAT THE HEAT AND EARN OVER \$2,000 IN FREE PLAY! 	1 <p>REWARD YOURSELF & SHOP WITH REWARD CREDITS AT THE GIFT SHOP</p>	2 <p>ULTIMATE TOOL GIVEAWAY</p>	3 <p>SUMMER PLAY FEST 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER FOREVER YOUNG</p>	4 <p>YOUR CHOICE TO PLAY YOUR WAY</p>	5 <p>SUMMER PLAY FEST 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER FOREVER YOUNG</p>	6 <p>DRINK OF THE MONTH AT THE LOUNGE</p>	
7 <p>SUNDAY SHOPPING SPREE</p>	8 <p>DOWNLOAD THE CAESARS REWARDS APP</p>	9 <p>ULTIMATE TOOL GIVEAWAY</p>	10 <p>SUMMER PLAY FEST 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER FOREVER YOUNG</p>	11 <p>YOUR CHOICE TO PLAY YOUR WAY</p>	12 <p>SUMMER PLAY FEST 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER FOREVER YOUNG</p>	13 <p>AMAZON.COM® GIFT CARD GIVEAWAY</p>	
14 <p>SUNDAY SHOPPING SPREE FLAG DAY SURPRISE PATRIOTIC GIFT</p>	15 <p>PURCHASE A DAY PASS FOR THE POOL!</p>	16 <p>ULTIMATE TOOL GIVEAWAY</p>	17 <p>SUMMER PLAY FEST 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER FOREVER YOUNG</p>	18 <p>YOUR CHOICE TO PLAY YOUR WAY</p>	19 <p>SUMMER PLAY FEST 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER FOREVER YOUNG</p>	20 <p>TIMELESS GIFT GIVEAWAY</p>	
21 <p>SUNDAY SHOPPING SPREE CELEBRATE FATHER'S DAY AT CHOP, BLOCK & BREW AND OAK & FORK</p>	22 <p>NEW MONTH, NEW GAMING SPACE</p>	23 <p>ULTIMATE TOOL GIVEAWAY</p>	24 <p>SUMMER PLAY FEST 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER FOREVER YOUNG</p>	25 <p>YOUR CHOICE TO PLAY YOUR WAY</p>	26 <p>SUMMER PLAY FEST 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER FOREVER YOUNG</p>	27 <p>FRY'S FOOD STORES® ELECTRONIC GIFT CARD GIVEAWAY</p>	
28 <p>SUNDAY SHOPPING SPREE</p>	29 <p>START THE WEEK WITH DUNKIN'</p>	30 <p>ULTIMATE TOOL GIVEAWAY MID-SUMMER MULTIPLIER MADNESS</p>	<p>SUMMER PLAY FEST \$700K IN CASH & PRIZES</p>				<p>WIN YOUR SHARE OF \$700,000 IN PRIZES THIS SUMMER</p> <p>WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS THIS SUMMER</p>

Valid only at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino and must have a Caesars Rewards card and valid photo ID to participate. Management reserves the right to change or cancel these promotions at any time without prior notice. Must be 21 or older to gamble and take advantage of these offers. Know When To Stop Before You Start? Gambling Problem? Call 1-800-NEXT STEP or text "NEXTSTEP" to 53342. ©2025 Caesars License Company, LLC. See official rules at the Caesars Rewards Center for complete details.

MWMS Spring Concert

Story and photos by Megan Quintero



Clockwise: Orchestra class getting ready to begin. Bella and her partner Taylor during the duet. Amaya with her Mom Andrea Peters, after the concert, and Corianna before the concert.

Thursday, May 14, at 7 pm, Maricopa Wells Middle School held their end of the year spring concert at the Maricopa High School Performing Arts Center.

The night was filled with guests and music from the middle school's choir, orchestra, beginning band, and advanced band classes.

Starting off the night was choir with "Try Everything" from the movie Zootopia.

Once the choir was done with the rest of their performance, the orchestra class then took the stage with a few members of the community; Sarah Delma, Aurelia Peters, and Bella Ramon on the violin, and Corianna Nevarez Vallejo on the viola, along with their classmates.

They played "Feed the Birds" from Walt Disney's Mary Poppins, which also featured Bella Ramon and Taylor Schroeder playing a piece

in the song as a duet.

Next up was beginning band where the class played "Battle Cry", "Colors of the Wind", and "Raiders March".

Last to the stage was advanced band with community member, Amaya Rocha another on the flute. Her class played "Kilauea", "Can You Feel the Love Tonight", and "Highland Echoes".

Great job to you all, you played your instruments so beautifully!

Graduations continued from Front

– Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Science from South Mountain Community College and Alyssa Wind – Bachelor of Science in Public & Non-Profit Administration from the University of Oklahoma.

We also celebrate two graduates from Scottsdale Community College; Lisa Chavez – Associates of Arts in Business, and Emily Peters – Associates of Arts with Emphasis in Sustainability and Environmental Studies.

In addition, we also celebrate and recognize four post-secondary students: Julia Dickerson – Nail Technician – Paul Mitchell the School in Rapid City; Hunter Louis – Electro-Mechanical Technologies – The Refrigeration Institute; Dannika Pedro – Veterinarian Assistant – Carrington College; and Josefina Salas-Vargas –

Dental Assistant – Pima Medical Institute.

Of course, all graduations were major highlights, the number of graduates who walked down the aisle to get their diplomas from Maricopa High, Sequoia Pathways, Desert Vista, Ak-Chin/CAC HSE, and Smart Schools, Inc., totaled close to twenty, which is the most from Ak-Chin in recent years.

Promotion ceremonies were also a great achievement, where we had over a dozen promote from Maricopa Wells Middle School and Maricopa Virtual Academy, who will now be tasked of making a major step in selecting a high school to attend this coming year.

Various Kindergarten and Fifth grade promotions also took place in and around the community, with many

receiving their certificate of completion and recognition of awards and honors.

At the Ak-Chin Preschool, twenty little tykes were celebrated following their ceremony; which was unique this year; as young grads and their teachers donned traditional attire. They cited their alphabets, numbers, colors, shapes, rhymes and other educational topics that they were taught throughout the school year. Now they look forward to the respective elementary school they may choose to attend next year.

A big congratulations to all students on all their achievements, and a huge shout out to the parents and guardians for being the source of support that enabled them to complete their journeys.

Higher Education Graduates



At left: Emily Peters with family after graduating from Scottsdale Community College with Associates degree with Emphasis in Sustainability and Environmental Studies. At right, Julia Dickerson graduating from Paul Mitchell the School in Rapid City with Nail Technician Certification.

Awards for Ak-Chin Students

Story by Kristen Villegas, photos by Runner Staff



From Left to Right: Joshua Dominguez with Pride Award, Rosa Merriweather with Pride Award, and Tahlia Johnson after award ceremony.

To end the school year, students' Rosa Merriweather – 5th grade, and Joshua Dominguez - 3rd grade, received the PBIS ticket from Saddleback Elementary.

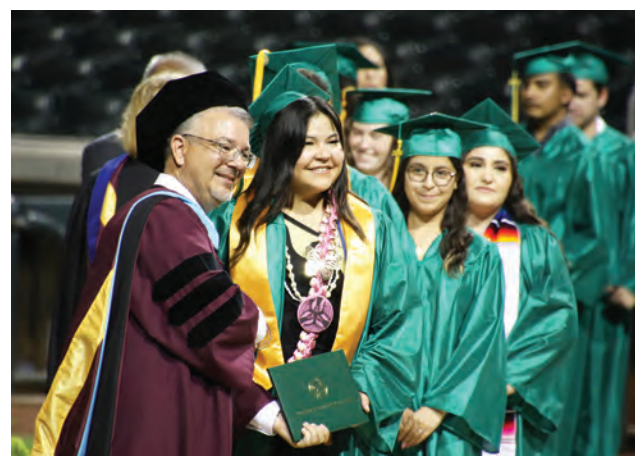
These students displayed the motto of "be

respectful, be responsible, and be safe" to their fullest potential in the fourth quarter.

Tahlia Johnson, Ak-Chin Indian Community member attending Stanfield Elementary School was awarded for

her hard work in the fourth quarter with Honor Roll.

Congratulations students on your outstanding achievements, enjoy your summer and we hope to hear more about your academic successes in the future!



Lisa Chavez graduating from Scottsdale Community College with Associates Degree in Business.



At left: Josefina Salas-Vargas graduating from Pima Medical Institute with Dental Assistant Certification. At right: Alyssa Wind graduating from the University of Oklahoma with BS in Public and Nonprofit Administration.

Bottom left: Desiree Carra graduating from South Mountain Community College with BS in Behavioral Sciences. Bottom right: Dannika Pedro graduating from Carrington College with Veterinary Assistant Certification.



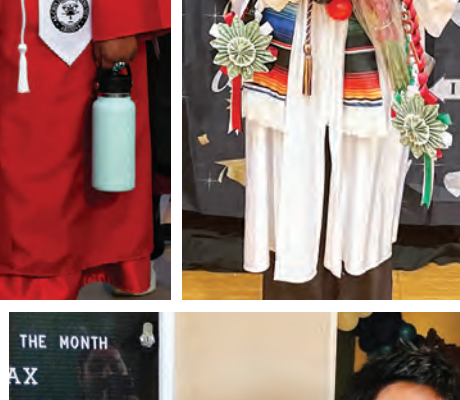
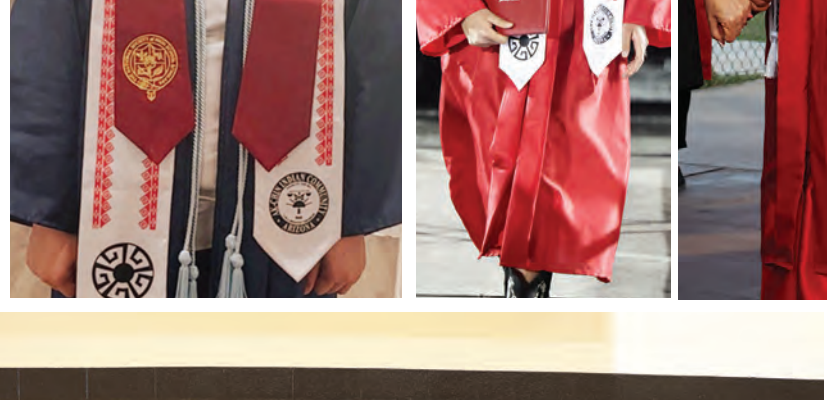
The Runner would like to celebrate your graduate/promotee!

If you are graduating from school this year, or know someone who is and would like to have a photo and/or wish placed in the Runner, please send us an email with photo/wish, name, school and grade.

Please email: runnernews@ak-chin.nsn.us or call us at 520-568-1375

Thank You, Ak-Chin O'odham Runner

Congratulations to all Ak-Chin Indian Community 2026 Graduates and Scholars



Antone's continued from Front

Fire personnel. Fire Fighter James Boehm was able to give information and proper ways of putting on turnouts (fire suit gear) within two minutes, ropes and knots, and other tasks that were to be performed during training at Central Arizona College and Fire Fighter/EMT Jacob Dickerson was able to show the proper use of ladders.

As the training went through its courses, participants slowly declined, and by the final two weeks of the training program, only four remained. Following the six-month training, Angel and Amber were selected to fill the created positions within the department, and hence, the training began in January of this year to apply and partake in courses at Central Arizona College.

From January to April of this year both Angel and Amber were attending classes twice a week at CAC. On Wednesdays, classes entailed of going over the Firefighter I & II handbook, with a question-and-answer session at the end of the day.

Saturdays were designated to outdoor conditioning

agendas, which also included hands-on activities from handling fire hoses, search and rescue, and ladder activities, which began at 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. In late April, Mondays were added onto the schedule until the completion of the course.

Recruitment Training Officers (RTO), from Rural Metro, Casa Grande Fire Department, Maricopa Fire Department, and Florence Fire Department were rotating in teaching the sessions at CAC.

For Amber, the difficult area of the whole course was continuing to maintain all the book knowledge that was needed to learn, with all acronyms. While for Angel, the physical portion of training was her challenging area. Small in stature, she was tasked at removing a 260-pound individual on a ladder, which took her numerous attempts, but she eventually succeeded.

There were two nights where family members were able to attend activities, which included live burns, where they were able to view recruits firsthand, display some of

the techniques learned. Although no official ceremony or graduation took place to celebrate the two, family and friends acknowledged their achievements with their own celebrations.

The opportunity for both to help people, in particular the children, is what excites them as they begin their professional careers with the Ak-Chin Fire department.

"I'm now really excited to dive into getting the younger community members interested in the Fire Service. We have the Fire Explorer Program and other exciting opportunities that I would like to get them interested in." Angel stated.

"I am excited to help my people in making sure that they are safe and are well taken care of, if medical assistance is needed," Amber shared. "I am also looking forward to building my career here in Ak-Chin and want to make sure that I am doing all I can to get our younger members involved and possibly follow in our footsteps in Public Safety."



Pool lifeguards and Recreation staff from left to right: Aleena Antone, Mariah Carlyle, Julia Dickerson, Candice Antone, Kayla Thomas, Dustin Whitman, Erika Garcia, and Omarion Flores partake in lifeguard training.

Lifeguard Training for Recreation Staff

Story & photo by Robert Miguel

For Ak-Chin Parks & Recreation staff, a training session was held for two days, May 28th and 29th, to certify themselves to oversee the pool days and hours this summer.

During the two days, staff was able to learn from certified instructor, Kyle Stephens, Aquatics Coordinator for the Salt River Indian Community.

Most of the classes, which also included indoor classroom, focused on water safety, CPR, and First Aid.

This year's lifeguards are; Omarion Flores, Dustin Whitman, Erika Garcia, Kayla Thomas, Aleena Antone and Shane Antone.

The pool officially opened to the public on Thursday, May 29th during

the annual PD Luau, hosted by the Ak-Chin Police Department.

The Ak-Chin Recreation Department would like to thank Kyle Stephens and members of his aquatics team from the Salt River Indian Community, for assisting and providing extra lifeguards during the annual Luau.



Ak-Chin's Angel Antone (top row second from left) and Amber Antone (bottom row left) with their classmates and instructors at the Central Arizona College Signal Peak Campus following training courses.



Amber Antone and Angel Antone were part of a team of Fire Fighter Trainees who rushed a mock fire during Family Night at CAC.

Thank you from Ak-Chin Parks & Recreation

We had an excellent experience during our Mother's Day event, and we were so happy to see our community mothers come together for a fun and relaxing evening.

A special thank you to the Health Department for providing delicious smoothies and refreshments for our mothers throughout the event. Your support helped make the evening feel welcoming and refreshing for everyone who attended.

We would also like to thank Tera and Brian Manuel with UniqueLala business for coming out to support the event and showcase their products. The mothers truly enjoyed learning about the different perfumes and nail products while being pampered and treated special throughout the evening.

Another huge thank you goes to Esther Landmeier of Mary Kay for taking the time to teach and share information about cosmetics and makeup. It was wonderful seeing mothers feel comfortable asking questions, learning new techniques, and simply enjoying the experience.

We also want to recognize Leslie Carlyle-Burnett for volunteering her time to provide free haircuts and hairstyles for our mothers. The hairstyles turned out absolutely beautiful, and we are so grateful she helped give many of our community mothers a confidence boost and fresh new look. If anyone is interested in booking with Leslie in the future, please feel free to reach out to her directly.

Lastly, a huge shout-out to the Recreation staff for pulling everything together and helping make this event successful. From organizing vendors to preparing activities such as the gas link and sugar scrubs, everyone worked hard to create a relaxing pampering day for our mothers.

Thank you again to everyone who supported and attended this event. We hope to see everyone again at our upcoming Father's Day event and future community activities.

Ak-Chin Parks and Recreation Pool Hours

Monday	CLOSED
Tuesday	CLOSED
Wednesday	12:00pm-7:00pm
Thursday	12:00pm-7:00pm
Friday	12:00pm-7:00pm
Saturday	12:00pm-7:00pm
Sunday	12:00pm-7:00pm

SUMMER

Ak-Chin Parks & Recreation

Swimwear and Safety Guidelines

- No cutoff pants or jeans, and avoid wearing dark-colored cotton clothes.
- Floaties (flotation devices) are not allowed
- The use of drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping, and glass containers is strictly forbidden.

All slide users are required to be a minimum height of 48 inches.

Pool Reservations

- Reservations are open for Tribal Members and Community Departments.
- Please submit reservation forms at least 7 days before the desired date.
- Approved private parties can access the pool from 10 AM to 12 PM.
- All food must be delivered pre-cooked.

Swim Test & Wristband

Swim tests required for first-time swimmers

GREEN BAND Proficient swimmer who can navigate independently in deep waters. Green Bands cannot supervise Red Bands.	YELLOW BAND Shallow-Water Swimmer Active supervision is required. Yellow Bands cannot supervise Red Bands.	Red Band A non-swimmer should stay within arm's reach of an adult at all times. Parents/guardians must actively supervise Yellow and Red Band swimmers at all times.
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Pool Season Officially Begins May 30th

Pool Hours

Monday & Tuesday: Closed
Wednesday to Sunday: 12:00 PM - 7:00 PM