



The Foundation Focus

Fall 2026
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The Newsletter of the Catalina High School Foundation

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Honored to Carry the Torch

by Dr. Jessica Bernal-Mejia, new CHS Principal

It is a tremendous honor to lead Catalina and carry the torch for a school with such a rich history and strong sense of community. Catalina has long been a place where students, staff, and families come together to support one another, and I am excited to build on the



Dr. Jessica Bernal-Mejia

strong foundation of inclusion and inclusivity that already exists. Every student deserves to feel seen, valued, and empowered to succeed, and that commitment will continue to guide our work.

One of Catalina's greatest strengths is the dedication of our educators and the resilience of our students. Together, we are focused on creating opportunities that

prepare every student for success beyond high school. Whether their path leads to college, a career, military service, or another meaningful pursuit, our goal is to ensure every student is college and career ready. Through initiatives such as class assemblies, we are building school pride while helping students stay focused on their future goals and the many possibilities ahead.

As we look ahead, there are exciting opportunities for growth. We are committed to strengthening support for our English language learners so they can become confident, proficient communicators and reach their full academic potential. We also want to increase student voice and collaboration by creating more opportunities for students to lead, share ideas, and actively shape the culture of our school. When students have ownership of their learning and school community, everyone benefits.

Honored to Carry Torch continued on page 5

Senior Earns Spot on Leadership Camp Team!

by Business Student Alexandar Roki, '27

During my two years in Catalina's Business program, I attended Leadership conferences, pursued Microsoft certifications, and participated in business competitions. These experiences strengthened my communication, technology, and professional skills. However, one thing was still missing: I had never earned a spot at the FBLA Leadership Camp.

When selecting classes for my senior year, I did not want to leave any unfinished business. I decided to enroll in the Business program as a Capstone class, where we focus on yearlong projects. In September, I achieved my goal, earning one of the spots to travel to Williams, Arizona, for the three-day camp.

On this unforgettable trip, I learned alongside student leaders, joined team-building activities, and developed leadership and business skills while creating lasting memories.



FBLA Trojans at Leadership Camp in Williams 09/26

The camp felt like a reward for my commitment to the Business program. Through FBLA, I practiced leadership and gained experiences that prepare me for my goal of attending college.

I sincerely thank the Catalina Foundation for its continued support. That support has helped make these opportunities possible and has encouraged me to pursue my goals with confidence.

2026 Trojan Alum of the Year

by Linda Raymond, '73

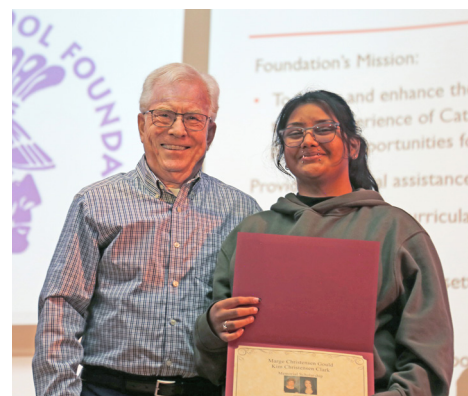


After 20-years of opening and running Costcos all over the country, Mark Hanna and his wife of 46 years, Lynda, a Tucson

native and proud Trojan grad ('71), retired here. Hanna pursued an Education Degree, starting at Pima and graduating from the UofA. He began as a teacher's aide at CHS before becoming its long-time College & Career Counselor, championing many 1st generation and immigrant students as they selected and applied for college. From start to finish, he helped each to fill out FAFSA Forms and various applications, as well as directing them to scholarships they should apply for.

Hanna manages the multi-high school Marge Gould (long-time Catalina teacher who passed away in 2020) Scholarship and often serves as a presenter at those schools' honors nights, including at Catalina. Additionally, he works with the ScholarshipsAZ organization that aids undocumented students seeking college opportunities. His many efforts have aided hundreds of Tucson students to enter and succeed in college.

Hanna's work with the Metropolitan Education Commission (now the Southern Arizona Education Council) included its awards programs (Crystal Apple), College Access Center, and representing MEC at college events held for high school students. A Crystal Apple recipient himself, he also chaired the organization (2020–21).



His work on boards and with high schools and colleges is extensive. Hanna helps refugees in our community (through the Iskashitaa Refugee Network), served as chair of the UofA Hillel Board, and he currently serves on the CHS Foundation's Scholarship Selection Committee. Hanna was an elected member and chair of the Pima Community College Governing Board (2014–20) and currently serves on the Pima County Planning and Zoning Commission.

Trojan Hall of Fame Inductees for 2026

by Linda Raymond, '73

David Cosgrove, '85



David Cosgrove has built one of the most accomplished coaching careers in Arizona soccer, demonstrating exceptional leadership and dedication to developing student-athletes. After playing for Pima Community College, where he was an All-American on the 1998 national finalist team, Cosgrove returned to the Aztecs that same year, but as head coach of men's soccer. He has guided Aztec Soccer to national prominence, capturing the NJCAA Div I National Championship in 2018 and 2021 and runner-up in 1999. His teams have appeared several times in the national finals, frequently ranked in the top 15 of the nation. Cosgrove has coached 14 All-Americans and more than 60 All-Conference players, with several playing professionally. Named ACCAC Coach of the Year six times

and West District Coach of the Year five times, he was part of the inaugural class of the NJCAA Legacy Award last year. He's also in the Pima County Sports Hall of Fame. His coaching staffs won Junior College Div I Staff of the Year and later Div II Staff of the Year. In 2025 he and his coaching crew won West Region Staff of the Year. Cosgrove co-founded the Tucson Soccer Academy in 2000. The academy has developed more than 200 collegiate players, five pros and a player who made it onto the US National Team.

Howard Frederick, '59



A naturalist and animal nutrition expert, Howard Frederick has worked in several corners of the world, but his most dramatic impact is on the town of Ruby, Arizona, near the Mexican border. He and his partner took over the town—a village with roots as deep as any of Arizona's ghost towns!

For years they gave tours of Ruby, keeping its story alive. Now closed to visitors, they hope Ruby will remain a historic Arizona landmark. Frederick has a doctorate in comparative nutrition from the UofA and started his career overseas in livestock-related industries. Since returning from Australia, he consults with zoos and wildlife organizations, often working with endangered species. He has also worked as an adjunct professor at the UofA and has served on boards for the Sky Island Alliance and the Nutrition Advisory Group. He has volunteered with Community Supported Agriculture for a decade. As a nutrition consultant, Frederick has worked with the Reid Park Zoo, the Desert Museum, San Diego Wildlife Park, the Fresno and Houston zoos and Wildlife World Zoo in the West Valley. In New Mexico, he worked for Ted Turner-owned ranches on the reintroduction of buffalo to foster genetic diversity and repair desert and grassland ecosystems.

Debby Vaughn Linscott, '67

Debby Vaughn's activities and contributions while at Catalina were a precursor to her stellar career in early education and exceptional education in public schools. Dr. Deborah Jan Vaughn Linscott earned a BA in Elementary Education and Special Education from the UofA, an MS in Curriculum & Instruction from the University of Tennessee, certification in Learning Disabilities from Vanderbilt, certification in Educational Supervision from Georgia State, a degree in Special Ed. Technology from the University of West Georgia, and a PhD in Educational Leadership from the University of Georgia. Dr. Linscott launched her career in Georgia. She was the principal at Ocee Elementary and also served as an instructional support teacher. Her consultant services included teacher certification tests for mental handicaps, community based instruction, special ed. programs, and coordinator for the handicap component for Marietta Head Start. She has authored and coauthored numerous articles in national publications. Dr. Linscott was president of the Council for Exceptional Children in Cobb County, Association for the Supervision and Curriculum Development, Cobb County Alliance for the Gifted, National Association for Elementary School Principals, and the Parent Teacher Association.

Roberta "Bobbi" Stevenson McDermott, '65

At Catalina, Stevenson McDermott's activities evolved from chorus, tennis and lab assistant to Torch, Forensic League and Future Homemakers of America. Her senior year, she was named the Betty Crocker



Homemaker of the Year. She paid her own way through the UofA, working for Student Union food services and earning a BS in agronomy in 1969. This led to a 38-year career (mostly spent in Yuma) with the USDA SCS/Natural Resources Conservation Service. She worked with farmers on soil and water conservation projects. She became the first female District Conservationist for the USDA. McDermott became deeply involved with the Yuma community, joining Cotton Wives, the League of Women Voters, Yuma Hospice and the funding committee for the local Marine Corps base. She and her husband Edward "Mac" McDermott, a retired Marine Sergeant Major, founded a popular bass fishing club. She also served on the Yuma Area Agricultural Council, the Arizona Heritage Fund Advisory Committee, and the International Water and Boundary Commission. Currently she serves on the Yuma County Planning & Zoning Commission. She has shared her technical knowledge by teaching at Arizona Western College, speaking for local groups and as a tour guide for foreign agricultural specialists and state legislators. She has been an agricultural columnist for the Yuma Sun. Beside her agriculture service award, Stevenson McDermott was inducted into the Arizona Farming and Ranching Hall of Fame in 2017.

Steven L. Tofel, '60

Part of the inaugural 4-year graduating class at CHS in 1960, Steven Tofel earned his electrical engineering degree from the UofA four years later. Early on, he worked out of California on international accounts. Tofel moved back to Tucson with his wife in the mid '70s, managing the Tucson Racquet Club, which his father built. In 1984, he and his twin Rich founded Tofel Construction, building strip malls, apartments and affordable housing. Under his



leadership, the company realized impressive growth. Today, Tofel Dent Construction earns around \$40 million in annual revenues and contracts in three states. Steve has retired from Tofel Dent, giving him the time to deepen his community connections. He is a steadfast supporter of the CHS Foundation and gives generously to a number of other local non-profits as well. He helped the Sister José Women's Center expand its shelter by 9,000 sq. ft. and supports entities like the UofA College of Dance, Angel Charity and his synagogue. Importantly, he lends his professional expertise by serving on the boards of Tucson Metro Housing and Sister José.

Lynn Waltke, '62

Lynn Waltke is an artist extraordinaire, often depicting desert wildlife, vibrant plants and landscapes. Although born in California, Waltke has spent most of her life in Arizona. She is part of the talented Class of '62 and then went on to the UofA, earning a BFA as well as her degree in education. Waltke has taught students ranging from kindergartners to adults, with her favorites being third- and fourth-graders. She also completed her Certificate of Nature Illustration from the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. Since retiring from the classroom, she is following her passion for art. She works in many media, but especially colored pencils. While Waltke creates abstract works and portraits, realism is her favorite, and desert creatures figure prominently in her work, especially native birds. She has an eye for the unusual and produces unique views of nature. Waltke has had many exhibits locally (like at ASDM's Ironwood Gallery) and elsewhere. To view her latest creations and some of her favorites, too, go to lynnwaltkeart.com or artistsforconservation.org.



Legacy of Excellence Scholars

by Jennifer Bond, '66

For the first time, two Trojan seniors received the prestigious Legacy of Excellence Scholarship, awarded at a banquet held at the Westin La Paloma on May 2.

Samsam Amberwa, who started at Oregon University this fall, and Nunjuma Joping, who is attending NAU, each received \$5,000. This

scholarship program was started 16 years ago by educators and community leaders and is a rigorous competition among students from all TUSD high schools. The Program is primarily aimed at African American students.

Members of the CHSF Board and some Catalina teachers attended the banquet to support the Legacy of Excellence and these high achieving Trojans.



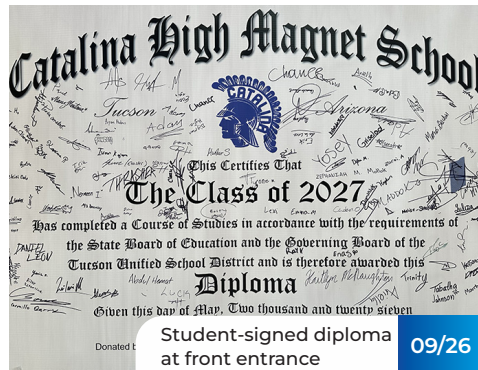
05/26 Samsam Amberwa



Nunjuma Joping 05/26



09/26 Mural promotes CHS Success Center



Student-signed diploma at front entrance 09/26



The Foundation funded the set materials for Proof 05/26



Donations

\$3000-5,000

Fred and Christine Anderson Foundation

\$1,000-2,999

Bruce and Gail Grossetta

Mark Haddad Smith
IMO Richard (Bart) Lewis '79

McCraren Compliance

Amanda Place

Tucson Federal Credit Union

Vantage West Credit Union

Zdot Bounce Marketing and Events

\$500-999

Jo Riester

James R Mouer, M.D. IMO George
Wayne Schumann '59

Mark and Linda Hanna

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\$250-499

Suzanne Van Ort

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Marylyn and Gene Tobey

Deborah Garrett IMO John Alquist '58

Glenda Anderson

Edith Gustafson

Emily and Ted Morrison

JD and DM Zimmerman

John Barrowman

Linda Cohen

Jennifer Bond

\$1-99

Nancy Hurato

Debbie Collazo

Richard Holsclaw

Lucy Masterson

Klaire Pirtle

Lebor Orthodontics

Leslie King

Toppy Burke

Nancy Schneider

Jim and Betty Herman

James Klein, MD

\$7,758 in Mini-grants Awarded Since May 1

by Jennifer Bond, '66

Since Spring of 2026, the Foundation has invested \$7,758 in Catalina. We supported a variety of projects and activities from purchasing textbooks that the Advanced Placement and Dual Credit teachers wanted for their classes, to providing food for students during the mandatory day long ACT standardized test. Here are the Mini Grants that the CHS Foundation most recently funded:

Jessica Bernal-Meija, \$500 for highlighters for each student for a school-wide program to help students learn to identify and highlight the important points of a lesson or text.

Margaret Davey, \$300 to purchase three rolling stools with locking wheels to be able to quickly and easily move around desks to help classes of exceptional students.

Melissa Kornmuller, \$1,000 to purchase specific textbooks that the teachers of new Advanced Placement and dual enrollment classes have requested which are needed above and beyond the funds TUSD provided

Janet Rothers, \$625 to purchase statistical software to support her statistics and data class including statistical tests to prepare for the ACT test and data visualization.

Marie Lea Skeggs, \$500 to purchase a music speaker and 10 soccer balls and 10 softball gloves, including 1-2 left handed gloves for the physical education classes.

Melissa Kornmuller, \$500 to purchase gift cards for such things as coffee, ice cream, books, etc. for teachers to show our appreciation of their hard work.

Catherine Selvas, \$500 to purchase supplies and gifts for the student positive behavior store where students who get award certificates for positive behavior can get small inexpensive items. This is a TUSD mandated program, but they do not provide funds.

Melissa Kornmuller, \$700 to provide snacks and lunch for students before and during the ACT standardized test.

Jennifer O'Dell, \$500 to purchase equipment to upgrade and repair the greenhouse for use with biology students.

Mishari Otaibe, \$96 for electrical equipment for the Construction classes.

Chelsea Duran, Athletic Director, \$437 for the reconditioning of the football team helmets to meet safety regulations.

Karl Oxnam and Jennifer Basandrai, Business and Culinary Arts Programs, \$1,800 to pay registration fees to take 12 students and 2 teachers to the Business Leaders of America Officers' Leadership camp in Williams, AZ.

Sam Lopez, Restorative Practice Facilitator, \$300 for supplies to help with restorative practice circles including conflict resolution, social emotion learning and regulation to help improve school climate and safety. These items include posters, fidget toys, snacks and electronic meeting tools.

In addition, the Foundation functions as a booster club for athletics. Several coaches have raised funds from the community for their needs, and the Foundation holds these funds and disperses them for specific needs.

For example, cheer coach Robyn Burrizzo raised over \$3,000 for the cheer and spirit line and was able to purchase matching uniforms, jackets and ribbons for members. Athletic Director Chelsea Duran organized citywide championships for cross-country and also track. Fees paid by the other teams raised funds to pay for entrance fees and travel to out of town meets.

Honored to Carry Torch continued

Like every school, we also face challenges. While we have a few minor building issues, our district has been responsive and is actively addressing those needs. We also recognize that some of our families need additional support with basic necessities such as hygiene products, clothing, and food. Beyond these needs, improving attendance and reducing tardies remain priorities, as we know that students learn best when they are present, engaged, and connected every day.

We are fortunate to have the continued partnership of the Catalina Foundation, whose generosity helps bridge important gaps and enrich the educational experience for our students. Their support has funded AVID materials that strengthen college readiness, upgrades to our library including a podcasting space that encourages creativity and communication, and community coffee mornings that foster meaningful connections between families and the school. These investments make a lasting difference in the lives of our students and strengthen our entire school community.

I am excited about what lies ahead for Catalina. By honoring our traditions while embracing new opportunities, we will continue to build a school where every student feels a sense of belonging, is challenged to achieve their best, and graduates prepared for a bright future. Together, with our staff, students, families, district, and Foundation, we will continue carrying the torch and building an even stronger Catalina.

Congratulations to 2026 Trojan Graduates!



The crowd was loud; faculty and staff were proud, and the 104 graduating seniors were ready for their accolades and diplomas on the evening of May 21. Flags representing the 27 countries the graduates are from bookended the star-spangled stage. Despite their varied backgrounds and cultures, this is a cohesive bunch of Trojans who led the school to another B letter grade from the Arizona Dept. of Education.



CHS REUNIONS

Class of '66: 60th Jenni Bond jbond8@gmail.com

Oct. 15 • 4-7 p.m. Tour & Foundation Fall Social

Oct. 16 • 6 p.m. Molina's del Norte

Oct. 17 • 1 p.m. Arizona Inn.

Class of '86: 40th Heather Moore-Martin

Oct. 17 • 6 p.m. Corbett's on 6th Avenue.

Class of '80 & '81: Marie Flores chs80and81@gmail.com

Oct. 17 • 4-8 p.m. Frog & Firkin upper room in back, \$30.

Oct. 18 • 8 a.m. 7 Falls full hike (8.4 mi total, meets at Sabino Canyon Rec Area)

9 a.m. 7 Falls short hike (4.2 mi total, meets at Tram)

Foundation Welcomes Teachers, New Principal

by Stephen Gin, '83

CHS Foundation Board Members set out fresh fruit, pastries, donut holes, orange juice, water and lots and lots of coffee to welcome Catalina teachers, coaches, administrators and support staff back to campus early in the morning of Aug. 3.

It's a Foundation tradition. But this time, Dr. Jessica Bernal-Mejia was running the program as Catalina's new principal. In July, Dr. Norma Gonzalez left CHS to run Tucson High. Dr. Bernal-Mejia was promoted from assistant principal. Michael Beck is Catalina's returning assistant principal, and Andrea Ayala is the school's new assistant principal.

Several of this year's teachers are new to Catalina. Foundation Co-president Jenni Bond introduced guests to the board members and explained how the Foundation helps students and faculty by providing mini-grants, scholarships, and publicity and outreach (please see Mini-grants story on page 5).



Foundation Co-president Jennifer Bond greets teachers

08/26



Catalina High School Foundation Membership Form

Send completed form to: CHS Foundation • P.O. Box 42016 • Tucson AZ 85733

Name _____ Class Year _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Annual Dues \$25.00 _____ I would like my donation to go to:

Founders' Club Dues \$57.00 _____ General Fund _____ Construction Trades _____

Life Membership \$250.00 _____ Mini-Grants _____ Future Business Leaders _____

Total Donation \$ _____ Music/Dramatic Arts _____ Culinary Arts _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____ Scholarship/Dramatic Arts _____ Athletics _____

This donation is **IN HONOR OF** or **IN MEMORY OF** (circle one): _____

Person to notify _____ Class _____ (If different from above)

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

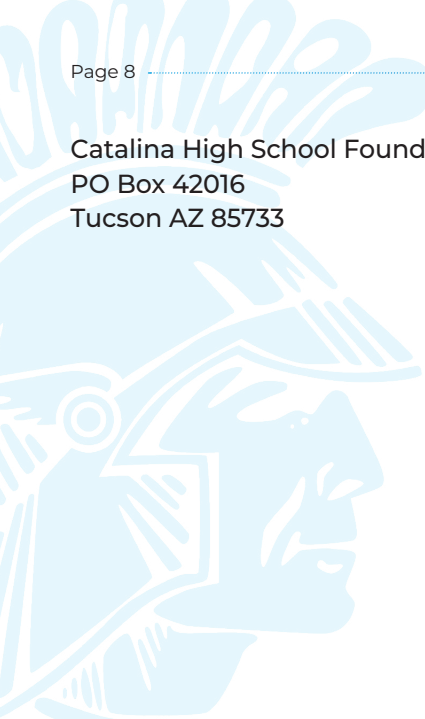
Please do not publish my name – Initial here _____

Questions? Ask Stacy at siveson@arizona.edu

Annual and Founder's Club Dues run from November 1 to October 31

Life Membership Payment Plan: Pay \$100 per year for two years and a final payment of \$50 in the third year, and become a Life Member. Put Life Member PP on the "For" line of your check.

Catalina High School Foundation
PO Box 42016
Tucson AZ 85733



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Website:

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Contact us at ekmorrison3150@gmail.com

CHS Foundation FOCUS newsletters:

www.catalinahighschoolfoundation.org/foundation-efforts/foundation-newsletters/

You are cordially invited to the 2026 Foundation Fall Social:

Cheers to the Years!

Thursday • Oct. 15 • 5-7 pm

Catalina High School Science Patio

RSVP: greenenchalada@gmail.com

Suggested \$20 donation • Casual dress

FREE Campus Tour meets at Front Steps at 4 pm