

SELF DEVELOPMENT CHARTER SCHOOL **Moves Into Cambridge League**

By AnnElise Makin

School (SDCS) is proud to announce its recent accreditation as a Cambridge International Examinations School.

This excellent news widens the path for college preparatory work on the junior high school level at SDCS.

"We are really excited about the Cambridge program for the students," said Ms. Jennifer Salvatori, administration team member and liaison for the Cambridge accreditation process. She seemed more than pleased for the entire team.

"Our principal, Ms. Anjum Majeed, had the Cambridge program in her scope of vision for a number of years," Jennifer recalled. "Then, two years ago, we started the certification process. In November of 2013, SDCS was accredited."

With accreditation, the work really begins. "We have continuously worked to enhance our excellent elementary and middle school curriculums," the administrator pointed out. "We also want students to stay and complete their educational foundation here with us. Cambridge opens up this whole new opportunity of international perspectives."

Increasingly, SDCS has seen students through to the high school level. A total of 10 students finished SDCS secondary last year, and 23 students will be completing their junior high experience at SDCS this year. In high school, SDCS students have become independent learners, choosing



advanced placement and honors courses—and excelling.

"Our school has been well known in the state for its outstanding academics, but the Cambridge program will prepare our students more for the national and global benchmarks of education," Jennifer said. The specific model is called Cambridge Secondary One, consisting of

English, Math and Science, for children 11 to 14 years of age.

Much of the groundwork for the Cambridge program has been laid at SDCS in years past. Being well-read, demonstrating critical thinking skills, and presenting knowledge in proper written or oral form are values enforced by SDCS from an early age.

"We are taking the existing curriculum and modifying it toward the Cambridge requirements," Jennifer said. The Cambridge model will open up an extensive resource for each subject matter syllabus, and provide assessment tests twice a year.

"Not only will our students be even better prepared to succeed at the college entrance examinations, such as the ACT [American College Testing], our eighth-graders also will have the opportunity to earn an IGCSE certificate," the educator continued.

The IGCSE—International General Certificate of Secondary Education—is the world's most popular international qualification for 14- to 16-year-olds. Leading

universities and employers worldwide recognize this certificate.

Currently, SDCS also is looking into the Information and Communications Technology component of the Cambridge program. *Computer* (literacy and technology) has become the fourth *R* after reading, writing, and rithmetic.

SDCS is a high-achieving school, earning Arizona Charter School of the Year in 2010. Recently, one of the school's key educators, Ms. Christina Harguess, won the Teacher of the Year award from the Arizona Charter School Association. The Cambridge program will continue to move SDCS to higher excellence.

For more information, or to schedule a visit, call Self Development Charter School at (480) 641-2640. You also can go to selfdevelopmentcharterschool.com. Enroll now for the 2014-2015 school year. To learn more about SDCS and the Cambridge programs, please attend a meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 14, from 6 to 8 p.m.



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iPLAN BUILDS ON SUCCESS FROM Street of Dreams Participation

By Kimberly Searles

Being invited to participate in this year's Street of Dreams event was honor enough for the team at iPLAN, but the feedback received during the showcase event made the icing on the cake.

The event gave iPLAN the opportunity not only to showcase their work, but also receive instant feedback.

According to iPLAN principal Ben Scheier, the showing was a success. Over the six-week Street of Dreams event, more than 22,000 people visited the house presented by the architectural firm.

"What we truly enjoyed most about the experience was meeting our community in person," Ben said. "It allowed us to hear directly what people liked or didn't like, as well about our design. That kind of interaction is



what truly inspires us and drives our creativity."

The event also served as a springboard for new interest in the firm, making the outlook for 2014 even brighter. According to Ben, iPLAN has received many phone calls from prospective clients who saw the house at Street of Dreams, and want to know what iPLAN can do for them.

In fact, iPLAN continues to hum along with current projects for Lennar and Blandford homes. They also are working on exciting projects for their private clients, as well. As if that weren't enough, they are looking forward to beginning several projects placed on the back burners for a while.

"It really is a great time for iPLAN," Ben stated. If you are in the market for custom home design, let iPLAN be your go-to source. As an architectural firm, they have created hundreds of luxury homes, ranging from 2,000 square feet to 22,000 square feet. ■

iPLAN provides a full-service custom home design for projects of all sizes. Learn more about iPLAN by visiting www.iplandesign.com, or contacting Ben Scheier at (480) 980-1119. You also can like them on www.facebook.com/IPLANLLC.



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(480) 748-1127

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Kim Phillips

ADVERTISING

Monica Adair (480) 772-1949 Kim Phillips (480) 748-1127

STAFF WRITERS

Dawn Abbey, AnnElise Makin, Kimberly Searles, Sharon Wozny

COPY EDITOR

Sandra Van Dyke

DESIGN

Lucky You! Creative, publication design Érin Loukili, Misty Voitovski www.luckyyoucreative.com

Ramey Newell, Web site design . KeenGraphics.net

CONTRIBUTORS

John Karadsheh, Nancy Nemitz, Lorraine Ryall, Jay Williamson

www.UpCloseAZ.com

EDUCATION

P UP DAY EASES THE TRANSITION TO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOO

By Sharon Wozny

Thile transitioning to junior high can cause anxiety and trepidation, Mesa Public Schools has the answer with Step Up Day.

Every January, all sixth-graders have the opportunity to attend Step Up Day at the junior high school they will be attending. All the counselors make this experience useful and motivating to the incoming students.

Mrs. Salas, Mr. Martin and Ms. Spencer lead Step Up Day at Fremont Junior High School. They rotate through three sections. In one section, they are welcomed by the principal and entertained by an orchestra, a band, a choir and drama, as well as STUCO.

The counselors take over in the auditorium for another section. This is where the students complete paperwork for the following year, and watch a PowerPoint presentation about Fremont Junior High School. In addition, they receive backpacks donated from CTE. The backpacks are filled with resources and registration information.

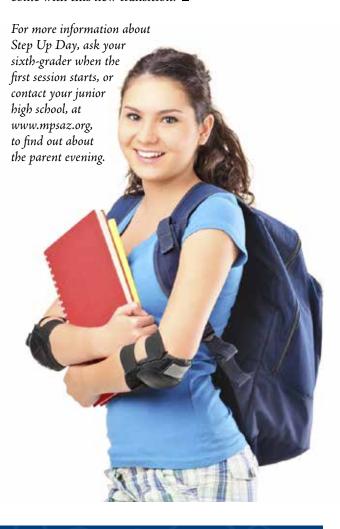
Lunch in junior high school is always a huge concern. In this section, students enjoy a snack in the cafeteria where they observe how lunch works. Step Up Day is tied in with registration and parent orientation. By day, the students learn the campus, and the parents attend in the evening. Fremont is always pleased with the parental support at these events.

As Mrs. Salas and Mr. Martin agree, the transition from sixth to seventh grade is so important, and the biggest education change these students will experience. Admittedly, they have such a short time to prepare the students for high school. Both of them love what they do, which is evident in the warmth felt within the counseling office.

Step Up Day is another way to connect with the incoming students and make them feel more at ease with the next chapter of their educational lives. About a week later, the counselors visit each elementary school

to meet with the sixth-graders to have them register for their classes.

Step Up Day may look different at each junior high school, but the goal is always the same—introduce the incoming seventh-graders to their new home for the next two years, while easing some of the anxiety, which may come with this new transition.



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- Full- or half-day
- Back-to-basics Dual language
- Montessori
- Arts



To learn more about our programs, visit www.mpsaz.org.

New Dodd Frank Regulations and FHA LOAN LIMIT REDUCTION ARE IN EFFECT

By Lorraine Ryall, Realtor CDPE, CSSN, MSSC Coldwell Banker Trails & Paths Premier Properties

s of January 2014, there are going to be some major changes in the mortgage industry, which will impact the home loan process.



FHA Loan Limit Reduction

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) recently announced it would reduce the loan limits as specified by the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008. Unfortunately, Maricopa and Pinal counties are among the 650 counties across the United States having their FHA loan limit reduced from \$346,250 to \$271,050, effective Jan. 1, 2014. That is almost a 22 percent decrease, or \$75,200 less buying power for a buyer using FHA financing.

The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 established the higher limits, which have been in place for the past six years. They served as an emergency measure to assure mortgage credit was widely available during a time when private lending options were severely constrained. Originally, the lower loan limits were scheduled to take effect in January 2009. However, due to continuing strains in credit markets, Congress delayed implementation several times, but now is moving forward with the lower loan limit.

For buyers who have to use FHA financing for specific reasons, such as a previous short sale, bankruptcy, foreclosure, low credit score or down payment limit, their purchasing power will be reduced, as they now have to look for lower priced homes. There are alternatives available for buyers who have the ability to convert to a conventional loan with a down payment as low as 5 percent. While

your credit score and debt to income ratio, as well as other qualifying factors, are stricter on conventional loans versus FHA, they are available and a good option for buyers who want to purchase a home above the FHA loan limit. Also keep in mind VA home loans. For those eligible, the VA allows for a zero down payment loan, with up to a \$417,000 loan amount, in most cases.

Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank)

Dodd Frank created a new requirement whereby all residential mortgages meet an *Ability to Repay* standard, prohibiting creditors from making a mortgage loan without determining the consumer's ability to repay, and establishing minimum requirements. This rule has created a new loan category called the *qualified mortgage*. The lender must meet the following criteria for the loan to be a qualified mortgage:

- A fixed rate with maximum 30-year term. No interest only, adjustable rate or balloon payment loans.
- Points and fees to be capped at 3 percent
- + Debt to income ratio cannot exceed 43 percent,

including PMI, debt and other obligations. However, lenders can exceed this amount in certain circumstances.

All other loans not meeting these criteria will be non-qualifying, which places a higher cost and burden on the lender. Jumbo loans also will be non-qualifying, but we don't expect to see any changes in this segment of the marketplace.

So what does this mean to the borrower?

- Lenders will be requiring more verification to support the borrower's ability to make the mortgage payment.
- Loan costs are likely to increase.
- The closing process probably will start to take longer due to the increased compliance lenders must undergo to be sure they are meeting the new federal regulations. Be prepared for closings to take 30 to 45 days.

With all the new changes, it is now more important than ever to choose a Realtor who not only understands the real estate market, but also understands how the new lending requirements may impact the sale or purchase of your next home. Choosing the right lender, one who is not

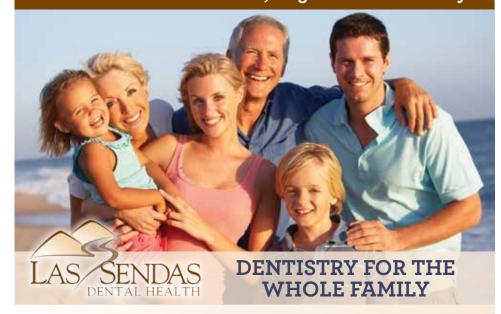
only well informed on all the new changes (and there are more to come), but also has the staff and systems already implemented to navigate the new requirements, is going to be the key to a successful and timely close.

Visit my Web site for more information on the FHA and Dodd Frank changes, or to contact one of our trusted lenders today.

Lorraine Ryall is a multi-million dollar producer and recipient of the International President's Circle Award, which is awarded to the top 5 percent of agents. For more information, call (602) 571-6799, or visit her Web site at www.Homes2SellAZ.com.

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LAS SENDAS GOLF CLUB Features Entertainment, Dining & Golf

A Closer Look, Las Sendas Golf Club...is a monthly column written for the Up Close Publication by Las Sendas Golf Club. In this column, you will get an in-depth look at upcoming entertainment, dining and golf events. Our brand is our mission—to reach out to the community with entertainment, dining and golf events as your pathway to fun, recreation and a pleasurable lifestyle.

LAS SENDAS **LADIES LEAGUE**

Making A Difference

This year, the Las Sendas Ladies League hosted a Christmas charity luncheon in Bogey's private dining room at Las Sendas Golf Club. This incredible group of women collected more than 110 toys, which were donated and delivered to the Mesa Salvation Army Christmas Angel Tree. A big thank you is extended to everyone for this contribution to our community.



LIVE...at Las Sendas is pleased to present: **Affinity—Generations of Classic Rock** Thursday, Jan. 16

Considered the area's best show band, Affinity has been captivating audiences with its high-energy performances since the 1980s. Based in Phoenix, Affinity has a long history of providing music and entertainment for major social events and corporate parties.

Rock Lobster—80s Retro Band, Thursday, Feb. 20

Rock Lobster is the absolute best cover band in Arizona when it comes to playing the ultimate in 80s' retro music. This band plays songs from Billy Idol's White Wedding to Cyndi Lauper's Girls Just Want to Have Fun. Bring your friends, come and join the fun. Just maybe you will be invited to go on stage to rock out your best 80s' dance.

With this band of highly talented musicians, you always are guaranteed to be on your feet from the beginning of the night.

The Chef's Grand Buffet is from 6 to 8 p.m., and the show begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$60 per person, or a table of eight for \$400. Only 200 tickets will be sold. To purchase tickets or a table, please call Erica at (480) 396-4000, or send an e-mail to egomez@lassendas.com.

Hold the Date**—Please hold the following dates in your calendar for our 2014 LIVE...at Las Sendas calendar of events:

- April 17
- May 29
- July 17
 - **Dates are firm, entertainment subject to change.

Wine Dinner—Amazing Food and Wine Pairings—Saturday, Jan. 18

The Vistas Pavilion, in partnership with Francis Ford Coppola Wines, is hosting the Wine Dinner on Saturday, Jan. 18, 6 p.m. This dinner will be five courses, and each course will be paired with a wine selection. Price is \$50 per person. For reservations, please call Erica at (480) 396-4000, or e-mail her at egomez@lassendas.com.

Valentine's Day Dinner The Patio, Friday, Feb. 14

Come and enjoy a romantic evening of dining on The Patio at Las Sendas on Friday, Feb. 14. We are pleased to offer a four-course prix fix menu for \$100 per couple. Your evening comes complete with a long stem rose and a table with dazzling city lights views. For reservations, please call Erica at (480) 396-4000, or send an e-mail to egomez@lassendas.com.

Weekly Specials at The Patio and The Grille Chef Attended Pasta Bar—\$13.95



Monday Tuesday Wednesday

House Fried Chicken—\$14.95 Cioppino (Seafood Stew)—\$15.95

Gold Canyon Angus Beef Meatloaf—\$14.95

Thursday Friday

Garlic Rosemary Prime Rib—\$19.95 Blue Moon Battered Rockfish and

Fries—\$13.95

Root Beer Braised Short Rib-\$15,95 Saturday

Tuesday to

Live Music on the Patio Saturday

The golf season is in full swing, and the snowbirds are back. Come by early to make sure you get a table, or enjoy casual dining on our side patio couches and chairs. We have NFL Sunday Ticket. So, come and watch your favorite NFL team, and indulge in \$5 appetizers, 50 cent wings and buckets of beer until 4 p.m.



THE VISTAS PAVILION

The Vistas Wedding Pavilion at Las Sendas is pleased to offer the following Summer Special Wedding Package for events booked and hosted in the months of June, July, August and September, 2014. The total cost is \$5,000 (does not include tax and gratuity), and includes the following items:

Ceremony

- White garden chairs
- Unity table
- Gift table and limeade station
- Setup and teardown of the ceremony and reception space
- Champagne, fruit and cheese platter in Bridal Changing Room

Reception

- Plated Dinner Menu
- 12-by-12-foot dance floor
- White, black or ivory tablecloths
- White, black or ivory napkins
- Votive candles on tables
- Cordless microphone with sound system for speeches
- Projector and screen for slideshow
- Complimentary cake cutting

Wedding coordinator will assist bride and groom with menu selections, ceremony and reception setup details, and ceremony rehearsal. Our wedding coordinator will be the single point of contact and on-site coordinator during the ceremony and reception.

Wedding Trends 2014

Food, floral and fashion—romance is driving bridal fashion in 2014, much of which can be attributed to the movie The Great Gatsby. We will see fashion resurrecting

A CLOSER LOOK AT LAS SENDAS GOLF CLUB (CONTINUED)

some traditional pieces with a new twist. Veils are back in a big and dramatic way. In fact, you will see a ton of focus on headpieces in general, including floral crowns and hair embellishments.

We will see the styles of the *Roaring 20s* in bridal gowns, as well. Romantic beaded gowns will be paired with floral crowns. Sleeves also have made their way back to the bridal gown. For so long, we have seen the typical strapless gown. This year, however, cap sleeves, long sleeves and caplets will make their way down rose petal aisles. Open back dresses, with delicate lace accent, and sheer and high lace necks, with sparkling embellishments, will be the highlight of this year.



GOLF SHOP

Golf Equipment Trends

Counter Balanced Putters—Ping Senoita, TaylorMade Daddy Long Legs and Cleveland Smart Square—Counter balanced putters put extra weight in the grip end of the putter to counter a heavier head, which adds stability and consistency to your stroke without anchoring. The weighting boosts the club's overall moment of inertia, so

the club feels stable throughout the stroke. These putters will still be legal when the USGA bans the anchored putters in 2016.

Adjustable Putter Shafts—Ping Scottsdale TR (True Roll)—The adjustable putter shafts extend from approximately 37.5 inches to 46.5 inches, depending on the putter you choose. The longer you extend the shaft, the more stable the club feels when you swing down the path. The adjustable shaft is available in all Ping Scottsdale TR putters.

Adjustable face drivers—Ping G25, TaylorMade SLDR and Titleist 913—With the adjustable face drivers, a golfer can adjust the loft up to four degrees by adjusting the loft launch angle, spin rate and overall direction, to get full distance and negate certain swing flaws. Adding loft to the driver will produce a more closed clubface. Subtracting loft will open the clubface. Adjustable face drivers can change the player without having to purchase a new driver. Most golfers are using a driver with the wrong loft for their swing. So, you can tinker with the different lofts to find one, which suits your golf swing.

All of the above mentioned products are available in the Las Sendas Golf Shop.

Golf Tips from Mike Malaska

The most common approach to learning is to copy the professional. What can you learn when you look at a pro swing? With tour players, watch how relaxed they are and how little effort they use. If you feel a lot of tension, and need a lot of effort, you probably are doing the wrong things. The tour players have effortless power, while most amateurs have powerless effort. Smooth and rhythmic is what you should be trying to accomplish, not tense and forceful. Effort never equates into distance or consistency. It just translates into effort.

Another thing to notice is how every one of the tour players is unique. As good as they all are, you have to learn who you are and what swing best fits you physically. It's OK to not look like the model. Among the best players, there are some common things every amateur

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would benefit from learning. They all hit the ball solid in the center of the face by being able to control the clubface with their hands. Their left arm rotates. It doesn't pull the club through the ball. Even after you find the few similarities among them, the reality is they are more unique than they are the same.

New Instructor for the Las Sendas Golf Academy

Ashley Malaska, a native of Murray, Utah, currently resides in Mesa, and is pursuing her dream as a professional

golfer. An all-around athlete and true competitor from the time she could walk, Ashley always has dreamed of a career in sports. She began her golf career at the age of 16, and went on to play at the University of Arizona. Later, transferring to Brigham Young University, she finished her last year of school, and graduated with a degree in business marketing. Along with competing on the local mini tour, she is starting a career in golf instruction for the Las Sendas Golf Academy. Ashley is looking toward following in her father's footsteps, and giving people a reason to love the game, which has given her so much.

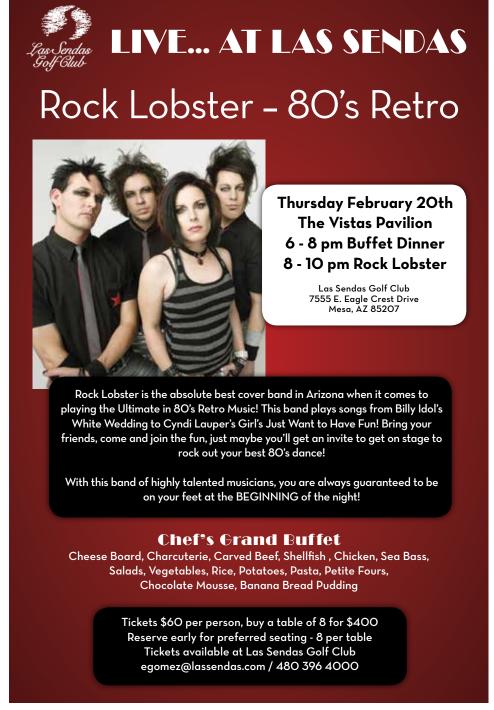
COOKING CLASSES WITH CHEF MATTHEW

Come and cook with our talented Banquet Chef—Matthew Tomten

- · Tuesday, Jan. 28
- The Vistas Pavilion, 5 to 7 p.m.
- Appetizer, Salad and Entrée
- Red and White Wine Pairings

Come as a couple, or bring a friend. Classes are demonstration format and limited to 16 people. Cost is \$40 per person. For tickets, please call Erica at (480) 396-4000, or send an e-mail to egomez@lassendas.com. This is a follow-up class from our December baking class, which received rave reviews from all attendees.

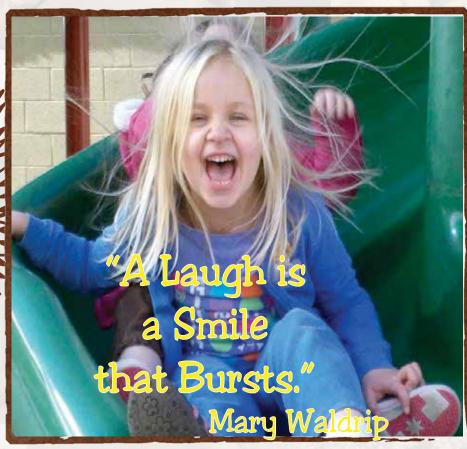




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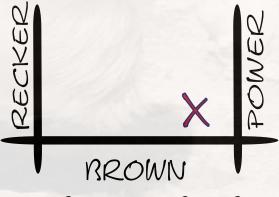
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Submitted by Trinity Christian School

¬ or four decades, Trinity **◄** Christian School has had the mission of helping children reach their full potential.

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TRIED AND TRUE CLASSICAL APPROACH

Trinity is a classical grammar school, which means they teach

the fundamental rules of each subject, as well as the basic data

that exhibit those rules. With a proper grammar foundation,

stages of learning. At Trinity, students learn how to learn.

Students are exposed to a strong phonics foundation.

phonics program, ultimately, fostering a love for great

STRONG PHONICS PROGRAM

MATH DRILL

students are set up for success to think critically in the following

Children are taught how to read and write using a rigorous

literature. By grade two, most children excitedly delve into

chapter books, embarking on many adventures in reading.

When students properly learn their math facts, they are

able to soar in future mathematical endeavors. Imagine

trying to learn scientific thought processes without a solid

arithmetic foundation. It is impossible to solve equations



their own pace.

students are able to work at

SCIENCE EXPLORATION

Starting in kindergarten, scientific thinking is experienced. Through every school discipline, children use scientific skills, such as observing, classifying, sorting, summarizing and accurately articulating. Moreover, Trinity students participate in

science class, regularly getting their hands dirty with their science experiments. Many graduates of Trinity have gone on to medicine and other fields of science.

HISTORY TAUGHT

Through Bible, American and world history, students gain a broad concept of history. The lunchroom boasts a world history timeline with a collection of student contributions they have discovered in their studies. Even kindergarten and first grade students make contributions to the world history timeline. Older stu-

dents are able to study ancient civilizations in depth, grasping not only the history, but also the geography.

SMALL CLASS SIZES

Research has shown children learn best teacher ratios are low. Students receive much care and attention and benefit from low class sizes. Because the ratios are low, teachers are able to make sure students understand concepts before moving on to new material.

LOVE OF THE ARTS AND LANGUAGES

Each year, student artwork is submitted to the Arizona State Fair, with Trinity students regularly bringing home prized ribbons. Moreover, a love of music is fostered through choir, music instruction, bells and chimes. The Bell Choir performs at several school functions during the year. Students learn to love language through Spanish instruction in grades kindergarten through second grade,

> while grades three through six endeavor to learn and use Latin.

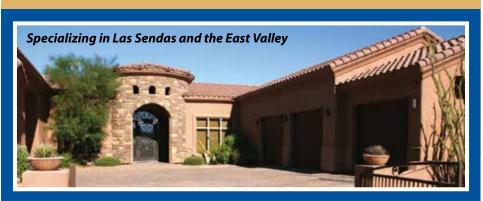
LOOKING UP

Through daily chapel service and direct moral instruction, children at Trinity are taught to look to God. As a result, children are orderly, hopeful and thoughtful. In this structure, a child progresses in the attributes of personality, which indicate his destiny—self-confidence, initiative and self-discipline, as well as the ability to solve his own problems. ■

Above are only a few of the reasons why so many parents choose Trinity Christian School for their children. If you would like to know more about Trinity, we welcome you to contact the office to schedule a tour at (480) 986-4629.



or think scientifically without a solid grasp on basic arithmetic. At Trinity Christian School, students learn their when student-toarithmetic through lively daily drills, and practice where What's My Home Worth? **Get an Instant Home Value Report**



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Level of Learning is High at

By Linda Steiner, MEd Certified Teacher and Reading Specialist

delf Development Preschool continues to exceed standards and enrich higher levels of learning in the 2- to 3-year-old classroom.

The school acknowledges the importance of early childhood education, and implements a weekly lesson plan. The children follow a curriculum-based lesson, which includes 12 areas of enrichment.



Rachel Hunt, MS, and Anjum Majeed, MS, doctoral candidate, design the curriculum. They each have more than 13 years of experience in early childhood. In addition, Linda Steiner, MEd, and reading specialist, oversees the phonics and reading program. These educators not only assist the staff in implementing the curriculum, but also teach the enrichment program.

The uniqueness of the program for the younger

children is exceptional. The weekly detailed lesson plans include concepts and objectives. The academic program includes language/reading readiness, math and writing. The enrichment curriculum details art, classics/poetry, music, science, life skills and dramatic skills.

The 2- to 3-year-old classroom introduces preschool and pre-k curriculum goals, and encourages concept mastery and academic confidence. This is an important component, since the 2- to 3-year-old classroom progresses with the skills needed to transition into the 4- to 5-yearold classroom. This ensures a solid academic start to kindergarten and elementary school.

The preschool prepares children to learn key subject matter. The school's success works on teaching children the principles of number, letter, sound recognition, learning the alphabet, verbal memorization, word association, tracing and pattern formation, as well as introduction to writing their first and last name and letters.

As a certified kindergarten teacher and stateendorsed reading teacher, I know the importance of early education intervention to promote a foundation for academic success. The school uses a multi-sensory phonics instruction focusing on visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic techniques, which reach each child's learning style. They learn phonemic awareness, and each week, concentrate on one letter and number of the week. Research shows children need a full week to master each letter of the alphabet to ensure correct phonemic awareness to begin reading.

On many occasions, I have observed this classroom, and I am truly impressed with the teaching techniques and engagement of the children. The dedication and sincere devotion of the teachers to instill these essential



concepts is amazing. I see the commitment to student's education

Michaela Stockton and Stephanie Mitchell are co-teachers with a commitment to their students. "I am extremely proud of my students' hard work and dedication," said Michaela. "In August, we moved up a group of 16 children who knew how to write their first and last names, and use letter

sound and recognition." Stephanie stated, "The art of teaching is the art of ... assisting discovery."

All parents are welcome to experience this exceptional learning environment for your child. I am proud to recommend Self Development Preschool as the path to your child's academic success. Parents need to be a part of this exceptional learning adventure for their child. The preschool hours and extended care are from 5:45 a.m. to 6 p.m. The enrichment program hours for the 2- to 5-yearold classrooms are from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Self Development Preschool delivers a well-rounded

educational experience for your child. The school offers children the opportunity to develop a love for learning and a daily challenge to think at a higher level. ■

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CHAUFFEUR SERVICE ENSURES

YOU TRAVEL IN STYLE

Submitted by My Chauffeur Taxi Service

year and a half ago, Dirk van Leenen started My Chauffeur Taxi Service, a private transport business.

Within weeks of establishing the service, this interesting man was taking people to and from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. He loves his job, and tells stories from books he has written on the Holocaust in the Netherlands.

"Being an author is really a lonesome job," said Dirk, an author and horticulturist. "That is why I was looking for a way to be out and about and meeting people."

After many years of traveling the

world, Dirk came to Phoenix 25 years ago. He found Arizona the best place of all. Today, he chauffeurs his clientele in Cadillac style.

"People often are sorry to get out of my car at their destinations, because they are eager to hear more of my stories," Dirk said. Now he gets bookings not only to the airports, but also to restaurants, hospitals, parties, theaters and stations.

"My service is private and personal, and my clients have become my friends," Dirk stated with pride. "They either call, text or e-mail me their reservations. The service is less costly because I don't employ a dispatcher or any other personnel." He likes to keep it that way.

"I have one slogan—AOT." Find out what that means the next time you take a ride with Dirk.

For more information about My Chauffeur Taxi Service, call (480) 512-9757.



HEALTH

Health Care Insurance Agent **Helps Clients Choose Wisely**

By Sharon Wozny
hoosing the right medical plan and understanding all the fine print and lingo of Medicare and the Affordable HealthCare Act can be stressful and intimidating.

Michael Henderson is the type of man who guides his clients through these tricky details of which people are unaware with regard to health care. Michael's

business, Tapestry Insurance, says it all, "...bringing all the pieces together in a meaningful manner."

The agents who work for Michael make health care understandable by breaking the large picture into small, manageable pieces. Knowing there are many options out there, he wants to make sure you choose the right policy for the right reasons.

Michael's easygoing and caring demeanor will put you at ease. Instantly, you will feel as though he has your best interests at heart. "I am all about educating my clients more than the sales," he said. "I want to meet their needs, and everyone's needs are different and varied."

With this approach, he likes to meet one-on-one with his clients. When he doesn't have the answer, he will get it for you. When his products



Michael Hend

may not meet your needs, he will direct you to others.

Michael travels all over the state to reach his clients. He knows his strengths and weaknesses, and is having fun with what he is doing. Michael's entrepreneurial spirit has led him to where he is today. His experience is varied and diverse, which is why he is successful. In the past, he has owned a bike and

snowboard shop, been involved with payroll, human resources, and served as a recruiter for commercial construction companies.

About nine years ago, Michael and his wife, LeJean, relocated to the Red Mountain Ranch area from Colorado. Being outdoors, whether it be biking, running, golfing, skiing, hiking or kayaking, are ways he likes to spend his downtime.

For the future, he would like to continue to grow his business with more agents in surrounding states. In doing so, he will maintain his guiding philosophy of educating his clients, and helping them make the best choice with respect to their medical insurance needs.

For help with your insurance needs, contact Michael Henderson at (602) 541-7656.

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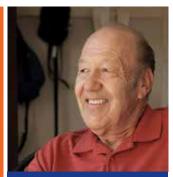
Michael Henderson

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DINING

NEW OWNERSHIP MAKES CHANGES at Gus's New York Pizza and Bar

By Kimberly Searles

ruce Towle is the new owner of Gus's New York Pizza and Bar. A former PGA professional in the Lake Tahoe/Truckee area, Bruce, along with his wife, Deborah, is taking a swing at creating a complete dining experience for the residents in Northeast Mesa.

"We want to have a place where people can come enjoy great food and have a great time," Bruce said. "We want to treat our guests the way we hope to be treated when we're out and about."

The service at Gus's isn't the only hole-in-one. Their pizzas keep em coming back for more. With a variety of choices, such as the Bronx Bomber, Mediterranean and the White Pie, it's no wonder why.

Bruce has begun to implement changes to create that overall dining experience at Gus's. Diversifying the menu options is a priority, thereby ensuring there is something for everyone. Adding more burger and sandwich options is part of those changes, as well as building a better selection of salads. According to Bruce and Deborah, the response from customers is positive.

Entertainment also is a focus for Bruce and Deborah. In addition to the cozy outdoor patio, Gus's will begin having a First

Thursday event each month, which will feature comedy and music. Of course, they offer entertainment on weekends as well, staying open until 1 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

If you are in the mood for great food and a great experience, give Gus's in Mesa a shot. Specials are available each day, including a buy one—get one at half price on sandwiches. In addition, you can enjoy half-price appetizers after 9 p.m. ■

Gus's New York Pizza and Bar is located at 2015 N. Power Road. They offer dine in, delivery or carry out dining. Call them at (480) 924-4877, or order online at www.gussnypizzabar.com. You can also find them at facebook.com/gusinmesa.



EDUCATION

Teacher Elevates Welding **PROGRAM**

By Sharon Wozny an Hurst came to Red Mountain High School in August, and the welding program will never be the same.

The classes are full with excited students, from the novice, to the experienced. Cole, a sophomore, has been welding since he was 12 years old by helping his grandpa around the farm. He wants to be

an agricultural engineer for John Deere, building and designing farm equipment. Annie, a senior, never welded before in her life. This class has taught her she can accomplish anything. Her welding has improved, but so has her self-confidence.

Mr. Hurst treats the class like a job by exposing his students to real world experiences. He is diligent in instilling a respect for the trade in his students. They have job sheets for every project. Mr. Hurst is adamant about finding the best equipment and newest ways to teach his students how to be top-notch

One way he is doing this is by starting a welding club, as well as a welding competition team. The 12-member team entered the Welding Thunder Competition 2013, where they built a smoker, which will be used for fund-raising events. In order to be a



member of the team, the students had to try out by showcasing their welding abilities, along with their motivation, academic knowledge and respect to the trade of welding.

Mr. Hurst loves bringing real world experiences to his students. The welders will be designing and welding tea light holders, along with napkin holders, all including the Red

Mountain Lion. Look for them to be on sale soon. It's the perfect way to enhance those math skills, as well as integrate the Career and Technical Education Common Core Standards.

On the day I visited, excitement was high as the students were being treated to the Virtual Reality Welding Machine. Here, by welding a piece of metal in a virtual world, even the novice could be a welder without fear of being burned by the sparks. Each participant was rated in five areas. By the end of the day, the competition was in full force.

If you are looking for an elective for your student to take at Red Mountain High School, this welding class is a

For more information about welding, contact Dan Hurst at Red Mountain High School. Call (480) 472-8225.

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Market Report

Sales for the Month of November 2013



Address	Square Feet	Community	Sold Price	Short Sale or REO*
7013 E. ROLAND ST.	1,571	TAPESTRY MOUNTAIN	\$267,000	
6825 E. PEARL ST.	2,475	VINTAGE HILLS	\$297,600	Х
3614 N. BARRON CIR.	1,571	ROLLING HILLS	\$300,000	
3521 N. DESERT OASIS ST.	2,451	SHADOW CANYON	\$305,000	
6928 E. SCARLET CIR.	2,475	COBBLESTONE	\$327,500	
3732 N. LADERA CIR.	2,226	ECHO CANYON	\$355,000	
7815 E. RED HAWK CIR.	2,833	GRAYHAWK	\$370,000	
3060 N. RIDGECREST ST. #89	2,732	DESERT VISTAS	\$383,000	
7432 E. ORION CIR.	2,732	THE TERRACES	\$385,000	
7423 E. ORION CIR.	2,732	THE TERRACES	\$390,000	
3829 N. MORNING DOVE CIR.	2,757	CANYON CREEK	\$400,000	
3528 N. EAGLE CANYON CIR.	3,330	BOULDER CANYON	\$475,000	×
3833 N. DESERT OASIS CIR.	3,330	CANYON CREEK	\$515,000	
7260 E. EAGLE CREST DR. #51	3,598	BLACK ROCK	\$590,000	Х

3 DISTRESSED SALES IN NOVEMBER

Information gathered from the Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service is deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

Sales Information Provided By John Karadsheh, ABR, CRS, ASSOCIATE BROKER, Coldwell Banker Trails & Paths Premier Properties. www.BuyAndSellAZ.com



AAA GOLD SPORTS NEW NAME, **SAME GREAT SERVICE**

By Kimberly Searles

s the New Year begins, AAA Gold Exchange, located at Power and Brown roads, in Northeast Mesa, is now AAA Gold and Bullion.

"We decided to break away from our California franchisor," said owner Mike Meyer. "We felt doing so allows us to give our customers the best payout amount for their jewelry. It also allows us to keep our business local and not follow the direction from out-of-state."

Mike also wants to let customers know bullion isn't the little cube used for cooking. Instead, it is the purest form of a precious metal. And AAA pays the most for your bullion.

While the name has changed, getting cash for jewelry is as easy as ever at AAA Gold and Bullion. You simply bring in your unwanted gold, silver or diamonds, and the specialist will evaluate your items right on the spot, in front of you.

"We're going to take the time to work with each customer, making sure the customer understands the process of cash for gold, as well as the formula we use," said Mike. "We're not going to rush the deals or pressure our customers into making instant decisions."

In addition to the name change, AAA Gold and Bullion now is partnering with Loan Mart to give customers easy access to car title loans. Oftentimes, customers may need a little bit more cash than what their jewelry is worth.

"Our goal is to serve as a resource to let customers know how to tap into the equity of their vehicles to get that extra cash they need," Mike stated. "It's just another way we can better serve our customers."

If you need extra cash, or simply want to free yourself of unwanted jewelry, visit the experts at AAA Gold and Bullion.

AAA Gold and Bullion buys gold, silver and loose diamonds. They also buy platinum. With four Valley-wide locations, you can visit them in Northeast Mesa, at 1152 N. Power Road, Suite 102. The hours of operation are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday by appointment only. You also can find them online at aaagoldandbullion.com and on facebook.com/AAAGoldandBullion.



Start the New Year

WITH A FACIAL TREATMENT

By Dawn Abbey

ith the holiday
hustle behind us, a
look in the mirror
may reveal all the running
around, late-night parties and the
dry winter air has taken a toll on
our skin.

The skilled aestheticians at Cosmos Salon and Day Spa have a solution—the *Winter Glow!* exfoliating facial.

"This month, just to get your New Year off to a great start," said Sandra Barbetta, co-owner of the salon with her husband, Cosmo, "we are offering this off menu exfoliating facial treatment, featuring Jan Marini Clinically Validated Skin Care, which combines glycolic with enzymes to give you the effects of a peel without the downtime. Your skin will be refined, polished, and glowing with immediate results."

"For the uninitiated, the term *peel* might be a little confusing," said Cosmo aesthetician Jill Batista. "A chemical peel is a treatment technique used to improve and smooth the texture of the facial skin. The peel solutions cause dead and dry skin to slough off after a few days, leaving a regenerated skin surface, which is smoother, refined and glowing, with reduced wrinkles and fine lines."

The Winter Glow! exfoliating facial has all the benefits, including the immediate result of a peel without the downtime or the actual flaking off of skin. You can go right out and face the world with beautiful, glowing skin.

"Although it's called a chemical peel,

many exfoliating facial solutions are derived from natural ingredients," Jill stated. "They are gentle and safe, such as alpha hydroxyl acids (AHAs) and enzymes."

AHAs are naturally occurring, such as glycolic acid, a natural constituent of sugar cane juice. This is the mildest of the peel formulas, and produces a light exfoliation for treatment

of fine wrinkles, areas of dryness, uneven pigmentation and acne.

AHAs also can be used in conjunction with enzymes in a facial treatment for even better results. Enzymes found in green unripened papayas are used to break down dead and damaged skin cells, resurfacing without disturbing sensitive or irritated skin. Combining enzymes with other resurfacing agents, such as glycolic, dramatically accelerates desired results in skin rejuvenation, acne control, hyper-pigmentation and scar reduction.

"So, book your Winter Glow! appointment now with one of our skilled aestheticians, Margaret, Maria or Jill, at a special discounted price of only \$95," said Sandra.

Cosmos also is discounting \$10 off other January spa specials, including a 90-minute massage, a microdermabrasion and the Desert Bliss Scrub.

For more information and appointments, call Cosmos Salon and Day Spa at (480) 844-0707, or stop by the salon at The Village at Las Sendas, on the northeast corner of Power and McDowell roads.





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MANAGE YOUR POOL FROM Your Smart Phone Or Tablet

By Dawn Abbey

ecent technology
advances are offering
pool owners the
option of managing their
home pools and spas from
their smart phones and
tablets, using apps and
controllers similar to those
available for home security.



Whether you are at home or on the road, you can monitor pool and spa

can monitor pool and spa settings, adjust parameters and receive alerts if a problem is detected. "Imagine turning up the spa heater before you head home from work, adjusting the outside lights, and activating water and fire features, so everything is just perfect for you on your arrival home," said Chris Quam, owner of Arizona Pool Guy, Inc.

In addition, you can save money by maintaining perfect water chemistry while keeping chemical use to a minimum, avoiding potential problems before they become major. In addition, you can conserve energy by keeping heat low until you need it. Anything you can do from your pool controller, you now can do anywhere.

Chris explained the difference between automatic devices and automated controls. "Everyone is familiar with automatic devices that require timers or a person to turn them on and off," he said. "Many homeowners have their pool pumps and pool cleaners set on a timer that runs the pump during hours when electricity costs less. They set it and forget it. That's automatic."

Automated devices are those that can be pre-programmed and controlled by

remote signals from inside the house or via the Internet. These include pool controls for cleaners, heaters, lights, water features and even chemical balance. "Pools and spas can be set up with probes and sensors that test levels and release the proper amounts of chemicals automatically," Chris stated. "That way you never have

either too low or very high amounts of chlorine or pH, preventing the green pool or red-eye situations."

By combining automatic devices like timers with automated systems, more than 100 pool and spa conditions, parameters and settings can now be accessed and monitored at your fingertips.

"The best part is that your pool service tech at Arizona Pool Guy can also get problem alerts on our computer or cell phones and correct any problems right away, even if it's not your regular day for service," Chris explained. "And most times, we may be able to fix the problem without actually having to go to your house. If you love technology, these user-friendly apps are for you, whether you do the monitoring, or we do it for or with you."

To find out how an automated pool monitoring system would work for your own pool or spa, call Chris at (480) 699-0607 for a free estimate.

For information on any pool service, installation or repair, call (480) 699-0607. Arizona Pool Guy, Inc. is licensed, bonded and insured, ROC #243628.

LOCAL BUSINESS

NEW TAX ON NET INVESTMENT INCOME

By Brian L. Bentley
Pearce, Gray and Co., PLC
s of Jan. 1, 2013, some
taxpayers are subject
to a new 3.8 percent
Medicare tax on their net
investment income, but even
though this tax has a wide
reach, certain steps may be
taken to lessen its impact.

Net investment income, for purposes of the new 3.8 percent Medicare tax, includes interest, dividends, annuities, royalties and rents, as well as other gross income attributable to a passive activity. Gains from the sale of property not used in an active business, and income from the investment of working capital, are treated as investment income, as well. However, the tax does not apply to nontaxable income, such as tax-exempt interest or veterans' benefits.

Further, an individual's capital gains income—both long-term and short-term—will be subject to the tax. This includes gain from the sale of a principal residence, unless the gain is excluded from income under Code Sec. 121, and gains from the sale of a vacation home. Planning the sale of big ticket items, therefore, often requires attention to the new 3.8 percent surtax.

Net investment income is reduced by deductions *properly allocable* to the qualifying income or gain. Therefore, it is critical to keep track of amounts, which increase your property's basis or other investment expenses, which may reduce net gains. These include, interest on loans to purchase investments, investment counsel and advice, as

well as fees to collect income. Other costs, such as brokers' fees, may increase basis or reduce the amount realized from an investment.

The tax applies to the lesser

of net investment income or modified AGI above \$200,000 for individuals and heads of household, \$250,000 for joint filers and surviving spouses, and \$125,000 for married filing separately. The tax can have a substantial impact

if you have income above the specified thresholds. Also, remember, in addition to the tax on investment income, you also may face other tax increases having taken effect in 2013.

The top marginal income tax rate is now 39.6 percent, and the top tax rate on long-term capital gains has increased from 15 percent to 20 percent. Thus, the cumulative rate on capital gains for someone in the highest rate bracket has increased to 23.8 percent in 2013. Moreover, the 3.8 percent surtax's thresholds are not indexed for inflation, so a greater number of taxpayers may be affected as time elapses.

Please contact our office if you would like to discuss the tax consequences to your investments of the new 3.8 percent Medicare tax on investment income. Pearce, Gray and Co., PLC is located at 3514 N. Power Road, Suite 135. Call (480) 835-1124. ■

Brian L. Bentley is a partner at Pearce, Gray and Co., PLC, and has been with the firm for almost 10 years. He focuses on small businesses and multi-state taxation.



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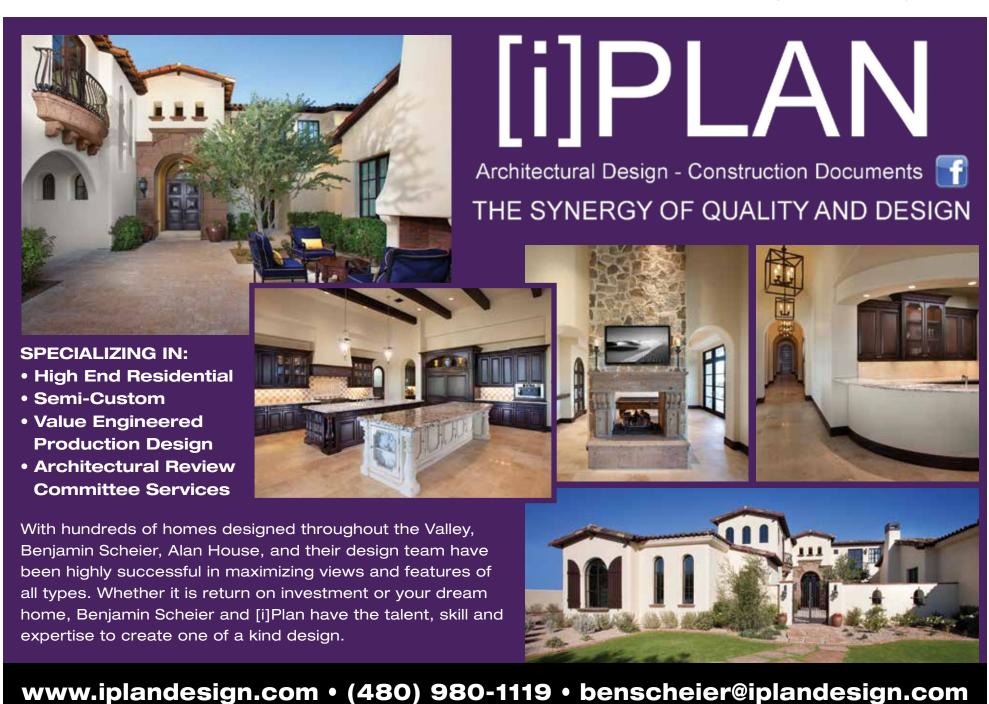
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HERE IS A NEW IDEA FOR

YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

By John Karadsheh

couple of months ago, I took a listing for a house that was an asset of a probate estate. While this is something I have done many times in the past, this particular situation was different.

A single father, in his 40s, had owned the house, and lived with his three teenage children. The father passed away after a

with his three teenage children. **John Karadsheh** The father passed away after a short illness and, unfortunately, he did not leave any will or trust. Consequently, the handling of the estate fell to the father's sister, who currently is navigating the estate through the probate court system.

Without a will or trust in place, the court had to have a separate proceeding to appoint a guardian and conservator for the children, as they were minors. The court also had to appoint a personal representative to manage and liquidate the assets of the estate, which included selling the house, to provide the inheritance to the children's conservator.

Luckily, there were relatives who were willing to take on these separate responsibilities. What was different about the sale of the house from this particular probate compared to houses I have sold out of other probate estates is that the judge ordered the house could not be sold without the judge's prior approval of the sale.

The property was very sellable, and shortly after it was listed, I received an offer. While the personal representative accepted the offer on behalf of the estate, we still needed court approval before the transaction could proceed. This meant the attorney handling the estate had to file a formal petition with the court explaining the terms of the sale and

why the sale was in the best interest of the heirs, and then obtain a hearing date for the judge to consider the petition. The judge handling the case went on vacation, and, at press time, our court date is still several weeks away.

I only hope the buyer will be patient, otherwise we will have to start this entire process again. In the meantime, the estate must continue to pay the mortgage, property taxes, utilities, HOA fees and insurance. Had there just been a will or trust in place, this entire process would have been far simpler and much less stressful on all those involved.

As you make your New Year's resolutions for 2014, consider adding *get will or trust created* to your list. If you already have these documents in place, consider getting them updated or revised, especially if they were created in another state and you now reside in Arizona.

I know that my wife and I struggled to make the difficult decisions as to who would be the guardian to our young children. I am sure that is the main reason people avoid getting their affairs in order. As hard as it was, however, it was easier to make those decisions than to think about a judge handling those decisions for our family.

If you are looking for an attorney to help you with your estate planning needs, I would be happy to recommend an estate planning attorney to you. If you need help with an estate sale or a date of death value, I also would be happy to help you. I have handled many estate transactions over the past 11 years, and know how to navigate the processes.

Wishing you and your family a happy, healthy and prosperous 2014. ■

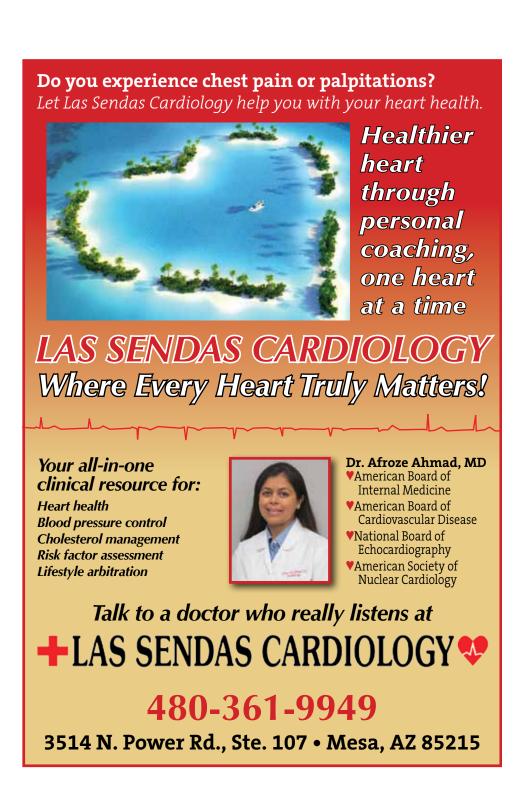
John Karadsheh is a licensed REALTOR® with Coldwell Banker, Trails and Paths Premier Properties. He also is an Associate Broker, Accredited Buyers Representative, a Certified Residential Specialist, and was voted in the Top Five Residential Real Estate Agents in Arizona for 2012 and 2013 by Ranking Arizona, the Best of Arizona Business. You can contact John with any of your real estate questions. Call him at (602) 615-0843, or go to his Web site at www.BuyAndSellAZ.com.













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MOTHER EXPRESSES PRIDE FOR DAUGHTER'S

MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY ADVENTURE

By Maureen Jackson

y daughter, Robin Jackson, just danced in the 87th annual ▲ Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City, as a Spirit of America Productions dancer.

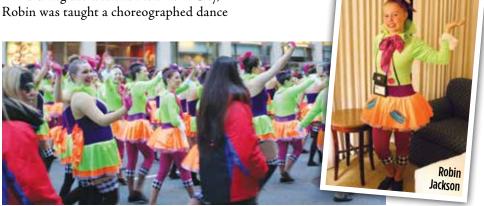
For the past 28 years, Spirit of America Productions has been a part of the Macy's Parade. The participating dancers involved, numbering 650, were from all over the United States.

Robin started dancing at Jeanne's School of Dance East Mesa in August 2003, and has been at this studio ever since. Beginning this past April, eight girls from Jeanne's, including Robin, had been fund-raising to supplement their cost of the trip. The trip departed Phoenix on Nov. 23, and returned on Nov. 29.

During the week in New York City,

routine. The rehearsals were from four to six hours per day. In addition, the trip included a Broadway show; Statue of Liberty/New York Harbor cruise; and the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular, starring the Rockettes. In addition, Robin and others observed the Empire State Building; Macy's; Times Square; Fifth Avenue; Central Park; Rockefeller Center; and many other New York City attractions.

Proud to accompany Robin to New York City, I also purchased advance tickets online to visit the 9-11 Memorial. It was something I wanted the girls to witness in addition to the amazing experience they had with the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.



COMMUNITY

LOCAL STUDENT SELECTED TO PERFORM at Discover Orange Bowl

David Siems 🧂

By Cindy Siems avid Siems, a student at Skyline

High School, was selected for the 2013 All Star Invitational Marching Band.

He will participate in the All Star Marching Band playing the mellophone.

Uniting talented performers from around the country, the All Star Band offers the opportunity to showcase skills at a national marching event, and interact with a team of nationally recognized marching directors. Participation in the All Star Invitational Marching Band is limited to the finest high school performers from across North America.

David auditioned for the All Star Band, and was accepted after a review by the Selection Review Board. Acceptance to the elite group is a direct result of the talent, dedication and achievements demonstrated in his application and audition videos. David will join other performers from the United States for two performances at one of the biggest games in college football—the Discover Orange Bowl, on Friday, Jan. 3, 2014.

David studies music with Jennifer McQuade, and is a member of the Skyline Marching Band, Honors Band and Jazz Band. Additionally, he is an Eagle Scout, from Boy Scouts of America Troop 301,

and participated in the Arizona Ambassadors for Music group last summer as they travelled to several European countries to perform and represent the state of Arizona.

All Stars will come together for six days in Florida to practice and prepare for the performances. This exciting week includes the

opportunity to work with the nation's leading marching band directors and culminates in not one, but two performances on one of the biggest stages in college football—the Orange Bowl.

The 2013 directors included Dr. Kenneth Dye, director of bands, University of Notre Dame; Barry Bernhardt, director of bands, Florida International University; James Hudson, marching band director, Arizona State University; Norm Ruebling, acclaimed percussion educator; and Wes Cartwright.

The All Star Invitational Marching Band combines the skill of the country's best marching students with the excitement of performing in front of nearly 75,000 fans. Each year, the group brings together the most talented high school marching band performers to work with the biggest names in the marching profession as they showcase their skills at prestigious national events.

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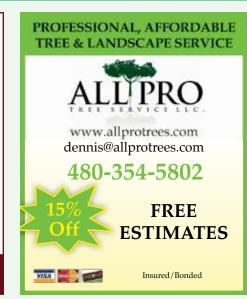
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