



THE LEONA FAMILY TIMES

Volume 6 • 2008

In the Spirit of the Season



Elementary School • La Primaria

Four years ago at Cesar Chavez Academy elementary campus, staff members created the Holiday Outreach program. It began as a way of providing families with assistance for essential services during the winter and gifts during the holiday season. Like most schools Leona serves, more than 90% of the student population at the academy is living below the poverty level. During difficult economic times, the need is far greater than ever before.

As in years past, the 2008 Holiday Outreach event was a tremendous success. Thanks to generous donations by community partners, staff, and friends of the academy, many families received help again this year. Despite the well-publicized difficulties facing the automobile industry today, Carl Galeana of the Galeana Motor Group donated \$10,000 to the Holiday Outreach fund. Galeana says he chose the fund as the beneficiary of his donation because he knew that 100% of the money goes to help the families, and in honor of his own Hispanic ancestry.



Each year the appreciation from the parents is over-whelming. With Galeana's support and other generous donations, parents received gifts, wrapping supplies and an \$80 gift certificate to Meijer. They were also invited to help themselves to tables of donated toys, clothing and other needed items.

It is the generosity of the Galeana Automotive Group and all of the other donors that demonstrates the true spirit of giving and epitomizes the Holiday Season.



Academy for Business & Technology

ABT High School participated in the Coalition on Temporary Shelter (COTS) program for the third year in a row. This year's effort was the largest yet as the school collected and donated over 250 blankets, comforters, personal items, toys, gloves and clothing. True to the school's mission of "learners as leaders of character," staff, parents and students demonstrated caring and sharing for those less fortunate.



Estrella High School's student government, under the guidance of sponsor

Steve Starkweather, hosted its second-annual Share Joys event. The day's activities included arts and crafts, movies, a mobile gaming unit, laser tag and making gingerbread houses. The event raised over \$1,200 to purchase food, clothing, toys, household necessities and turkey dinners for three Avondale families in need. In a second student government effort, Estrella finished in second place in the Avondale canned food drive, which helped to feed over 11,000 families.



The Tucson Accelerated High School culture committee, curriculum committee and students made nearly 150 letters and home-made holiday cards to be sent to soldiers and marines deployed in

Afghanistan. Seven Army units and one Marine unit were chosen to receive the cards and letters, based primarily on the isolation of their units. The students benefited by sharpening their writing skills while having fun creating awesome cards. The school wants the soldiers and marines to know how much the younger members of society appreciate their sacrifices.

Leona Arizona takes a Walk on the Wild Side



The force was with El Dorado High School, as 65 representatives from the school walked for a cure.

More than 225 Leona participants joined tens of thousands for the Multiple Sclerosis Society "Walk on the Wild Side," Saturday, Nov. 8, 2008. The event, which raises money to find a cure for Multiple Sclerosis, included walks along three- and five-mile paths leading through the Phoenix Zoo and the Desert Botanical Garden.

Students, staffs and families from Apex Academy; South Pointe Elementary, Junior High and High schools; Montezuma Middle School; and Apache Trail, Desert Hills, El Dorado, Estrella, Maya, Ocotillo, Peoria Accelerated, South Ridge, Summit, Sun Valley, Tempe Accelerated and West Phoenix high schools all joined forces with Leona's corporate office to walk for a cure.



A Note from our CEO

Dr. William Coats,
Chief Executive Officer
for The Leona Group

More different than alike

A recent essay published by the National Charter School Research Project states that when it comes to evaluating charter schools they are more different than alike. While Leona Group charter schools do maintain certain common characteristics, it is by design that each school is more different than alike. Aligning each school's program to the population it serves allows us to be most responsive to the distinct needs of the community, and essentially every child, served.

William Coats



"The best part of the entire day was to see the children's excitement, dancing, singing, screaming "thank you's" in unison, it made all the muscle aches so worth it!"

- Thea Yockus, Leona Group corporate office

When the sun rose over South Pointe Elementary in Phoenix on December 4, there was a great open space. Before the sun set, students had a brand new playground! The new place to play was part of a collaborative effort between KaBoom!, Chrysler Foundation and The Leona Group.

With the help of more than 350 volunteers, the new playground was fully assembled from scratch in less than eight hours. Volunteers included South Pointe Elementary parents, community members, Leona school leaders, South Pointe High School students, members of the US Marines Corps, Leona corporate office staff, family and friends, representatives from the Chrysler Foundation, Arizona Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge Dealers, Chrysler Financial, Councilman Johnson's office and the City of Phoenix.

Throughout the day, volunteers hauled more than 64,800 square feet of mulch by hand in tarps, mixed 20,000 pounds of concrete by hand in wheelbarrows and assembled the brightly-colored new play area.

The structure was based on drawings provided by students who attended a design day in October. The playground was dedicated at 2:30 p.m. and the children expressed their gratitude to volunteers with special hand made "thank you" cards and through their beautiful smiles.



Evangeline Boetel had a life-changing experience, thanks to a nomination by grade 5 teacher, Dian Shumway. Now a grade 6 student at Gilbert Arts Academy, Boetel visited Washington, D.C. through the People to People World Leadership Forum. Founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1956, the non-profit organization works to promote peace through understanding by sending student delegates to learn about history, government and other facts surrounding various world centers.

Fundraising events afforded Boetel a full scholarship just days before the trip.

"What this program did for me was it opened my eyes. I realized when I was there that there is so much more to life than staying in one place with the same routine," shared Boetel.

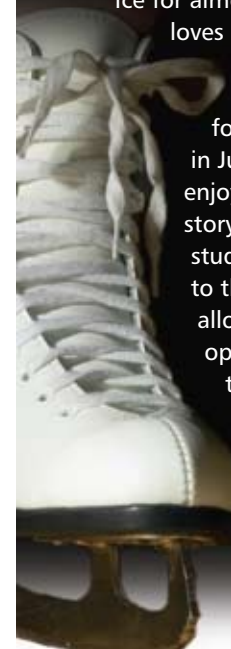
"I thank my fifth grade teacher Mrs. Shumway, my sixth grade teacher Mrs. Nielson, my family, my friends, my classmates, my principal, Mrs. Allen, everyone at Gilbert Arts Academy and everyone at the forum for helping me with all their support for this great journey."

Peoria grad takes the ICE

My daughter Alyssa graduated from Peoria Accelerated a couple of years ago. I just wanted to thank you for allowing her the opportunity to complete her high school education while still pursuing her dream of becoming a professional figure skater.

She achieved that dream and has been on tour with Disney on Ice for almost a year and absolutely loves her job. She performs in a new city every week and will travel to Japan for five months beginning in July. I thought you might enjoy hearing a success story of one of your students and wanted to thank you again for allowing her the opportunity that the public school could not give her.

Sincerely,
Angie Valichnac





Allen school leader named state's top administrator

Each year, the Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA) recognizes schools and individuals for excellence in education choice. This year's outstanding public charter school, educator and administrator were recognized at Michigan's 11th Annual Charter Schools Conference. Held at Detroit's Cobo Center on November 3 & 4, it is the largest gathering of charter school professionals in the nation, with nearly 3,000 participants.

This year, we are pleased to announce that Tim Green, Allen Academy school leader, received the honors for the coveted Administrator of the Year Award. Monique Woodland-Phillips, dean of students and curriculum coach at the academy, originally nominated him for the award in spring 2008. Congratulations to Tim Green and Allen Academy on this prestigious acknowledgement of the great things happening at 8666 Quincy St., Detroit.

Above: Tim Green presents 2008 Allen Academy graduate, Suantané Shepard, with her diploma.

In celebration of Board Appreciation Month

Please join The Leona Group in saluting charter school board members. Charter school board members volunteer their time, vision and talent to benefit the schools they serve. Of special note we would like to recognize the following board members who celebrate 10 years of service this school year, July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009.

- Darryl Barnes, *Voyageur Academy*
- James Blanks, *Allen Academy*
- Jim Buick, *William C. Abney Academy*
- Marcus Burkholder, *New City Academy*
- Mattie Ellis, *Voyageur Academy*
- Joe Gappy, *Hope of Detroit Academy*
- Carleton Golder, *William C. Abney Academy*
- Edward Hall, *Francis Reh Academy*
- Lillis James, *Allen Academy*
- Stanley Krajkowski, *Francis Reh Academy*
- Dr. Dennis Nordmoe, *Pierre Toussaint Academy*
- Joseph Rush, *Voyageur Academy*
- Tom Rys, *Hope of Detroit Academy*
- Barbara Smith, *Voyageur Academy*
- Calvin Tompkins, *New City Academy*
- Curtis Wade, *Voyageur Academy*

Meet Duron Bentley



CONSORTIUM
College Preparatory High School
Discipline • Perseverance • Character

I could begin by telling you how I have endured and ended up successful, or maybe how trials and tribulations came my way and I made it out. Or, perhaps how one year I wanted to give it all up – and how I pulled myself together. I do not give myself total credit for being able to sustain and make it to where I am today – a high school graduate, a college graduate.

Consortium not only prepared me for the challenges of life by educating me in the basics – like math, reading and science – but went beyond the typical and helped mold me into the young man I am today. When I think of Consortium, I don't think of head officials or top leaders. The people who make up Consortium are the school bus drivers, the cafeteria staff, coaches, counselors, teachers, technicians, custodians, latch-key staff – they are the puzzle-piece holders, the "backbone" of Consortium, to whom I give credit for my being able to sustain and make it to where I am today.

Attending Consortium, I gained a true understanding of what character, discipline and perseverance really mean in the real world. Consortium has taught me that nothing in life comes without a price tag. As a great friend of mine says, "You have to earn it!"

When my situation looks bigger than I can handle, I think of the school bus driver who picked my brain just to make sure I was taking school seriously. He would then tell me "Man, you are gonna be somebody important one day!" When my situation is staring me down, I know I have every bit of "backbone" to keep me standing strong and moving forward.

So, when you face students who don't seem to care, who don't realize how important it is to be the best they can be; who don't appreciate the opportunities before them; who don't recognize that you are pouring out every ounce of your heart to help them; who don't see how much you love helping the young face that reached out to know more about what you are passionate enough to teach; when it seems you are only talking to yourself and no one is listening, remember – I listened.

If you can affect just one life, give advice that may save one life, be support to one person who needs you, then your job is not in vain and you are just as important as every other piece in this puzzle. You can change the world through a student who is listening.

My journey to this day is like a puzzle.

Before I began, the pieces were scattered. Consortium College Preparatory High School offered me more than its initial intentions – and its purpose was greater than they may ever know. I thought I had walked into an institution offering education – when in reality I walked into a life-changing, breathtaking world of endless opportunities.



Briana

Tucson Accelerated High School

is proud of senior student, Briana Crawford, who earned a \$10,000 scholarship to the New York Conservatory School of Performing Arts as part of a talent and modeling competition in Dallas.

FAMILY TIMES

THE LEONA



THE LEONA GROUP, L.L.C.

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In the spotlight...

- **Apache Trail High School's** Students Taking Action in their Community (STAC) hosted a free "Spaghetti Night" on Dec. 5 to raise money for the Phoenix Children's Hospital. Thanks Louie Conti, John Morgan and Martin Acuna for working to spiff-up the building even more than usual for this special event.
- Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, hosted 250 **Hope of Detroit Academy** students and their teachers and parents, to kick-off the participation in the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI), which promotes learning about Michigan's ecology.
- Congratulations **El Dorado High School** science teacher and cheer coach, Queirston Haynes, who was named Teacher of the Year for the City of Chandler in a promotion sponsored by Wal-Mart.
- **Consortium College Preparatory Academy** has its first "McDonald's All Star" basketball athlete. As part of this honor, student Ashara Maxie will be touring with other high school girls to exhibit her hoop skills
- In response to the invitation to enter any craft or culinary item in Arizona State Fair, 11 students at **Gilbert Arts Academy** participated and several were winners.
- Congratulations to the **Alta Vista High School** girls volleyball team, who won the Southern Arizona Athletic Association (SAAA) Championship for the second time under coach Deerick Martinez. The team pulled together to win eight games at the Saturday tournament and bring home the championship trophy. A brief ceremony at the school recognized the Lobos and the trophy is proudly on display in the school office.

On the cover

Courtney Watters and her grade 3 students from South Scioto Academy in Columbus, Ohio.

Contact us!

The Leona Family Times is a quarterly newsletter published throughout the school year for Leona Group employees. If you have comments, suggestions or story ideas, send them to:

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