



2025 Arizona Farm and Ranch Museum & Hall of Fame Honorees and families enjoy a group photo following the ceremony at Sheraton Grand Wild Horse Pass, March 22. Carla Carlyle and Raychel Peters (second and third from right), accepted a plaque on behalf of their mom, the late Leona Carlyle-Kakar.

## Ak-Chin's Leona "Legend" Carlyle-Kakar Inducted into Farm and Ranch Hall of Fame

Story by Robert Miguel, photo by Joe Zuccaro, JRZ Photography

The Ak-Chin Indian Community has a long history of farming, it's their identity and foundation from their early beginnings to today.

Despite its early struggles, members who were part of the farming enterprise, persevered and maintained their distinctiveness to help develop one of the most prominent and

successful farming enterprises, not only in Arizona, but throughout the southwest United States.

Those struggles and the drive to continue to move forward was something the late Leona Carlyle-Kakar experienced first-hand. As the first female Chairperson of the Ak-Chin Tribal Council and a long

tenured Ak-Chin Farm Board Member, she was there from the beginning, fighting the United States Government for the Ak-Chin Community to secure a water settlement for their right to farm.

It was these efforts and actions that the Arizona Farm and Ranch Hall of Fame Board of Directors, with the

*Leona continues to Page 1b*

## Inaugural Senior Games "Legends at Play" is a Roaring Success

Photo by Robert Miguel



Carole Lopez gets ready to shoot for a 3 pointer as she shows the perfect form during the 'Basketball Throw" game during the Senior Games held at the Ak-Chin gymnasium.

*Senior Games continues to Page 1b*



Representing Ak-Chin Indian Community at this year's Tortilla Festival was (l-r): Glenna Francisco, Janice Miguel, and Melanie Antone.

## Tortilla Festival 2025

Story and photo by Ashley Vincent

The Salt River Indian Community held their annual Tortilla Festival at the Huhugam Ki: Museum in Salt River, Arizona, on Saturday, March 22, 2025. This year

the community continued the tradition of inviting the three other O'odham sister tribes; Ak-Chin Indian Community, Gila River Indian Community, and Tohono O'odham Nation;

to join in on the festivities by demonstrating their way of making "tortillas".

Representing Ak-Chin Indian Community this year

*Tortilla Festival continues to Page 2b*

## Governor Katie Hobbs Honors Native Veterans After Trump Administration Removes Flags from Phoenix Veterans' Hospital

Phoenix, AZ — Arizonans were dismayed to find out that the flags representing the 22 federally-recognized Tribes in Arizona were removed from the Carl T. Hayden Phoenix

Veterans' Administration Medical Center in Phoenix. After the flags were left with the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, they were entrusted to the Governor by

Tribal leaders. In recognition of the service Tribal Veterans have delivered to their state and their country, Governor Hobbs will display the Tribal flags in the Executive Tower rotunda.

*Governor Hobbs continues to Page 3b*

## Opening of Desert Willow Housing

Story by Kristen Villegas

For months, there has been a new housing development in the works that will soon hold 60 homes and two parks. Welcome, Desert Willow to Ak-Chin, located just south of the Ak-Chin Parks and Recreation gym!

These houses have been going up since before the start of the Masik Tas Celebrations, with the two parks and road work being completed prior to the construction of the homes.

It's expected that all tenants

will be moved in by August 2025, having signed up for homes through the Ak-Chin Housing Department. Three tenants will be doing walk-throughs of their homes every Friday until all homes are filled.

There are two types of homes, 3-bedroom homes at 2374 sq. ft. and 4-bedrooms at 2650 sq. ft.; both with a 2-car garage. Overall, the homes are modern in style, with grey wood flooring and matching cabinetry in the kitchen and



Aerial view photo taken from March 10, 2025 displaying the current progress of Desert Willow. Photo submitted by John Janzen, GIS Specialist.

*Desert Willow continues to Page 6a*

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Story and photos submitted by Leslie Carlyle-Burnett, Ak-Chin Elder Program Director



*Top right: A Hoop  
Dancer entertains at  
the Heard Museum.  
At right and below:  
Fine Arts and crafts  
on display.*

The elders admired the craftsmanship and stories behind each piece, appreciating the creativity on display.



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<div> <div>* Breakfast Served from 7 AM to 8:30 AM</div> <div>* Lunch Served from 12 PM to 1 PM.</div> </div> <div> <div>* For Transportation, call Georgia at 520-568-1760</div> <div>* Movie Questions? Call the Elders Center at 520-568-1760</div> </div> <div> <div>* Thursdays: Elder Chair Yoga 9 AM - 10 AM</div> <div>(Menu Subject to Change)</div> </div>				<div>4/4 Breakfast Sandwich, Hashbrown, Fruit Salad</div> <div>Pinto Beans, Chicken Stir Fry Egg Roll, Sweet Potato, Romaine Salad/ Cornbread, Apple/ Oranges</div>
<div>4/7 Scrambled Eggs, Potatoes, Sausage, Toast/ Fruit</div> <div>Pork Roast, Creamed Spinach, Scalloped Potatoes, Whole Wheat/ White Rolls, Ambrosia Salad/Plum</div>	<div>4/8 Oatmeal, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Banana</div> <div>Chicken Cordon Blu, Butternut Squash, Green Beans, Whole Wheat/ White Rolls, Pineapples</div>	<div>4/9 Biscuits &amp; Gravy, Scrambled Eggs, Peaches w/ Cottage Cheese</div> <div>Cabbage Stew, Chick Pea Salad, Corn, Biscuits, Fresh Cut Fruit</div>	<div>4/10 Breakfast Pizza, Avocado Slices, Fruit &amp; Yogurt</div> <div>Elder Chair Yoga w/ Christy @9AM</div> <div>Northern Beans, Chicken Dumplings, Carrots, Crackers, Grapes</div>	<div>4/11 Ham &amp; Cheese Croissant, Avocado Slices, Fruit Salad</div> <div>Potato Soup &amp; Romaine Salad, Whole Wheat/ White Rolls, Chocolate/ Vanilla Pudding</div>
<div>4/14 Cream of Wheat, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Fruit</div> <div>Black Eyed Peas, Beef &amp; Onion, Romaine Salad, Carrots, Moon Bread, Apple Sauce</div>	<div>4/15 Scrambled Eggs, Hashbrown Casserole, Bacon/Toast, Fruit &amp; Yogurt</div> <div>Tuna or Chicken Sandwich, Tomato/ Cucumber w/ Cottage Cheese, Cantaloupe/ Honey Dew</div>	<div>4/16 Oatmeal, Boiled Eggs, Toast, Fruit Salad</div> <div>Movie Day</div> <div>Butternut Squash Soup, Romaine Salad, Whole Wheat/White Rolls, Mandarin Oranges</div>	<div>4/17 Pancakes, Scrambled Eggs, Sausage, Mix Berries</div> <div>Elder Chair Yoga w/ Christy @9AM</div> <div>Angel Home Health Presentation w/ Erin Kariuki</div> <div>Easter Lunch/Bingo</div> <div>Turkey w/ Stuffing, Mashed Potatoes, Green Bean Casserole, Whole Wheat/White Rolls, Carrot Cake/Apple</div>	<div>4/18 GOOD FRIDAY CENTER CLOSED</div>





Newspaper of the  
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16600 N. Maricopa Hwy.  
Maricopa, Arizona 85139

#### OFFICE HOURS

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Dak, Library and Recreation

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#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements and wishes  
may be phoned in, faxed  
or e-mailed.

#### ARTWORK, LETTERS, STORIES

The Ak-Chin O'odham  
Runner is a Community  
Newspaper and encourages  
Community involvement.

If you have artwork, photos,  
poems or a great story that  
you would like to share,  
please contact us so we  
can include it in "YOUR"  
newspaper. If you have  
suggestions or comments  
about "YOUR" newspaper,  
please let the Runner Staff  
know that too.

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

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

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

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

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATE

2025 Subscription rate is  
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**16600 N. Maricopa Hwy.**  
**Maricopa, Arizona 85139**

Make check/money order  
payable to:  
**Ak-Chin Indian Community**

#### NEXT DEADLINE

Don't forget the  
DEADLINE for the  
**April 18 - May 1, 2025**  
issue is due by  
**FRIDAY, APRIL 11TH**

Please submit all  
announcements, wishes, etc.  
no later than  
**FRIDAY, APRIL 11TH**

Material submitted after the  
**APRIL 11TH DEADLINE**  
cannot be guaranteed  
placement. If appropriate  
and relevant, it will be  
included in the next issue.

# Cultivating the Future: Desert Sunrise High School Celebrates Greenhouse Grand Opening

Maricopa, Az – With a vision  
rooted in hands-on learning  
and real-world experience,  
Desert Sunrise High School  
celebrated the grand opening  
of its new greenhouse  
on Thursday, March 27.

The event welcomed  
approximately 30 guests,  
including Governing Board  
Vice President Patti Coutre,  
Mayor Nancy Smith,  
City Councilmember Ann  
Marie Knorr, Pinal County  
School Superintendent Jill  
Broussard, Pinal County  
Supervisor Rich Vitiello,  
former Ak-Chin Chairman  
Robert Miguel and NAACP  
President Constance Jackson.

The greenhouse marks a  
major milestone of the MUSD  
AgriScience program, which  
launched four years ago and  
continues to expand opportunities  
for students interested in  
agriscience, sustainability, and  
animal care and management.

Construction began last

Photos by Robert Miguel



Above: Guests await their turn to visit the Desert Sunrise  
Greenhouse. Below: Montana Roberts makes a friend as she feeds  
one of two mini goats who are residents of the Greenhouse grounds.





## 33rd Annual Him-Dak Celebration

Saturday, April 5, 2025

### " This is Us "

#### Him-Dak Celebration

This year's 33rd Annual Him-Dak Celebration will be held  
on Saturday April 05, 2025 at Ak-Chin Feast House located  
near St. Francis of Assisi Mission at 16657 N Church Rd,  
Maricopa, Arizona 85139. Festivities will be from 9am - 1pm.

#### Fun Run & Walk

Registration Starts at 7:30 a.m., Walk/Run begin at 8:00 a.m.  
(starting by the Justice Center Bldg on N. Court St. and ending north of the  
Feast House on W. Eco Museum Rd.)

#### Dance Performers Information Booths Art Vendors Food Vendors Bounce House Artisan Demonstrations.

If you should have any questions please contact the Him-Dak office at: 520-568-1350



## McBride retires after 30 years of Service

Story and photo by Robert Miguel

After thirty years of service  
to Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino  
& Resort in the capacity of a  
Security Officer, Surveillance  
Supervisor, and Surveillance  
Director, Mike McBride has  
finally decided to hang it up  
and enjoy the rest of his time  
traveling and spending time  
with his family.

On Thursday, March 20th,  
family, friends, and co-workers  
from Harrah's surprised Mike  
with a retirement party on the  
patio of Chop, Block, & Brew,  
where hors d'oeuvres and  
drinks were served.

The surprise was much  
appreciated by Mike as he  
made his way to each attendee  
and shared a moment or two  
reminiscing about the years  
working for the casino, twenty-  
five of it was in the surveillance  
area, and five as a security  
officer.

"I have been blessed to have  
been employed by such a great  
enterprise for this long. I've  
really enjoyed meeting and  
getting to know a number of  
great employees who eventually  
have become great friends,"  
McBride said. "Now it's time  
to really enjoy my life by  
spending more time and taking

a cruise here and there with my  
wife, children, and grandkids.  
Although I'll miss coming to  
work here at Harrah's, watching  
my grandkids grow up will be  
something exciting to see."

Mike and his wife of forty-  
five years, Donna, have two  
children, Jereme and Justin  
and three grandchildren, Cylee,  
Madison, and Colin.

The thirty years of service with  
Harrah's and the Ak-Chin Indian  
Community actually goes much  
further for the McBride family.  
As a Pinal County police officer,  
Mike helped patrol the city of  
Maricopa prior to it becoming  
incorporated and declared a  
recognized city.

Their son Jereme actually  
attended the Ak-Chin Early  
Childhood Development  
Program and during a time,  
was awarded the student who  
"spoke the most Papago words"  
by staff.

Mike also played a major role  
during one of Ak-Chin's darker  
moments, when he aided the  
unfortunate incident involving  
the loss of former Ak-Chin  
member and Chief of Police,  
Milton "Paul" Antone, an  
incident that he often thinks of.

**To all our amazing community members,  
residents and employees, we need your input!  
Last year's Masik Tas was a huge success,  
and we want to make it even better this year.**

**Please take a few minutes to fill out our  
survey and share your thoughts on what  
you loved and what we can improve. Your  
feedback is invaluable in shaping an even  
more incredible experience for everyone!**

<https://masiktas.ak-chin.nsn.us/thank-you/>

**Thank you for being a part of Masik Tas  
and for helping us create meaningful  
celebrations.**

**We appreciate you!  
We can't wait to hear your ideas.**

**Ak-Chin Community Events**



Ak-Chin Health Education Presents

## STAR WARS DAY MAY THE 4TH BE WITH YOU EVENT

Ak-Chin Circle Lawn  
May 3rd, 2025 / 8:00 AM

**MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU!  
JOIN US IN CELEBRATION OF STAR  
WARS DAY WITH A 5K OR 1.5 MILE  
WALK OR RUN!  
WHETHER YOU CHOOSE THE LIGHT SIDE  
OR THE DARK SIDE, PLEASE JOIN US  
FOR FITNESS, BREAKFAST, 5K TOP  
FINISHER PRIZES, AND RAFFLE PRIZES!**

EVENT OPEN TO AK-CHIN INDIAN  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS, RESIDENTS,  
EMPLOYEES & EMPLOYEE FAMILIES.  
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: APRIL 30TH

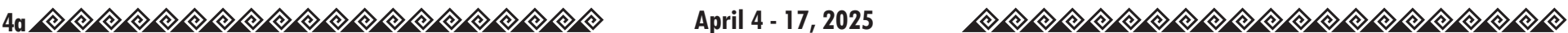
QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT AK-CHIN HEALTH  
EDUCATION AT (520)568-1080 OR MGUY@AK-CHIN.NSN.US

REGISTER USING GOOGLE  
FORMS. SCAN QR CODE.









# Bubble Planet

Story and Photos Submitted by Estrella Reyes-Helpingstine, 6th & 7th Grade Advisor

Recently, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students had the exciting opportunity to take a field trip to Bubble Planet, located at Arizona Mills Mall in Tempe on Tuesday, March 18th, 2025 followed by a fun lunch at Peter Piper Pizza.

Bubble Planet is an awe-inspiring destination, offering a world of immersive experiences and interactive displays that captivate the imagination. With its colorful, bubble-themed environments and endless photo opportunities, students were able to explore and capture creative pictures.

This special outing was organized by the Education Department as a way to celebrate the students' hard work, dedication, and academic achievements.

The students who earned good grades, maintained excellent attendance, and demonstrated positive behavior were invited to join the trip. This celebration was a way of recognizing their outstanding efforts and



commitment to success both in the classroom and beyond.

Providing these kinds of incentives is important because it not only rewards those who have excelled but also shows that we are invested in each student's journey. We want the best for all of our students and aim to create opportunities that motivate those who haven't yet reached their goals to keep working towards them.

We are incredibly proud of these students for their academic achievements,

and this trip is just one small way we can show how much we value their hard work.

It was a memorable day that highlighted the positive behaviors and academic perseverance the department strives to encourage. We are committed to fostering an environment where every student can thrive. Celebrating achievements—big and small—helps create a positive and motivating atmosphere that encourages everyone to do their best, setting the stage for future success.



Top Photo: Bottom Row L-R- John Zabawa, Edward Martinez, Arrow Santiago, Jamar Stevenson, Uriayzz Antone. Top Row, Left to Right – Mark Pablo Jr., Cecil Miguel, Terry Santiago, Narin Lopez, Elijah Narcia, Kylee Carlyle. Bottom Photos: At left, John Zabawa with the silver balloon. At right Left to Right, Cecil Miguel, Mark Pablo Jr., Jamar Stevenson.



# Understanding Water Quality Presentation

Story and Photo by Kristen Villegas

Another opportunity was presented to Ak-Chin Employees on March 28, 2025 by the Ak-Chin Environmental Department; this being the Understanding Water Quality presentation.

This lunchtime seminar was held at the Ak-Chin Water Reclamation Facility and was ran by Mr. Ross Stimac, Ak-Chin Water Quality Specialist.

The topics discussed were Water Quality Issues, because the water in Ak-Chin is transferred from a great distant, there are potential hazards that could cause corruption.

Water Pollution and Prevention was also a subject of discussion. Here we learned of the possible pollutants that are present in unfiltered water and how Ross and the water operators prevent them from entering our waters. With the prevention, the topic of Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment was another area covered as it aids in continued protection from probable contaminants.

Not only did the group get the option to ask questions, they were given tote bags and a lunch of cheese enchiladas with rice and beans.

The Environmental Programs Department has their Earth Day Celebration on Tuesday, April 22, 2025; for more information, please contact them at 520-568-1140.



# Enchanted Island

Story and Photos Submitted by Diana Velazquez, Student Advisor/ Tutor

The Third Quarter Academic Field Trip was a resounding success, offering students a well-earned day of adventure and excitement. After months of dedication and outstanding academic performance, children from grades K through 5 were rewarded with an unforgettable experience at Enchanted Island on March 21<sup>st</sup>, located within Encanto Park in Phoenix, Arizona.

As students arrived, they were welcomed by a refreshing breeze and a scenic waterway filled with ducks, setting the perfect tone for the day. After check-in, each child received a wristband granting them access to the park's many attractions.

One of the most popular rides among the younger children was the carousel, while the train ride, a 10-minute tour around the park, provided a fun and scenic journey for all. The Parachute Tower was another highlight, offering a breathtaking view of the Central Phoenix skyline and Encanto Park as students floated gently upwards before descending.

The bumper boats provided endless laughter as children navigated the water in battery-powered boats, while the rock-climbing wall tested their courage



and skill. Standing at 30 feet tall and designed to mimic the Grand Canyon's rugged terrain, the wall accommodated four climbers at a time, offering varying levels of difficulty.

As the day unfolded, students enjoyed a delicious lunch before browsing for souvenirs to commemorate their special outing. The joy and excitement on their faces reflected the success of the trip and the value of such rewarding experiences.


The Ak-Chin Education Department extends its heartfelt gratitude to the parents for their support and trust. Seeing the students' enthusiasm reaffirms the importance of fostering educational excellence through enriching experiences beyond the classroom. This field trip was not only a celebration of

their hard work but also a cherished memory for years to come.

Children who attended the Fieldtrip:

- Kinder: Alexandra Lopez, Andrew Enos, Aria Vincent -Enos  
1st Grade: Aaron Peters Jr., Andrea Lopez, Brooklynne Baptisto, Mazi - Ali Owens  
2nd grade: Jaxson Justin, Layla Santiago  
3rd grade: Adam Alejandro, Adriel Jimenez, Aliyah Vincent, Ariya Ramon, Connor Martinez, Damien Thomas, Kieran Yarberry, Luisana Garcia, Morgan Miller  
4th grade: Dallyss Peters, Eleazar Baptisto, Elmaleen Johnson, Jessica Zabawa, Kaiya McClure, Serenity Villegas  
5th grade: Aribella Avilar- Vincent, David Oliver, Morgan Green, Sedra Dean, Sophia Matuz





**Celebrate National Library Week**

*Ak-Chin Indian Community Library*

**Open House**

Thursday  
April 10th, 2025  
5-7 PM

**A time to celebrate the many ways libraries bring people together, spark imagination, and support lifelong learning.**

**We invite the community to join the celebration! Whether you're a longtime patron or haven't visited in a while, now is the perfect time to explore all the library has to offer.**

**Open to Ak-Chin members, residents and employees!**



# Ak-Chin Early Childhood Education Students Experience Business Side of Ak-Chin Circle

On Friday March 28th, the Ak-Chin Preschooler's had one last addition to their department visits for the month, the Ak-Chin Circle Entertainment Center. The three and four-year-old classes took a short trip to the Circle where they were greeted by staff, David Trujillo and Brittany Peters.

Students were able to get a "behind the scenes" look at how some of the areas in the entertainment center is operated. On the theatre side they were able to see the process of how a movie is played, when it starts on a computer, to how it looks being projected onto the big screen.

For the entertainment side the students were able to see how the bowling machinery



works at the bowling alley. Then, ending their visit at the 347 Grill, where they were treated

to some delicious pizza made fresh just for them by the 347 kitchen.



The Ak-Chin Early Childhood Education program would like to send a big thank you to the staff at Ak-Chin

Circle; the kids really enjoyed the behind-the-scenes experience of the movie theatre and bowling alley.



## Final Week of Intersession Brings Fun For All



Ak-Chin Him-Dak and Community Events departments ended their final week of intersession with some fun activities lined up for the students that attended their respective programs.

During the week, both groups were visited by different departments within the community. Ak-Chin Health Education department had the kids at the Him-Dak breaking out in a sweat with some exercise activities that got their blood flowing. Prior to

visiting the Him-Dak, they visited the Ak-Chin gym where Community Events had their group of kids, showing them a snack that was both delicious and healthy for all. During the week the students also had a special visit from the Ak-Chin Police Department.

The Events department said, "For 2 days students were given the option and opportunity to learn to read and write in cursive or learn beginner calligraphy. Our younger attendees who were in

kindergarten were able to practice their upper and lowercase manuscript letters. A good handful of children were able to decipher and read the "Old English" cursive text. Children learned easy techniques for cursive lettering and calligraphy by using worksheets they could trace and they explored freehand style lettering too.

By the 2nd day, children were able to write their names in beginner cursive, copy cursive

letters and create calligraphy artwork. Some students even requested that they wanted to continue learning and writing on the 3rd day too. All creations and practice work completed was displayed on the gym wall for all to see and brag."




In organization with the Ak-Chin Recreation department, the group attending Events intersession activities were treated with a trip to Lake Pleasant in Morristown, Arizona. There the kids were able to get their tan on and have a light lunch, lakeside.

"On Thursday, March 20th a group of excited children set off on a fantastic field trip to Lake Pleasant. The children spent the day swimming, and enjoyed their picnic lunch by the lake. Seeing their excited faces as we approached the lake was great. 'Look! It's beautiful!' said Blayke Patterson, 6 years old as we got close to our destination. The exhausted children left with big smiles and wonderful memories of their day by the lake.

A huge thank-you to everyone who worked together to make this field trip possible and a success." Events Department shared.

The students with Events spent their last day of intersession having some fun in the sun, with a water day at Milton "Paul" Antone Memorial Park, while the students attending the Him-Dak spring art sessions spent their last day watching Snow White at the Ak-Chin Circle. It was an easy-going day for all as they made the most of their "free days" before heading back to school the following Monday.



**Monday, April 7th, 2025**

**Time: 4:00 pm-6:00 pm**

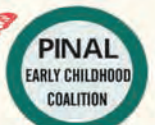


**Where: Milton "Paul" Antone Memorial Park**

**The Pinal Early Childhood Coalition invites you to a celebration focused on early learning and the educators who support the positive development of young children.**

**AK-CHIN CHILD DEVELOPMENT WILL BE HOSTING A TABLE FOR MUSIC MONDAY AND MAKING KAZOOS!**

**JOIN US FOR FUN!**  
**FREE event for families with children birth to age five years old.**

- Crafts, activities, music and BOUNCE Houses
- Raffle prizes
- Community resources



bathrooms. Not only do all room come equipped with plenty of outlets, but there is a high outlet for those who plan to mount their tv's against the wall.

The rooms, though on the cozy size are perfect for those with kids or others to have the space they need. The laundry room is located in the hallways with wide double doors for easy access to the washer and dryer. All

bedrooms excluding the master are facing the front of the house.

How do Community Members sign up for the housing list? First, you will need to fill out one of the applications from the Housing Department.

Remember to bring your diploma or GED certificate as this is one of the requirements for a home or apartment. You will then be put on

the waitlist and a copy of your application will be sent to the Council Secretary as a backup.

Currently, the waitlist for homes has reached 170 members, but will be reduced to 110 once all tenants enter their new homes.

If you are expecting an apartment, have no worries as construction on the new apartment building is expected to

start in April/ May of this year; depending on if there are no setbacks and will last for a year.

Apartment applications can also be picked up at Ak-Chin Housing, though you will only be put on the waitlist for one or the other, pending the approval of the Housing Board.

We can't wait to hear more about this upcoming project!

Grace Pablo, current Housing Director shared, "The Housing Department, Capital Projects, The Contractors, as well as Community Council and everyone that has been involved is over joyed and excited to welcome in the new tenants and to be able to hand over the keys to their New Homes.

It is my hope that the new tenants embrace

their new homes with pride, satisfaction, and appreciation to the Community for making all this possible for its membership."

For more information on how to sign up for a house or apartment, please contact the Ak-Chin Housing Department at 520-568-1730.

Congratulations to all who are receiving their homes!



# Honor Roll Shout Out

Story and Photos Submitted by Diana Velazquez, Student Advisor/ Tutor

Congratulations to Honor Roll Achievers Lanna Lewis (2nd grade), Marie Lewis (4th grade) and Ginalee Lewis (5th grade). Ginalee and Marie Lewis attend Imago Dei Middle School; Lanna Lewis attends Mary Belle MrCorkle. Their parents are Dominic Lewis and Sacena Frank.

The girls shared a bit about themselves and their schooling.

## Lanna – 2nd grade

Q: What are some of the things you learned from your teachers this year?  
A: I have learned subtraction and borrowing from the tens place.

Q: What was the most challenging subject and how did you overcome the challenges?  
A: Most challenging is school testing the reading part. I practice my reading for overcoming my challenges.

Q: What do you want to be when you grow up?  
A: Nurse and Gymnast and so many other things

Q: If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who

would it be and why?  
A: Jesus Christ because I heard he has good bread.

Q: What is your favorite thing about your family?  
A: My favorite thing about family is the good food they cook.

## Marie – 4th grade

Q: What are some of the things you learned from your teachers this year?  
A: I learned in science there are air particles everywhere. And when you play music on a speaker the particles make the speaker vibrate.

Q: What was the most challenging subject and how did you overcome the challenges?  
A: Math is most challenging. I ask for help and participate.

Q: What do you want to be when you grow up?  
A: Designer and so many other things.

Q: If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and why?  
A: Selena (singer) because she has a pretty voice.

Q: What is your favorite thing about your family?  
A: That when we attend parties we like to dance.

## Ginalee- 5th grade

Q: What are some of the things you learned from your teachers this year?  
A: Science I learned that the sun has the biggest mass, it forces earth to move toward sun.

Q: What are some of the things you learned from your teachers this year?  
A: Have a challenge of speaking in front of class. I overcome my challenge by taking it little by little.

Q: What do you want to be when you grow up?

A: Dance teacher, singer

Q: If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and why?  
A: My great grandparent to learn more from them.

Q: What is your favorite thing about your family?  
A: My favorite thing about family is being together during b-day parties, anniversaries and just being together.



Ginalee Lewis



Marie Lewis



Lanna Lewis

# ATTENTION

## Community Members

## Past Due Fines/Restitution

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

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

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

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

## Ak-Chin Indian Community

## 2025 EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Tuesday, April 22, 2025  
10:00AM - 3:00pm  
Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino

Hosted by Ak-Chin Environmental Programs - Join us for an amazing event!

**FOOD EXHIBITS**  
**RAFFLE PRIZES**  
**LIVE ENTERTAINMENT**  
**GIVE AWAYS:**  
**T-Shirts**  
**Sling Bags**  
**40oz Stainless Tumbler**  
(while supplies last)

Contact Angie Soliz for more information.  
ASoliz@ak-chin.nsn.us or (520) 568-1140





# JOB OPENINGS

## CURRENT JOB OPENINGS:

- Accountant (2)
- Communication Officer
- Communication Officer (part-time)
- Compensation Analyst
- Detention Officer (non-certified)
- Detention Officer Certified part-time
- Electrician
- Environmental Technician
- General worker (Temp worker)
- Lab Tutor (part-time)
- Maintenance Technician
- Plant Electrician
- Plant Electrician & Instrumentation Technician
- Police Officer (non-certified)
- Prosecutor
- Substance Abuse Therapist

Open to Enrolled Community Members Only

- Cultural Resource Monitor
- Museum Technician
- Oral Historian

[www.ak-chin.nsn.us](http://www.ak-chin.nsn.us)

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

**WAILA MUSIC CLASS**

**Saturday April 26<sup>th</sup> 12 p.m**

For Sign-up or Any Questions Contact the Library at (520) 568-1675 Or Email [library@ak-chin.nsn.us](mailto:library@ak-chin.nsn.us)

## Reading Buddies

April 2nd - June 27th, 2025

Ages 5-18

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

@ 3:30-5:30 PM

Saturdays

@ 1-3 PM

Children and teens are welcome to the library to read for 20 minutes with a plush book buddy. Participants will sign-in for a time when they arrive at the library. This program will help children practice reading in a nonjudgmental environment with the goal to develop a love of reading.

Questions

Call: 520-568-1675

Email: [library@ak-chin.nsn.us](mailto:library@ak-chin.nsn.us)



INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

To My GrandBaby Genevilyn Miguel

It has really been an amazing year,

And all the richer

because you are here.

Your sweet little coos

are now baby talk,

And your wobbly legs

are learning to walk.

Your little mouth now holds

a toothy grin,

And each time you smile,

another heart you win.

So, we're celebrating your special day.

This birthday is the first of

many more on the way!

From Gamma Mena

Happy Birthday to my grandsons

Jason, Michael Sr., and Darryl

Love, Grandma

Happy Belated Birthday to our

Grandma Seda and Uncle Carlton

We love you – thanks for all you do.

Love, Yaya and Armanii

Happy Birthday Pate and Janay

Love your family

**Restorative Yoga** With Vickie

**April 02, 2025**  
**April 09, 2025**  
**April 16, 2025**  
**April 30, 2025**

**Ak-Chin Circle- Elements**  
**Wednesdays 6:00p-7:00p**

Questions?? Please call Health Education at: (520) 568-1080

\*Open to All Ak-Chin Community Members, Ak-Chin Community Residents, Employees and Employee Family Members

**AK-CHIN HIM-DAK MUSEUM**

**EASTER CRAFTS**  
**WEDNESDAY**  
**APRIL 9TH**  
**ART BUILDING**  
**4:30 - 7:00 PM**

OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS & RESIDENTS OF THE AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY. TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED, PLEASE CALL THE FRONT DESK BEFORE 4:00 PM. @ 520-568-1350



## NO TRANSIT SERVICES

Good Friday, Friday, April 18th

Memorial Day, Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup>

Please make alternate arrangements for transportation on these dates.

Thank you!!

**EASTER word search**

NPYQHNL PW MERTMUTVWQ  
KGBQAVYTYIEWABRGESK  
OPRBKANZQNGVWBMIBDR  
XACOKAQYLZGILYBUSGK  
QRVNPEJIUQSTWOFIXEJ  
LAWNONRHLGSTTOMRTL N  
MDOEOPABYCNPEXESAHL  
I EETANRZOEQCJA IAGZA  
ROQMMYPYLUTBPMSQBLA  
AHRFGHFNVEQI VPD TYUQ  
CIFCJUSFKFLUWZCBE BR  
LZPRINFSSUTYEXURBRJ  
EYOOUTALT YQQETQHSSC  
OLGSPBKOA ZPPEEPSQB C  
QOPSCGJCHICKYXSCGWZ

APRIL BONNET EGGS BASKET  
RISEN PARADE PEEPS TULIP  
MIRACLE HUNT RABBIT CROSS  
LENT BOUQUET EASTER CHICK

## Birthdays 4/4 - 4/23

### APRIL 4TH

Eileen Quintero  
Paula Pete  
Isabella Luna

### APRIL 5TH

Jacolby King

### APRIL 6TH

Drevon Deloney  
Elena Cypriano  
Alexis Stephens  
Jason Garcia

### APRIL 7TH

Nicole Coester

### APRIL 8TH

Cayla Thomas  
Jeffery Ruelas

### APRIL 9TH

Nikolai White  
Nathius Jaucinde  
Garin Cuatt  
Michelle Miranda  
Leondro Antone

### APRIL 10TH

Amanda Green

### APRIL 11TH

Heather Thomas  
Fred Jerry Jr.  
Michael Peters Sr.  
Gloria Alejandro  
Miranda Iniestra  
Angel Stephens

### APRIL 12TH

Genevilyn Miguel  
Isaiah Narcia  
Angel Hoffman  
Deeandra Lewis

### APRIL 13TH

Mel Kaniatobe  
Jessica Batopis

### APRIL 14TH

Pate Justin  
Janay Ulloa-Justin

### APRIL 15TH

Reynold Narcia  
Brian Carra  
Sandra Shade

### APRIL 16TH

Antonia Baptisto  
Darryl Peters  
Valerie Ruiz  
Glenna Francisco

### APRIL 17TH

Jace Dickerson

### APRIL 18TH

Tianah Pilone

### APRIL 19TH

Anaise Valles-Diaz  
William Antone

### APRIL 20TH

Steven Sam  
Celeste Delores

### APRIL 21ST

Renelda Pete  
Anyssa Justin  
Zaida Soliz

### APRIL 22ND

Vickie Tavena  
Ricky Attakai  
Dustin Whitman Jr.  
Eliza Smith  
Andrew Enos

### APRIL 23RD

Jonathan Dean  
Hunter Narcia

### APRIL 24TH

Martina Antone



4/2025

**April**



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5 Him Dak Celebration 9am-1pm Library Closed
			Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm		Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	
6	7 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	8	9 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	10 Ak-Chin Library Open House 5-7pm	11 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	12 Easter Egg Hunt Library Closed
Happy National Library Week!						
13	14 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	15	16 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	17	18 Good Friday Library Closed	19 Library Closed
20 HAPPY EASTER	21 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	22 EARTH DAY	23 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	24	25 Mediums & Mocktails 5-6pm Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	26 WAILA Music Class @12pm Reading Buddies 1:00-3:00pm
27	28 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	29	30 Reading Buddies 3:30-5:30pm	Programs and events open to Ak-Chin members, residents and employees. Minors under 16 must be accompanied by an adult over 18.		

Questions? Call: (520) 568-1675 or Email: [Library@ak-chin.nsn.us](mailto:Library@ak-chin.nsn.us)





Affairs hospital is overtly offensive and a complete dishonor to our long history of selfless sacrifice to this country. I demand that we, as Sovereign Nations, who have given so much for this nation, be allowed representation by allowing our flags to be unfurled in VA facilities.”

— Chairman Roland Maldonado, Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians

“Last week, we worked closely with our federal government to reinstate materials associated with our Navajo Code Talkers on federal websites. Although that action has since been resolved, our tribal flags being removed from the Phoenix VA hospital is completely disheartening. Especially since Native Americans and Alaska Natives are proud members of the military, enlisting at higher rates than other nationalities, inspired by patriotism, cultural values and the desire to protect their homelands. Although the VA has implemented a new policy to limit flag displays at its facilities, it is essential that the sovereignty of

tribes continues to be represented.” – President BuuNygren, Navajo Nation

“The Pascua Yaqui Tribe expresses deep disappointment in the decision by federal agencies to remove the flags of Arizona Tribal Nations from their facilities or any removal of the memory of Native American figures in US Military history. These actions disregard the significant contributions and sacrifices made by Native American veterans, including those from the Pascua Yaqui community, who have served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. For generations, Native Americans have served at the highest rates of any demographic, demonstrating unwavering dedication to the defense of this nation. Our flags are symbols of our sovereignty, history, and the enduring commitment of our people to the values of service and honor. The removal of these flags or the memory of Native American figures in US Military diminishes the recognition and respect that our veterans rightfully deserve. We urge these

agencies to reconsider their decisions and work collaboratively with tribal nations to ensure that the sacrifices of Native veterans are properly acknowledged and honored. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe remains committed to advocating for the rightful representation of all tribal nations within spaces dedicated to those who have served.”

— Pascua Yaqui Tribe

“There is no reason to do this other than to attempt to erase our history. Arizona has 22 sovereign tribal nations whose members have proudly and courageously served in the U.S. Armed Forces for generations, with many giving the ultimate sacrifice. Removing our tribal flags is insulting and disrespectful. But let me be clear: The Apache people stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our Native brothers and sisters from across Arizona and the United States. We are here. This is our land. And we are not going anywhere.”

— Chairman Terry Rambler, San Carlos Apache Tribe

“For generations, veterans

from the Tohono O’odham Nation and other Arizona tribes have served in the U.S. armed forces with courage and honor. Unilaterally removing the 22 tribal flags from display at the Phoenix Veterans Administration Hospital is an insult to their service and sacrifice. The VA must correct this misguided action at once.”

— Chairman Verlon Jose, Tohono O’odham Nation

“As Chairwoman of the Yavapai-Apache Nation, I strongly oppose the removal of the 22 Arizona tribal nation flags from the Phoenix Veterans’ Administration Medical Center. Native veterans have served this country with unwavering dedication for over 200 years. By removing these flags, the VA dishonors their sacrifices and undermines the sovereignty of tribal nations. It is an unacceptable and hurtful act that diminishes the contributions of Native veterans, and we urge the immediate restoration of their rightful recognition.”

— Chairwoman Tanya Lewis, Yavapai-Apache Nation

LUXE LOUNGE  
**LIVE**  
THE LIVE MUSIC & DJ BAR

**Native Greed**

Performing Live  
**April 12, 2025**  
10PM-2AM | DOORS OPEN AT 9PM

21+ EVENT  
MORE BARS AND SEATING AVAILABLE!

LUXE LOUNGE

Ak-ChinCircle.com

16000 N. Maricopa Rd. Maricopa AZ 85139

GOOD FRIDAY  
**DEAL**  
\$35

2 Hours of Bowling  
\*Shoes Included  
5 1 Hour Arcade Card  
\*Non Redemption Only  
5 Single Rounds of Laser Tag  
To add an additional person to the deal will be \$5 per person

**ALL DAY APRIL 18**

Ak-ChinCircle.com

16000 N. Maricopa Rd. Maricopa AZ 85139

**ARROYO GRILLE**  
At Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club

520.426.6832 | ARROYOGRILLE.COM  
PATIO VIEWS | DINE IN | ORDER TO GO  
48456 WEST HWY 238 IN MARICOPA

**APRIL FREE CHIPS N'SALSA**

**JOIN US FOR MASTERS WEEK APRIL 7-13**

Must present coupon to server. Not valid with daily or Happy Hour specials. Cannot be combined with other specials, offers or Harrah's Rewards. Does not include alcohol. One coupon per table, no split checks. Valid for one visit daily. Mon-Sat. Non-transferable. Offer expires 4/30/25.

Proudly owned by the Ak-Chin Indian Community

**Harrah's**  
AK-CHIN CASINO

**APRIL 2025**

**CAESARS**  
REWARDS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 <b>5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER</b> MONDAY, APRIL 14 – SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 2025		 REACTIVE DINNERWARE GIFT GIVEAWAY	 PEGBOARD WEDNESDAYS FOREVER YOUNG	 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER	 SEVEN STARS® EXCLUSIVE PROGRESSIVE REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER CANTINA NIGHTS	 SEVEN STARS® EXCLUSIVE PROGRESSIVE REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER CANTINA NIGHTS
 SUNDAY FUNDAY SHOPPING! SEVEN STARS® EXCLUSIVE PROGRESSIVE REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER	 REDEEM REWARD CREDITS FOR FREE SLOT PLAY!	 REACTIVE DINNERWARE GIFT GIVEAWAY	 PEGBOARD WEDNESDAYS FOREVER YOUNG	 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER	 CANTINA NIGHTS	 TEE UP AT THE AK-CHIN SOUTHERN DUNES GOLF CLUB CANTINA NIGHTS
 SUNDAY FUNDAY SHOPPING!	 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER	 REACTIVE DINNERWARE GIFT GIVEAWAY 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER	 PEGBOARD WEDNESDAYS FOREVER YOUNG 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER	 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER	 CANTINA NIGHTS 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER	 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER CANTINA NIGHTS
 SUNDAY FUNDAY SHOPPING! 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER EASTER SUNDAY	 COFFEE & DONUTS, A WINNING COMBINATION	 REACTIVE DINNERWARE GIFT GIVEAWAY	 PEGBOARD WEDNESDAYS FOREVER YOUNG	 10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER DRAFT DAY MEMORABILIA SWEEPSTAKES	 CANTINA NIGHTS	 GO GREEN \$50,000 SWEEPSTAKES CODEGREEN® BAMBOO FIBER DINNERWARE GIVEAWAY CANTINA NIGHTS
 SUNDAY FUNDAY SHOPPING!	 CAESARS SPORTSBOOK WITH CAESARS REWARDS. GAME ON!	 REACTIVE DINNERWARE GIFT GIVEAWAY	 PEGBOARD WEDNESDAYS FOREVER YOUNG	 <b>\$50,000 SWEEPSTAKES</b> SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025		



**AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY, AZ** – The Ak-Chin Recreation Center buzzed with energy and camaraderie as the inaugural Ak-Chin Senior Games, themed “Legends at Play” unfolded on March 25th. What began as a vision inspired by discussions with Elder and Health Education Coordinators, blossomed into a vibrant celebration of active living, drawing participants from across Arizona and even California.

“We saw the success of events like the Quechan Senior Games and recognized the opportunity to create something similar here,” explained Ann Antone, Ak-Chin Recreation Director. “Leveraging our central location, we aimed to kickstart our own Active Senior Programs.”

And kickstart they did! The response was phenomenal, with over 200 individuals competing in the Individual Games, 18 spirited ‘Oompa Loompa’ teams, and 34 teams battling it out in the exciting Chair Volleyball tournament.

“The theme ‘Legends at Play’ was conceptualized by the Ak-Chin Recreation team, aiming to celebrate the experience and vitality of senior athletes,” a spokesperson said.

The event’s appeal stretched far beyond the Ak-Chin Community, attracting teams from across the state and

even across state lines. Many were newcomers to such tournaments, drawn by the unique blend of competition and community.

The two-day event kicked off with a lively opening ceremony, followed by intense competition in the Individual Games and pool play for Chair Volleyball.

“It was amazing to see such widespread interest,” remarked one organizer. “We’re especially delighted that many of these teams are new to our tournaments, which speaks volumes about the appeal of this event.”

Ak-Chin’s own athletes shone brightly, with Jeanette Peters, Flora Howerton, and Robert Miguel all earning awards in the Individual Games, showcasing the community’s talent and dedication.

“My favorite moment was seeing everyone come together and have so much fun,” shared one Ak-Chin team member. “The energy was incredible!”

Another participant added, “I’d tell anyone thinking about participating next year, do it! You won’t regret it. The camaraderie and competition were fantastic.”

Adding to the festive atmosphere, Ak-Chin members showcased their entrepreneurial spirit with vendor spaces outside the Recreation Center, offering a variety of goods.

“The Ak-Chin Recreation Department is already envisioning the future of the Senior Games,” Director Antone confirmed.

“Given the overwhelming positive response, plans are underway to make it an annual tradition, with potential for expansion and further development of Active Senior Programs. The goal is to build upon the success of this first year, and to continue to allow the event to grow and serve the community.”

The Ak-Chin Senior Games proved to be more than just a competition; it was a celebration of community, athleticism, and the enduring spirit of its participants.

The “Legends at Play” truly lived up to their name, creating memories and forging connections that will last long after the final whistle.

We would like to recognize the departments that supported us and helped us make a successful event. Marissa Antone and Sonia Narcia – Elderly Department  
Martina Guy and Marc Matteson – Health Education  
Language Department  
Fire Department  
Police Department  
Events Department  
RUNNER  
CSM/COM  
Public Works  
Community Council  
TEMP Workers  
Library



Photos by Family and Friends of Leona



Above, Leona's family gather together for a photo.

At left: Ak-Chin Council (l-r): Councilmember Cecil Peters, Vice-Chair Delia Carlyle and Chairman Gabriel Lopez along with Ak-Chin Farm Board Chairman Justin Zabawa, Sr.

recommendation of the Ak-Chin Farm Board, proudly inducted Leona into the Hall of Fame.

The 18th annual event took place at the Sheraton Grand Wild Horse Pass Resort on the Gila River Indian Community, on Saturday March 22nd.

The Carlyle-Kakar family and the Ak-Chin Indian Community/Farms were able to sponsor five tables, with close to 50 attendees in support of Leona.

Family members included her daughters; Nancy Carlyle, Carla Carlyle, and Raychel (Kakar) Peters, as well as her #1 daughter Imelda Ocano, Leona’s grandchildren, extended family, Ak-Chin Farm employees/board members and Ak-Chin Tribal Council.

As Carla and Raychel accepted their mother’s plaque, they shared a few words on stage.

“I really want to thank our Ak-Chin Indian Community, especially our Ak-Chin Farm Board for recognizing her for this spectacular honor,” Raychel shared, “for remembering her, for loving her and just respecting everything she’s done for our community.”

Carla also shared, “This is such a wonderful honor and we appreciate you all... thank you very much.”

Prior to her official induction, a video was played to highlight some of Leona’s work and the history of the community.

Current Ak-Chin Vice-Chairwoman Delia Carlyle, former Ak-Chin Chairman Robert Miguel and former Ak-Chin Farm Manager Steve Coester were able to share comments about Leona in the video.

The three spoke of her love for her community, the people, water and of course, the farm.

Throughout her life and career, Leona dedicated her vision and work to give her people the resources, opportunities, and future that she felt they all deserved.

Although, it has been decades, since Leona and her brothers, the late Richard Carlyle and Wilbert “Buddy” Carlyle

visited Washington D.C. to lobby their efforts to obtain water for the community, their prior work has been acknowledged to this day as being key in motivating tribes to fight for a secured water settlement or working on settlements at this time.

Prior to the end of my term as Chairman, Ak-Chin was synonymously recognized with Leona Kakar as she would be mentioned when I visited the Rayburn and Hart building, meeting with Congressional leaders throughout the United States.

Leaders would identify the community I was representing, and they would automatically mention the water settlement we had and Leona.

They would also highlight that our water settlement is the best of all water settlements and there would never be a settlement like ours again.

After hard work and perseverance, the Community’s dreams and hopes for a bright future were finally realized, when in the early 80’s, its first allotment of water was delivered to the farm/ community.

Leona’s brothers, Richard and Buddy, unfortunately had passed prior to the deliverance of water, but Leona was able to be present for the two as the Community celebrated.

Although the induction event was solely focused on her water and farming accomplishments, she is also recognized as a trailblazer in the gaming ventures for Indian Country.

She questioned the State of Arizona and its Director of Gaming (DOG) on restrictions and control of gaming on Tribal Lands. Something I recalled as Leona sat on a panel discussion on gaming during my early days as a photojournalist for the Ak-Chin O’odham Runner.

I remember attending that session and the Director making a statement to the extent that the State was only looking to help tribes with guidelines and policies to help them do things right, and not seem like they were going to control them.

Leona told the Director,

“You and the state are trying to help us now, where were you when we really needed you?” Man, she got a standing ovation from the full room of attendees. I remember the Director just looking away, he was speechless.

The week prior to Leona’s induction into the Hall of Fame, ABC 15 News 15’s Nick Ciletti reached out to the community and family to get permission to do a story on Leona as Woman History Month was celebrated in March.

Ciletti and a crew member came out and shot footage of the farm and community and interviewed her daughter Raychel, granddaughter Morgan Peters and myself. The segment was aired a couple of days prior to the Hall of Fame celebration.

Ciletti acknowledged that he didn’t know of Leona prior to recording the piece, but was extremely happy to get to know the Ak-Chin Community and Ak-Chin Farms.

“The Farm Bureau sent me a list of people they were honoring and I chose her story.” Ciletti said.

The Ak-Chin Community has always been a farming community, it’s the backbone of who the Ak-Chin people are. A lot of tribal members have come and gone, but their legacy, identity and spirit continue through the farms.

One of the many things I will always remember and never forget that Leona once told me, was that if I ever wanted to remember, feel and speak with those that have left us, is to “go out into the farm and visit them, they are all out there and are waiting for us to visit them.”

During the AZFAR 2025 Induction Ceremony they honored a total of seven recipients along with Leona, including; Arizona Cowbells, W.T. Gladden of Buckeye, Ernest W. McFarland of Florence, Orme Family/Orme Ranch of Mayer, Barbara Stevenson Jackson of Tucson and Sierra Bonita Ranch from Wilcox.

They also recognized the 2025 Legacy Scholarship recipients; Lydia Bleak, Caden Hooper and Hollie Keil.

There was also a silent and live auction held during the dinner.



Costella Lopez carefully stacks her cups into a pyramid in the “Stackers” game.



Wilma Antone-Frausto is crunching away at the “Paper Crunch” station.



Sisters, Flora Howerton and Jeannette Peters hustle downcourt with the “Mega Ball” enroute to a second place finish in the “Oompa Loompa” race.



George Lewis Jr. tosses his bag directly towards the hole in the “Cornhole Toss.”



Lena Cypriano flings that chicken out of the parking lot.



Tortilla Festival continued from Front



was Janice Miguel, Glenna Francisco, and Melanie Antone, with the help of Ak-Chin Language staff, Velacita Lopez, Lerline Peters, and Jesus (Buddy) Corella.

At the start of their demonstration time, the group made tortillas that would be given out as samples to the attendees.

At the end of the demonstration, they were able to sell their tortillas



by the dozen to anyone that wanted to take some freshly made ones home.

Beside their tortilla station was a table set up with the tortilla samples along with butter for those that wanted to add a savory flavor to their tortilla and Nutella for those that wanted a sweeter flavor.

In addition to the endless number of tortillas being made during the day, there were other attractions available such as game booths dedicated to tortillas.

There was a game featuring a burrito race, where a team has to wrap up one of their players in a tortilla blanket, mimicking a burrito, then the “burrito” has to race to the opposite end of the field and back to their team mates.

There were also competitions for tortilla makers that included, who can make the tortilla the fastest, starting with a dough ball ending with a nice sized round tortilla; another was who could make the biggest tortilla, the winning size was 16 inches.



Vendor and information booths were also on site, some beautiful handmade jewelry and accessories were displayed for sale as well



as some delicious food and drinks. The Salt River Cultural Resource Department had food samples available for everyone that included ingredients which are indigenous to O’odham tribes.

Along with the samples, recipes were also given out for all to try at home. The rabbit stew and quail stew had everyone wanting seconds as it was cooked and seasoned perfectly.

Another sample everyone took a liking to was a granola like mix that was made from Amaranth seeds.

Not only did Ak-Chin

have tortilla makers, they also had musicians participating in the festival as well.

Two Rivers Waila Band was on-site to keep the crowd entertained with their cumbias and two-step songs, whom featured Ak-Chin members, Nicholas Narcia, Milo Antone, Marco Thompson, and Nicole Narcia.

The festival’s famous Tortilla mascot also made an appearance, visiting with the crowd and showing his moves on the dance floor.

It was another successful year for the tortilla festival to say the least, if

you have not made it out to one yet, the festival happens every year in March so mark your calendars now as it is an unforgettable experience that everyone should attend at least once in their lifetime.



## Community Holds Silent Seal Bid Vehicle Auction



March 22-28, 2025 - Ak-Chin Indian Community put out an ad for a Silent Sealed Bid Vehicle Auction.

There were 26 vehicles on display, “AS-IS” just north of the Runner building, off of SR347, from various community departments.

Each vehicle had a display on the windshield

with a number and list detailing the condition of the vehicles. Bidders were asked to place their sealed bids in an envelope with their contact information and bid.

All bids were to be turned in to the Tribal Headquarters office by 5pm on March 28.

On Monday, March 31,

the bids were opened and on April 1, those who submitted the highest bids were notified by phone bring payment (cash or cashier check only) to the Purchasing Office by April 4, 2025 retrieve their vehicles.

This year’s vehicle auction has been the highest bidding auction so far; it has also had the most vehicles up for bid.

13th Annual Him-Dak Golf Classic

Monday, April 28th, 2025

9:00AM Shotgun Start

**\$1,800 Team Entry**

Includes: Golf, Food & Beverage, Tee Gifts, Awards & Raffle

**Presenting Sponsor—\$6,000**

2 Foursome Entries  
Company logo on GPS screens in carts & welcome TV board  
Large sponsor sign with logo  
Logo placement on all cart material & live scoring software  
Recognition during golf announcements & award ceremony  
1 entry per person into Raffle Draw

**Supporting Sponsor—\$3,000**

1 Foursome Entry  
Logo recognition on cart material  
Hole sponsor sign  
1 entry per person into Raffle Draw

**Hole Sponsor Sign—\$500**

One hole sign on assigned hole, putting green, or practice facility

**For entry or questions, please contact Ryan Graham at 520.426.6830 (rgraham@troon.com) or Brandon Peters at 520.568.1020 (BPeters@ak-chin.nsn.us)**

**Greetings Community Membership,**

Each year Community Leadership awards students graduating from high school with a trip to Hawaii. We need your help in identifying past and present graduates who have not had the opportunity to participate in this annual event.

Please contact Flora Howerton, Purchasing Manager at 520-568-1043 or email [FHowerton@ak-chin.nsn.us](mailto:FHowerton@ak-chin.nsn.us) with names of individuals who would like to participate.

Must be an Ak-Chin Enrolled Member and have a High School Diploma to participate in trip.

## Ak-Chin PD Host Gas Safety Training

Story and photo by Ashley Vincent

Ak-Chin Police Department partnered up with Mike Ebert of Southwest Gas to hold a presentation pertaining to gas safety and why it is important to know the potential signs of a gas leak.

The presentation took place on Thursday, March 27th, in a reserved theatre at the Ak-Chin Circle, with a morning and afternoon session, both containing the same information.

There was an estimate of 50 people present between the two sessions, including members, residents, and employees of the community.

All that attended were educated on what steps they should take if ever they discover a gas leak inside or outside their home. Mr. Ebert shared with everyone that the smell of “rotten eggs” is one sign of a gas leak.

An interesting fact is that the smell is actually put into the gas manually so that it could be easily



Above, Mike Ebert of Southwest Gas discusses Gas Safety Tips.

identified for safety precautions, because carbon monoxide is known as the “silent killer” being that naturally it is has no smell or certain color that can be detected.

Another piece of information that was shared is that it is important to call 811 should anyone ever need to dig at their home or business. Southwest Gas will go out to homes and businesses to mark where

current gas lines are located so that they will not be disturbed during the digging process, which lessens the chance of a gas leak.

The PD is looking to host another presentation this year in hopes of having more members and residents of Ak-Chin attend, so they can have the opportunity to learn all the valuable information Southwest Gas has to offer.



April 4 - 17, 2025

# Ak-Chin Recreation concludes successful Football Season

Story and photos by Robert Miguel

With the support of a successful football program initiated by the Ak-Chin Recreation Department and the commitment and dedication from families of the athletes, a number of community youth enjoyed their time on the gridiron as they showcased their skills.

For the past couple of weeks, children from

three years old to twelve displayed their hiking, throwing and running skills as they battled for thirty minutes of game time dodging and weaving defenders who dared to stop them.

Football is widely consider a man/boys game, but in this year's flag football season, a couple of young ladies showcased their

talents, keeping or even surpassing some of the talented boys.

The past couple of seasons around the country, female flag football programs have developed and become official sports in high schools.

This past Saturday marked the final games of the Ak-Chin Recreation football season.



**Ak-Chin 3-5 Year Old Flag Football** - Top left to right: Recreation Coordinator Jordan Gusse, Parent Emmelene Whitehorse, Referee Mariah Carlyle, Referee Jessica Mercado and Parent Ione Garcia. Bottom left to right: Darryn Narcia, Sadie Rivers, Angelita Garcia, Crystal Denetsosie and Adrian Garcia.



**Ak-Chin 6-8 Year Old Flag Football** - Top left to right: Coach Jacob Dickerson, Referee Mariah Carlyle, Referee Jessica Mercado, Parent Emmelene Whitehorse and Recreation Coordinator Jordan Gusse. Bottom left to right: Kooper Denetsosie, Aaron Peters Jr., Gabriel Sierra James, Emerson Antone, Raiden Sierra James, Rebecca Rodas, Danyll Narcia, Kaleb Rivers and Jonah Dickerson.



**Ak-Chin 9-12 Year Old Flag Football** - Top left to right: Recreation Coordinator Jordan Gusse, Referee Mariah Carlyle, Parent Emeelene Whitehorse, Referee Jessica Mercado and Coach Jacob Dickerson. Bottom left to right: Mylaunah Robles, Marquan Robles, Sarah Delma, Ariel Lopez, Jose Lopez, Elmaleen Johnson, Alice Denetsosie, Joaquin Dickerson, Connor Martinez, Benjamin King, Mauricio Contreras-Valles, Aarow Santiago, DeleAnna Lewis, Yaniah Miguel and Adriel Jimenez.



In the #6 issue of the Ak-Chin O’odham Runner, we misspelled Myles Peters’ name in the article “Ak-Chin baseballers take to the field for MHS & A+ Charter”. We also identified Myles as a two year varsity starter, when his first varsity selection was this year. Our apologies to Myles and family; we wish him continued success on the diamond for the Maricopa High School Rams.

*22 Flags continued from Front*  
“Arizona is proud of the Tribal Veterans who sacrificed for their country,” said Governor Katie Hobbs. “We should be recognizing their service, not disrespecting their heritage. It’s my honor to display these flags at the Executive Tower, and I am grateful to all the Tribal leaders who have entrusted me with this responsibility. I will always support our Veterans, and vow to keep these flags safe until they can be returned to their rightful place at the VA hospital.”

Tribal leaders shared their outrage about the removal of the flags, and their appreciation for Governor Hobbs’ action and partnership.

“The Community is grateful that we had the opportunity to receive the tribal flags and to have them for the short time and we are thankful Governor Hobbs has agreed to take the flags to display them at the Arizona Capitol, a more prominent and appropriate place for them to be located. We are hopeful these twenty-two tribal nation flags can be viewed in recognition of the Native American veterans that served in the U.S. Military of the United States.” – President Martin Harvier, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community

“For generations, service members from the Ak-Chin Indian Community and each of Arizona’s tribal nations have proudly defended this country. Their sacrifice must be recognized, and the first step is immediately returning the 22 Tribal flags to their rightful place at the Phoenix VA.” – Chairman Gabriel Lopez, Ak-Chin Indian Community

“As Chairwoman for the Cocopah Tribe, I find the removal of our tribal flags both insulting and disrespectful to all the members of the 22 federally recognized tribes in our state. The Cocopah Tribe is a small Tribe but, per capita, we have had a large percentage of our men and women serve this nation only to be disrespected by the very country they defended. I, personally, come from a family where all my uncles and brother served. All received Purple Hearts and the silver star. Our contribution to this country is/were great, now it seems we are being erased. We are citizens of this nation and we should be recognized for the service of our proud men and women. The removal of tribal flags sends a message that the sacrifices made are irrelevant. On behalf of all tribal members who served and their families, the Cocopah Tribe, request reconsideration and reposting the tribal flags.” – Chairwoman Sherry Cordova, Cocopah Tribe

“The removal of the Colorado River Indian Tribes flag as well as the other 21 Tribal Nation Flags from the Carl T. Hayden Phoenix Veterans’ Administration Medical Center in Phoenix is

troubling, confusing, and disrespectful. The 22 Tribal flags removed not only represent the Arizona Tribes, but more importantly, they represent the countless men and women from those tribal nations who proudly served in the military. Many sacrificed and gave their lives for their country. They deserve the utmost respect and honor and CRIT urges the VA to reconsider their decision. CRIT thanks the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Community for honoring and temporarily displaying CRIT’s flag in their community along with the other 21 Arizona Tribal flags.” – Colorado River Indian Tribes

“The decision to remove the flags of Arizona’s Tribal Nations from the Phoenix Veterans Affairs hospital is profoundly disrespectful to the legacy of Native veterans who have honorably served this country. These flags



**Governor Hobbs Public Relations Director, Jason Chavez stands by the Ak-Chin flag.**

are not just symbols – they represent the sovereignty, sacrifice, and unwavering patriotism of our Tribal Nations. Refusing to fly the flags of the twenty-two Arizona Tribal Nations dishonors the Native American service members who defended freedoms they were historically denied. We stand united in demanding the immediate restoration of these flags to their rightful place.” – Vice President Paul Russell, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation

“As a veteran of the United States Army, the display of the 22 Tribal flags at the Phoenix VA hospital was a symbol of honor and appreciation for generations of Native American veterans who served on behalf of this country. In recognition of the critical contributions Native Americans have made to the United States through military service, we feel the decision to remove Tribal flags from public display at the Phoenix VA hospital should be rescinded.” – Shan Lewis, Vice Chairman, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe and President of the Inter Tribal Association of Arizona (ITAA)

“I strongly object to the recent removal of Arizona tribal flags from the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Medical Center. This insulting action ignores the long-standing recognition that Tribes

and tribal membership is a political status, not racial classification. The Supreme Court has recognized the critical importance of this distinction and so should any policy from the federal government. What is particularly inappropriate is that the new policy apparently allows any political sovereign in the state of Arizona to have its flag displayed except an Indian tribe. This is an insult to the tribal members who serve in our armed forces at a higher per capita rate than any other group in America. The removal of these flags sends a harmful message that their sacrifices are being diminished or erased. I urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reconsider this policy and take immediate action to restore the display of tribal flags at the Phoenix VA Hospital.” – Governor Stephen Roe Lewis, Gila River Indian Community

“The Hopi Tribe strongly disagrees and opposes the removal of their flag and the flags of the other 21 federally recognized tribes of Arizona at the Carl T. Hayden Veterans Administration Medical Center in Phoenix. The Hopi have willingly served our Armed Services in the protection and defense of our homeland and our country. Our sacrifices are evident as witnessed by individuals like Pfc. Lori Piestewa along with our Hopi Code Talkers who used our Hopi lavayi (language) to protect the freedoms for all United States citizens. This action of the flag removals needs to be rescinded immediately.” – Chairman Timothy Nuvangyaoma, Hopi Tribe

“The removal of our flags, symbols of our sovereignty, heritage, and the sacrifices of our Native American veterans, is an affront to the very principles of respect and recognition that the VA should uphold. We are grateful for Governor Hobbs’ leadership and unwavering support. We are confident that, together, we can ensure that the voices of our tribal nations are heard and that the service of our Native American veterans is honored with the dignity and respect it deserves.” – Chairman Duane Clarke, Hualapai Tribe

“The removal of Arizona Tribal Nation flags from the Phoenix Veterans





We are **GRHC!**  
*Where Care Meets Community.*



# GOOD FRIDAY

## Holiday

Gila River Health Care's  
Administrative Offices and Outpatient Clinics  
will be

**CLOSED**  
**Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>**

## Hu Hu Kam Memorial Hospital Pharmacy Hours

Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup> ..... **C L O S E D**  
Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> ..... **8:00 am - 8:00 pm**  
Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup> ..... **12:00 pm - 8:00 pm**

For any information on services open during the holidays,  
call our main line at (520) 562-3321. Normal business hours  
will resume Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup>.

If you need immediate assistance, please call 911  
or visit the Emergency Department at  
Hu Hu Kam Memorial Hospital.

# NATIONAL FOOT HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH APRIL

We provide comprehensive foot care to patients of all  
ages. If you have questions and would like to schedule  
an appointment:

**Hu Hu Kam Memorial Hospital (520) 562-3321 Ext. 1258**  
**Komatke Health Center (520) 562-3321 Ext. 6520**  
**Hau'pal (Red Tail) Hawk Health Center (520) 562-3321 Ext. 2664**



## APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT — AWARENESS MONTH —



**Sexual assault is when someone  
touches your body when they  
don't have your permission.**

*"Your Voice is Power"*

The most important thing is your health and  
safety. Please reach out to any of the following  
**Gila River Health Care's** resources if you have  
been a victim of sexual assault.

Crime Victim Services (520) 562-4106  
OEW DV Shelter (855) 203-5849  
GRIC Crisis Line (520) 562-2740  
Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 988 (text/call)  
GRHC SANE Forensic Nursing (520) 562-5151  
GRIC Police Department 911 / (520) 562-4511  
GRIC Silent Witness (520) 562-7144

## View our April Health Update Newsletter



This Month's HEALTH  
UPDATES AND  
EDUCATION on:

- National Foot Health Awareness Month
- Meet our Podiatry Team
- Podiatry vs Orthopedics
- Key Differences Between Podiatry & Orthopedics

