



Ak-Chin Council and AR Mays Construction, officially break ground on the new dialysis center, west of Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino, on December 15.

Groundbreaking for New Dialysis Center

Story and photos by Robert Miguel

As the 2025 year comes to an end, the Ak-Chin Indian Community has to be thankful for a number of things.

In particular the venture in providing a Wellness Center with an award from the Indian Health Services (IHS) to move forward with a tribal health facility; and now, a groundbreaking for a new dialysis center.

Ak-Chin Council, along with AR Mays construction personnel, Ak-Chin members and invited guests gathered Monday morning on December 15th, behind Harrah's

Ak-Chin Casino and Resort on Sudagi Avenue to gather for the Ground-breaking Ceremony.

After a blessing from Spiritual Healer, Joseph Enos of Tohono O'odham Nation, everyone gathered and watched, as Ak-Chin Council and AR Mays turned over dirt to officially begin the project of building the dialysis center.

Ak-Chin Chairman, Gabriel Lopez gave a welcome and acknowledged guests and dignitaries from the community and the city of

Maricopa.

Chairman Lopez also expressed the importance of a much-needed facility for membership.

"As we break ground on a medical office suites shell building, today represents the beginning of improved access to life-saving care and strengthening healthcare access for Ak-Chin and also the entire surrounding Maricopa community."

"Dialysis is not optional care; it is essential ongoing treatment that patients rely on multiple times each week.

Ak-Chin Masik Tas Celebration offers FREE-FUN-EVENTS FOR EVERYONE!

Story and photos by Runner Staff

The 2025 Ak-Chin Masik Tas (Birthday) has begun, with many events still to come; bringing joy to all with a fun-filled weekend celebration.

A Spiritual Run, hosted by the Ak-Chin Youth Council on December 7th, provided runners to circle Ak-Chin's boundaries, bringing blessings to the Community with their good intentions.

The following week, Ak-

Chin's Masik Tas Light Parade, trooped down Farrell Road, during a wonderful evening in Ak-Chin on Saturday, December 13, with an intimate setting of nostalgic and retro entries for the community to enjoy.

As families and guests made themselves comfortable on lawn chairs along Farrell Rd., or even just sat in their vehicle's next to the road, they anticipated the

kinds of floats that they would see.

As the parade began around 7:00 pm, the first entrant was the Ak-Chin Police department color guard, leading the way. Other great entrants followed, including many community department floats.

First floats included the Ak-Chin Him-Dak's Charlie Brown Christmas, with Charlie Brown and gang,



Harrah's Development System (HDS) Program participates in the 2026 Ak-Chin Masik Tas Light Parade, December 13.

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Runners and walkers take off from the start point of the 10k and 2mile Masik Tas event, which was the Ak-Chin Elderly Center.

Masik Tas 10k & 2 Mi

Story by Kristen Villegas, photos by Runner Staff

Last year, Ak-Chin Events and Health Education departments introduced the first 10k to the community; enticing challenge seekers to participate in one of the many events held to celebrate Ak-Chin's Masik Tas (birthday)!

With the competitive 10K Run and 2-Mile Walk getting its fair share of recognition, it was no surprise to see such a great turnout!

On December 13, 2025, 133 2-mile participants

and 73 10k-ers met at the Ak-Chin Service Center for registration, check-in and collect their super-cool souvenir 2026 Masik Tas designed tee.

On the west side of the Ak-Chin Elder Center, participants were offered refreshments of fruits, coffee, granola bars, etc., before their main event took place.

On the east side, in the Elder Center parking lot the Start/Finish line was set and as the time grew near, 10k runners

gathered, waiting for the "GO".

At the call of "GO" the runners headed towards Farrell Rd., then followed the route markers to guide them through the 10k course.

Walkers for the 2-mile route followed the same course to a point, but did not venture farther than around the pecan trees.

The following Top Finishers all received medals and gift cards for their winning strides!

Velasco Retires from Ak-Chin Sanitation

Submitted by Delbert White, Ak-Chin Sanitation Director

We would like to express our sincere thank you to Francisco "Cisco" Velasco on his retirement after serving 20 years of dedication and commitment to Ak-Chin.

Cisco also retired from the City of Casa Grande after serving 30 years before coming to Ak-Chin and serving 20 years with us.

Cisco was a very hard worker and when you think about the number

of years combined and you are able to celebrate two retirements, that to me is true dedication and commitment!

Cisco was one of the few employees that started way back when Sanitation and Public Works was first created.

His many years of experience being an operator for the City of Casa Grande allowed him to give many pointers and advice to his

fellow operators.

His daily work ethics made him a huge asset to our department and will surely be missed.

In closing, on behalf of myself and our entire department, we would like to say Thank You Cisco and Happy Retirement! Best Wishes on your future plans.

Do va ep em nei (see you again) Ed Navoj (our friend).



Francisco "Cisco" Velasco (center - white cowboy hat) was honored by his Sanitation Family during a retirement luncheon after serving 20 years.

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Ak-Chin Elders receive December Distribution and Holiday Gifts



Maria Hernandez and Sylvia Guiterrez pick up their community distribution checks a day prior to the release of checks to all membership, as elders were designated their own day for distribution.



Jesus Corella (Language), Waylon Antone (Museum) and Marissa Antone (Elderly) give gift cards and other goods to elders; Adella Zabawa, Evelina Lopez and Jeannette Peters during a drive through at the Elder Center.



Masik Tas Elder Chair Volleyball Tournament Champions Pala #1 (green shirts) from San Diego battle against Yavapai during placement games.

San Diego's Pala #1 takes Elder Chair Tourney

Story by Robert Miguel, photos by Raychel Peters

Thirty-two elder chair volleyball teams made the journey onto the floor of the Ak-Chin Recreation department gymnasium on Tuesday, December 9th, and Wednesday, December 10th, to participate in the Ak-Chin Indian Community's Masik Tas Elder Chair Volleyball Tournament.

even California, put their volleyball and teamwork skills to the test, serving, bumping and setting in hopes of scoring points up to eleven for a win.

This year's two-day tournament format was new, with the first day designated for pool play, with a 3-game schedule set between all teams.

At the end of day one, all teams were respectively

placed in either the gold or silver brackets, for a single-elimination tournament.

Day two provided the opportunity for all teams to climb to the top of their brackets. Two teams from San Diego, California, were able to make their five plus hour trip to Ak-Chin, worth their while, as they made it to the final four to earn the gold title and a silver

second-place finish.

In the gold bracket, Pala #1 sported a 5-0 record for the championship, while Onk Akimel Tadaí placed second and Nyaa Thosh nabbed third.

In the silver bracket, the Firebirds went 5-0 and a tourney title, Pala #2 finished second and the Quails finished third.

Three Ak-Chin teams were able to represent the community; S-ve:pek U'uhig, Sunflower Ladies and Fighting Turtles; while additional members played with other teams.

Of the Ak-Chin teams, the Fighting Turtles were

able to make a mini-run in the tournament, advancing to the Elite Eight.

During the tournament there were plenty of close games as teams battled point for point, with some winning by a mere point to move on.

Despite some games being lop-sided, teams were happy to be around friends and family, enjoying the atmosphere of fun, food and music.

Overall, everyone seemed to enjoy the tournament and offerings, which also included a souvenir Masik Tas blanket, gifted to all players for their

participation from Ak-Chin Parks & Rec.

Community Events also sponsored a choice lunch on day one from Honey Baked Hams, with veggie, turkey and ham options.

Congratulations to all who made it out to this year's tournament and a HUGE round of applause to the Ak-Chin Parks & Recreation for setting up another successful event.

Kudos also goes to department staff and volunteers who offered their assistance with the tough decision making and close calls!



Ak-Chin Sunflowers Matriarch, Evelina Lopez sets the ball over, as her children cheer her on.



Community Elder, George Lewis takes the ball over the net.



Ak-Chin Team S-ve:pek U'uhig - Top I to r: Lerline Peters, Lena Santiago and Polly Antone. Bottom I to r: Janice Miguel, Norman Vincent and Carole Lopez.

Ak-Chin's Glenna Francisco (bottom right) and Ak-Chin employee, Virginia Zepeda (bottom middle) with their team.



Masik Tas Elder Chair Volleyball Gold Bracket Champions - Pala #1



Masik Tas Elder Chair Volleyball Silver Bracket Champions - Firebirds

Elder Center OPEN – Sort Of 😊

Greetings, Elders!

The Elder Center is currently open from 9:30am to 1:00pm.

We are not serving breakfast at this time. We are serving lunch only.

Please note that the kitchen is still undergoing repairs following our recent move.

The activity room is available for crafting, puzzles, diamond painting, and any other activities you would like to enjoy.

Transportation for pick-up begins daily at 9:00 AM.

Lunch is served in the new dining room from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM.

For more information or to schedule transportation, please call the Elder Center at 520-568-1760.

Elders, we hope to see you! You are missed!

The Elder Center Staff



The Ak-Chin Fighting Turtles were elated to make it to the elite 8 in the Silver bracket. Also wanted to share a HUGE shout-out to Renee Boehm and whatyouneed@zabawacattle.com for the quality rush job and getting us our new holiday team shirts so quickly.

JOIN US FOR A

2026

NEW YEAR / NEW BUILDING LUNCHEON

JANUARY 29 @ 11:00 AM

Join us to Celebrate our Newly Renovated Building with Food & Dancing!

Call the Elder Center to RSVP. Deadline January 19, 2026

If you have any questions, please give us a call at 520-568-1760.



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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"
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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
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description. Pictures with no
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Allow 2 weeks for return.

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COMMUNITY**

NEXT DEADLINE
Don't forget the
DEADLINE for the
December 19, 2025 -
January 1, 2026
issue is due by
**WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 24TH**

Please submit all
announcements, wishes,
etc. no later than
**WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 24TH**

Material submitted after the
DECEMBER 24TH DEADLINE
cannot be guaranteed
placement. If appropriate
and relevant, it will be
included in the next issue.

Ak-Chin Recreation hosts Holiday House Decorating Contest

MERRY AND BRIGHT LIGHTS



1st – Georgia Corella



2nd – Steven Ruelas



3rd – Marla Antone

HOLIDAY SPIRIT



1st – Deanna Justin



2nd - Candi Chavez



3rd – Bijagozhone Talkalai

As the Ak-Chin Parks & Recreation department cruised around the community to judge the annual House Decoration Contest on December 17, 2025.

Anticipation and excitement began to build, as they wondered which homes had the brightest and merriest theme.

Fifteen homes were registered with Ak-Chin Recreation for the contest.

The route started from the Ak-Chin Farm's subdivision to the Fire Department subdivision, then through the Desert

Willow subdivision and finally down the main village area.

Judges had to admit that this year was a tough one, as the community homes were all decked out with lights, giant inflatables and over the top holiday cheer. Once all judging was completed, Rec staff made their way back to the gym to tally up the scores.

At the end of the tallying task, nine community homes would be cheerfully rewarded; first place through 3rd place winners from three categories; Merry & Bright, Holiday Spirit and Incredible

Inflatables. "We have made our decisions and the winners have been chosen!" Ak-Chin Rec shared. "First, we would like to thank all who participated! Everyone did great and it was definitely a difficult decision to make."

Following are the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each category.

Each winner will be awarded cash and a certificate. 1st - place is \$500, 2nd place is \$300 and 3rd place is \$175!

Congratulations to all the winners!

INCREDIBLE INFLATABLES



1st - Alicia Gomez



2nd – Eric Chavez



3rd – Ame Stephens

Trash to Treasure Craft – Water Bottle Gnomes

Turn your recycling into something adorable! These tiny yarn gnomes are made using plastic rings cut from a water bottle or cardboard tubes, plus leftover yarn or scraps from other projects. They're a perfect way to reduce waste out of the landfill and to decorate.

Materials

- 1 empty plastic water bottle or cardboard tube from toilet paper or paper towel
- Scissors (sharp enough to cut plastic)
- Leftover yarn:
 - Fun color for the hat
 - Brown, black, white or different shades of grey color for the beard
- 1 small bead or button (for the nose), check those junk drawers
- Hot glue or tacky craft glue
- Optional: scrap fabric or felt for accents

Step-by-Step Instructions

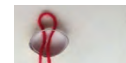
1. Prepare the Water Bottle Rings

1. Rinse and dry the bottle.
2. Cut off the smooth middle section of the bottle (if using cardboard tube, cut tube into rings).
3. Slice this section into rings about ½ inch wide.
 - Each ring forms the base that the gnome hat and beard attach to.
4. Trim any sharp edges.



2. Create the Hat

1. Cut yarn strands in your hat color 8–10 inches long.
2. Fold one strand in half.
3. Loop the folded end under the plastic ring and pull the tail ends through, this is a lark's head knot.



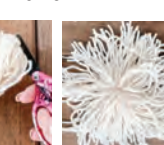
4. Repeat, placing knots close together, until half the ring is completely covered.
5. Gather the loose yarn ends above the ring to form a hat shape.
6. Tie tightly with another strand of yarn to create the top of the hat, leaving the tassel

sticking out (like in the photo).

7. Trim if needed for shape.

3. Make the Beard

1. Cut yarn strands for the beard 6–7 inches long.
2. Add them to the other half of the ring using the same lark's head knot method.
3. Fill until the bottom half looks full and fluffy.
4. Trim to shape rounded, pointy, or scruffy depending on the look you want.

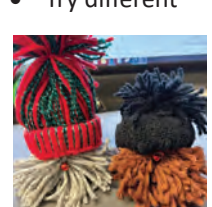


4. Add the Nose

1. Part the beard strands slightly in the center.
2. Glue a small bead, button, or pom-pom just under the hat line.
3. Hold in place until secure.

5. Finishing Touches

- Fluff the beard with your fingers.
- Trim stray strands.
- Add a loop of yarn to the top if you want to hang the gnome as an ornament.
- Add fabric patches, tiny bells, or ribbon scraps for extra personality.
- Try different



sizes of yarn for the hats and beards to give a unique and different look to each gnome.

Why It's a Great "Trash to Treasure" Project?

1. Reuses plastic otherwise destined for the trash.
2. Works with leftover yarn pieces too short for most craft projects.
3. Quick, easy, and kid-friendly.
4. Each gnome is unique and costs almost nothing to make.

Complete this project? Please email photos to **Brandy Nelson** at BNelson@ak-chin.nsn.us at Environmental Programs.

ITEMS WITH EMBEDDED (NON-REMOVABLE) BATTERIES

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW?
EMBEDDED BATTERIES CAN CAUSE FIRES IN TRASH TRUCKS, LANDFILLS, AND RECYCLING FACILITIES (ESPECIALLY LITHIUM BATTERIES)

HOUSEHOLD ELECTRONICS SMARTPHONES TABLETS & E-READERS SMARTWATCHES & FITNESS TRACKERS LAPTOPS WIRELESS EARBUDS & HEADPHONES BLUETOOTH SPEAKERS DIGITAL CAMERAS & GOPROS HANDHELD GAMING DEVICES (NINTENDO SWITCH LITE, ETC.) TV REMOTES & STREAMING DEVICE REMOTES (APPLE TV, Roku, FIRESTICK REMOTES) SMART HOME DEVICES (DOORBELLS, THERMOSTATS, SECURITY CAMERAS, TRACKERS)	HOLIDAY & SEASONAL ITEMS LIGHT-UP DECORATIONS (LED CANDLES, ORNAMENTS, WREATHS) MUSICAL GREETING CARDS BATTERY-POWERED GIFT BOXES OR DÉCOR RECHARGEABLE HOLIDAY FIGURINES OR NOVELTY TOYS
TOYS & KIDS' ELECTRONICS REMOTE-CONTROL CARS, DRONES, AND HELICOPTERS HOVERBOARDS / BALANCE BOARDS LIGHT-UP OR SOUND-ACTIVATED STUFFED TOYS INTERACTIVE LEARNING TABLETS MOTORIZED RIDE-ON TOYS ELECTRONIC MUSICAL TOYS (KEYBOARDS, DANCING ROBOTS, ETC.) RECHARGEABLE WALKIE-TALKIES ELECTRONIC BUILDING SETS (LEGO ROBOTICS KITS) WEARABLE KID TRACKERS & KID SMARTWATCHES	SMALL HOUSEHOLD TOOLS & GADGETS ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSHES HAIR TRIMMERS & GROOMING TOOLS FLASHLIGHTS & HEADLAMPS RECHARGEABLE SCREWDRIVERS, DRILLS, OR SMALL TOOLS POWER BANKS & PORTABLE CHARGERS VAPE PENS / E-CIGARETTES WIRELESS COMPUTER MICE & KEYBOARDS

General Rules (Simple & Universal)

Do NOT throw in trash or curbside recycling.

Bring to an e-waste drop-off (city, tribe, county, transfer station, or special event)

Keep items separate in a plastic or clear bag

If battery casing is damaged, tape with clear tape and inform staff

Don't stockpile old electronics after unwrapping gifts

Set up a collection bin in the home

Recycle old items before setting up new ones.

Remove data from phones/tablets and factory reset before drop-off

Store used electronics away from heat and off porch areas

Never place lithium items near wrapping paper or trash bags

Call Environmental Programs, drop off items during business hours, or email bnelson@ak-chin.nsn.us

“You’re a Nice One Mr. Grinch”

Story and photos by Kristen Villegas



Storytime is still a big hit amongst the youth, with the Ak-Chin preschool making visits every Tuesday and Thursday morning to the Ak-Chin Library.

Ms. Linda and library staff always share an interesting topic with the students and ensure their book selections are abundant.

On December 9 and 11, Ms. Pollie’s and Ms. Mary’s 3-year-old classes along with Ms. Billie’s and Ms. Francine’s 4-year-old classes resumed their scheduled library visits, but this one held much surprise for the youngsters.

Per usual they greeted

each other with their “Wave and Say Hello,” song, before jumping into their Storytime, which consisted of “Chicka Chicka Ho Ho Ho” by William Boniface and “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” by Dr. Suess.

Between reading, the library staff gifted the classes presents and at the count of three the kids opened the gifts to see their new books. The three-year-old classes received “You’re My Little Star” by Eric Carle and the 4-year-old classes received “How Does a Caterpillar Change,” also by Eric Carle.

It was just after the reading of those two

The 4-year-old classes loved the reading of “Chicka Chicka Ho Ho Ho.”

stories when the groups had a visitor, none other than Mr. Grinch himself. He showed he was good by the beating of his heart, which put the kids at ease.

It was then Mr. Grinch invited the children to follow him, where he took photos with each kid. After photos, each student received candy canes “dressed” as Max in the Grinch.

It’s always nice to see what the kids at the ECE are up to, stay tuned for more exciting moments from our Ak-Chin kids.



Ms. Mary’s Class



Ms. Pollie’s Class



Mrs. Francine’s Class



Ms. Billie’s Class

Storytime with Mrs. Naomi

Story and photos by Kristen Villegas

On December 17, storytimers read a snowman filled book called “Snowmen at Christmas,” by Caralyn Buehner, illustrated by Mark Buehner. They were also gifted books and bells to ring in the Christmas Spirit.



HO HO HO to Holiday Crafts

Story and photos by Kristen Villegas



It’s that time of year where the Ak-Chin Him-Dak Museum showcases new holiday crafts for community members. This year’s crafts featured gingerbread men decorations, using foam and fun crafting accessories of one’s choosing.

You also had the opportunity to create your own ginger wreath if you wanted. Small 3ft. tree decorating was also a big favorite, which consisted of garland and a hot glue gun. The crafters who did attend seemed highly focused on perfecting

their creations. It was a great way to bring in the Christmas Spirit.

If you are interested in attending one of the Him-Dak’s crafting nights, please be on the look out for the next posted event in the Runner!



Winter Wonderland and Family Literacy

Story and photos by Kristen Villegas

The Ak-Chin Library and Education departments had a busy, but cheerful night with plenty of Winter festivities on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, starting at 6 PM.

Why you may ask? Ak-Chin Education and Library hosted their own Winter themed family nights that included gifts, hot cocoa and so much more.

To start, Ak-Chin Education hosted a Family Winter Wonderland where families could fill out surveys that were designed to help the Education staff get a better understanding on student’s needs; as a way for the department to improve as a whole by using the community’s input.

Once parents and guardians completed the survey, they met with advisors for their youth to receive a special gift from Ak-Chin Council.

These gifts were hoodie sweaters with the phrase “O’odhamac Cem Hekid,” which translates to “Being O’odham

Always.”

According to the letter provided by Council it stated, “This term illustrates and encourages you to be proud of your heritage and who you are as Ak-Chin O’odham in all that you do.”

The sweaters are black, with bold lettering and feature coyote tracks on the sleeves. Advisors shared that the students thought they were “tough” and “fire” which is the new age term for “cool.”

Families were treated to a meal of stove-hot pozole or menudo with chumuth and their choice of drinks.

Moving across to the library side, Ak-Chin Librarian, Ms. Linda Brill and Library Manager, Naomi Bishop invited families to sign up for the reading of “The Polar Express” by Chris Van Allsburg and received a golden ticket upon signup.

With three readings, each session was filled with families who

enjoyed the childhood classic.

In the meantime, a hot cocoa station was available in the lobby, which was a hot spot for the kids who dressed their drink in numerous toppings.

Organized in the multipurpose room of the library, was a cookie decorating station, which was another nice treat for children and adults.

Naomi shared, “We had a wonderful evening last night with families. The Winter literacy night was an opportunity for families to decorate cookies, drink hot cocoa, and enjoy the holiday classic “Polar Express” read by Miss Linda. The children that listened to the story all received books as gifts or a mug to take home. The event was a time for family, community, and literacy!”

Naomi added, “The library wishes everyone a happy holidays and happy reading over the winter break!”



Here’s just a few of the noteworthy moments from the night’s wintry-filled occasion. From good food, great treats and fun activities; it was on for the books.



Snowy Night for Early Childhood

Story and photos by Kristen Villegas



Fun was abundant at the Ak-Chin Preschool’s snow-filled night held on December 17, at the Early Childhood Development Center.

The evening included train rides, real snow, bounce houses and a delicious dinner.

Families of the ECE students were treated to the singing of their kiddos from the big screen as well, with their meal.

There was a little something for every member of the family to enjoy.

Legacy & MHS Christmas Programs

Story Robert Miguel
Photos by Diana Carlyle & Victor Moreno Photography

“Immerse yourself in a world of emotions through dance” was the theme, as Maricopa High School presented the “Emotion in Motion” dance event at the school’s Performing Arts auditorium on Friday, November 14th.

Ak-Chin’s Stella Miguel, who is a sophomore at MHS, performed in three different dance routines during the show. The three routines Stella participated in involved hip hop.

Throughout the evening, family, friends and guests were able to experience sequences of ballet, hip hop, folklore and techno dancing through various types of music. Another show was presented the following day on Saturday, November 15th.

Stella is the daughter of Robert and Connie Miguel.

On Thursday, December 4th, Ak-Chin community member, Kylee Carlyle, a 7th grade student at Maricopa Legacy Traditional Middle



7th grader, Kylee Carlyle, plays flute during the Legacy Traditional School Holiday Concert.

School played the flute in the school’s band during “A Holiday Concert Review” Winter Concert.

Throughout the whole show, the band played

a variety of Christmas music.

Kylee is the daughter of Carlton Sr. and Diana Carlyle.



Maricopa High School Sophomore, Stella Miguel, performs a hip hop skit during a recital.



The San Juan Kwaliaya Dancers from the Ak-Chin Community, perform the “kwaliaya” dance during the Cultural Festival at Maricopa Wells.

Maricopa Wells hosts Cultural Festival

Story and photos by Robert Miguel

To help celebrate diverse traditions and cultures at Maricopa Wells Middle School, the school hosted a Cultural Festival that featured entertainment from Ak-Chin’s San Juan Kwaliaya dancers, dancers from the Philippines, as well as a Hispanic group from Mexico.

The performances were enjoyed by middle school students and guests on Friday, December

12th in the multi-purpose room at Wells. Throughout the evening, booths were set up for all to get information and familiarize themselves of Native American, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Italy and South African backgrounds.

Maricopa Wells Middle School has celebrated this event for three years now and staff are excited that they are able to schedule events such as

sharing traditions and culture.

“It is a great tradition we have here at Wells, and we will continue this as long as I am here,” said Maricopa Wells Middle School Principal, Thad Miller. “The community loves it! Celebrating our various cultures is one of our biggest strengths at Maricopa Wells Middle School. We are very proud of that!”



Folklore Dancing was displayed during the Festival. Dancing from the Philippines, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Italy and South Africa cultures was shared.



A design of Ka:lo The Young Quail and his buddies by Dwayne Antone.

Ka:los The Young Quail

Submitted by Dr. Mario Molina, Ak-Chin Education Director

In the coming weeks, the Ak-Chin Language Department will introduce a second book highlighting a young quail, Ka:los (Carlos).

The main character, Ka:los, was introduced some time ago in the first book titled “Ka:los Greets The Storm” and was written and produced by the Language program with the assistance of a local artist, Dwayne Antone.

The second book is titled, “Ka:los Meets His Friends,” and takes the young quail on a short adventure where he meets his friends.

The idea to develop a book starts with an open discussion to identify what the story will tell in the book; this part of

developing a book took more than two months to formulate and took several discussions and meetings within the Language Program.

Following the development of the story, the Language team then developed a very rough draft of a storyboard, giving the team an idea of what they would like to see illustrated in the book.

The team then reached out to a local artist who illustrated the first book and provided him with a description and understanding of the vision the team had for the book.

From there, Dwayne took the vision and provided renderings for the Language staff where

they would provide feedback.

There were several other steps such as the identification of a publisher, correcting the wording for proper spelling, and ensuring the story and illustrations were authentic to the Ak-Chin Community.

The book is almost finished, and the Language Program will host a book launch sometime in January.

Many individuals came together to make this book a reality and the Education Department and Language Program look forward to future publications that focus on Ka:los and how he can help teach our language to the young members of our community.



A design of Ka:lo The Young Quail in the beautiful desert scenery.



A copy of the booklet was on display at the Education Department.

Alma Farrell Innovation Academy Officially Named as the First MUSD K–8 School

MARICOPA, AZ, December 10, 2025 – The Maricopa Unified School District Governing Board has officially approved the name of the district’s newest K–8 school: Alma Farrell Innovation Academy, opening July 2026.

The name honors Alma Farrell, a longtime MUSD educator whose decades of service shaped generations of students.

Located within the Sorrento neighborhood, Alma Farrell Innovation Academy will serve grades K–8 and launch under the leadership of Principal Elizabeth Allison.

Guided by the theme Igniting Minds. Building Futures., the school will offer an innovative approach to teaching and learning designed to prepare students for future success.

Alma Farrell Innovation Academy’s Next Generation Workforce and work-based learning model features:

- Kindergarten Discovery House, providing individualized, developmentally responsive instruction.
- Dynamic multi-age learning houses for grades 1–8, allowing students to remain with the same teachers and peers for up to two years.
- Middle School Academies, where students in grades 5–8 engage in hands-on, career-connected learning and explore diverse career pathways such as Public Safety, Hospitality and Tourism, Financial Services, Digital Technology, Construction, etc.
- A work-based learning

pathway beginning in kindergarten and growing through middle school to help students understand, explore, and experience real-world careers.

Principal Allison is actively seeking industry partners to collaborate with students through mentorships, career simulations, internships, and classroom experiences, connecting learning to real-world opportunities.

Alma Farrell Innovation Academy will open in July 2026, with student registration beginning February 2026, priority open enrollment available now until January 9, 2026.

For more information visit musd20.org/afia.

Groundbreaking continued from Front

The dialysis center will total approximately 6,500 sq. ft. and will be located in a building with other medical service providers. Dialysis services will be open to Ak-Chin members and the general public. Davita Incorporation will provide the services needed for the facility.

“We’re honored to be part of expanding access to essential kidney care services for the Ak-Chin Tribal members through this collaboration with the Ak-Chin Community Council and the Southwest Kidney Institute,” said JD Sprague, Divisional Vice President overseeing the Southwest Region for Davita, through a shared press release.

“For people living with kidney failure, life-sustaining treatment is essential. We look forward to serving the community with personalized, compassionate care.”

Facility construction is expected to be completed by fall 2026, with the dialysis center opening just under a year from now.

During the ceremony, a moment of silence and acknowledgement of the late Bartholomew “Bart”



Ak-Chin Chairman, Gabriel Lopez, addresses the crowd gathered during the groundbreaking.

Smith was held. Bart was the Community Operations Manager, who dedicated countless hours, expertise, and commitment to this project.

“His leadership and care helped lay the foundation for what we are building here. Although, Bart is not with us today, his contributions will always be a part of this facility and the people it will serve.” Chairman Lopez added.



A rendering of the new Dialysis Center was on display during the ground breaking ceremony in the designated grounds near the Waste Water Facility.



Ak-Chin Police Officers and Staff help Santa with the “Toys for Tots” toy distribution held for community children at the Old Fire Department, Saturday December 13.

Ak-Chin PD Hosts “Toys For Tots”

Story by Runner Staff, photos by Brianna Peters

On Saturday, December 13th, officers and staff from the Ak-Chin Police Department hosted their annual “Toys for Tots” for community children. For tots ages 0-18, a gift of items such as Legos, basketballs, books, and a variety of toys were given out.

The old fire department on Farrell Road, was the headquarters for children to come and get their gifts. For those that were unable to physically make their way to the fire department, officers and staff made home deliveries.

Children were able to make it to the old fire department, were able to see and take a photo with Santa.

The Toys for Tots program, is run by the United States Marine Corps Reserve since 1947, they collect and distribute new, unwrapped toys, books, and other gifts to give to less fortunate children at Christmas, bring them joy and a message of hope while building community spirit.

The Program operates through local campaigns, relying on

Ak-Chin Youth get to go “Shop with a Cop”

Story by Runner Staff, photos by Lucy Antone

Saturday, December 13, six young community members from Ak-Chin were selected to participate in the “Shop with a Cop” program.

The event began with a breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus at a local church. After breakfast, the children drove with police officers in police vehicles with lights and sirens to Wal-Mart, where they were able to select gifts for themselves and family members.

Once the children selected all their presents, they were gift wrapped prior to being escorted home by the Ak-Chin Police Department.

“Shop with a cop is always an amazing experience for everyone involved.” Sgt. Perez shared.

“It’s an event I look forward to being a part of yearly. Some kids don’t say much as they are picking toys out, but you can tell they are having the time of their life when you see their facial expressions.”



Ak-Chin Police Sergeant, Diana Perez, and Kyla-Jae Antone enjoy a moment shopping for toys during the “Shop With A Cop” program.

The event was set up by the Maricopa Police Foundation, Maricopa Police Department, and the Maricopa Lions Club.

“Shop with a Cop” is a holiday program where local law

enforcement officers take children shopping for holiday gifts. The goal is to foster positive interactions, build trust and provide a happy holiday experience for children who might otherwise miss out.



Community children get to shop with Ak-Chin PD, I-r: Criminal Investigator Gonzalez, Daniel Thomas, Matthew Miranda, Kyla-Jae Antone, Sgt. Perez, Sgt. Garcia, Ranger Grizzle, Adriel Jimenez, Ofc. Sandoval, Yondell Antone, Ofc. Coronado and Jacob Santiago.

COMING SOON

NEW FIXED ROUTE STARTS
MONDAY JANUARY 12TH 2026

FIXED ROUTE SCHEDULE

PICKUP TIMES	BUS SHELTER	LOCATION	PICKUP TIMES	BUS SHELTER	LOCATION		
10:15AM	12:00PM	YES	WB-West of Carlyle Rd.	10:32AM	12:17AM	Juan and Ross St	
10:16AM	12:01AM	YES	NE Elders Center	10:33AM	12:18PM	Juan and Hohokam St	
10:17AM	12:02PM		Apartments	10:36AM	12:21PM	Coppersky	
10:18AM	12:03PM	YES	EB-Elders Center	10:37AM	12:22PM	YES	SB -Ak-Chin Circle
10:20AM	12:05PM		Vekol Market	10:38AM	12:23PM		Front of Ak-Chin Circle
10:21AM	12:06PM		Library and Gym	10:39AM	12:24PM		Front of Casino
10:23AM	12:08PM		Lewis and Joaquin	10:41AM	12:26PM	YES	Harras Casino West Side
10:24AM	12:09PM		Joaquin and Joaquin	10:42AM	12:27PM	YES	Harras Casino South Side
10:24AM	12:09PM		Lewis at Park	10:46AM	12:33PM	YES	Peters and Nall at Milo
10:24AM	12:09PM		Lewis and Manual	10:47AM	12:34PM		Ak-Chin Govt. Headquarters
10:25AM	12:10PM		Smith and Lewis	10:47AM	12:34PM		Barley and Pecan
10:26AM	12:11PM	YES	Bureau of Indian Affairs	10:47AM	12:34PM		Farm and Pecan
10:27AM	12:12PM	YES	Police Station	10:56AM	12:43PM		Walmart
10:28AM	12:13PM		Peters and Narcia	11:05AM	12:52PM		Frys
10:28AM	12:13PM		Pablo and Narcia	11:11AM	12:58PM		CVS Pharmacy
10:29AM	12:14PM		Pablo and Miguel	11:14AM	1:01PM		ACE Hardware
10:30AM	12:15PM		Ralph and Miguel	11:15AM	1:02PM		Walgreens
10:30AM	12:15PM		Ralph and Milton	11:18AM	1:05PM		Bashas
10:31AM	12:16PM		Ralph and Hohokam St	11:23AM	1:10PM		Sprouts

Transit will still be offering Free On-Demand door to door pickup in Ak-Chin that can be scheduled up to 7 days in advance. This new route is an addition to our current services. Residents can make unlimited On-Demand Reservations in addition to the new fixed route.

KEY

WB= West Bound
EB= East Bound

SB= South Bound
NB= North Bound

Yes at bus shelter indicates the stop is at the bus shelter

TO SCHEDULE A RIDE:

CALL: 520-568-1630
TEXT: 520-340-0382

AK-CHIN TRIBAL TRANSIT
SERVING THE AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY

toy donations and volunteers to sort and distribute items through community agencies to children in need, and also

has year-round literacy and Native American programs.

Ak-Chin Police Sergeant Davis

“Skip” Garcia and Evidence Technician Michell Granados spearheaded Ak-Chin’s Toys for Tot distribution.



Santa and all his helpers from the Ak-Chin PD enjoy a beautiful day greeting families and handing out Christmas gifts to Ak-Chin children, through the “Toys for Tots” Program.



JOB OPENINGS

CURRENT JOB OPENINGS:

- Accounts Payable Technician
- Communication Officer (part-time)
- Communications Officer
- Deputy Clerk II
- Detention Officer Non-Certified
- Detention Officer Certified
- Detention Officer Certified (part-time)
- Plant Electrician
- Plant Electrician & Instrumentation Technician
- Police Officer (non-certified)
- Police Officer (certified)
- Security Systems Technician

Open to Enrolled Ak-Chin Members Only

- Administrative Support Tech- Elder Center
- General Worker (Temp Worker)
- Museum Technician
- Oral Historian (part-time)

www.ak-chin.nsn.us

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

Employee Updates



Amber Antone
Recruit FF EMT
Fire Department



Angel Antone
Recruit FF EMT
Fire Department



Angelica Fernandez
Teacher's Aide
Preschool



Daniel White
Groundskeeper
Parks & Rec



Graciela Ortega
Museum Tech
Him-Dak Museum



Janay Ulloa-Justin
Deli Clerk
Vekol



Sheila Reed
Substance Abuse
Therapist
Health and Human
Services



JOIN US THIS Crafternoon

COME IN AND DECORATE A JOURNAL FOR THE NEW YEAR. ALL MATERIALS PROVIDED!

WEDNESDAY JAN 7TH 3PM-6PM
SATURDAY JAN 10TH 1PM-3PM

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



COME TO THE Library AFTER DARK

ADULTS 18+

END YOUR DAY WITH SOME QUIET READING AT THE AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY LIBRARY AND A LIGHT DINNER.

JANUARY 15TH 6PM-8PM

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS OPEN TO AK-CHIN MEMBERS, RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES

QUESTIONS? CALL: (520) 568-1675 OR EMAIL: LIBRARY@AK-CHIN.NSN.US



2025 Transit Schedule Changes

TRANSIT SERVICE CHANGES

Masik Tas, December 19th
Event Only transport will be provided

**Christmas Eve, December 24th
Transit Closed at 11:00am**

CLOSE
Christmas Day, December 25th
Christmas Holiday, December 26th
New Year's Day, January 1st, 2026

READ ALL THE COMICS AT COMICSPLUS

HOW TO ACCESS:

Download the [Library Pass app](#) or go to:
<https://akchinincomlibazfc.librarypass.com>
Select the Ak-Chin Indian Community Library and login with your library card.



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

storytime

At the Ak-Chin Library for kids ages 3 and up

Come in and listen to amazing stories along with a fun craft!
Guardians must be present with their child.

Wednesdays @10am

Open to Ak-Chin Indian Community members, residents and employees.

520-568-1675
Library@ak-chin.nsn.us



Employee Birthdays 12/19 - 12/31

12/19
Daniel Espinoza, Police
Richard Kindred, Tribal Gaming
Manuel Peters III, EPD

12/20
Devontae Hopson, Fire
Nathan Reihl, Central Plant
Roni Zappia, Maintenance

12/21
Micky Moull, Central Plant

12/22
Heidi Hinz, Custodial
Candida Upton, Custodial

12/24
Velacita Lopez, Language
Kyle Peters, Maintenance
David Peters Jr., Vekol

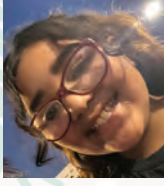
12/26
Joe Garcia, Elderly Center

Johnnie Traugher III, Police

12/27
Angel Ruelas, Motorpool

12/29
Kathleen Miguel, Runner


12/31
Mercedes Salcido, Community Government



Happy 1st Birthday Ulni.


We love you and are so proud of the smart/creative person you are growing into. We can't wait to see what the future holds.
Mom, Ellie, Bubba

Happy Birthday to my son, Manuel Peters III
Love, Mom



Happy Birthday to my dad, niece and little sister! Hope you all have the best birthdays, love you!
Love Kristen

Happy Birthday to my grandsons Aiden, David, Jr., Kyle and my granddaughters Serenity, Sabrina, Jersey and Aubrey
Love, Grandma



Happy Birthday Aubrey Girl Lozano
Wishing you the happiest birthday ever!
Love your family

Happy Birthday Kathleen!
From the Fanner Runner Gang

Library Hours

Mon-Fri: 9am-6pm
Sat: 12pm-4pm
Sun: Closed

1/2026 JANUARY



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Programs and events open to Ak-Chin members, residents and employees Minors under 16 must be accompanied by an adult over 18.			Happy New Year	1 Closed	2 Closed	3 Closed
4	5	6	7 Storytime @10am Crafternoon 3-6pm	8	9	10 Crafternoon 1-3pm
11	12	13	14 Storytime @10am	15 Library After Dark 18+ 6-8pm	16	17 Closed
18	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Closed	20	21 Storytime @10am	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 Storytime @10am	29 Puzzle Day!	30	31

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

Birthdays 12/19 - 12/31

DECEMBER 19
Manuel Peters III

DECEMBER 20
Lanna Lewis
Collette Susunkewa
Lailani Marrietta
Roni Zappia

DECEMBER 21
Adrian Romo
Aiden Peters
Elijah Narcia
Eileen Pinheiro

DECEMBER 22
Volincia Pablo
Manuel Rodriguez, II
Izik Antone
Candida Upton
Nicolas Olivas

DECEMBER 23
Yyondrez Antone

DECEMBER 24
Velacita Lopez
David Peters Jr.
Kyle Peters

DECEMBER 25
Serenity Villegas
Arrow Santiago
David Manuel Sr.
Danny Vincent

DECEMBER 26
Andrew Pinheiro
Angela Trenado

DECEMBER 27
Erica Oliver
Orlando Lewis

DECEMBER 28
Javier Zepeda
Bernardina Gonzalez
Julianna Orona
Sabrina Sam
Jersey Peters

DECEMBER 29
Abel Aguilla
Kathleen Miguel
Aubrey Lozano

DECEMBER 30
Renita Montero-Zamudio
Christopher Lewis
Bernadette Carra
Lee Joe Miguel II

DECEMBER 31
Mercedes Salcido

Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino's SALUTE Business Impact Group Honors Veterans and Allies with Acts of Gratitude and Service

Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino's SALUTE Business Impact Group continued its long-standing commitment to honoring and supporting veterans, their families, and the organizations that serve them by hosting a series of meaningful events throughout November.

During the month, SALUTE volunteers joined forces with Diana Gregory Outreach Services for the "Veggies for Veterans" initiative, distributing fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables to more than 700 veterans. The effort served as a simple, yet powerful reminder of

the respect, dignity, and appreciation owed to those who have served.

"We firmly believe in lifting up the people who have given so much in service to our country," said Samantha Gulick, director of Marketing and Operations and executive sponsor of the SALUTE Business Impact Group.

"Our veterans have devoted their lives to safeguarding our freedoms, and it's an honor to support them when they need us most. By showing our appreciation and encouraging others in our community to do the same, we help spark a wave



of meaningful, positive change in veterans' lives."

Continuing a proud tradition of corporate giving and community engagement, Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino team members also supported the Maricopa Veterans Day Parade



on Nov. 8.

The culinary team prepared 300 box lunches, which SALUTE members served to veterans attending the event, offering nourishment and gratitude to those who participated.

The SALUTE Business Impact Group at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino is dedicated to fostering a culture rooted in duty, honor, and selfless service.

By bringing together veteran team members and their allies, the group champions diversity, inclusion, and community impact through grassroots initiatives such as fundraisers, donation drives, and volunteer programs. SALUTE's ongoing efforts underscore its unwavering commitment to empowering veterans and strengthening the community it proudly serves.

MOVIES • RESTAURANTS • BOWLING • ARCADE • LASER TAG • GROUP EVENTS

DECEMBER EVENTS
Ak-ChinCircle.com

MOVIE RELEASES

12/05 Five Nights at Freddy's 2

12/05 Fackham Hall

12/05 Jujutsu Kaisen: Execution

12/05 Kill Bill: The Whole Bloody Affair

12/12 Silent Night, Deadly Night

12/12 Hamnet

12/19 The Housmaid

12/19 Is This Thing On?

12/19 David

12/25 Anaconda

12/25 Marty Supreme

MEET SANTA

DEC. 21 4PM-8PM

MONTHLY MOVIE MUST-HAVE COMBO

Large Popcorn 44oz Drink Reese's Peanut Butter Cup King Size \$20

JUAN OLIVAS

FRIDAY DECEMBER 19TH IN LUXE LOUNGE
FREE SHOW | 10pm-2am
DOORS AT 9pm

HOLIDAY HOURS

December 22nd - January 4th
Bowling & Theater Will Open at 11:00am

2026

AVAILABLE NOW

GIVE THE GIFT OF ENTERTAINMENT

AVAILABLE NOW

LUXE LOUNGE PRESENTS

DJ BATTLE NYE

COUNTDOWN TO 2026

7PM DOORS • 8PM MUSIC

LUXE LOUNGE

WEDNESDAY DEC 31

ARROYO GRILLE

520.426.6832 | ARROYOGRILLE.COM
48456 WEST HWY 238 IN MARICOPA

DECEMBER FREE APPETIZER

TRY THE PHILLY EGG ROLLS! W/ANY TWO ENTREE PURCHASES

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. Non-transferable. Offer expires 12/31/25.

Proudly owned by the Ak-Chin Indian Community

TRUCK GOLF

SATURDAY DECEMBER 20TH

THE OFFICIAL

TRACY LAWRENCE

AFTERPARTY

IN LUXE LOUNGE

10PM-2AM

CHRISTIAN WARREN

PUT ON YOUR DANCING SHOES

90'S COUNTRY ALL NIGHT LONG

DRINK SPECIALS ALL NIGHT

16000 N. MARICOPA RD. MARICOPA AZ 85139

Harrah's AK-CHIN CASINO

DECEMBER 2025

CAESARS REWARDS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<div>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div> <div>WEDNESDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHTS</div> <div>THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2025</div>	<div>1</div> <div></div> <div>OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF THE NFL</div> <div>MONDAY NIGHTS ARE GAME NIGHTS!</div>	<div>2</div> <div></div> <div>HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS GIFT GIVEAWAY</div>	<div>3</div> <div></div> <div>FROZEN FLURRY SURPRISE FOREVER YOUNG LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>4</div> <div></div> <div>10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER</div>	<div>5</div> <div></div> <div>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>6</div> <div></div> <div>APP-SOLUTELY CONVENIENT! LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>
<div>7</div> <div></div> <div>SUNDAY FUNDAY SHOPPING!</div>	<div>8</div> <div></div> <div>MONDAYS NEED DUNKIN', TOO!</div>	<div>9</div> <div></div> <div>HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS GIFT GIVEAWAY</div>	<div>10</div> <div></div> <div>FROZEN FLURRY SURPRISE FOREVER YOUNG LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>11</div> <div></div> <div>10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER</div>	<div>12</div> <div></div> <div>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>13</div> <div></div> <div>FRY'S FOOD STORES® ELECTRONIC GIFT CARD BASH LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>
<div>14</div> <div></div> <div>SUNDAY FUNDAY SHOPPING!</div>	<div>15</div> <div></div> <div>BE INSTANTLY ENTERTAINED</div>	<div>16</div> <div></div> <div>HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS GIFT GIVEAWAY</div>	<div>17</div> <div></div> <div>FROZEN FLURRY SURPRISE FOREVER YOUNG LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>18</div> <div></div> <div>10X REWARD CREDIT MULTIPLIER</div>	<div>19</div> <div></div> <div>LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>20</div> <div></div> <div>MERRY MIX & SIP BOOZE GIVEAWAY LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>
<div>21</div> <div></div> <div>SUNDAY FUNDAY SHOPPING!</div>	<div>22</div> <div></div> <div>OAK & FORK IS OPEN EVERY MONDAY</div>	<div>23</div> <div></div> <div>HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS GIFT GIVEAWAY</div>	<div>24</div> <div></div> <div>FROZEN FLURRY SURPRISE 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>25</div> <div></div> <div>5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER PLAY YOUR WAY FOR THE HOLIDAY LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>26</div> <div></div> <div>5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>	<div>27</div> <div></div> <div>5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER ANNIVERSARY HOT SEATS LEGACY OF LUCK KIOSK GAME LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE LOUNGE</div>
<div>28</div> <div></div> <div>SUNDAY FUNDAY SHOPPING! 5X TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER</div>	<div>29</div> <div></div> <div>PARLAY TO PLAY CAESARS SPORTSBOOK</div>	<div>30</div> <div></div> <div>LAST CHANCE CREDIT BOOST</div>	<div>31</div> <div></div> <div>NEW YEAR'S EVE 2026 TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER FREE SLOT PLAY DRAWING LOUNGE ENTERTAINMENT UNDER THE STREETLAMP CONCERT</div>	<div>ROCK THE CLOCK</div> <div>WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2025</div> <div>TIER CREDIT MULTIPLIER FREE SLOT PLAY DRAWING LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</div>		

Ak-Chin Youth Council Masik Tas Celebration

Story by Kristen Villegas, Photos by Runner Staff

Sunday, December 14, 2025 many were in attendance for the Ak-Chin Youth Council's Masik Tas Celebration which began at 1 PM at the "Old Vaila Site" in the main village.

Open for registration was the wood chopping, popover making, chumuth making, and youth/ adult dance contests.

The crowd was also treated to the musical styles of The Juanios Boys throughout the day.

Vendors stationed at the dance grounds serving popovers and more included; Marla and Family and Josie's Frybread.

Raffle prizes were up for grabs during the Community Day; prizes included a variety of Masik Tas swag.

Wood Chopping was the first contest to take place with 5 contestants, all Ak-Chin members, giving it their best shot. Ultimately it was Davis "Skip" Garcia who took first place, with Cecily Peters placing 2nd, and Chizzum Justin earning 3rd place.

Next was the Popover Making contest, with 5 contestants entered, ready to show their skills with the dough and cast iron.

Once the wood from the chopping contest was stoked hot enough, the frying of the Popovers began. Winners for the Popover Contest included: Manfred Jose winning 1st, Alena Makil placing 2nd, and Ak-Chin's Mary Anne Diaz earning 3rd. Following the Popover

making contest was the Chumuth making, with 5 ladies taking to the tables to dish out their best dough.

By the end of the night, best Chumuth Makers were announced; 1st place winner was Alex Carlyle from Ak-Chin, Alena Makil won 2nd, and Mavis Thomas took home 3rd.

After the cooking contests were over, everyone focused on the dance floor, where couples in the youth and adult Dance contests were owning the dance floor for a chance to place in the three categories; Chote, Vaila and Cumbia.

Ak-Chin brother-sister team, Abraham and Harlee Jose won 1st place for Vaila, 2nd in Cumbia and 1st in the Chote. Emilio Gomez and Francisco Kisto placed 1st in the Cumbia, and earned 2nd in the Chote and Vaila. Another brother-sister duo from Ak-Chin, Mylaunah and Marquan Robles took 3rd in all categories.

To end the contests, four groups headed to the dance floor for the Adult Dance contest.

When the dust settled, the following winners were; Ak-Chin members Mylauni Antone and Baya Olivas who placed 1st in all three categories; Chote, Vaila and Cumbia.

Evelyn Enos and Zyana Flores placed 2nd in Chote, and 3rd in the Vaila and Cumbia.

Gila River Royalty, Virginia Rossel and Mavis Antone placed 2nd

in Cumbia and Vaila and 3rd in Chote.

"On behalf of the Ak-Chin Youth Council, I want to express our sincere appreciation for your participation in the 2025 Masik Tas Community Event on December 14." Sheila Pablo-Bandin shared.

"It was a memorable day filled with exciting contests like wood chopping and dancing that highlighted our community's talent and spirit."

Sheila gave thanks to: the judges for the Popover and Chumuth contests; Carol Lopez, Velacita Lopez and Kathleen Miguel, as well as for the Dance Contest judges; Gabriel Lopez, Doria Garcia and Carole Lopez; "for their commitment to fairness and integrity throughout the event(s)."

"Thank you to our community vendors who dedicated their day to serving delicious food made with authentic traditional food that made our day the best.

Thank you to the Ak-Chin Indian Community and youth and the visiting sibling tribes who were also invited to join our festivities and made their way down to help us celebrate our Ak-Chin Indian Community 2025 Masik Tas Celebration hosted (by) our Ak-Chin Youth Council."

"Congratulations to all winners and great job to all who joined in and did awesome!" Sheila concluded.



Wood-chopping crew from Ak-Chin; l-r: Davis "Skip" Garcia, Chizzum Justin, Dreyvn Soliz, Conner Martinez, and Cecily Peters.



Chumuth Contest winners, l-r: 1st Place - Alex Carlyle with son Amari, 2nd Place - Alena Makil, 3rd Place - Mavis Thomas..



Siblings; Abraham and Harlee Jose were youth dance contest winners.



Emilio Gomez and Francisco Kisto also took home trophies from the dance contest.

Ak-Chin, siblings Mylaunah (left) and Marquan (right) Robles took 3rd in the youth dance contest.



It was an all-female sweep in the Adult Dance Contest as these young ladies wowed the crowd with their chotes, cumbias and vailas.



Couples glide across the floor as Juanios Boys play some chickenscratch.

Ak-Chin Indian Community Environmental Programs Burn Permit Do's and Don'ts

- DO**
- Obtain a Burn Permit from the Ak-Chin Environmental Programs before any open burning.
 - Confirm approved burn days and weather conditions with Environmental Programs, burning is only allowed when air quality and wind conditions are safe.
 - Use only approved materials, such as:
 - Natural vegetation (brush, leaves, tree trimmings)
 - Agricultural debris generated on-site
 - Keep water, shovels, or a fire extinguisher nearby at all times.
 - Maintain constant supervision of the fire until it is completely extinguished.
 - Burn in cleared areas, removing surrounding dry grass or debris to prevent spread.
 - Follow all permit limitations, including start/end times, burn pile size, and required setbacks from structures and roads.
- DON'T**
- Do NOT burn without a permit.
 - Do NOT burn prohibited materials, including:
 - Household trash
 - Plastics, tires, rubber, treated/painted wood
 - Chemicals, fuels, or hazardous waste
 - Construction & demolition debris
 - Appliances, furniture, or metals
 - Do NOT burn on windy, high-risk, or no-burn days.
 - Do NOT leave a fire unattended, even briefly.
 - Do NOT allow smoke to impact neighbors, roadways, or sensitive individuals, including elders or those with respiratory conditions.
 - Do NOT ignite oversized piles that exceed permit limits (burn smaller, manageable piles).
 - Do NOT assume agricultural exemptions apply without confirming with Environmental Programs.
 - Do NOT attempt to burn if you are unsure about the rules call Environmental Programs first.

Burn Permits are not needed for:

- Outdoor cooking
- Outdoor ceremony
- Outdoor Warmth

If you have any questions, contact Ralph "Manny" Gomez at 520-568-1162 or rgomez@ak-chin.nsn.us

Sanitation Holiday Schedule December 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
15 Trash Pick Up	16	17	18 Trash Pick Up Recycling Pick Up	19 Ak-Chin's Masik Tas Holiday
22 Trash Pick Up	23	24	25 Christmas Day Holiday Community Holiday	26 Trash Pick Up Recycling Pick Up
29 Trash Pick Up	30	31 (January) New Year's Day Holiday	1 Community Holiday	2 Trash Pick Up Recycling Pick Up

Overall Male: 1st – William Gundrum 1st – Marcel Nosie 3rd – Garrett Burnett	37-42 Artie Cassa III, Lyn Hargis	hope you will be in Ak-Chin again next year for this yearly celebration!"
Overall Female: 1st – Marcell Selestewa 2nd – Alyssa Voels 3rd – Marissa Flores	43-48 Arnold Cosen, Cecelia English	Ak-Chin Health Education would also like to thank the various community departments and individuals.
Age Categories	49-54 Ben Notah, Deej Honyumtewa	"Without your help, leadership, and partnership we could not host this event without you.
18 & under Marcel Nosie, Adikiss Romero	55+ David Thompson, Virginia Slim	Thank you to Ak-Chin Community Council, Ak-Chin Community Events, Ak-Chin Sanitation & Public Works, Ak-Chin Farms, Ak-Chin Fire Department, Ak-Chin Police Department, Ak-Chin Youth Council, Runner, Purchasing, Vekol Market, Chairman Gabriel Lopez, Waylon Antone, Clayton Antone, and all the volunteers & temp workers. We thank you so much for all your help!"
19-24 Tayshaun Nosie, Female (NO PLACEMENT)	"We would like to extend our appreciation to all who have joined us for the 2025 Masik Tas 10K & 2 Mile. Ak-Chin Health Education shared.	
25-30 Garrett Burnett, Brandi Selestewa	"We are grateful that you chose to spend your morning with us to not only celebrate Ak-Chin's Birthday, but to join us for fitness and to be active before the holidays.	
31-36 William Gundrum, Alyssa Voels	We hope you had a great time and	



10Kers show they're still with it, everyone had great energy when it came to cheering peers on.



There were many participants who pre-registered and able to get their Masik Tas run/walk shirts on the day of event.



Many community members came out to help Health Ed celebrate Masik Tas with the 2 Mi.



Cheers to another spectacular light parade; as we share in the Ak-Chin Masik Tas Celebration. We appreciate you all for joining us - for the pride and love of our community.



Masik Tas All-Indian Men's Basketball Tournament

Story and photos by Robert Miguel

Saturday, December 13th, and Sunday, December 14th, twelve teams took to the courts at the Ak-Chin Parks & Recreation gymnasium as they vied to see who would come out on top in the annual Masik Tas All-Indian Men's Basketball tournament.

For spectators, the tournament was an opportunity to see the "run and gun" style of play, which is also called "rez ball" up close, as the majority of game point tallies were never under fifty points.

The Arizona Warriors, a group representing the Salt River Community in Scottsdale, finished with an unblemished mark, taking the title against a tough, Those Guys squad in the championship game.

The championship game was a good one as both Warriors and Those Guys battled to a stand-still in the first and second quarters, with both teams racing up and down the court making layups and then stopping and popping from three-point range.

In the third quarter, the Warriors were able to take their lead to double digits. The game stayed the same in the fourth quarter as a fatigued Those Guys squad succumbed to the Warriors and a second-place finish.

Third place went to an OTF squad who battled back from the loser's bracket to place. Each placement team was awarded shirts, sweaters, and other goods from the Recreation Department.

Ak-Chin was well represented in the tournament as two teams participated, Ak-Chin #1 and Ak-Chin #2. Two other Ak-Chin members were able to play with teams from the Gila River and the San Lucy communities.



AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY
Ak-Chin Circle // 16000 N. Maricopa Rd. Maricopa, AZ 85139

FREE CONCERT
SAT DEC 20

2025 Masik Tas
AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY
EQUALITY FOR ALL
FOR A BRIGHTER TOMORROW
ARIZONA

CLEAR BAG POLICY

TRACY LAWRENCE

JUSTIN BILTONEN

WALKER MONTGOMERY

CALLIE TWISSELMANN

PALA CARTER

MONTGOMERY GENTRY
EDDIE MONTGOMERY
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

masiktas.ak-chin.nsn.us



Ak-Chin Indian Community

2025 MASIK TAS CELEBRATION



Ak-Chin Circle Arena | 16000 N. Maricopa Rd.

JR. RODEO

Friday, December 19th @ 9am

BULLS, BRONCS & DONKS

Friday, December 19th @ 4pm

OPEN WILD HORSE RACE

December 20th & 21st

OPEN RODEO

December 20th & 21st



MASIK TAS HAY RAFFLE



64 Bales

1 ticket for \$10

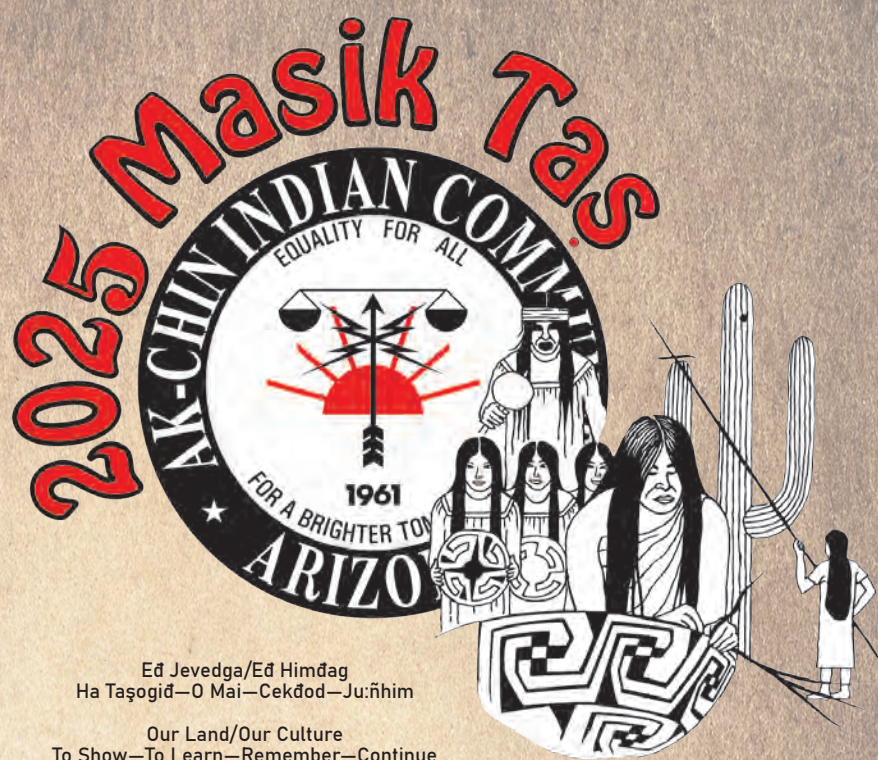
3 tickets for \$20

20 tickets for \$100

ON-SITE RAFFLE SALES: December 18th-21st
at the Masik Tas Rodeo Secretary's Office

****CASH OR MONEY ORDER ONLY****

WINNER NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.
Drawing will be held after last rodeo event
on December 21st



ATTENTION

To ensure the safety of our guests
and expedite Masik Tas entry, a
Clear Bag Policy will be in place.

CLEAR BAG POLICY

All bags must be made of clear
materials, with minimal logo(s),
NOT color or tinted.

Size must not exceed
12"x6"x12".

Medical bags, diaper bags, lawn
chairs, strollers, wagons &
blankets will be permitted upon
inspection.

NON-APPROVED

Non-approved bags/items
must be returned to vehicle
or discarded.



masiktas.ak-chin.nsn.us

Everyone Welcome

For information on Rodeo Events, please contact:
Delbert White: dwhite@ak-chin.nsn.us | 520-414-5515

alleventsstaff@ak-chin.nsn.us
520-568-1000