

Guest List:

Gino Cocci—parents, Dr. Joan Ashcraft, Art Almquist

THMS band students----25 students/guests

Safford's ADE recognition –10 students/administration

Oyama playground crew: 11 staff/administration

Happy Video

What's the saying ... "When the cat is away the mice will play?"

When I was in Washington, D.C. a couple weeks ago, our Communications department corralled people from just about every school to get a little silly and welcome their students and co-workers back to school.

The result is a fun video. Who knew so many of our staff had dance moves? **Watch this:**

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First day of School

I would like to thank all of our Tucson Unified School District teams for making the first day of school smooth for our families and students. Despite a Sun Tran bus strike that put a bump in the road for students and the Transportation Department, the first day went smoothly.

Also thank you to all of the teachers, school staff and families who shared first-day photos with us.

We also want to say thanks to the community, the Educational Enrichment Foundation and several churches who volunteered to clean campuses, donated backpacks and school supplies and offered support to our students and campuses.

We're compiling a list to share on our website and our district newsletter to say THANKS to all. If you know of a group we missed, please email us at media@TUSD1.org so we can acknowledge as many groups as we can!

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Steps to Success

On July 31, we held our third Step to Success walk. I'd like to thank Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild for his continued partnership in this powerful program. I'd also like to thank the community volunteers and employees who participate. This year we had about 130 employees and volunteers involved, and they visited about 400 homes.

To date, Steps to Success has brought 230 students back to school, and 31 have graduated. We are still looking at the numbers of students who came back this semester.

Our Dropout Prevention specialists and Student Services teams do an excellent job making this program a success and bringing kids back to school through Steps to Success and their everyday work days.

This year, we are working to pair our returning students with mentors to help them along the way. You can see here Mr. Cam Juarez with a student he has volunteered to mentor. Brandon returned to school on Thursday, and Mr. Juarez plans to see him through until the end.

Thank you, Mr. Juarez and everyone who has agreed to be a mentor so far. If anyone is interested in volunteering, they can call 232-8411.

We found out this morning that half of the students we made contact with that Friday have returned to school---that's 74 kids!

Here's a short video from the Steps to Success.

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Student Support Graphic

At the end of July teachers and district staff helped me show the community our vision for 15-16. At the end I showed this graphic.

It's the curriculum triangle we so often see in education but it goes a step further---showing not only the support our teachers get, but the programs and services that surround the students in our district.

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I also unveiled this vision statement for the district and I hope you'll join me in embracing this. This is where: students love to learn. Teachers love to teach and People love to work. We are Tucson Unified.

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Recognitions:

I'd like to congratulate **Gino Cocchi**, a Tucson High student who won the Ben Vereen Southwest Region Best Actor Award from the Broadway League Foundation. Gino was also chosen by his fellow students to win the Spirit of Ben Vereen Award, which was given to the most positive student at the event.

From there, Gino traveled to New York City to perform on the Broadway stage last month with just 60 students from around the nation to compete in the National High School Musical Theatre Awards!

His teacher, Art Almquist said, "We are all thrilled for him and beside ourselves with pride." As I understand it, Mr. Almquist and his wife went all the way to the Big Apple to cheer Gino on.

Congratulations, Gino! Please come on up with your supporters and take a bow!

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Next we have more good news from Tucson High. A group of **Tucson High's Band Leadership** students attended the Fred J. Miller Clinic in Flagstaff last month.

This is an excellent band leadership camp that included students attend from all over the state of Arizona and the Las Vegas area.

At the end of the clinic, the camp holds student performances, and individual and group awards are presented.

Our Tucson High Band Leadership students won an award for the group that showed the greatest improvement while at camp.

I'd like to ask these talented students and their leaders as well as their supporters to come on up:

Jameiz Grigsby, Head Drum Major

Meranda Romero, Asst. Drum Major

David Ingram, Percussion Captain

Emily Drum, Woodwind Captain

Ricardo Calderon, Brass Captain

Adrienna Chacon, Colorguard Captain (Rifle)

Katie Walls, Assist. Colorguard Captain (Flag)

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Our next recognition is for Safford K-8 Magnet School. The Arizona Department of Education named Safford an Arizona Civic Engagement School for 2014-2015.

The Excellence in Civic Engagement Program recognizes and supports schools in their efforts to ensure that our citizens are educated and engaged.

Safford Principal Steven Gabaldon credits the school's teachers, students and International Baccalaureate curriculum for the success in creating a culture of civics excellence.

Congratulations, Safford. I'd like to invite our folks from the school and from the Magnet Department to come on up.

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Camp Cooper

A few weeks back we had our friends from Camp Cooper in as we learned about their funding needs. We have an update for you; the center that serves so many Tucson Unified School District students is now FULLY FUNDED thanks to the generosity of the community.

We thank every single donor and everyone who shared the crowdfunding information over the past few months!

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Oyama playground

Next, I'd like to talk about a team that took a bad situation and turned it around for our students. A couple weeks ago vandals burned a playground set at Oyama Elementary School. The equipment and site were ruined, and it looked like our kindergarteners weren't going to have a place to play when school started.

Our Facilities team, led by Stuart Duncan, went to work to ensure that wouldn't happen. They located a playground set that wasn't in use, removed all of the hazardous material from the site and installed the new set in time for the first day of school.

The set is temporary, and the school is accepting donations for a new playground. Please contact Oyama if you would like to help. They have also set up a "go fund me" page and have an account at Pima Federal Credit Union.

Would the following members of our Facilities team please come up along with Principal Christopherson.

Tony Roman, supervisor

Howard "Red" Crawford

Manny Robles

Richard "Turbo" Holmquist

Melissa Schwartz

Sammy "Kool aid" Granillo

Painter John Martinez

Ray Cashen

And Stuart Duncan