PuHSD Highlights

2013-2014

Adrine Rodriguez, a freshman golfer on the Maryvale Girls Golf team, playing in her first match, on her first hole, and her first swing of her golf life hit a hole-in-one, August 28.

Four Phoenix Union students won State Track and Field Championships. South Mountain’s Alexsis Center won both the Girls Division II 100-meter and 200-meter sprints. South’s Nik Merzer was the state champion in the Div. II Boys Shot Put; Central’s Quinton Russ won the Division II Long Jump and Alhambra’s Zarriea Willis won the Girls Division I High Jump.

Maryvale’s Alejandro Calderon was crowned a Division I Wrestling State Champion in the 113-pound division, finishing the season with a 50-4 record. He is the 19th wrestling state champion from Maryvale since 2001.

Metro Tech’s Martin Lopez finished 5th in the 56-kilogram weight class at the National Youth Olympic Weightlifting Championships in February. Only lifting since August and competing in his only his second event in his life, 5-4, 123-lb. Lopez has been identified as a top prospect by the United States Olympic Committee.

Maryvale High School and football coach George Martinez were presented with the Matt D. Hambly Sportsmanship Award for the Division I Football season. The award is presented by the Arizona Football Officials Association based on players’ and coaches’ conduct on the field and the sportsmanship they display.

For the second consecutive year, seven teachers earned National Board Certification: Sungbwan Byun: Math, Metro Tech; Carrie Deahl: English, Maryvale; Joyce A. Donaldson: English, North, Niki Karavandian: English/Literacy, Trevor Brown: Cynitha Maher: Spanish, Alhambra; Sue Weight (not pictured): Art. Alhambra. There are now 31 current NBC Teachers in the District.

North’s Joann Martin was named the High School English Educator of the Year by the Arizona English Teachers Association in September. Martin teaches English Honors, AP English Literature and Academic Decathlon.

Cesar Chavez math teacher Jeanette Fernandez Scott, was selected as a 2013 Chicano/Hispanic Esperanza Award winner, honoring Latino teachers who inspire students of all backgrounds, play an active role in the school, and demonstrate a true commitment to the community.

Camelback Marketing teacher and DECA advisor Julia Bourdo was one of eight teachers nationwide to win the Teacher Leavy Award for her teaching the Free Enterprise System and incorporating “Consious Capitalism.”

Teaching U.S. History grant coordinator Syd Gilston was selected by the Arizona Council for the Social Studies as the 2013 recipient of the Wilbur Murra Award, recognizing her long-term contributions and achievement in the field of social studies education.

Betty Fairfax Physics teacher Britny Delp was selected for STAR (STEM Teacher and Researcher Program) organized by Cal Poly San Luis Obispo’s Center for Excellence in STEM Education. The program involves a nine-week summer research experience in prominent national laboratories. Delp worked at Stanford University lab.

Betty Fairfax Principal Dr. Zack Muñoz received the Phoenix College Golden Bear Award in May for his school’s participation with Degree Phoenix, an initiative with Phoenix College and the City of Phoenix to increase college-going high school students.

Trevor G. Brown Principal Dr. Gabe Trajillo was named a 2014 Rodel Exemplary Principal Finalist. Kessoni Dang, a Professional Development Specialist a Betty Fairfax was named a Rodel Aspiring Principal. Rodel Aspiring Principals are selected each spring to participate in a two-year mentoring partnership with Exemplary Principals.

Comeback Band Director Jamie Johnston is a quarterfinalist for the GRAMMY Music Educator Award, one of only two from Arizona. Semifinalists will be chosen in September and 10 finalists named in December.

English teacher Sean Tessmer from Betty Fairfax; Math teacher April Coleman of South Mountain and Spanish Teacher Heidi Garcia from North were selected to participate in the national Teacher Leadershship Initiative (TLI), a program to develop a new generation of leaders within the profession.

Phoenix Union Principals Claudio Rosas and Dr. Chen Gostnon joined U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s Principal Roundtable Discussion, hosted by the Arizona K12 Center in Phoenix.

The roundtable discussion was about teacher leadership and principal needs. The Teach to Lead initiative that the USDE is developing promotes the involvement of teachers in decision making and increasing their leadership capacity.

Tony Scarle, Quality Assurance Technician for the District was given an Education Commitment Award by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for his work with a sustainable and safe program called “Integrated Pest Management.”

Phoenix Union hosted the 30th Annual Greater Phoenix Music Festival at Camelback High School. Top musicians from junior high and Phoenix Union high schools converge for two days of rehearsal, culminating with a performance. Guest conductors worked with the students who earned their way through auditions.

Phoenix Union increased the number of A schools and B schools and no school recorded a Letter Grade of less than C in the 2013 Arizona Department of Education accountability rankings. Three-time A school Franklin Police and Fire was joined by Bioscience High as A schools. Maryvale joined Metro Tech, Cesar Chavez and Betty Fairfax as B schools.

Phoenix Union High School District enrollment topped 27,000 students for the first time in 36 years, as 739 more students than last year chose District schools for the 2013-14 school year.

The Class of 2014 seniors earned a record $53 million in college and university scholarships. Students earned millions more in grants and financial aid.

For the sixth year in a row, every junior in the District was offered the ACT College Entrance Exam for free. Almost 5,000 juniors took advantage of the opportunity in April.

Phoenix Union High School District 2013-2014 Highlights
Preparing Every Student for Success in College, Career, and Life.

Metro Tech earned the A+ School of Excellence Award given by the Arizona Educational Foundation for 2013-14. The A+ designation is for a three-year period. Winning schools are recognized for their superior ability to identify and meet the academic and non-academic needs of their student population.

Franklin Police and Fire High School was recognized as an Arizona Higher Performing School, exceeding expectations in college and career readiness, according to the National Center for Educational Achievement. It was the second year Franklin was named a Higher Performing School in Arizona.

Bioscience High School was listed as one of the 30 Most Amazing High School Campuses in the World, according to Best Education Degrees (www.besteducationdegrees.com). Bioscience, built in 2007, was 27th in the rankings, and also one of 13 U.S. schools selected. The list looked at many factors, including as the learning environment and architectural notability.

Phoenix Union High School was listed as one of the Top 50 High Schools in Arizona. The ranking is based on a school’s average score of the 2013 SAT exam from The College Board, which administers the test nationwide.

Rodel Aspiring Professional Development Specialist Dr. Gabriel Trujillo, Trevor Browne Principal Roundtable Discussion, principal for his work with a sustainable and safe program called ‘‘Education Commitment Award’’ in May for his school’s participation with Degree Phoenix, an initiative with Phoenix College and the City of Phoenix to increase college-going high school students.

The completion of new classroom buildings at Betty Fairfax and Franklin Police and Fire, and design work for a new Suno-Diamondbacks Education Academy campus were among the highlights of the 2011 Construction Bond in 13-14.

Franklin Police and Fire High School led a group of five Phoenix Union schools that made the U.S. News and World Report’s Best High Schools rankings. Phoenix Union was designated as a Silver medalist, Bioscience, Maryvale, Metro Tech and North were Bronze medalists.

Voters passed a seven-year Maintenance and Operations Override in November 2013 that will insure that the District maintain current programs, offerings and personnel, while also extending learning opportunities for all students, through additional class periods; opportunities for 8th grades, expanded evening school, summer school, access to virtual learning opportunities at all schools, as well as intervention and student support programs promoting diversity, campus safety and anti-bullying. It was the seventh successful Override in nine elections since 1980.

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North High School and Bioscience High School made a list of the Top 50 High Schools in Arizona. The ranking is based on a school’s average score of the 2013 SAT exam from The College Board, which administers the test nationwide.

Bettie Fairfax senior Genesis Miranda-Soto was honored as one of six National Hispanic Heritage Youth Award winners for her leadership in the classroom and community in January. Miranda-Soto earned her award in the Business and Entrepreneurship category.

North High School and Bioscience High School made a list of the Top 50 High Schools in Arizona. The ranking is based on a school’s average score of the 2013 SAT exam from The College Board, which administers the test nationwide.

Eugenia Anane-Wae, a South Mountain High School Law Magnet student, was a National Champion at the Marshall-Brennan National Mock Court Competition, in Washington, D.C. in April.

Markaya Hill, was one of four finalists. The two final matches featured South Mountain (Anane-Wae and Hill) coached by ASU law students against Connecticut high school students trained by Yale Law School students.
North’s Karla García earned a perfect score on the National French Test in March. A junior who tested at the 3rd year level, Garcia will not only receive a gold medal and a first place prize, but she was also eligible to win an all-expense-paid two-week trip to France, offered by the French Embassy. Eleven other North students finished in the top 10 in the nation in the exam in their respective divisions.

Trevor Browne’s Kimberly Soltero, was accepted to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. Soltero, Browne’s Junior ROTC Battalion Commander, had also applied and was accepted to The U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the Coast Guard Academy. She is the third Trevor Browne student accepted into a military academy in four years.

David Battel of North High School was named a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist in the 2014 National Merit Scholarship Program. North’s Taylor Heimbichner qualified as a National Achievement Scholar semifinalist, as a high-achieving African-American. North’s Poetry club, called “Underwater Dreams” placed first in the Unity Festival City-wide Poetry Slam at the Mesa Center for the Arts in November.

Six Phoenix Union High School District students from six different schools were named Gates Millennium Scholars, the most District students ever in one year to earn the prestigious scholarship from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Scholarship, which can be applied toward undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees, is valued at over $250,000. The Gates Millennium Scholars are (pictured from left to right): Job Du La Crau, Comeback; Naila Littlet, Trevor Browne; Karen Mondaca, Cesar Chavez; Amanda Serrano, South Mountain; Brian Shelby, Central; and Juan Vasquez, Bioscience.

A motion picture and a documentary were produced in 2013 about the Carl Hayden Robotics team. The documentary, Underwater Dreams debutted in April, while the movie, Spare Parts, will be released in January, 2014.

Phoenix Union qualified a record-tying seven teams for the 46th State Academic Decathlon Competition in March. Cesar Chavez led the PUHSD contingent with a 7th Place Finish. It was the Champions’ fourth Top 10 State Finish in five years.

Bioscience’s Samantha Su Taylor is the first-ever Flinn Scholar from the math and science-focused small school. Only 20 of Arizona’s highest achieving seniors are selected as Flinn Scholars, and the competition is fierce, with 653 seniors applying this year.

Bioscience sophomore Helena Silva-Nichols was selected for the High School Student Research Internship Program sponsored by Neurology Research Barrow Neurological Institute of St. Joseph’s Hospital. She will work year-round, through her senior year in high school, conducting research in the field of brain cancer and tumors.

Bailey Myers, a senior at Betty H. Franklin High School was nominated to attend the Congress of Future Medical Leaders in Washington, DC in February. The Congress is an honors-only program for high school students who want to become physicians or go into medical research fields.

Jose Contreras, a junior at South Mountain’s broadcast-journalism magnet was invited to participate in the New England Center for Investigative Reporting high school workshop in Boston this summer.

North’s Poetry club, called “Generation Ink” placed first in the Unity Festival City-wide Poetry Slam at the Mesa Center for the Arts in November.

The Carl Hayden Falcon Robotics won the Arizona FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Regional for the fourth consecutive year in March, and made it to the semi-finals at the FIRST International in April. The Falcons essentially finished 17th out of 2,727 teams from 17 countries.

South Mountain’s step team “Ice Cold Souljah” won a National Step Team competition in Atlanta in June, competing against 10 other teams from New York, Florida, Atlanta, and Virginia.

Three Metro Tech students and one North student earned scholarships and one, a possible job offer, at this year’s Careers in Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP) State Finals, March 22. Ana Osuna of Metro won a $20,000 scholarship to the Cordon Bleu. Metro’s Rebecca Estrada and Bryan Ponce won scholarships.

Trevor Browne’s Brain TV producer Gabriel Gamino, was one of 10 youth journalists from across the country selected as PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs All-Stars. These students traveled to Washington, D.C. in the summer to work together with teachers and mentors from across the country.

North culinary student Leondra Sosa won a $3,000 scholarship and a one-year internship offer of a job at the Kierland Westin Hotel.

South Mountain, one of 16 teams to qualify, lost its only trial to the eventual champion at the Arizona State Mock Trial Competition in March. The Jaguars placed three individuals on the eight person All-State Team, including the state’s top-ranked student, Alexis Carter.

South Mountain received $5,000 and Metro Tech, $4,000 for their communications and digital film programs as winner and runner-up of the Phoenix Police Department “Too Young to Drive” Video Public Service Announcements contest. South also took home another $2,000 for its audio PSA, placing second in that category.

North’s Alan Ponce competed on Telemundo’s La Voz Kids, a Spanish version of The Voice, and made it to the final three singers.

The one-man team of Metro Tech student Andreas Parrida and “Drizzy” placed first at the Virtual Business Management Challenge at the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) National Leadership Conference.

Maryvale’s BriAnna Frank was selected as Arizona’s winner of the AlNeal Fuder Free Spirit Scholarship, which included an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for a summer journalism conference held at the Newseum. Neuharth was the founder of USA Today. Frank also attended a summer training conference hosted by the Asian-American Journalists Association at Emerson College in Boston, one of 43 students chosen.

Two Metro Tech teams qualified for the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Virtual Business Management Challenge, two of only 16 teams nationwide who competed at the FBLA National Leadership Conference in the summer.

Metro Tech juniors Du Vu and Nicholas Renteria placed second in the nation in the field of Industrial Robotics at the Future Business Leaders National Competition, in Kansas City, MO this summer.

Hunter Hazlettol, a sophomore member of the Betty Fairfax Boys Golf team, was selected to represent Arizona this summer at the First Tee Life Skills and Leadership Academy in San Diego.

Trevor Browne Senior Cadet Captain Alan Soto received a Distinguished Marksmanship Award for being one of the top 10 air riflemen in the nation, based on national competition results. Soto is the first JROTC cadet in Trevor Browne history to win a Distinguished Marksmanship medal, considered the highest shooting award in JROTC competition.

The Alhambra Lions captured the runner-up trophy at the Arizona Chess Team championships in November. The Lions won all their matches before falling to undefeated Catalina Foothills. It is the second time in three years that Alhambra finished second in state. Khann Phan was the runner-up State Chess Champion at the Individual Championships.

The Alhambra Falcon Soccer team advanced to the State semi-finals, falling to eventual state champion, Byrophy Prep, 3-2 after two overtimes and a penalty kick shoot-out.

The Carl Hayden Falcon Marching Band came in 6th place at the State Championships in November. The Falcons were the only PUHSD band in the State Championships, qualifying as one of the top 10 bands in Division III out of 61 bands statewide.

The Betty Fairfax JROTC was the only Arizona finalist in the Army JROTC Leadership and Academic Bowl in Washington D.C. The Stamps finished 11th in the nation among the 40 finalists, from more than 3,000 entrants.

Carl Hayden JROTC cadet Alan Rodriguez won a National Championship, finishing 1st in the American Legion Junior Sporter National Rifle Championship in August, 2013.

Trevor Browne won the statewide JROTC Adventure team competition in October, the fifth time in six years the Bruins have won this event.

The South Mountain Girls Basketball team finished 18-0 and was ranked #1 in Division II at the conclusion of the regular season, falling to eventual state champ Seton Catholic. Overall the Jaguars were 26-4 and won their division of the Nike Tournament of Champions in December.