

GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY'S MAGAZINE

# GCU today

MAY 2016



## Point of Emphasis

Student groups are thriving  
— just ask the Havocs



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GCU Today Magazine is a quarterly publication of the Office of Communications and Public Affairs at Grand Canyon University.

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It's hard to tell who enjoys the Canyon Kids program more, the GCU students who give their time or the local kids who participate. But there's no question that God has His hand in it.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

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Getting involved in clubs and other student groups on campus has never been easier. The biggest challenge might be trying to choose just one or two.

### 16 Top 10 GCU Stories

Community leadership, amazing growth and the quick success of the University's new hotel and golf course — 2015-16 certainly Painted the Valley Purple.

### 18 A Grandy Success

Grandy Glaze came to GCU on a basketball mission — to help the 2015-16 season be the best ever for both him and the Lopes. Mission accomplished.

### 20 Raising McCain

The GCU students who are interns for John McCain love their jobs, but they love even more their opportunities to interact with the Arizona senator.



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**ON THE COVER:** The Havocs student cheering section has become the biggest and most high-profile student group on campus, but many others also are wildly popular. PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB

## Sound Bites

*What is your favorite GCU memory from the 2015-16 academic year?*

Welcome Week. I loved gathering with returning students and working together to make the freshmen feel at home the moment they stepped out of the car. It may be hot, but it's a wonderful way to meet other students and make new friends.

**Gabby Marrama,**  
ASGCU public relations coordinator

When coach Dan Majerle, the Thundering Heard Marching Band and the cheerleaders came to the Tempe office before the basketball season.

It was a great day to get pumped for the season and amped about being a Lope!

**Connie Balderrama,**  
enrollment counselor

The Honors Scholarship Reception at the GCU Golf Course clubhouse. The best and the brightest had to demonstrate not only academic excellence but character and service, and their parents and grandparents were beaming.

**Dr. Hank Radda,**  
GCU provost

Watching students hold the door for others, speak words of encouragement, share their snacks with peers, and simply practice good fellowship. It makes me ultra-proud to be part of such a "Grand University."

**Kari Marks,**  
faculty specialist, College of Nursing and Health Care Professions

BE THERE

## May

4-6

### INTERNATIONAL WHOLISTIC MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Workshop facilitators and speakers from around the world hand off proven strategies and effective tools for wholistic ministry, such as engaging youth, wholistic health care, engaging the refugee and more. GCU Arena. [gcuarena.com](http://gcuarena.com)

13-14-15

### WAC BASEBALL

Last year, the Lopes clinched the Western Athletic Conference regular-season championship at Sacramento State. When the two teams meet this year at Brazell Stadium, will it be for the title again?  
[gculopes.com](http://gculopes.com)



## June

6-9, 20-23, 27-30

### BASKETBALL CAMPS

Head coach Dan Majerle, assistant coaches and Lopes basketball players invite boys ages 6-14 to camps featuring drills, demonstrations, competitions, individual instruction and tournament games.

[gcumensbasketballcamps.com](http://gcumensbasketballcamps.com)



13-16

### STEM CAMPS

High school students spend four days and three nights on campus experiencing fun and hands-on activities that explore a variety of STEM subjects and careers.

[campus.gcu.edu](http://campus.gcu.edu)



## July

10-14, 17-21

### SOCCER CAMPS

Boys ages 10-18 enjoy the fun of a summer camp combined with the skill development of a soccer player next to coach Schellas Hyndman and his dedicated staff of coaches.

[gcusoccercamps.com](http://gcusoccercamps.com)

## August

22-26

### WELCOME WEEK

Welcome Week is all about getting to know campus, meeting new friends and learning what it means to be a Lope. Kick off the start of the school year with a variety of events on campus, including a new "Hype Night" led by the Havocs, a Canyon Cool Down, the "Ignite" candlelight ceremony and a Night at the Movies. [www.gcu.edu/welcomeweek](http://www.gcu.edu/welcomeweek)

## Opt In

What was the best part of a GCU basketball game this season?

- ☐ Watching the Havocs go crazy
- ☐ DeWayne Russell driving and dishing
- ☐ Joshua Braun shooting a 3-pointer
- ☐ Grandy Glaze finding yet another way to score under the basket
- ☐ An alley-oop dunk to Keonta Vernon
- ☐ The halftime shows
- ☐ Winning
- ☐ The swag

Vote for one and check results at [news.gcu.edu](http://news.gcu.edu).

### Results from the last poll

When will GCU hit the 200,000 mark for its alumni community?

August 2019, our 70th anniversary	28%
Sooner than you think	24%
December 2020	14%
December 2016	13%
Around the time an Arizona pro sports team wins a title, which could be soon.	9%
December 2022	7%
December 2025	5%





One of the things Pastor Tim Griffin loves most about his role as dean of students is talking with students on campus, even if they're just standing in line waiting to order lunch.



## 5 ON 5 WITH

# Pastor Tim Griffin, dean of students

**T**im Griffin was a motor sports chaplain for 12 years, six in NASCAR, before coming to Grand Canyon University in 2010. As pastor and dean of students, he oversees Student Engagement, Spiritual Life, Residence Life, Housing and the Health Center, which includes the Counseling Center. GCU Today caught up with him to talk about life on campus.

- 1 What is the best thing about the student experience at GCU?** You don't have to leave campus to find things to do. It's really on the students — it's right at their fingertips. Evenings are a great opportunity for social and extracurricular engagement that is unique to Grand Canyon.
- 2 What is the advice you find yourself giving students most often?** This time will pass faster than you think, so take advantage of every opportunity that is presented to you. Students should plug in early and find something that they know they will enjoy — or maybe even something they don't know but want to try. They'll be seniors before they know it.
- 3 What is your favorite aspect of GCU?** Move-In is incredible. There is just a buzz the first week.

Also, it's great to be at graduations because you see these students who are celebrating all their success that got them to that point. But outside of just events, I enjoy being in the eateries on campus, and, strangely enough, I don't mind waiting in line because I get to have conversations with students. That's a sacred moment for me.

- 4 How are Chapel speakers chosen?** We want to find people who are what we term "broadly evangelical" and are effective communicators to millennials, which is why most of the speakers are local church pastors. We try to keep it simple, and we try to make it about Jesus and not about political ideas. It is a place where people can have a simple worship experience.
- 5 To what do you attribute GCU's success?** God has allowed this to happen. There's no doubt about it. I think He has used a variety of dynamics for this to become what it is, but the top two are vision in the leadership and a huge percentage of employees who are deeply invested in what this is all about. They believe God wants them to be here, and they have made it their life mission to help these students grow into young leaders.

—RICK VACEK

## Got Your Number

When Grand Canyon University took over management of Maryvale Golf Course early in 2015 and did a complete renovation of the west Phoenix layout, it figured to get a lot more play. But this is amazing. Tee times were in demand right away when it reopened as Grand Canyon University Championship Golf Course on Jan. 1, and the flow hasn't stopped. Here are some numbers that put in perspective how successful the course was in its first three months:

**1** Position in Golf Advisor Power Rankings soon after it opened

**5** Rainy days in Phoenix, January-March 2016

**5,511**

Average rounds per month, January-March 2016

**3,041**

Average rounds per month in 2014 when it was Maryvale Golf Course

**\$949,307**

Total revenue, January-March

**\$950,000**

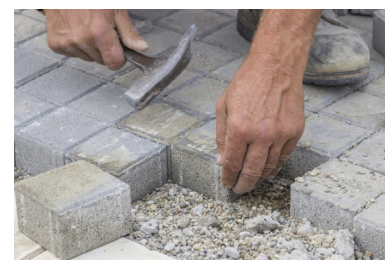
Total revenue in all of 2014



## Oh, Yeah?

Employees were scheduled to start moving in to the new Student Life Building, located just south of the Student Union, in late April. The four-story building will house all of the Student Engagement offices on the first two floors, Athletics on the third floor

and the Administration and other personnel on the top level. And that's just one of a number of new buildings that will be open for the start of the 2016-17 academic year. There also will be a second engineering building at the front of campus, three new apartment buildings and the beautiful soccer stadium located just west of the Student Life Building.











# GCU club scene hits the heights

Getting involved in student groups is easy — and can be a Grand adventure

BY RICK VACEK

One of the most interesting dynamics of the Grand Canyon University campus is that, despite all the growth of recent years, it still takes only a few minutes to walk from one side to the other. Such intimacy breeds inclusiveness.

And nowhere is this geography lesson more clearly mapped out than in the rise in the number of student clubs and organizations, from 22 to more than 100 in just three years if you count all the teams in the burgeoning club sports program. Numerous studies have shown that students who are engaged beyond the classroom perform better academically, but GCU has taken this idea to the next level — it's the ace of clubs.

How did this happen? Simple. "We encourage them to dream big," said Moyo Harris, GCU's clubs and organizations coordinator. All someone has to do to start a club is fill out paperwork, get a faculty/staff sponsor, petition for the support of at least 50 other GCU students, and get approved by the Associated Students of GCU board.

But there's more to it than that. The clubs are about students helping each other, the community and even the world, and you see evidence of that time and again as you delve into their activities. These aren't just time-fillers, they're life-savers.

Take, for example, how getting in a club might have convinced senior Kendall Argust she was making the right decision in switching careers.

The commuter student had flunked biology — kind of a problem when you want to become a pharmacist — and had switched to accounting when one of her instructors, Dr. Donna DeMilia,

The Outdoors Club trip to the Grand Canyon was among its many popular excursions.





Getting a group rate on ski trips is another perk offered by the Outdoors Club



suggested one day in class that students might want to consider joining what now is known as the Accounting Society.

So Argust went to a meeting and had what she calls “an ‘aha’ moment that I belonged there.” Before long she was attending a student leadership conference as the group’s secretary, and that was it — she was hooked. Being in the club gave her a reason to stay on campus after making the long drive from her home in Surprise, Ariz., and then going to class. She shudders to think what would have happened if she hadn’t followed DeMilia’s advice.

“I think I would have changed to something different. I think I would have fallen back onto something in general biology or something along those lines,” she said. “And I don’t think I would have been as involved in school — obviously not.”

It makes you wonder how many GCU students feel the same way.

## Havocs show their heart

Many GCU clubs spread their positive influence in multiple directions. To see what that’s like, look no further than the inspiration of what has become the University’s most well-known student organization, the Havocs student cheering section.

Most people know them as those lovable crazies who paint their faces and bounce and scream and turn basketball games in GCU Arena into must-see entertainment, but they

make noise in another, even more important way. They also do “Havocs with Heart,” the group’s outreach program whereby members fan out into the community to bring their good cheer.

The new Havocs president for the 2016-17 school year, Steve Hunsaker, said he was “blown away” the first time he went to one of their events at 6 a.m. on a Saturday and saw a large group of typically enthusiastic students doing their Havocs thing — and these are volunteers, folks.

“That’s the GCU way,” he said. “That’s what sets us apart from a lot of other student sections in the country.”

But the Havocs are just one of many student organizations that have become distinctive.

Certainly the most adventurous group — literally — is the Outdoors Club, which is in just its second year but has become so popular, it had to stop trying to attract more students to its events. There regularly is a long waiting list for every event even though it schedules one or two trips weekly.

If you think that all they do is hiking, hold on to your backpack. They’ve gone canyoneering and rappelled down waterfalls. There was the spring break trip to the beach at Santa Monica, then the wilds of Yosemite National Park. Snowboarding. Paintballing. Whitewater rafting. They’ve explored a cave in Tucson. They even have gone skydiving.

Oh, there’s plenty of hiking and

backpacking, of course. Utah is a popular destination. They went from rim to rim in the Grand Canyon. And all of the local trails are at play.

“We try to change it up a lot just so that everyone can experience something new,” said the club’s president, Stefan Dudzinski.

They set up a system of carpools that reimburse the driver for gas, and they keep costs down by getting group discounts and providing inexpensive gear whenever possible. For example, they were able to get lift tickets and rentals for \$40 on the snowboarding trip, and Dudzinski, who comes from an outdoorsy family, regularly rents out his own gear for a fraction of what it normally would cost.

“We try to keep the trips under \$20,” he said.

You never know what to expect on these trips, and not just because of what’s out in nature. The caving trip took them to a lake at the bottom of the cave, and one participant decided to get baptized right then and there.

## Exploring faith

For those who want something spiritual but would prefer to stay out of caves, there’s the Defenders Club, which meets on Monday nights to discuss Christianity.

It was begun in the fall of 2013 by someone who knows more than a little bit about the subject — senior Matthew Mittelberg, whose father, Mark, is a prominent Christian





**The Havocs' histrionics at games have become legendary, but they also reach out to the community.**

apologetics author and speaker. Matthew is headed to the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics in the fall.

"I think a lot of people, before they come to college, they have the idea that faith has to be taken blindly," Matthew said. "In reality, there's a lot of evidence and reasoning that supports the Christian faith. We examine some of those evidences and some of those arguments to show that Christianity is true."

About 50 students pack a room at the weekly meetings to hear such subjects as what historical evidence there is that Jesus rose from the dead, how Christianity compares to Islam and why Christians are pro-life. Mittelberg also arranges for visits by big-name outside speakers, such as his father, Lee Strobel and Dr. Nabeel Qureshi, who converted from Muslim to Christian.

The meetings attract students of all types of backgrounds, including Buddhists, Muslims, Jews and atheists. In fact, Mittelberg said, a Jewish man was so impressed by Qureshi's talk, he decided to become a Christian. Everyone is welcome as long as they're open to a good discussion about the issues.

Does that diversity benefit the club?

"It really does," Mittelberg said. "People who have those different backgrounds can say, 'Coming from the outside, this is the way I had seen it.' It really helps us to sharpen our witness so that we're not having a group think kind of situation where only Christians are

## GCU CLUBS AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

### PROFESSIONAL

Accounting Society  
Alpha Chi Honors Society  
(high achieving students)  
Anatomy  
AzHOSA  
Business Management  
Canyon Counselors  
Collegiate DECA (business)  
Colangelo Scholars (business honors)  
Communications  
DC Cohort  
Delta Mu Delta (business administration)  
Digital Design  
Digital Film Production  
Doctoral Learning Community  
Educators Rising  
Engineering  
Forensic Science Society  
Future Healthcare Administrators  
Future Politicians of America  
Guitar Haven  
Hawaii  
Honors Consortium  
Honors Institute Organization  
Honors STEMists  
IDEA Club (entrepreneurism)  
Innovating Computing  
Lambda Pi Eta (communication)  
Lopes Justice Society  
Lopes Speech and Debate  
Mock Trial  
National Council of Teachers of English  
National Society of Collegiate Scholars at GCU  
Pre-Dental Society  
Programming  
Psi Chi Honor Society (psychology)  
Psychology  
Psych Hiking  
Scholars at GCU  
Society of Collegiate Leadership and Achievement  
Sociology  
Sports Business  
Sports Medicine  
Student Dance Education  
Student National Association of Teachers of Singing  
Student Nurses Association  
Student Veterans Association  
Student Wellness and Health Association  
U.S. Institute for Technical Theatre  
We the People  
X-Factors (mathematics)

### SOCIAL

Alpha Psi Omega (theatre)  
American Sign Language  
Bass Fishing  
Best Buddies Black Student Union  
Black Student Union  
Crossfit GCU  
Circle K International of GCU  
DeCram Club (computer gaming)  
D.R.E.A.M. Dance  
Fellowship of Christian Athletes  
Friends of the Pen  
History  
Humans vs. Zombies International  
Latino Student Union  
Lindy Lopes  
Lopes Chess  
Lopes E-Sports  
Lopes Outdoors  
Love Your Melon Crew  
Progress More Often Boot Camp  
Pro Life  
Scuba Lopes  
Spikeball  
To Write Love On Her Arms (outreach to people struggling with addiction or depression)  
Young Life

### MINISTRY

Biblical Theology Club  
Defenders (defending Christian faith)  
Freedom Fighters (committed to abolishing modern-day slavery)  
GCU Catholics

### SPORTS

Baseball (men, 3 teams)  
Basketball (men and women)  
Equestrian (men and women)  
Esports (men and women)  
Extreme (triathlon and cross country)  
Flag football (men)  
Golf (men and women)  
Lacrosse (men and women)  
Rugby (men)  
Soccer (men and women)  
Softball (women)  
Tennis (men and women)  
Ultimate Frisbee  
Wrestling (men)

Students interested in joining a club should email [clubs@gcu.edu](mailto:clubs@gcu.edu), go to [gcu.edu/clubsandorganizations](http://gcu.edu/clubsandorganizations) or visit the Student Engagement office.



**Matthew Mittelberg speaks at a Defenders Club meeting.**



talking to Christians and using our jargon and vernacular. The mission of apologetics and Christians is to reach the world and to share our faith.”

### Game on

Another huge club — actually, a conglomeration of a bunch of smaller groups — is club sports, which has grown to 22 teams and 450 athletes in just a few years. Associate Athletic Director Dan Nichols expects to have even more teams and 200 more participants for the 2016-17 academic year.

“We’ve got one of the top club programs in the nation,” he said. “I’ve got people calling me asking, ‘How are you doing it? What are you doing?’ and really wanting to look at our program.”

The program drew national attention last year when GCU won the Men’s Collegiate Lacrosse Association championship, but what amazes Nichols is the interest in baseball (there are three teams) and hockey and the development of women’s lacrosse.

“Women’s lacrosse started with nine

## Speech and Debate Team is talking point for GCU excellence

When Ashlyn Tupper was a freshman in 2012, Grand Canyon University didn’t have a speech and debate team, and that didn’t faze her.

After all, she had logged four years of speech and debate at North Pointe Preparatory high school in Phoenix, and she was ready to end that chapter of her life.

My, have things changed! Four years later, not only does GCU have a speech and debate team that is rocking the competition, but Tupper, the only senior, is one of the keys to its success.

So what changed her mind?

In the spring of 2014, six months after College of Humanities and Social Sciences instructor Barry Regan started GCU’s first Speech and Debate

Team, Tupper found herself in his public speaking class.

She had no idea he was the team’s director. So when he asked students to talk about themselves, Tupper thought nothing of discussing her years competing in speech during high school.

“He spent the rest of the semester talking me into joining the team,” Tupper said.

It wasn’t until the fall of 2014 — and after much prayer — that Tupper attended a practice.

“I just felt suddenly this clarity that this is where I belong and need to be. It was a community I hadn’t found in two years at GCU,” Tupper said. “I found my peeps.”

Since then, the team has grown from about a dozen students to more than 20, and



**Ashlyn Tupper**

the coaching staff has more than doubled.

The team collected a cornucopia of titles this year. It finished No. 25 in the nation of out 199 in parliamentary debate. It was Division III champion in the 2016 Christian College Forensic Invitational. And, in perhaps the highest honor, GCU was

selected to host the 2017 National Christian College Forensics Invitational.

Tupper believes GCU’s shiny new national reputation will attract students who want to compete in speech and debate.

“I think people will come here for us,” she said.

—LAURIE MERRILL



players at a park four years ago,” he said. “They’re out there learning the game, and then a couple of years later I see them out there playing a real competitive game against an Arizona State or somebody like that, and it feels real good to watch.”

How does someone sign up to play? Simple — go on the website ([clubsports.gcu.edu](http://clubsports.gcu.edu)), find the sport and call the coach, whose phone number is listed there. You need to have some ability, of course, but the opportunities are available.

### Health care, anatomy help

Among the University’s most established and successful clubs is AzHOSA, which primarily caters to pre-med, pre-dentistry and physical therapy students. “Anything that falls under the health umbrella,” said senior Caitlyn Garmer, the club’s vice president.

With almost 400 members, it’s one of the most active HOSA chapters in the country. Its main goal is to get members ready for graduate school by offering tips on resumé, interview and exam preparation and helping them gain the community-service hours they need. There also are two major HOSA competitions every year, and in the most recent one the GCU chapter brought home 12 gold medals from the State Leadership Conference in Tucson, Ariz.

“It’s a great opportunity. You’re able to meet other people in your major and get involved and get a friend group,” said Garmer, who met her future roommate through AzHOSA. “Especially coming in as a freshman, you come in not knowing many people. The people running the meetings have been in your situation before. They’re willing to help you make friends and learn what you need to do.”

The club is big on community-service projects, such as helping with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society’s Light the Night Walk. But the focus is the meetings, which cover such topics as nutrition, the Affordable Care Act and how to do a suture.

And here’s an example of how clubs interact. The suturing demonstration was overseen by the Anatomy Club, which was formed last October and already has 70 members. It is designed to provide peer mentors and tutors for students in anatomy- and science-related classes and also to work on projects (yes, one of them is dissection training).

But it’s for anyone, said its president, Thomas Varkey, “as long as they bring



The men’s lacrosse team, coached by Manny Rapkin (center), celebrates its national title last season.

something to the table and we can do something to help them, too.” For example, one Christian studies major joined the club because she wanted to see how God put the body together.

### Help for those who need it

There also is a club for healing a troubled mind. To Write Love on Her Arms is a national nonprofit that aims to help people struggling with addiction and depression, and Hanna Klinefelter decided to create a GCU chapter last fall when she sent out a tweet that she planned to light a candle for suicide prevention and asked the Twitterverse if anyone was interested in joining her. The response was overwhelming.

Klinefelter was so moved because, two years ago, one of her best friends committed suicide. Klinefelter’s response was to not only transfer from North Dakota State University, near her home in Detroit Lakes, Minn., to GCU; she also changed her major from English education to counseling with an emphasis on substance abuse and addictions.

But her new club’s meetings are hardly a downer. Sure, the group is there to support those who need it, but it includes people of all types.

“We have people who are just happy and want to bring joy to people,” she said. “They have a lot of love to give, and they use our club to express that to people who need the love. It really makes for a good dynamic.”

Such is the dynamic of club life across the GCU campus. It’s vital.

“Student engagement is the golden thread that will hold your academic experience together and get you across the finish line in a way that will be transformational,” said Pastor Tim Griffin, GCU’s dean of students.

And, come August, a whole new set of students will have a chance to experience what the transformation is all about. For the first time, Welcome Week will include a special pep rally led by the Havocs, and keeping the spirit-filled athletic success going will be a focus.

“It’s ultimately in the freshmen’s hands to make it even bigger,” Hunsaker said. “The momentum we have going into next year is huge, and the freshmen are going to be a huge part of that.”

They no doubt will notice the intimacy of the campus, but it’s up to them to be included. It could be the difference between feeling lost and finding their proper destination. **G**

### VIDEO



See how another new club, CrossFit, gets students in shape on Wednesday nights in this video at [news.gcu.edu](http://news.gcu.edu).



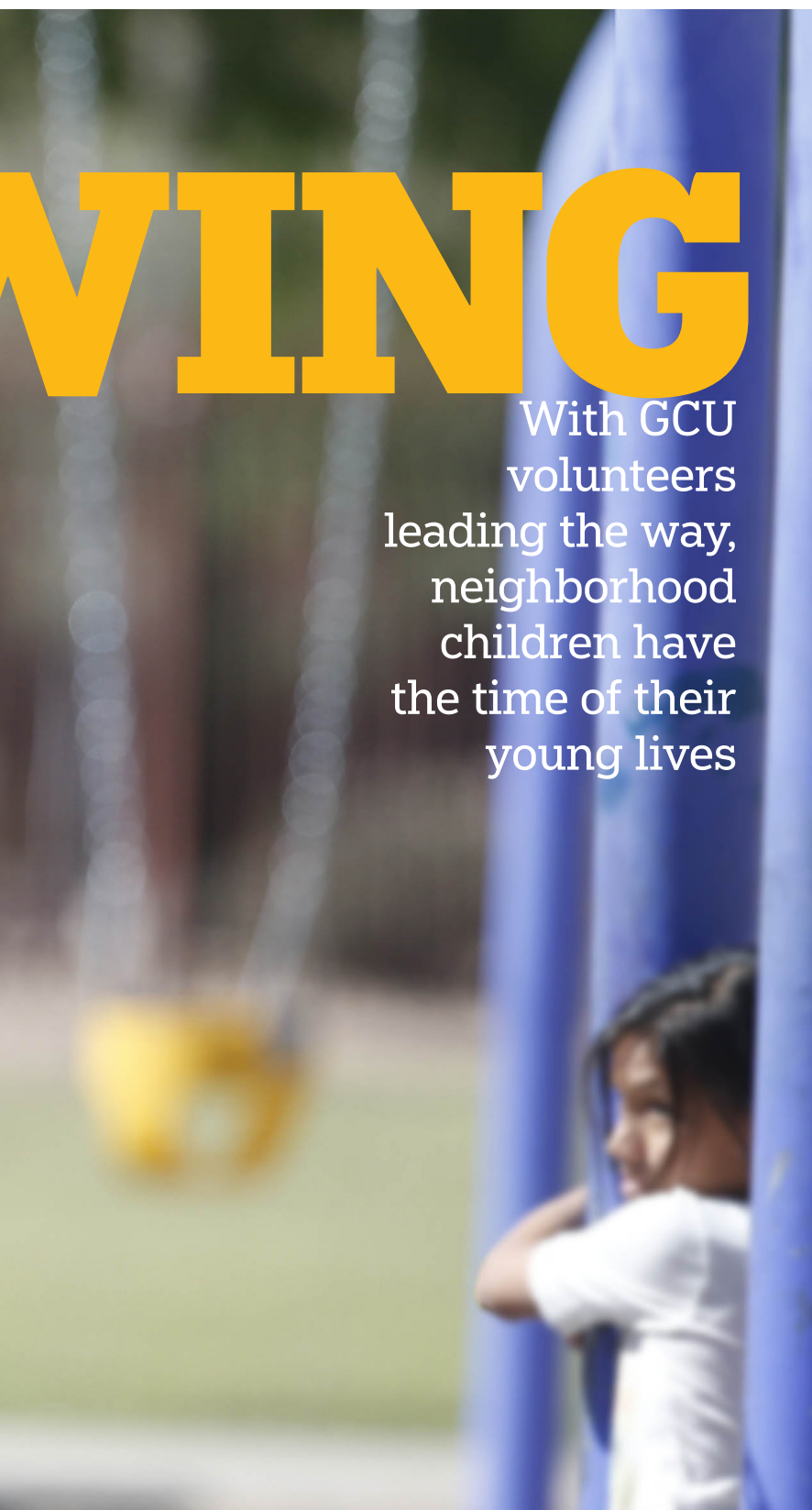
A young girl with dark hair, wearing a blue dress with white polka dots, is swinging happily on a wooden swing. She has her mouth wide open in a joyful shout. In the background, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a purple t-shirt and blue jeans, is smiling and watching her. The scene is set outdoors at a park with blue playground equipment visible in the background.

# Canyon Kids is in

# FULL SV

Neighborhood children who take part in Canyon Kids love the back-and-forth with GCU students, such as Monique Aceves (rear).





With GCU  
volunteers  
leading the way,  
neighborhood  
children have  
the time of their  
young lives



STORY BY LAURIE MERRILL

PHOTOS BY DARRYL WEBB

At 9 a.m. on a Saturday, while many of their peers at Grand Canyon University are slumbering or shaking off the night's cobwebs, about 50 enthusiastic volunteers are hopping and bopping to Christian rap music.

"Church clap let me hear the church clap (church clap). Church clap let me hear the church clap (church clap)," they chant as Evan Fallon, filling in for absent leader Joe Koetter, cavorts and croons in the lobby of Cypress Hall.

They are getting ready to leave campus to gather, shepherd-like, children ages 3-15 for a morning of Bible verses, games, crafts and skits at nearby parks in a weekly ministry program called Canyon Kids.

The rap is the energetic beginning of a ritual that for many is the highlight of their week: bringing joy and ministry to a rapidly growing population of children who live in the neighborhoods surrounding GCU.

What started as a handful of Department of Spiritual Life volunteers working with a small group of kids in Little Canyon Park has blossomed today into a vital ministry with dozens of GCU students and more than 100 children in two parks, said Jaci Curran, Spiritual Life outreach coordinator.

The Canyon Kids program is so successful, this year organizers began a new outreach in Cielito Park.

"The purpose in our mission statement is to create a safe environment surrounded by volunteers who love the



Lord and who are Christ-centered and instill Biblical truths into the kids,” said Yvanna Rodriguez, a student leader.

Already, parents and children are flocking to the fledgling Cielito Park program, which started this year. From 15 children the first week, the number sprang to 45 by week four and is still growing, Rodriguez said.

### Street outreach

After the hip hop, the volunteers split into two groups. Rodriguez and others knock on doors as they make their way, Pied Piper style, to Cielito Park.

To build a critical mass of children for the new arm of the ministry, volunteers went door to door to every house near the park, brochures and permission slips in hand, to invite children to Canyon Kids.

“At first, everyone was kind of shy, reserved,” Rodriguez said of the children.

But many — such as the three Vazquez sisters, Romina, 6, Mariana, 8, and Brianda, 11 — are waiting outside their homes for the weekly visit. Ponytails bouncing, they rush to hug their GCU friends.

Their mother, Alma, waves goodbye. That parents like Alma are content to watch their children walk down the street with GCU students is a testament to the level of trust the Canyon Kids program instills.

Laughter, chatter and shouts of joy fill the air as kids arrive at the park. Some kick a soccer ball and play hopscotch while others make for the swings and slides. Some cluster around a handful of picnic tables and play with chalk and nail polish.

“I think I’m addicted to purple,” Brianda says, giggling, as Megan Ziegler, a sophomore nursing student, helps her paint her nails. “I like it because of GCU!”

**Enjoying the play equipment (right) is one of the many activities for kids on a Saturday at Canyon Kids. Readings from the Bible are interspersed with lots of games and skits — and laughs (below).**

### Crafts, a Bible lesson and a skit

The volunteers create “stations” based on the Bible verse, which this week is, “As for God, His way is perfect: The Lord’s Word is flawless; He shields all who take refuge in Him.” (2 Samuel 22:31)

For the arts and crafts project, the children paste together a construction paper shield with a cross and a copy of the verse.

For the skit, volunteers Josh Micko, Steven Culebro and Kayla Michaels brainstorm under a tree.

Micko, a freshman justice studies major, suggests an enactment in which hikers come to a fork in the woods, one shorter and easier and the other harder but “God’s way.”

The hiker goes the hard way and stumbles. But because “the Lord is our shield, Jesus is our shield,” the hiker recovers his footing and the way becomes clear, Micko suggested.

“Seeing all the kids have engaged, one-on-one time with people who genuinely care and love on them” is a moving sight for Rodriguez. “And when you see the message of the Bible verse stick, it’s amazing. God can do His work here at the park.”

Christian Barrow, who happened to be in the park with her children, Alison, 5, and Romel, 2½, strode over to request a permission slip.

“This is perfect for the community,” Barrow said. “All these kids will get to know each other better.”

### ‘God is like a shield’

Over at Little Canyon Park, Fallon sits cross-legged in the grass surrounded by more than a dozen children who are munching on fruit snacks.





"King David knew that God is like a shield. A shield protects us," Fallon said. "King David knew that no matter what happened to him, God would protect him. ... If life gets tough, God protects us."

Fallon instructs the children to clasp their hands together, close their eyes, and shout: "I love God!"

The words are music to the ears of junior nursing student Olivia Meek.

"The volunteers have such passion and love for the kids," Meek said. "It's so amazing to see so many

smiles. Sometimes I can't even explain how much I enjoy these kids."

Britannee Carranza, a junior justice studies student, said she had to skip a few Saturdays and noticed the difference.

"I missed the children so much," she said. "It's so rewarding. Just teaching the Word to them is so cool."

And watching them get the Word is even cooler. Frankie Davis, 9, was asked if his shield is protecting him.

"No," he said, "but God is." **G**

## VIDEO



See the Canyon Kids program in action in a video at [news.gcu.edu](https://news.gcu.edu).



## List of student ministries just keeps growing

As GCU students went door to door collecting youngsters for one weekly ministry, they also urged mothers to meet for coffee, donuts and conversation for another.

"This could be a time of fellowship for the moms," said Yvanna Rodriguez, a student leader.

The program, Canyon Moms, is one of a growing roster of outreach opportunities offered by GCU's Department of Spiritual Life. Every week, students provide assistance and ministry to nearly 500 people in the community who may be homeless, hungry, neglected or needy.

Volunteering offers GCU students a deeper understanding of those less fortunate, said Chris Cunningham, Local Outreach coordinator.

"It gives students the opportunity to see the needs of others just outside their door," Cunningham said.

In addition to Canyon Kids and Canyon Moms, Spiritual Life also offers students volunteer opportunities at these ministries:

- **Changing Lives Center:** Work with the children of abused or recently homeless women.
- **Colter Commons:** Spend time with senior citizens who live in a low-income housing program.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** Help renovate or build homes in the community for families of modest means.
- **Homeless Ministry:** Serve food, sing songs and listen to stories told by homeless Phoenix residents.
- **Neighborhood Ministries:** Provide crafts, Bible stories, games and dinner for more than 100 kindergarten-seventh graders.
- **New Life Pregnancy Center:** Serve women in crisis through care and prayer.
- **Serve the City:** Perform yard work, paint and help beautify the community at biennial event.
- **Youth Outreach:** Mentor and form spiritual relationships with middle school pupils.

Jaci Curran, Local Outreach coordinator, said there is no shortage of student volunteers for these and other programs.

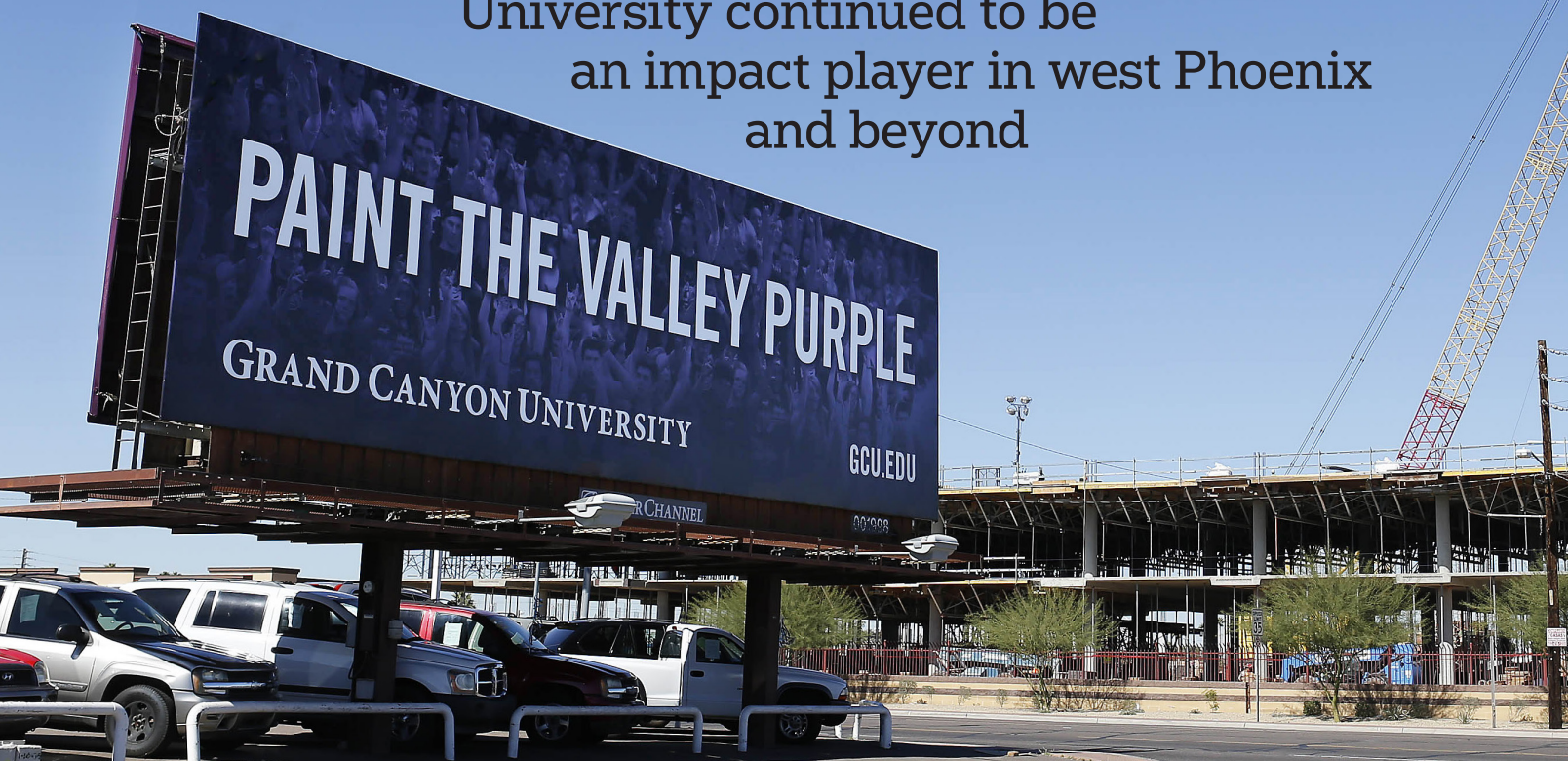
"It's exciting to be given the chance to equip students to be the hands and feet of Jesus," she said.

—LAURIE MERRILL



# GCU YEAR IN

University continued to be  
an impact player in west Phoenix  
and beyond



## 1 Community revitalization

The local crime rate goes down 30%, home values go up 30%, and the Habitat for Humanity and Neighborhood Safety initiatives continue to make a difference as GCU fulfills its lead role in transforming west Phoenix.

## 2 Hotel, golf course open

The University provides jobs for both students and the community by re-opening two local businesses as the Grand Canyon University Hotel and Grand Canyon University Championship Golf Course. Both thrive.

## 3 Growth in academics

The accent on STEM education takes shape as GCU offers engineering degrees for the first time, and the new hospitality management and golf course management programs open in conjunction with the new venues.



## 4 Growth in K-12 initiatives

Students Inspiring Students is created to provide up to 800 full-tuition scholarships for high school seniors, and the STEM Scholars partnership and the Learning Lounge continue to benefit all pre-college students.

## 5 Growth in enrollment, grads

Ground campus enrollment reaches 15,500, and the University passes a huge milestone by reaching the 100,000 mark in alumni — after adding a whopping 68,426 members between 2010 and 2015.

## 6 Growth on campus

The new engineering building, Lopes Way and The Grove residence halls open. Next up are the Student Life Building, soccer stadium, three apartment buildings and a second engineering building.

## 7 Athletics on rise

The men's basketball team wins 27 games, including its first two Division I postseason victories, the men's and women's track and field teams teams both win Western Athletic Conference indoor championships, and the men's tennis team ties for the WAC title.



## 8 Worship Arts album

The new recording studio gives Center for Worship Arts students a place to work with state-of-the-art equipment to create great Christian music, and they use it to produce the second-year program's first full album.



# REVIEW

2015-16



Signs of GCU growth and community involvement were everywhere, from numerous construction projects (left) to the Habitat for Humanity initiative (above), the continuing rise in the campus population (right) and the successful renovation and opening of Grand Canyon University Championship Golf Course (lower right).



**9 Speech and Debate**  
The Speech and Debate Team ranks in the top 25 in two different categories, wins its third straight Division III title in the Christian College Forensic Invitational and is chosen to host the event next year.

**10 Nonprofit effort ends**  
Grand Canyon Education, Inc. (NASDAQ: LOPE) announces that it is terminating its current effort to convert Grand Canyon University to a nonprofit entity after the Higher Learning Commission denies the request.

#### HONORABLE MENTION:



GCU freezes tuition for the eighth straight year, President Brian Mueller is voted Businessperson of Year by the Phoenix Business Journal, the GCU Foundation Run to Fight Children's Cancer attracts thousands of runners and cancer survivors, students and staff continue to bring their passion to mission trips around the world and community outings close to home, and the University is again the home for significant events such as Forensic Science Day.



Center for Worship Arts students, including Maddison Harris (singing, above), produced their first LP, and engineering degrees were offered by the University for the first time as the STEM curriculum took hold (left, bottom).







# Match made in Lope heaven

## Grandy Glaze's best season ever typified a basketball season to treasure

BY RICK VACEK

**T**hey had a deal. Grandy Glaze would bring his muscle and energy to the Grand Canyon University men's basketball team, and coach Dan Majerle would give him the opportunity he craved — to improve on his career scoring average of three points a game.

It is hard to imagine a more symbiotic relationship in college basketball this season. Or a more successful one.

After transferring to GCU for his final year of college eligibility, Glaze averaged 14 points a game, including one in which he scored 29. He led the Western Athletic Conference in field goal percentage (59.6) and was second in rebounding (8.8 per game). He had 14 double-doubles (double-digit totals in two categories, in his case points and rebounds). He was voted the WAC Player of the Week three times, made the All-WAC Second Team and won the Riley Wallace Award, given to the top transfer in Division I basketball.

"The season of my life," Glaze said. "I had Coach Majerle — he's the best coach I've ever had. I had a program that I could trust, that I'm a proud alumni of. And, hey, when I was getting recruited, they told me what it was, and it happened. I was in a situation where I needed to produce right away and they needed someone to come in and fill a void inside, so it was a perfect relationship."

Majerle's perspective: "He said that he had been injured (right shoulder surgery) and just wanted a chance to play and show what he

could do, and he'd bring energy and the right culture. I bought into it. I said, 'If that's what you want, we'll give you a chance,' and I think both parties lived up to it. I told him, 'I'll give you that opportunity as long as you do it the right way and it's about Grand Canyon University and it's not about you. You've got to do it within the team framework.' And he was great, all year long."

So was the entire team.

The Lopes made national news by going 27-7 in only their third year in NCAA Division I — an unprecedented record for a team still in the midst of the mandatory four-year probation that comes with a move up from Division II. They were 92nd in the Ratings Percentage Index (RPI), the best measurement of a team's strength of schedule. Of the 25 D-I teams they played, 15 won at least half their games. They tied for second in the WAC, defeated perennial conference champion New Mexico State for the first time and stunned San Diego State on its home court, where it had won 98 of its previous 106 games.

### Easy transition

Glaze felt at ease as soon as he arrived at GCU for summer workouts.

"We have really wholesome guys, from Josh Braun, DeWayne Russell, all the way through," he said. "They welcomed me with open arms, and we jelled right away."

He also welcomed being around Majerle, quite possibly one of the few coaches in America whose enthusiasm could match that of the effervescent Glaze.

"Every good college basketball team, they feed off their coach's energy," he said. "Coach has childlike energy. He's 50 years old, but he doesn't get tired and he loves the game. He still has a certain enthusiasm



and glow about him that he had back when he was in college and when he played for the Suns.”

Their relationship was such that, before the second-round CollegeInsider.com Tournament game against Jackson State, Majerle told Glaze he was going to run a play for him to take a 3-point shot. Glaze had gone 0-for-10 on 3-pointers during the season — the only threes he had ever taken in his career — but kept insisting he could make one.

“I didn’t want to have to go to my grave saying that I never gave Grandy Glaze a chance to make a three in his senior year,” Majerle said.

So they ran the play, and ... airball. “I caught the ball, measured it up and it just went awaaaaay out of bounds,” Glaze said. “I just looked at him like, ‘Coach, hey, I’ve got to get in the gym and get some more reps.’”

The normally mega-intense Majerle had a priceless reaction — he cracked up as he walked courtside.

“I was more relieved than anything, knowing that I didn’t have to deal with him talking about it or shooting another one,” he said days later, still laughing.

## Looking ahead

The Lopes will win that game, touching off yet another GCU Arena celebration in a season in which they went 18-2 at home. Not only did the Lopes make some noise nationally, so did the wild-and-crazy Havocs student cheering section, which SB Nation called “the biggest party in college basketball.”

The future looks bright, but Majerle knows how difficult it will be to match what happened this season.

“I think we took a really good step this year — won 27 games, got a lot of notoriety — but we’re still a long ways from where we want to be, and we’ve got to build on it,” he said. “Next year’s going to be tougher. We’ve got a tougher schedule (see chart).”

All of the regular rotation players will be back except Glaze and Ryan Majerle, the coach’s nephew. And if Majerle ever needs an ambassador for the program, Glaze is his guy.

“It’s a perfect situation,” he said. “I’d say that to any recruit. If you’re looking for an opportunity as a fifth-year guy or just in general, Coach

Majerle is going to put you in position as long as you show that you’re dedicated to the team and you’re about winning first. He has a great offense. It’s NBA style.”

Look at what it did for Grandy Glaze. He got to show he’s the real deal. **G**

**Grandy Glaze was in the middle of the Lopes’ happiest moments (opposite page), and his play made coach Dan Majerle ecstatic (below).**



## SCOREBOARD

### FIVE GAMES TO CELEBRATE ...

The Lopes’ five biggest victories of the season with final score, opponent’s final record and what made it significant:

#### **1 79-75 vs. New Mexico State (23-11)**

Aggies won 14 of next 15 games after first loss ever to GCU, which ended with students storming court.

#### **2 52-45 at San Diego State (28-10)**

Aztecs went on 11-game winning streak soon after losing to Lopes, advanced to semifinals of National Invitation Tournament.

#### **3 78-69 vs. Houston (22-10) at Las Vegas**

Big win at San Diego State would have lost a little of its luster if Lopes hadn’t kept the momentum going with another impressive victory, this time in first round of Global Sports Classic.

#### **4 85-81 vs. Marshall (17-16) at Las Vegas**

And this completed the big tournament victory, which was followed by eight more consecutive wins to bring streak to a dozen.

#### **5 64-54 vs. Jackson State (20-16)**

Frustrated by Jackson State’s slowdown offense, Lopes went to full-court press — something they hadn’t even practiced — and came back for their second consecutive win in CollegeInsider.com Tournament. The previous two years, they had lost in first round.

### ... AND FIVE TO ANTICIPATE

The Lopes’ five most high-profile nonconference games next season, and what those teams did this season or in recent years:

#### **1 at Arizona (25-9)**

Could this be the beginning of a regular in-state date? Wildcats were disappointed with tying for third in Pacific 12 Conference and losing to Wichita State in opening NCAA Tournament game, but they’re perennially one of country’s top programs.

#### **2 at Duke (25-11)**

One year after winning their fifth national championship, Blue Devils advanced to Sweet Sixteen in what for them was a disappointing season. We have Havocs; Duke has Cameron Crazies.

#### **3 vs. Louisville (23-8)**

Cardinals were ineligible for NCAA Tournament because of self-imposed ban amid NCAA investigation, but they were considered a title contender when decision was made. This will be the most high profile team to ever visit GCU Arena.

#### **4 vs. San Diego State (28-10)**

You can be sure Aztecs will have revenge on their minds when they come to Phoenix for second half of two-year, home-and-home contract.

#### **5 at Illinois (15-19)**

Losing record was Illini’s first since 2007-08. They advanced to NCAA Tournament 25 times between 1981 and 2013, including two trips to Final Four and loss to North Carolina in 2005 championship game.





# Internship gets their vote

GCU students say working for Sen. McCain checks their political boxes — it's educational and fun BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

**A**rizona Sen. John McCain arrives at Grand Canyon University Arena for a night of basketball, and a group of his interns, all GCU students, huddle around him as though they've done this before.

McCain gathers his thoughts to tell them about his busy day — he has attended several events in the Valley and taken part in a political conference call — but he says he's well aware they've been busy, too. Almost effortlessly, he commends them for their hard work, then talks with each student one by one.

"To me, they've been inspirational," McCain says. "They are enthusiastic, they are committed, and that has been one of the most uplifting experiences of all of my time in public office. They are the key to the future of any political party, and having them engaged is not only important to this campaign, but future campaigns."

No wonder the 31 students love working for McCain at his spacious campaign headquarters in central Phoenix, a venture they began in October. Sure, they enjoy the new friendships and bonds they've made, the free campaign swag, and even the sugar loads. But the best part is

getting to know McCain personally.

"McCain is like our grandpa — he's fun, he's talkative and he tells a lot of grandpa jokes," says Brenda Crawford, a junior Justice Studies major. "The more I spend time with him and learn about him, the more I appreciate all of the work that he does."

Freshman Colson Franse says he finds the senator's personal stories encouraging.

"One story we got to hear was about how McCain spent over five years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam — it was very difficult to hear about it, but it is also very heartfelt how he fought for our country and still continues to serve it," Franse says. "It is phenomenal to see a man with his character and his integrity."

## Lots to do

From making calls to answering phones, collecting data, recruiting, managing digital content and implementing projects throughout the week, sophomore Cathleen Daly says there is never a dull day at McCain's headquarters.



**Four of the GCU students who are interns for Arizona Sen. John McCain (photo on Page 20, left to right) are sophomores Anthony Aguilera, Cathleen Daly and McKenzie Shaver and junior Hillary Gavino.**

“Every day going into the office I know it’s going to be different, and that’s what I like most about it,” she says.

But, at the end of the day, the interns share a similar objective: to spread McCain’s message and, above all, gain political support from the millennial generation.

On Saturday mornings, the interns huddle at the headquarters — sporting McCain sunglasses and T-shirts and fueled by soda, candy and chips. They pull out their smart phones to check the updated Walk Book application in their devices before splitting up into teams, jumping in their cars and driving off to collect signatures from voters.

Fransé, who has a passion for business and politics and dreams of running for the U.S. Senate someday, says he quickly learned that the best way to get involved in politics is to get involved in a campaign because of the hands-on experience.

“From grassroots to meeting state representatives to making a lot of connections, there are so many different outlets through which you can gain so much experience in this internship,” he says.

Crawford also is no political newcomer. She has been around politics

her whole life, including taking part in rallies with her family and volunteering in campaigns.

“It frustrates me that the younger generation doesn’t know anything about politics — it’s kind of scary,” Crawford says. “Even if someone doesn’t vote for our political candidate, it’s just the idea of being involved in politics that I am really grateful for.”

“McCain is like our grandpa—he’s fun, he’s talkative and he tells a lot of grandpa jokes”

#### Political fallout

While collecting signatures can be interesting, it is also one of the interns’ most difficult tasks. At the same rate that voters gracefully offer interns bottled water and cheerfully express how much they like McCain, they also shut their doors and taunt them, said sophomore Chelsea Evans.

“With politics shaping our world, as a political intern you learn to grow thick skin,” she says. “It’s easy to see a political candidate standing up on stage and running for a position. It’s easy to sign the ballot and vote, but after actually being in a campaign you definitely gain a lot of empathy and knowledge about those who get to work underneath them.”

Evans, who is from Washington, says it’s important for an out-of-state




**Hillary Gavino (top photo, foreground) and Cathleen Daly work at McCain’s headquarters. The senator was on hand for the GCU basketball game on Homecoming Weekend and spent time there with his interns.**



student to feel a sense of fellowship.

“I came here not knowing anything or anyone, and this campaign team has allowed me to make new friends and meet people who are encouraging and motivated to make a difference in the local community,” she says.

McCain is confident they will continue to make a difference.

“There is nothing to match this experience,” McCain says. “But I know for a fact that many of them will consider seeking public office after having been involved in this campaign, and that’s an important factor for the future of American politics.” 



# HIGH-TECH

## security guard

**New program  
arms 'hackers'  
with halos'  
for growing  
cyberspace war**

BY LAURIE MERRILL



Dr. Roméo Farinacci says that learning new technologies is essential as hackers become increasingly sophisticated.



There's a war going on that most of us can't see, a behind-the-scenes battle in cyberspace between thieves who seek to steal vital information and those trained to stop them.

The weapons: sophistication, knowledge and training.

The bounty: untold quantities of computer-stored information that contains our most sensitive interests in both the private and public realms.

This year, Grand Canyon University introduced new online and ground degrees to arm graduates with an arsenal of high-tech weapons so they can immediately join the front line against cybercriminals.

"At GCU, we are teaching our students the tools and the technologies that hackers use to penetrate our security," said Dr. Roméo Farinacci, program director of Information Technology & Cyber Security for GCU's College of Science, Engineering, and Technology.

"We are the hackers with white hats, the hackers with halos."

The degree is one of a rapidly multiplying list of new online and ground STEM degrees GCU is rolling out as it continues on its mission to produce well-trained, highly competitive graduates in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math.

"We want to make Arizona a hot spot for cybersecurity," Farinacci said. "We want Arizona to be the place where data centers and corporations that handle data relocate."

## 24 new CSET programs

Dr. Mark Wooden, CSET dean, said GCU is developing 24 new degree programs in his college, including 12 in IT/computer science, seven in engineering and five in science.

At the same time, the University is working on methods for allowing online students who work full-time to apply their experience in lieu of some required courses, Wooden said during a session on STEM Happenings at GCU.

The Bachelor of Science in Information Technology with an Emphasis on Cybersecurity is GCU's first step in offering a degree that provides unique, hands-on training and will help transform Arizona into a hot spot for cybersecurity professionals, Farinacci said.

"Thirty years ago, we had security guards to protect us. Today, we need more than security guards because hackers are breaking in and stealing our identification, our information and our intellectual property, and they do it without walking a foot outside their homes," he said.

Information system analysts are among the most sought after job candidates in the workforce today. Consider these 2015 statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- Arizona had the fifth-highest concentration of cybersecurity jobs.
- The average information security analyst annual salary in the Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale metropolitan region was \$81,830.
- The average salary nationally was \$88,890 compared with \$79,390 for all computer occupations and \$35,540 for all jobs.

• And the prospects continue to brighten. Between 2014 and 2024, cybersecurity employment is expected to rise 18 percent nationally compared with 12 percent in all computer occupations and 7 percent in all occupations.

"The need for well-prepared information technology and cybersecurity experts is growing exponentially," GCU President Brian Mueller said. "It is GCU's vision to provide a premier educational experience and exceptional career preparation in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math."

Additionally, Farinacci and Dr. Heather Monthie, CSET assistant dean, are working on a head-spinning number of fronts to enrich and complement the University's emphasis on cybersecurity.

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## "We want to make Arizona a hot spot for cybersecurity."

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For example, this year GCU partnered with the Arizona Cyber Threat Response Alliance (ACTRA), a nonprofit group that collaborates with the FBI, the Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to name a few.

The partnership gives GCU's cybersecurity students the advantage of practicing methodologies and strategies on ACTRA's live cyberwarfare range, Farinacci said. And Farinacci is instructing in the ACTRA Cybersecurity Academy, a boot camp for handling real-world security events and threats.

## Cyber Lopes on the horizon

Other initiatives include developing a web-based cyber defense center, Cyber Lopes, that likely will go online this summer, and creating an e-learn cybersecurity boot camp.

"This is GCU's attempt to put our foot in the door," Farinacci said. "Now we can walk through the door and talk the talk."

Cybersecurity students will branch out to study cyber operations planning and execution, cybercrime and cyber law and also utilize the live cyberwarfare range, among other options, Farinacci said.

One new student is freshman Morgan Melton, who switched to the cybersecurity degree and said he knows other ground students who plan to enroll.

"I have a passion for learning about networks," said Melton, a CSET student worker. "I want to work for a large bank or a corporation and test their security to make the world a better place."

That the program is new is an advantage because it is flexible and allows students to dig deep.

"My skills will go outside the normal program that other students at other schools will have," he said. **G**





## It's like a home away from home

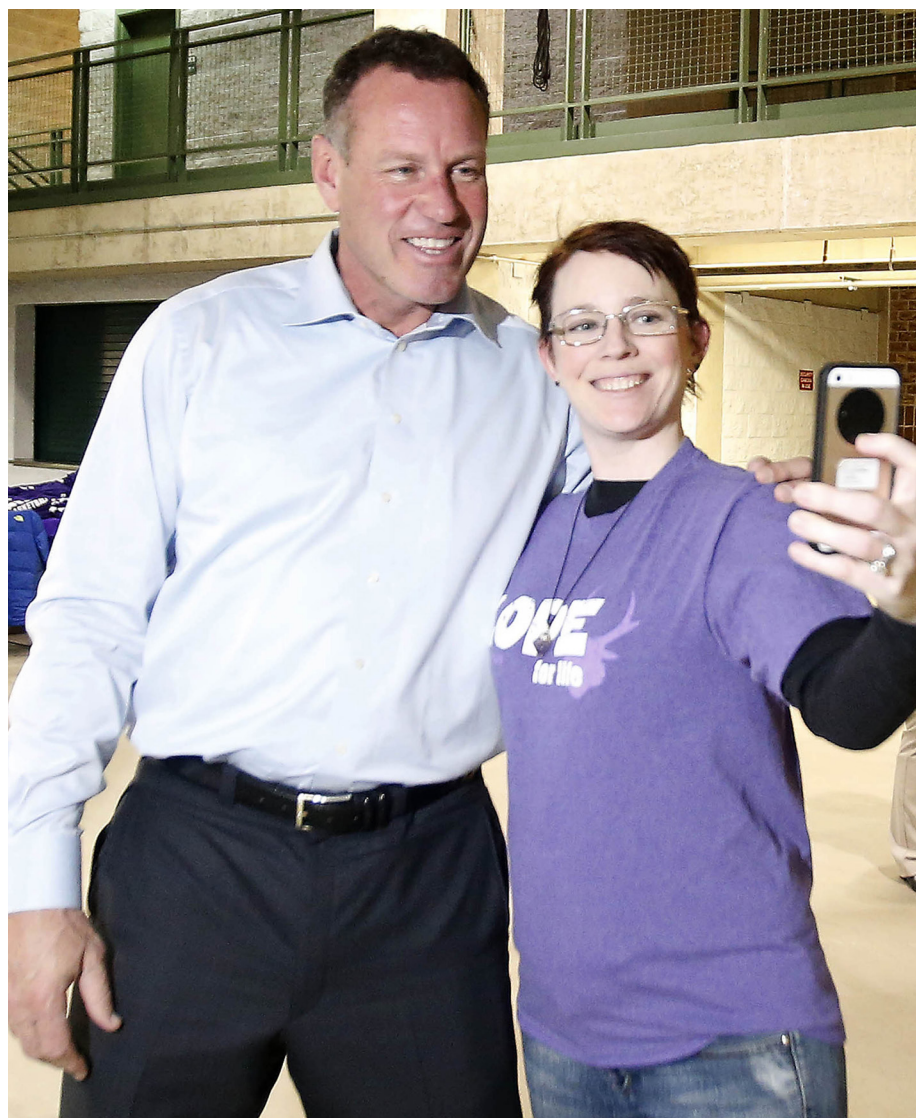
'Lopes on the Road' program shows how well GCU's sense of community travels

BY LAUREN MICHELSEN

**A**sk any Lope, past or present, what they love about Grand Canyon University, and the word "community" is bound to be heard many times over. With GCU recently surpassing 100,000 graduates and spreading its reach nationwide, the need to engage alumni, online students and off-campus staff is greater than ever, and "Lopes on the Road" does just that.

The Alumni Relations and Athletics departments team up to stage Lopes on the Road, a family-oriented pregame reception that brings GCU fans — including parents of ground students — together before they go wild for the team at the game. They gather for a meal, collect free swag and get in the spirit.

This was the third basketball season of Lopes on the Road events, and they were so successful the departments have expanded the program to other sports. There have been Lopes on the Road events at two baseball games this season, and another one is scheduled for May 3 in San Jose, Calif.



**Dan Majerle mingles with GCU fans when they gather for "Lopes on the Road" at away basketball games.**

"Other schools look at us like, 'Where did all these GCU people come from?'" Vice President of Athletics Mike Vaught said.

It's not unusual for purple-clad GCU fans to take up a whole section in the opposing team's arena. "As an athlete, it's good to not feel like it's 'me against the world,'" Vaught said. "It's good to have people on your side."

While Lopes on the Road provides a support system for athletes, it also creates a sense of camaraderie between fellow alumni and non-traditional students by "bringing a piece of campus to them," said Kimberlee Marlow, director of alumni relations. "The interest level and attendance has exceeded our expectations."

"I've had the ability to meet fellow students,

alumni and even GCU staff members that I would not have been able to previously meet thanks to the 'Road' programs," said Nick Roberts, a former online student and the Seattle alumni chapter president. "Getting to watch the team go out there and represent our school makes such an impact when you're so far away. It really loops you into the campus."

The big Lopes on the Road turnouts have shown that the togetherness at GCU events is not exclusive to the west Phoenix campus. "The GCU community is amazing and improving every day," said Erik Adams, a former online student.

No matter whether it's on campus or far, far away.





**Brittany Holen became one of the leaders of the women's golf team after making it as a walk-on in her junior year, and she also was president of the Sports Business Club.**

## She's headed in a positive direction

Holen's leadership made her one of nine Outstanding Seniors

BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

**B**rittany Holen is already a leader well beyond her years. And she plans to keep it that way.

Considering that the sports management major was a member of Grand Canyon University's Honors College and Delta Mu Delta and was one of the leaders of the women's golf team, it's no surprise Holen, 21, was named one of nine Outstanding Senior award recipients for the graduating class of 2016.

"I've always done as much as I could inside and outside of myself without spreading myself too thin," she said. "It's pretty much who I am."

Born and raised in Omaha, Neb., Holen played soccer, basketball and golf in high school but concentrated her passion and determination on golf when she came to campus in 2012. She finally walked on to the team as a junior after getting cut her sophomore year.

"My teammates had years of experience behind them, so I had a lot of catching up to do," Holen said. "I was the first at practice and the last one to leave. It wasn't easy."

Holen, daughter of parents who work in the

pharmaceutical industry and older sister of Miss Nebraska's Outstanding Teen 2014, said she credits her family for her ability to thrive without fear.

"Growing up, my parents traveled three or four nights a week, and I was left in charge to take care of my younger sister — that taught me to care for someone other than myself," Holen said.

But, in doing so, Holen also learned another valuable lesson: balance.

"Even while they worked, my parents still had time for us. So because of them I learned that you can pursue your dreams, your passions and still make time for what's important," she said.

During her time at GCU, Holen provided more than 200 students with opportunities to gain experience in the world of sports as Sports Business Club president, assisted in operations of the Chris Paul Basketball Camp in San Diego during her internship with Position Sports, created content for the Basketball Hall of Fame social media accounts, and traveled across the country to assist with Nike brand activation.

### OUTSTANDING SENIOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

**Joshua Braun**, Colangelo College of Business

**Calie Donovan**, College of Theology

**Cody Dumas**, College of Fine Arts and Production

**Alena Gladwin**, College of Science, Engineering and Technology

**Kelsey Hillman**, College of Fine Art and Production

**Brittany Holen**, Colangelo College of Business

**Jennifer Hotchkiss**, College of Nursing and Health Care Professions

**Brenda Lara**, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

**Brenna Roth**, College of Education

This summer, Holen is looking forward to interning at the Olympic Track and Field Trials in Oregon before starting her MBA in Project Management at GCU, which she plans to complete by September 2017.

"I know that's kind of pushing it," Holen said. "But I'm pretty open to where God takes me. He is the one who opens and closes doors, so anything can happen."





**Kelsey Davis graduated in November as a second lieutenant from the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School. She is scheduled to complete her training in July.**



## Recruited by God

Kelsey Davis felt a higher calling . . . to join the Marines BY JEANNETTE CRUZ

**K**elsey Davis had it all figured out. After research, trial and error and some guidance from her mentors, she had settled on a degree in criminal justice from Grand Canyon University and planned to become an FBI agent.

Then it hit her. She was at The Gathering, the student worship service on Tuesday nights, only weeks before graduation last year and was reflecting on the many leadership roles she had held at GCU. Suddenly, she felt a frightening and yet fitting calling from the Lord.

She needed to join the military. And, as it turned out, not just any branch of the military — she eventually decided to enlist in the toughest one of all, the Marine Corps.

“Joining the military sounds crazy to me,” Davis confessed to her peers. “But it also brings to mind the thought of the disciples as Jesus comes to the water and all of the disciples but

Peter sit in the boat. Peter is the safest because he’s looking into the eyes of Jesus. That is my goal, to be like Peter.”

Davis, 23, said that for a long time she struggled with the thought of becoming a Marine, but after meeting with a recruiter she instantly changed her mind.

She took on 12 weeks of intense classroom, drills and field training at the Marine Corps Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Va., where she was the second youngest member and one of 65 women in her platoon. In November, she graduated as second lieutenant along with 27 others who made it through the course.

Since then, she has been training at The Basic School in Quantico to prepare for duty. As a newly commissioned Marine officer, Davis already has made a good impression by outshooting the males and earning two Expert Marine Corps Marksmanship Qualification

Badges, one for the service rifle and one for the service pistol.

When she completes her training in July, Davis will move on to a military occupational specialty school, where the Marine Corps will determine which career Davis will tackle.

“The Marine Corps is everything that I have wanted to be and everything that I know I have the potential to be,” Davis said. “It is surrounded by wholehearted leadership, pride and honor, and it encourages that a limit does not exist.”

Davis said her degree is only a small part of what she got out of GCU.

“I always knew God had brought me to GCU to find my purpose,” she said. “I don’t think anyone saw this coming — I didn’t see this coming. But one thing I’ve learned through this experience is that God does not make any mistakes.”



# CLASS NOTES



## 1980s

**Lisa Warner, B.S. in Business Administration, '87**, has been a sales manager in the hotel and resort industry since graduation and is currently with Embassy Suites. Warner's parents met at GCU, and Warner is a former GCU cheerleader.

## 1990s



**Evangeline Diaz, B.S. in Elementary Education, '95**, is co-founder and education director at Ni Hao Amigos Language Immersion Preschool in Avondale, Ariz. The preschool nurtures young children by developing their fluency in the world's most spoken languages — Mandarin, Spanish and English.



**Rev. Daniel P. Richards, B.A. in Creative Arts and Worship, '97**, was hired as the rector of Christ Church of the Ascension

in Paradise Valley, Ariz. Rev. Richards returned to the Valley after serving seven years as rector of Grace Episcopal Church and dean of the Grand Traverse Deanery in Traverse City, Mich.

## 2000s



**Joseph M. Vindigni, B.S. in Public Safety Administration, '06**, is chief of the

Hendersonville (N.C.) Fire Department. He served as deputy chief before being named interim fire chief in April 2015. Vindigni has worked in the fire service industry for more than 16 years.



**Charlotte Wheelless, M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction: Technology, '06**,

has been promoted to chair of the Williams Teacher Education Program (WTEP) at Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark. She is pursuing an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership at GCU.



**Steve Prahcharov, M.Ed. in Educational Administration, '08**, is co-founder

and principal of Scottsdale Country Day School. Prahcharov started his teaching career in England 16 years ago and has served as principal for the last seven years.



**Zach Wigle, M.Ed. in Educational Administration, '08**, has been

named the 2016 Iowa Secondary Principal of the Year by School Administrators of Iowa. Wigle is principal of Keokuk High School and previously was an associate principal at Ottumwa High School. He began his career as an elementary physical education teacher.

## 2010s



**Thom Grosse, B.A. in English Literature, '10**, is a semiretired online English professor to

students in China and the U.S. After graduation, Grosse retired from work in the U.S. as an occupational therapist assistant and moved to China, where he has taught English at Sichuan Police Academy and at Weifang University of Science and Technology in Shandong.



**Jacki Gerchman, MBA with an Emphasis in Leadership, '10**,

recently joined the SEPP Group in Binghamton, N.Y. as deputy director and chief operations officer. Her duties include general administration, public relations and project management.



**Candice Carroll, B.S. in Nursing (RN to BSN), '10**, and MBA with an Emphasis in

Leadership, '12, is a 2015-16 inductee into the VIP Woman of the Year Circle of the National Association of Professional Women. Carroll is chief nurse



## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Juan Mendoza, '99



Although Juan Mendoza's original purpose to come to Grand Canyon University was to become a physician's assistant, he discovered something bigger during his time on campus: God's grace and humor.

As a 30-year-old father of two (and eventually three), Mendoza had bigger demands on him than his classmates did — he was working full-time in the Navy reserve, doing construction work and going to school full-time to support his family.

"Time was limited," he recalls.

And after serving as a combat medic in the Middle East, including frontline duty in the Gulf War, Mendoza lost his urge to go into the health sciences and instead chose to enter the field of life science, majoring in biology when he arrived at GCU in 1995.

Mendoza chose GCU because it posed a homelike atmosphere with smaller classrooms and a genuine interest in student academics, he said. But outside the classroom, he became involved in Chapel services on campus.

"It was rewarding to know that GCU had this (Christian) atmosphere — you could see it and hear it everywhere on campus," Mendoza said.

After graduating from GCU in 1999, Mendoza worked as an operations and training manager for Urgent Care clinics in the Valley. He currently is a private investigator for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security in the U.S. Department of State.

According to Mendoza, in the classroom GCU prepared him to think critically, and outside it the University showed him the camaraderie between teachers and students. But the most important life lesson he got here was God's presence in his life.

"I've had the privilege, being stationed in Iraq, to go to Babylon and seeing Nebuchadnezzar's Palace, the ruins of Babylon, the Tigris-Euphrates River, going to places that you read about in Sunday school — it's humbling," he said. "Although my career trajectory definitely did not go in the direction I had originally planned, I did leave with the same goals."

—JEANNETTE CRUZ

executive at Riverside Regional Medical Center in Newport News, Va.

Technological Literacy. He is one of 100 teachers nationwide awarded the scholarship.



**Anthony Perez, M.Ed. in Elementary Education (IR), '11**, was selected by the Museum of Science

in Boston to attend its Engineering is Elementary program, developed by its National Center for



**James Wieland, B.S. in Marketing, '11**, wrote a guidebook, "Chains of Change," that

focuses on helping felons who have been incarcerated by showing them how to find housing

and employment and become contributing members of society.



**Don Bendell, MSL, '11**, is owner and operator of Strongheart Ranch in southern

Colorado and has 28 books in print. He and his wife, Shirley, are the only couple in history inducted into the International Karate and Kickboxing Hall of Fame.



**Nicole Thomas, M. Ed. in Elementary Education (Non-IR), '12**, was named Douglas County

public guardian (Minden, Nev.). Thomas was promoted from caseworker for Nevada Department of Behavioral Health.



**Charlee Harris Hamilton, B.A. in English Literature, '13**, was featured in Women of

Distinction Magazine as a new author. After 15 years in the consumer finance industry, Harris Hamilton is a full-time author and has published two books, with a third scheduled to be released this summer.



**Melissa Evans, B.S. in Justice Studies, '13 and M.S. in Psychology with an Emphasis in**

**General Psychology, '15**, is a corporal for the Windham County Sheriff's Office in Vermont. Evans previously served as a patrol officer in Putney, Vt.



**Christine Ragay-Cathers, B.S. in Biology, '13**, is a family medicine physician at Dignity

Health Medical Group in Phoenix. Ragay-Cathers previously served in the Air Force, providing health care to military men and women and their families.



**Greg Brown, B.A. in History, '13**, gave a presentation on Project Gemini, America's second

manned space program, at the Allen County Museum in Lima, Ohio. Brown's 12 years in the military were split among the National Guard, Army and Air Force, where he was a missile security specialist. He also is a tour guide at the Armstrong Air and Space Museum in Wapakoneta, Ohio.



**Andrew Meyers, B.S. in Athletic Training, '13**, is a personal trainer at Youfit Health Club in

Gilbert, Ariz., and writes athletic-performance articles for STACK Magazine. Meyers was a four-year member of the GCU men's cross country team.



**Connor Dougherty, B.S. in Psychology, '13**, and M.S. in Psychology with an Emphasis in General

Psychology, '15, realized his dream of playing professional volleyball. The four-year member of the GCU men's team played in Greece and Thailand.



**Sonny Reel, B.S. in Elementary Education and Special Education, '13**, has been the

clerk of court in Edgefield, S.C., since February 2015. He oversees the daily operations of the Family, Common Pleas and General Sessions courts.





**Momi Robins-Makaila, M.A. in Christian Studies with an Emphasis in Pastoral Ministry,**

'14, launched a new business and website, [www.alohamomi.org](http://www.alohamomi.org). Robins-Makaila is an author and inspirational speaker.



**Christina Loren, M.A. in Christian Studies with an Emphasis in Pastoral Ministry,**

'15, has joined the RFD-TV Rural Evening News weather team in Nashville, Tenn. Loren has 12 years of meteorology media experience and joins RFD-TV after five years at the NBC affiliate in San Francisco. She also is featured via Rural Radio on Sirius XM Channel 147.



**Elizabeth Snyder, M.Ed. in Educational Administration,**

'15, was a finalist for the Arizona Educational Foundation's 2015 Arizona Teacher of the Year. As a finalist and "Ambassador of Excellence," Snyder will advocate for students and the teaching profession at educational, governmental, business and other meetings around Arizona. She teaches sixth grade at Akimel A-al Middle School in Phoenix.



**Sandra Seelhammer, B.A. in Christian Studies, '15,** is coordinator for

Blueprint for Safety, which works with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through the HOPE Center in Faribault, Minn.



**Dr. Theodus Luckett, Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership with an Emphasis in**

**Instructional Leadership, '15,** is the director of instrumental music for the Mount Pleasant (Texas) Independent School District. He is researching the relationship between music participation and academic achievement.



**Lashunda Dillon, M.S. in Psychology with an Emphasis in Industrial and Organizational**

**Psychology, '15,** is an inductee into the 2015-16 National Association of Professional Women VIP Woman of the Year Circle for her leadership in conflict resolution and mediation. She is equal employment opportunity manager for the Bureau of Land Management in Denver.



**Ryan Guard, M.A. in Christian Studies with an Emphasis in Christian Leadership, '15,** is

the teaching pastor/adult ministries pastor at Mission Community Church in Gilbert, Ariz. Guard has been in full-time ministry for 14 years.



**Laura Lane, B.S. in Elementary Education, '15,** is a preschool teacher in the Alhambra

School District Head Start Program at Westwood Primary School in Phoenix. More than 90 percent of the children enrolled in the program are from low-income households in which English is a second language. Previously, Lane traveled with GCU students to teach in Fiji.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Kelly Schindler, '15



Kelly Schindler didn't waste any time taking what she learned in the Colangelo College of Business and running with it.

Schindler, who graduated from Grand Canyon University in December with a degree in business management and marketing, got a crash course in big business and major college football as a seasonal intern with the Fiesta Bowl. She worked on community relations and charities for the Fiesta Bowl

from late October to the end of January.

Her responsibilities included scheduling appearances by Spirit, the Fiesta Bowl mascot, arranging for players to participate in charitable events and distributing tickets to nonprofit groups.

She also worked with Fiesta Bowl employees to provide Thanksgiving dinner to a group of foster children, and she helped serve free chicken sandwiches and meals donated by Chick-fil-A at events in downtown Phoenix and at Luke Air Force Base.

Schindler said she put in long hours over the holidays. The Fiesta Bowl hosted Notre Dame vs. Ohio State on Jan. 1 at University of Phoenix Stadium, followed the next day by the Fiesta Bowl Parade and Arizona State vs. West Virginia in the Cactus Bowl at Chase Field. She worked from 7 a.m. the day of the parade until 2:30 a.m. Jan. 3 after the Cactus Bowl game.

"I had no idea it was going to be that intense," she said. "I was just a North Dakota girl who loves football, looking for a job."

Schindler grew up in Bismarck, N.D., where she attended Shiloh Christian School. On her first visit to Arizona, she came out in July with her older sister, who was looking for a school to study physical therapy.

"It was the hottest time of year" with lots of dust and construction underway on the GCU campus, she recalled. "But I fell in love with GCU, and I had this feeling that this is where I'm supposed to go to school."

So she became a snowbird and gave up North Dakota winters for Arizona sunshine, GCU and, eventually, a Fiesta Bowl internship.

One of the lessons she learned from the experience is that anyone pursuing a career in sports management must be persistent.

"You need that to be successful," Schindler said. "I loved my time there at the Fiesta Bowl. It transformed my career and me as a person. It taught me so much."

Schindler leveraged her internship, which included working with charities, to find a full-time job with a nonprofit group. In February, the Be Kind People Project hired Schindler as its national school and community marketing manager.

The organization schedules assemblies and works with schools to teach young students about the importance of kindness and good behavior — giving her another chance to apply what she learned in her GCU marketing classes.

"I love it," she said. "It's my passion now."

— PETER CORBETT



# Parting Shot

## 'Seussical the Musical' was magical

The College of Fine Arts and Production's performance of "Seussical the Musical," with Ryan Usher (foreground) doing an amazing job as the Cat in the Hat, played to full houses for two consecutive weekends at Ethington Theatre. Oh, it was a sight and sound to behold.

PHOTO BY DARRYL WEBB











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