



ARIZONA FOUNDATION

Academic Year 2022-23

AAF MISSION

The mission of the Aspire Arizona Foundation (AAF) is to support the higher education needs of Payson, Arizona and the surrounding Rim Country rural communities.

We help young adults aspire to higher education by making college education Accessible, Attainable and Affordable.

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

Spotlight on Aspire Awardees

Meet Aspire Scholars

John Goldman

I have had an amazing experience with the Dual-Credit Program! I have never had a bad moment. The teachers and everyone else associated with the program have been very helpful. The dual-credit courses have helped me achieve my career goals by allowing me to start college earlier, ahead of schedule, and therefore, start my career earlier.

I appreciate the opportunities that the Aspire Arizona Foundation has given me. The dual-credit classes gave me a head start on my college education. They also increased my GPA, allowing me to be selected as Valedictorian. I am planning to attend college at ASU, pursuing a bachelor's degree in Engineering and master's degree in Business. With my education I plan to start an engineering and manufacturing firm to develop a way to take the waste energy in trash and convert it to power. I have never liked seeing trash dumps and all the pollution caused by them.

I am not the first in my family to attend college. Two of my grandparents, all my aunts and uncles, parents and sisters and cousins have gone to college. They have influenced me with the benefits of having a college degree and all the stories of college and what it can do for you. It was more like an expectation.

I would advise every high school student to take all of the dual-credit classes they can. It gives them a head start, especially when they are free to Payson students. Thank you to all of the Aspire donors, I greatly appreciate the opportunity that you have provided me. I hope you will continue to support the Dual-Credit Program and the program grows in the future, helping more and more students.

Thank you.



John Goldman

Education Elevates Everyone!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



President's Message

As I look back on fiscal year 2022-23, I am appreciative of the broad community support that Aspire Arizona Foundation (AAF) received. As we entered this fiscal year, we recognized that it would be a year of financial challenges for many, and we were hopeful that AAF would continue to be a priority for many of our supporters. The results were gratifying, and we thank you.

We received support from three foundations (McKinley Educational Initiative, Holbrook Pyle Foundation and the MHA Foundation) and more than 90 individuals, businesses and non-profits, including the Mogollon Sporting Association. As a public charity, this broad community support is essential in allowing AAF to continue its collaboration with the Payson Unified School District (PUSD), Gila Community College (GCC) and Eastern Arizona College (EAC).

In addition, this support allowed AAF to not only pay the dual-credit (high school and college credit) tuition for the students, but we also were able to award three \$5,000 merit-based scholarships for the first time in our history.

None of this would have been possible without each and every donor. And for that, we say thank you on behalf of our Aspire Scholars.

AAF is managed by an all-volunteer board of Payson residents committed to our mission to make a college education accessible, attainable, and affordable for Rim Country students. I am happy to report that since the program began in 2016, AAF has paid tuition for more than 2,000 college classes, allowing 501 Payson students to earn more than 6,000 college credits. We have provided our up-to-date numbers in this Newsletter for your review.

I can also report that we are starting to see an uptick in dual-credit participation. Like most educational programs, the COVID pandemic negatively impacted how many students were enrolling and our overall participation dropped about 30 percent. However, preliminary numbers for the Fall Semester indicate we are about to fully recover from that downturn. In fact, if the current numbers hold, we will see over 100 students enrolled this Fall.

While we are pleased to see the numbers growing back to pre-pandemic levels, it also creates a challenge for the coming fiscal year and AAF's fundraising efforts.

The support of our donors is what makes the work of AAF possible. We are thankful for your support and hope the profiles and information in this Newsletter give you a snapshot of the significant impact your support is having on the lives of Rim Country students.

Paul Brocker
President
Aspire Arizona Foundation

Meet Aspire Alumni

Trace Wallace, ASU Ph.D. candidate

In the Fall of 2017, Trace Wallace, a junior at Payson High School (PHS), took a leap of faith and enrolled in dual-credit classes being offered through the community college and PHS. "The dual-credit courses were new to me at the time," he recalls now. "But I knew that to get both high school and college credit for taking some more difficult courses was a huge plus. And the bonus was I could take them at no cost because of Aspire Arizona Foundation, and they prepared me for what to expect in college."



Trace Wallace

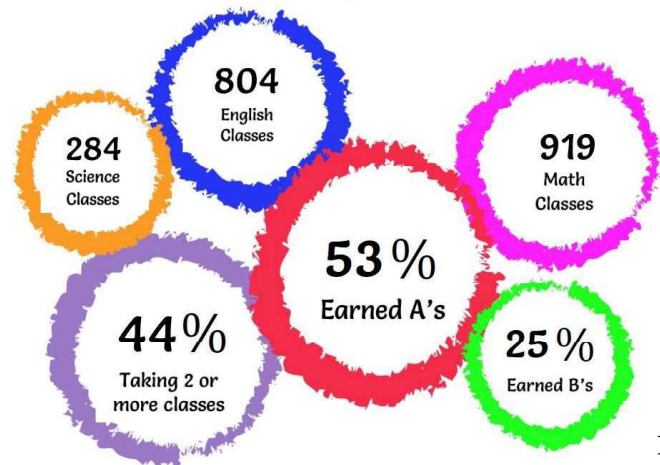
Trace continued taking dual-credit courses through his senior year and completed 48 hours of credit. When he entered Arizona State University (ASU), he realized how important those dual-credit courses had been. "Because I had pretty much completed my general education courses, I saved more than \$10,000. My first year I was able to begin work on a minor in business to compliment my electrical engineering degree."

Today, Trace is a Ph.D. student in Electrical Engineering working as a research assistant with a professor he connected with during his undergraduate days. He is taking the thesis route to his Ph.D. and is studying the overarching radiation and heat effects on transistors.

"I just want to thank all the donors to Aspire Arizona Foundation," he said. "The fact that so many people come together in our Payson community to help the high school students get a leg up as we enter college is just awesome. I so much appreciate what they did for me."

Trace will graduate with his Ph.D. in Fall 2025 and hopes to apply the research and life skills that he has learned to greatly contribute to the advancement of cutting edge technology in both space and military applications.

2026 College Classes Taken By Aspire Students (2016-2022)



Aspire awardees for 2022/2023

Aspire \$5000 Merit Scholarships

Jason Andersen
John Goldman
Desirae Lunsford

Aspire Achievement Level (Earned more than 30 Credits) * 3.5 + GPA

Jason Andersen *
Adam DiQuattro
John Goldman *
Anderson Hatch *
Benjamin Menghini *

Aspire Ambition Level (Earned more than 20 Credits) * 3.5 + GPA

Teagan Hiatt *
Angelina Jakubek *
Thomas Jakubek
Joseph Lamorie *
Desirae Lunsford *
Angelica MacFarlane
Joselin Mendoza *
Aidan Meredith
Winifred Paine *
Jessica Tafoya
Braden Tenney *
Magdalene Whaley

3rd Annual Aspire Arizona Foundation Charity Golf Tournament

Saturday, August 12, 2023
8:00 AM Shotgun
Payson Golf Club
Scramble Format
\$125 Entry Fee



Save the Date

Meet Aspire Scholars

Interview with Benjamin "Ben" Otte

How would you describe your experience with the Dual-Credit Program?

It has been a great experience. The college courses are not hard and are more exciting compared to home school. I love Mr. and Mrs. Russell who are my Business and English professors.

How are these courses helping you achieve your career goals?

I'm not sure what I want to do in the future, but I know that the Aspire courses are a great foundation for any field of study I choose. Right now, I am working towards my Associate's degree and will transfer those credits to a trade school or university.

What are some other benefits that you have experienced with taking the dual-credit classes?

The Aspire Program really helps bridge the gap between Home School and College. The class sizes are small and the academic quality and opportunities is beyond what I could get in a home school environment. I have 3 sisters at home, so a classroom of 5-10 students was an easy transition. I think it would be hard to go to college without the boost of the Aspire program.

Where are you wanting to attend college and what degree will you be pursuing?

I am currently attending school at Eastern Arizona College Payson Campus through the support of Aspire to earn my Associate Degree. After my Associate Degree I might go to a university or trade school. I have always been fascinated with engines and motors, so I think something in automotive might be a potential career for me.

Are you the first in your family to pursue a college degree? If not, who else has pursued a degree and how have they influenced you to aspire to go to college?

Both of my parents went to college and are huge advocates of post-secondary education. My mother is a teacher and my father works for the Forest Service. They have pushed me to continue my schooling and their support has been incredible.

What advice would you give other high school students that haven't taken dual-credit classes that might want to get a head start on their college education?

The Aspire dual-credit courses are not as hard as I thought. I was hesitant, but my parents pushed me to register for a few classes. I just signed up for my 3rd semester and will continue taking classes until I graduate from high school. I have learned a lot and it has opened my eyes to new things that I would not have learned at home.



Benjamin Otte

Aspire 2022-2023 Annual Fund Drive Results

Donor Honor Roll 2022-23			
Levels	Amount	Donors	Totals
Achievement	\$100-499	47	\$10,177
Merit	\$500-999	10	\$6,125
Scholarship	\$1000-1499	9	\$9,000
Honor Roll	\$1500-2499	3	\$5,500
Leadership	\$2500-4999	3	\$9,500
Honor Society	Above \$5000	4	\$59,000
Totals		76	\$99,302

Helping Shape Payson's Future

Your tax-deductible contribution can shape the future by helping AAF provide dual-credit opportunities

**ASU Tuition for 1 Year Costs
\$12,698**

**Aspire Scholarship of \$2160 = 24
Dual-Credits = 1 Year of College**

100% of donations fund student scholarships. Invest in the next generation and in the future of Payson.

**Aspire Arizona Foundation is a
501 (c)(3) non-profit.**

Tax ID 46-4130332

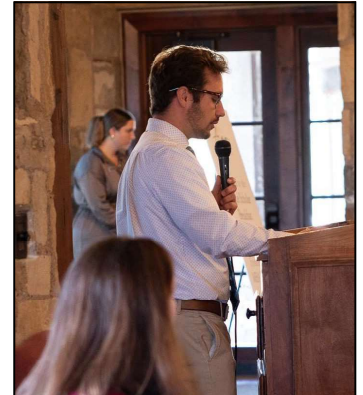
**For Information or to Donate go
to www.aspirearizona.org**

**Mail to: 431 S. Beeline Highway,
Suite 1, Payson, AZ 85541**

Aspire Scholars Breakfast -

Randall Adcock, 2018 PHS Salutatorian, comments at recent Aspire Scholar Breakfast for Students and Donors

Student success stories have become the norm for the Aspire Arizona Foundations' (AAF) Dual-Credit Program. Many students who have completed dual-credit courses have earned multiple degrees at their universities. Randy Adcock is one such example. Randy spoke at our recent Aspire Scholar Breakfast and shared his experience of how the program helped him achieve.



Randy earned 70 college credits during high school and was able to skip calculus and general chemistry at ASU. He initially believed that he wasn't learning as much as "real" college classes would offer—that dual-credit courses were going to be much easier than "real" college classes. To debunk this misconception, he talked about two dual-credit courses. In taking Mrs. Rustagi's chemistry class, Randy feels that he learned more because of individualized instruction. Meeting 5 days a week also provided more instruction and lab time than in college, allowing the subject to be covered deeply including concepts such as physical and organic chemistry. His roommate, who took Mr. Fiala's physics class, also felt the same way. Not only did they cover general physics, but also electricity and magnetism which prepared him for Physics 102.

Randy believes the difficulty of college courses comes from taking them all at once. Taking 4-5 high-level classes without daily structure, having to self-motivate to attend class, and learning to live by yourself all at once is not an easy transition. What is most helpful about dual-credit courses in high school is learning more with the consistent structure of daily classes and fewer college classes all at once.

Randy is currently attending ASU grad school, working on a PhD program in Chemical Engineering. His final words of advice to the Aspire Scholars were to "learn from your classes (obviously), but more than that, learn about yourself, what you enjoy, don't enjoy, what you find important."



Aspire Scholar Breakfast

April, 2023

Honoring Payson students achieving academic success in Aspire's Dual-Credit program.



Parents Perspective on Aspire's Dual-Credit Program

Jon and Shauna Otte

When we first learned about the Aspire scholarship at EAC, we thought it was too good to be true! As a homeschool family living in Rim Country, we are very much aware of the need for accessible and affordable higher education for our children. Aspire has made that possible, and our son has thrived in the positive environment at EAC. The dual-credit classes have allowed him to complete his high school education with top-notch educators while earning college credits. He has also gained valuable classroom experience that will help him transition to a university. Aspire creates the perfect bridge between homeschool and college, giving our son a foundation for his future. Thank you for making that possible!



A Teachers Perspective on Aspire's Dual-Credit Program

Meena Rustagi – PHS Science Teacher

Meena Rustagi arrived at Payson High School (PHS) 16 years ago eager to teach science courses.

"I have a passion and love for innovative methods of teaching chemistry such as learning by doing, which is an amazing strategy to connect science with real-world applications," Meena explained.

She also has a passion for teaching students in dual-credit courses. "I have very much enjoyed teaching the dual-credit students in the Aspire program," she noted. "It is an honor to be accepted as one of these teachers. This Aspire program has enabled the students to be high achievers, allowing them to work at much more challenging levels. I am continually impressed by how well our students rise to the more difficult course work."

"I am grateful to the donors who support the work of Aspire Arizona Foundation," Meena added. "I do hope they realize what their generosity means to these students. They are having a very positive impact on our Payson students."

Her interest in science developed while she was pursuing her bachelor's degree at Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak, India which led her to major in Biological Sciences and M.S. in Chemistry.

Today, she tries to instill that same interest in her students by guiding her PHS chemistry students to organize an annual Chem-stem day to motivate younger students' interest in science with hands on activities.

The success of the program has encouraged Meena and one of her colleagues to start a 'Science in Motion' program for Gila County Schools, an Educational Outreach to promote science through demonstrations at other schools throughout Gila County.





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Join Aspire Arizona Foundation
for
its 3rd Annual Community Golf Tournament
Saturday, August 12, 2024
(More Information inside!)

