

Stories of Generosity & Opportunity at Arizona State University

IMPACT

ISSUE No. 3 | FALL—WINTER 2016

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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Stories of Generosity & Opportunity at Arizona State University

IMPACT

GENEROSITY CHANGED MY LIFE



I began as a bright-eyed dreamer, freshly enrolled in Arizona State University through the support of scholarships funded by generous donors. Overwhelmed by the endless subjects to study, I explored classes in both the arts and sciences, ultimately declaring biochemistry as

my major. I was initially hesitant in my own scientific ability, but ASU saw potential in me when I didn’t see it in myself. With the encouragement of my professors, friends, and mentors, and late nights studying at Hayden Library, I successfully completed my bachelor of science degree—earning a diploma and a deep sense of appreciation for my university community.

The philanthropic culture at ASU extends beyond financial transactions—its impact pours into the daily work of the professors, students, and staff who have left lasting impressions on my life and the lives of others. After graduation, I moved to Dhaka, Bangladesh, to teach as a Fulbright Fellow. I witnessed the incredible value of giving through the other side of the lens as a teacher. I realized my achievements could always be traced back to the investments of donors, who enabled me to transform my future. With this in mind, I made a financial gift to ASU to support students through their own educational journeys.

As I continue my professional career, I have been able to grow, learn, and serve others, thanks to the support of generous individuals like you. I invite you to learn more about this culture of giving as we celebrate and invest in the leaders, thinkers, doers, and dreamers who need your support to succeed.

With gratitude,

Maisoon A. Chowdhury

Maisoon Chowdhury ’12

PHOTO BY ANDREW FRANZ



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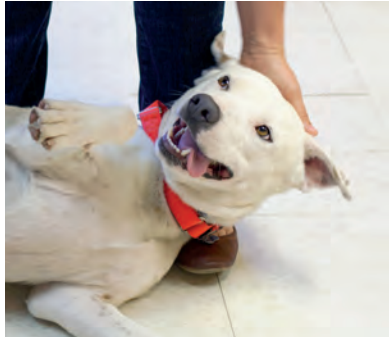
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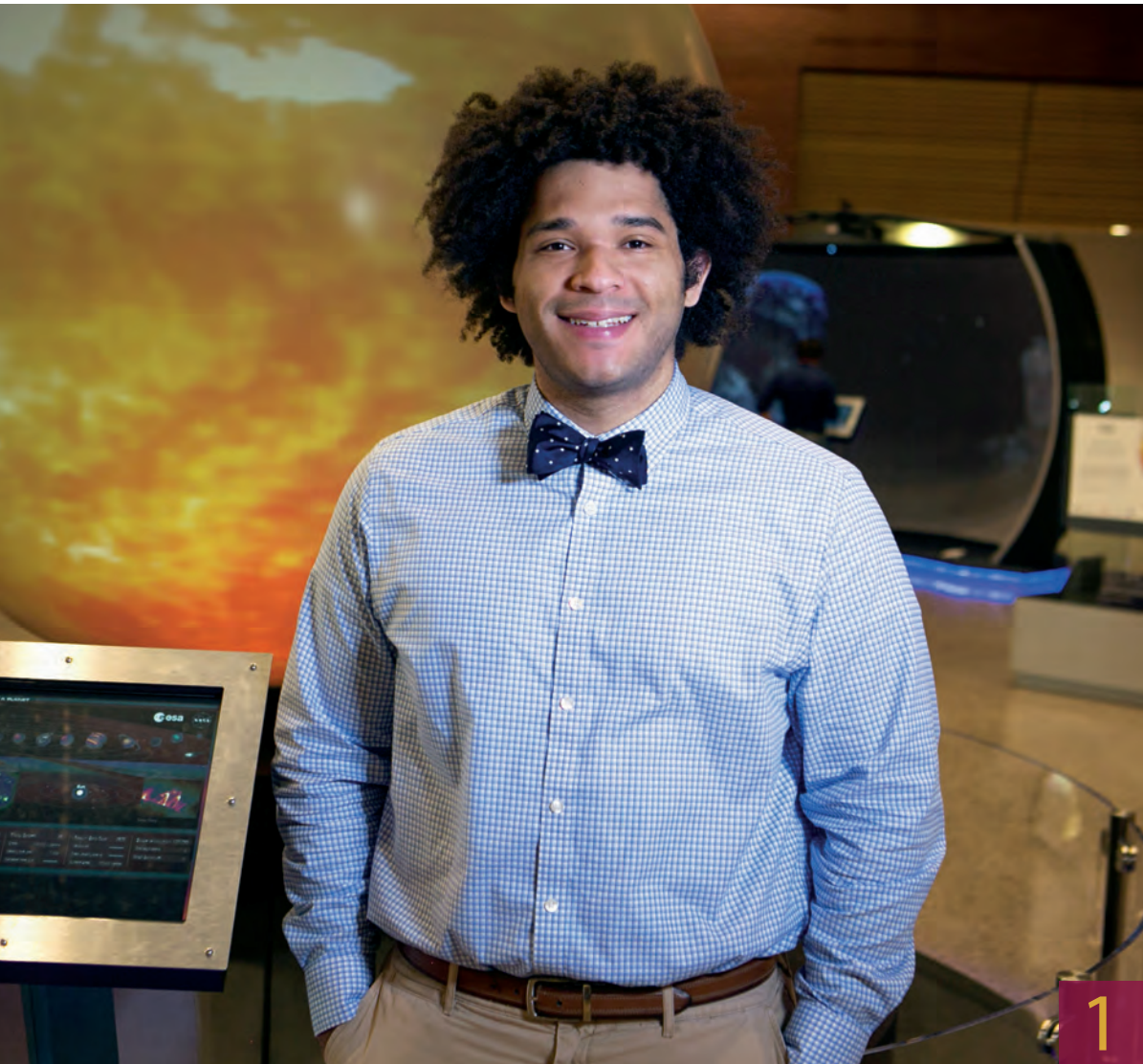


COVER PHOTO BY JUSTINE GARCIA

EARTH TO SKY, BODIES TO BILLS

SCHOLARS CHASE THEIR DREAMS

PHOTO BY JUSTINE GARCIA



1 CARL FIELDS

ALUMNUS, MAY '16
ASTROPHYSICS
HOMETOWN:
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
MY SCHOLARSHIP:
AMONG OTHER
FELLOWSHIPS AND
SCHOLARSHIPS, FIELDS
IS ONE OF FOUR ASU
ORIGINS PROJECT
SCHOLARS TO RECEIVE A
PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL
SCIENCE FOUNDATION
GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP.
HE IS NOW IN MICHIGAN
STATE'S ASTRONOMY
AND ASTROPHYSICS PHD
PROGRAM.

"I'm the first in my family to attend university, and the transition was difficult—and my academic performance reflected that. In 2013, I started doing everything I could to improve myself: retaking courses to raise my GPA, studying harder, getting help for my core physics courses, and getting involved in scientific research. Through this and the support I was able to surround myself with at ASU, I was able to succeed."

▶ Learn how ASU students reach for the stars: sese.asu.edu.

1



PHOTO BY JUSTINE GARCIA

2 BLANCA ENCINAS

SENIOR
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
HOMETOWN:
EL MIRAGE, ARIZONA
MY SCHOLARSHIP:
ASU MEDALLION SCHOLARSHIP,
NEW AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
SCHOLAR DEAN'S AWARD

"When I was younger, I used to watch the TV show *House* all the time. I used to try to diagnose patients even though I was a child. Over time, I started to think I could explore the sciences and actually make it a career to help people thanks to my knowledge of biological functions of the human body."

"I hope with my degree I can go to medical school to become a physician and help save lives. It would be rewarding to apply the science foundation I got here at ASU toward making a difference to those who need it medically."

▶ Learn more about Encinas's ASU experience: asufoundation.org/impact.

2

3 SHAWN RUPP

MASTER'S STUDENT
BIOLOGY
HOMETOWN:
LIVONIA, MICHIGAN
MY SCHOLARSHIP:
ASU ORIGINS PROJECT'S NORM
PERILL SCHOLARSHIP

"I have always loved reptiles. Upon moving to Arizona, I realized how little we actually know about many of the species here. Because I am in a position to do something about that, I decided to focus on learning about the reptiles that inhabit the desert with us."

"The Gila monster is my favorite reptile, because it's probably one of the most interesting lizards in the world. I also love whiptails, which are incredibly fast and also parthenogenetic, which means that females can produce offspring without mating, resulting in more females in the population than males. And I have a newfound interest in alligator lizards, which I have around my house—they just look really cool."

▶ Explore foundational questions facing humankind: origins.asu.edu/about.



4 KELSEY FILES

SENIOR ECONOMICS
AND BUSINESS—URBAN
POLICY
HOMETOWN:
TEMPE, ARIZONA
MY SCHOLARSHIP:
ASU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
MEDALLION SCHOLARSHIP,
AMONG OTHERS

Files explains what he's learned in his time as a legislative intern in the Arizona Attorney General's office:

"Let's just say that *Schoolhouse Rock* took a few shortcuts in its explanation. When we think of how bills are proposed, we think someone behind a desk is just spitballing problems that need to be solved. While that sometimes occurs, the bulk of the bills that become laws are those that arise from specific events."

"To understand proposed legislation, not only should you know what the proposed law does; you need to understand who is advocating for it and why. The objective of a bill is never apparent by simply looking at the proposed legal statute. By having this social understanding of legislation, people are able to propose compromises and amendments that can achieve the intended goals and avoid unintended consequences. My experience at the Arizona legislature and the Arizona Attorney General's office showed me how colorful and exciting this process really is—a process that is often perceived as uninteresting and insignificant."

ASU prepares urban policy experts: students.wpcarey.asu.edu/degrees-and-advising/degree-programs/urban-policy.



FACULTY IMPACT

BY MELISSA BORDOW

A NATIONAL DIALOGUE

ENDOWMENT WIDENS SCOPE
OF PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECT ON INCARCERATION

One of the first things Judith Perera noticed about the Florence Correctional Center were the transparent garbage bags clustered in the lobby.

The Arizona State University doctoral student realized they contained the belongings of immigrants processed into the 450-bed facility operated by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Florence, Arizona.

“To see that on the ground is visually powerful,” Perera remembers. “It’s indicative of how we treat our immigrant population.”

She and ten other ASU graduate students toured the center as part of a semester-long, nationwide project examining incarceration in the United States. They were there to experience sights and smells, observe living conditions, and document the immigrant experience.

The result of their efforts can be found in “Arizona: The Cost of Immigrant Detention—How Do Profits Shape Punishment?” which examines the practice of using private companies to detain undocumented immigrants. (In Arizona, ICE also contracts with a private company, Corrections Corporation of America, to run the Eloy Detention Center, the third largest in the country.)

Their project is part of a larger initiative, “States of Incarceration: A National Dialogue of Local Histories,” which brought together students from twenty states, each exploring the history of incarceration in his or her own community.

“The idea is to have a global dialogue on incarceration, recognizing this is a very large, growing issue in this country that has to be understood through its many different facets,” says Professor Leah Sarat, who directed ASU’s project through the Applied Humanities Lab in the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies.

Students read widely on detention in Arizona and studied theories of incarceration, but they developed a nuanced understanding of the detainee experience by visiting the

detention center, interviewing a former detainee, and spending time with activists and community members who work firsthand with immigrants, Sarat says.

Their travel was enabled in part by the Stowe Endowment for Public History, established by the late ASU Professor Noel Stowe, former assistant dean of the graduate college, chair of the history department, and founder of ASU’s Public History Program.

His endowment also allowed students to travel to the New School in New York City, which sponsored the project, to share results with students from around the country.

These experiences enriched her understanding of a complicated issue, says Perera.

“To see the whole project come together, seeing it there in one room with everyone talking about the issues in their own states, was very impactful, very powerful,” Perera says.

The general public will have the chance to see “States of Incarceration” when it comes to Arizona in the spring of 2018 as part of a national touring exhibit.

View the work of ASU students and their peers at
statesofincarceration.org.



> LEARN MORE ABOUT PROFESSOR NOEL STOWE AND HIS IMPACT ON CHRONICLING PUBLIC HISTORY AT
ASUNOW.ASU.EDU/CONTENT/NOEL-STOWE-LEAVES-HIS-MARK-ARIZONA-HISTORY.

RECENT IMPACT

BY MARVIN GONZALEZ

INFINITE
POSSIBILITIES
THROUGH
GENEROSITY



Jane Jackson

These recent gifts to Arizona State University exemplify the diverse ways your generosity influences education in our community—from K-12 to graduate school.

A MODEL INSTRUCTOR:



To celebrate fifty years since receiving her master's in physics from ASU, Professor Jane Jackson is supporting robust physics education in Arizona's K-12 schools.

Jackson, who was also the first woman to graduate from ASU with a PhD in

physics, made a gift to the Improving Physics and Chemistry Teachers Scholarship endowment, created by Jackson and her husband, Paul. Endowment funds support teachers participating in the Modeling Instruction Program at ASU, a summer course that teaches best practices in physics education to up to 100 educators every summer.

"We give [instructors] resources to guide their students to think critically and creatively," says Jackson. "We do this by providing research-validated, face-to-face professional development."

The Modeling Instruction Program steers away from traditional lecture-demonstration methods of teaching science and

instead organizes courses around constructing and applying conceptual models—a more active, hands-on approach to learning.

▶ Professor Jackson's impact has a wide reach. Learn more—in her own words—at asufoundation.org/impact.

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING:



The Helios Foundation awarded \$720,000 to ASU's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College to invest in dual language and practice for children ages three to five. The grant will fund a partnership between ASU, the Osborn Elementary School District, and the children's theater Childsplay to provide two-way immersion early childhood learning, aiding in early literacy and language development for English- and Spanish-speaking children.

HONORING A LEGEND:



The Arizona Republic awarded \$65,500 to ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication to create a fellowship in honor of Don Bolles, a Republic investigative journalist mortally wounded in a car explosion forty years ago while investigating alleged land fraud in Arizona. The Don Bolles News21 Fellowship will fund one Cronkite student's participation



Theatre for Youth

in the Carnegie-Knight News21 initiative, in which the country's top journalism students produce in-depth multimedia reporting projects on issues of national significance.

PLAY TIME:



Retired ASU professor Lin Wright made a real-estate bequest valued at \$2 million to expand the Lin Wright Endowed Scholarship in Theatre for Youth, the Jim and Lin Wright Endowed Chair, and the Roger Bedard Travel Fellowship in Theatre for Youth. The gift will help attract the brightest graduate students and faculty in the field. Additionally, it will provide ASU University Libraries



Carnegie-Knight News21

\$100,000 toward the Jim Wright Grant for ASU Libraries' Child Drama Special Collection, the largest theater-for-youth repository in the world.

SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES:



Hailing from families with a history of military service, ASU parents Trish and Fred Biddix established a scholarship endowment to support a spouse or child of a member of the US armed

forces. They established the award in honor of their daughter, Kaitlyn '14, a graduate student in the College of Public Service and Community Solutions, who was influenced by Fred Biddix's twenty-year Air Force career, during which he cultivated the values of volunteerism and community engagement.

BY BETH GIUDICESSI

ARTS AND LETTERS



ASU's printmaking annex contains the largest movable-type collection of its kind—and boundless creativity to go with it.

[1]

Some 1,600 cases of type (enough to fill two semitrucks) and printing presses, including an ornate 1834 Columbian Press, make up the pristine Adam Repan Petko Type Collection, which was donated to ASU's School of Art in early 2016. The collection, named for its donor's father, makes ASU's type collection the largest at any institution of higher education in North America.

[2]

Graduate student Sofia Paz won "best in show" at the 2015 Southern Graphics Council International conference but feared she wouldn't have funds to attend the 2016 show—until she was conferred a Graduate and Professional Student Association travel grant. At the event, Paz was awarded second place in the Speedball New Impressions printmaking competition. She applied her prize money to purchase ink application rollers for her intaglio (a type of print made by engraving metal plates) class.

[3]

With donations from art suppliers across the country, support from ASU arts organizations, and a recent National Endowment for the Arts Art Works Grant, the biennial Map(ping) Project—led by Associate Professor Mary Hood—invites Native American and indigenous artists with limited printmaking experience to collaborate with graduate student printmakers on limited-edition artwork that reflects the personal and cultural histories of those involved.

[4]

A-Buncha-Book-Artists (ABBA), ASU's student-run organization for contemporary artist book enthusiasts, plays host to events and instructional sessions throughout the year. In the spring of 2016, Kate Horvat, Sean Gallagher, and other members of the group welcomed visiting artist Jessica Spring, who ran printmaking workshops that were free, open to the public, and supported by donations from community members.

[5]

A stop on the City of Phoenix's regular public art tour is Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, home to two award-winning projects: Variable Order, a letterpress printing-inspired terrazzo floor made of more than 1,000 embedded metal letters, and Trace Elements, two connector bridge glass murals featuring scaled-up nature prints. The works, commissioned by the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture Public Art Program with funds from the Aviation Department's Percent for the Art Program, were created by Daniel Mayer, director of Pyracantha Press, ASU's production and research imprint.

[6]

The ASU printmaking program's recent ranking as fifth in the country by *U.S. News & World Report* helps attract talented artists like Emily Ritter. She helps fund her graduate education through the Richard L. and Mary A. Shindell Rock, Scissors, Paper Printmaking Scholarship and two other privately supported awards.

[7]

ASU's Pyracantha Press prints fine books and print publications for private individuals and special collections, including the Getty Center, Yale University, Klingspor Museum in Germany, the Library of Congress, the Bodleian Library, and others. The press is self-supporting and receives sustaining gifts from the Hatchfund and the Philip C. Curtis Charitable Trust.

▶ See the Petko type up close at: asu.foundation.org/impact

FEATURE IMPACT

BY BETH GIUDICESSI

PAWS FOR
CONSIDERATION

THERE ARE COUNTLESS
QUESTIONS ABOUT HUMANS'
RELATIONSHIP WITH DOGS.
CLIVE WYNNE'S LAB
HELPS ANSWER THEM.

The offices of many
academics feature
floor-to-ceiling
bookshelves, but Clive

Wynne may be unique in
having a plush border collie riding a skateboard atop his.

The stuffed dog, part of a presentation Wynne gave shortly
after joining Arizona State University in 2013, is one of many
animals playing a role in the professor of psychology's career in
animal behavior and cognition.

"It is both fascinating and fun," said Wynne, director of
ASU's Canine Science Collaboratory. "For me, it's fun with
consequences. You can have a great time—yes, I cuddle
puppies—but it really does matter."

Wynne's team of researchers studies aspects of the human-
dog relationship where there are high stakes—for dogs, for
people, or for both. Current projects range from the effect
of aging on canine memory to the bond formed when dog
adopters exercise with their new pets to how dogs detect
different odors.

An ongoing collaboratory investigation considers the welfare
of shelter dogs and ways to increase their chances of
being adopted.



Each year, some four million dogs enter shelters in the United
States; at least a quarter of them face euthanasia if a new
home for them cannot be found. As Wynne's team discovered,
a contributing factor to a dog's likelihood of adoption is its
breed label—and the perceptions that come with it.

With support from Mars Veterinary, Wynne's team acquired
2,000 DNA tests to trace dogs' heritage as far back as eight
generations. The tests revealed a shelter dog's breed is often
mischaracterized—unsurprising because there are more than
200 known purebred dogs, and most shelter dogs are of
mixed descent.

Accurately identifying a dog's ancestry allows caretakers to
better predict health issues and provide appropriate treatment,
and it gives potential owners a more complete picture of the
pet they adopt.

"The 'bully breeds' get the rough shake for adoption to the
point where a label of 'pit bull' can double one's adoption
time," said Arizona Animal Welfare League marketing and



communications manager Michael Morefield, referring to
a term that encompasses twenty-five recognized breeds.
"Because of the research Clive Wynne's postdoctoral
student Lisa Gunter worked on here, we eliminated all
breeds from our kennel cards. If someone has a question, we
don't hide it—we talk about it, but we don't want those initial
impressions or stereotypes applied to an individual dog."

Morefield said an owner doesn't fall in love with a "German
shepherd" or a "terrier," he or she falls in love with a
particular dog with individual experiences and personality,
which is why getting to know an animal leads to more
successful adoptions than basing the decision on breed
assignment—an outcome that not only improves dogs' well-
being but benefits their human caretakers.

"To know more is rich, and it makes our lives with dogs richer,"
said Wynne. "There is so much we could know. But it's not
just for fun—it actually matters. We could help. And dogs
can help us."

Watch ASU's Canine Science Collaboratory
research in action at asufoundation.org/impact.

MAN'S BEST FRIEND:
TWO WAYS DOG STUDIES HELP HUMANS

1. Sniffing out danger, saving

lives: Defense research
agencies have spent billions of
dollars developing specialized
tools to detect bombs, but those
devices can fall short compared
to the natural sensitivity of a dog's nose. ASU's Canine
Collaboratory, with support from the U.S. Office of
Naval Research and British



Science and Technology Laboratory, is teaching dogs
to identify bomb-making ingredients and to sniff out
Improvised Explosive Devices to protect soldiers
and civilians.

2. Old dogs teaching new

research tricks: Dogs are one
of the few species aside from
humans that share vulnerability
to dementia and develop a
disease similar to Alzheimer's. Because dogs' average
lifespans are shorter than humans', ASU scientists are
able to perceive and treat the disease's progression
in dogs in a condensed period of time. The research,
which is supported in part by the College of Liberal
Arts and Sciences, is accelerating understanding of
effective therapies for both species.



> THE CANINE SCIENCE COLLABORATORY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT. TO HELP ASU
RESEARCHERS BETTER UNDERSTAND DOG BEHAVIOR AND HOW IT AFFECTS HUMANS,
CONTACT LINDA RAISH AT LINDA.RAISH@ASU.EDU.

STORIES OF IMPACT

BY KRISTINE BURNETT

A CALLING FOR FUNDRAISING

PHOTO BY PHILAMER BATANGAN

When Viking Wadsworth traded an on-campus job washing dishes for a position in the ASU Foundation's Tell-A-Devil Network call center, he discovered an aptitude for fundraising and a keen eye for the impact of philanthropy.

"I didn't think I'd be good at it," said Wadsworth, a junior who began working in the call center in April 2015. "I got the hang of it and started creating my own scripts, adjusting them as I went."

Wadsworth's work performance is better than good. He recently set a new record for the call center, securing nearly \$200,000 in donations in 2016. The previous year's top performer raised just under \$70,000.

The Tell-A-Devil Network employs 120+ students each year, providing:

- **Networking with alumni**
- **Employment skills**
- **Resume-building opportunities**

The secret to his success? A genuine desire to make a difference.

"It took a while to realize that I can have an impact just by raising \$100 or so a night," said Wadsworth, who works about 20 hours a week. "But I walk away at the end of the week knowing the money I raised amounts to an entire scholarship for someone."

The numbers aspect of the job also intrigues Wadsworth, whose love of math has him pursuing a degree in actuarial science, which uses mathematics and statistics to assess risk in finance, insurance, and other industries.

Proving that his call center job is leaving its mark, Wadsworth recently began thinking about applying his degree toward a career in fundraising.

"I personally benefit from scholarships, so fundraising for education isn't something I have to feign passion about when I'm talking to people on the phone. It's a true passion for me."

> LEARN MORE ABOUT TELL-A-DEVIL NETWORK AT TAD.ASUFOUNDATION.ORG.

A new vision for retirement living.

Coming soon to ASU's Tempe campus.

M
MIRABELLA
at ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Learn more at: mirabellaASU.com

A GIFT That Gives Back

Did you know?

If you are 65 years of age, you can fund a charitable gift annuity at ASU and receive payments for your lifetime.

Benefits include:

- An income tax charitable deduction in the year you make the gift
- Fixed payments for life — a portion of which is tax free for several years
- A reduction in capital gain tax if you use long-term appreciated stock to make the gift

Most importantly, you will provide support for Arizona State University, an institution committed to helping all students succeed.

Interested?

Contact Tim Gartland at asufoundation.myplannedgift.org or at 480-965-2038.

STORIES OF IMPACT

BY KRISTINE BURNETT



FitPHX ENERGY ZONES

SEEKING OBESITY SOLUTIONS
THROUGH SOCIAL EMBEDDEDNESS

"Obesity is one of the greatest health challenges we face, infiltrating almost every aspect of our lives. Yet our thinking around obesity remains myopic, as we continue to blame people for their condition. We need to step back and look at the challenges with fresh eyes. Many of the best solutions suggested by current science require us to work together, to rethink the design of our cities, our neighborhoods, our schools, clinics, and campuses, and to recognize how we together can create healthier, happier everyday lives."

Alexandra Brewis Slade
PhD, co-director for ASU's Obesity Solutions initiative

For first-generation college student Karina Bello, a semester-long internship teaching middle schoolers how to be fit and healthy has turned into a lifelong passion.

"I see myself working in schools to help combat childhood obesity by focusing on prevention rather than just intervention," says Bello, a senior community health major who has interned with the FitPHX Energy Zones collaborative, an obesity solutions initiative from ASU's School of Human Evolution and Social Change.

FitPHX, awarded the President's Medal for Social Embeddedness for helping meet the needs of the local community, is a free library-based after-school fitness and nutrition education program serving vulnerable youths ages ten to fourteen. It is operated in partnership with City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation, Phoenix Public Libraries, the Phoenix Mayor's Office, Mayo Clinic, Maricopa County Department of Public Health, and several ASU schools and colleges.

As a FitPHX intern, Bello learned early on that getting kids' attention doesn't come easily.

"Some of the kids had this sort of 'too cool for school' attitude, but we knew the information was sinking in when kids were getting less junk food from the vending machines and drinking more water," Bello says. "We were changing their conscious decision making."

Bello, a beneficiary of several ASU scholarships, knows a thing or two about the impact of conscious decisions. As a recipient of the Early Outreach Scholarship, designed to help ASU students serve as role models to children and adolescents in grades K–12, her involvement with FitPHX and its impact on her career aspirations illustrate social embeddedness coming full circle.



Learn more about FitPHX and its impact on youth at asufoundation.org/impact.

> TO INQUIRE ABOUT INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITH OBESITY SOLUTIONS AND THE FITPHX ENERGY ZONES, CONTACT DEBORAH WILLIAMS AT DEBORAH.L.WILLIAMS@ASU.EDU.

FACE VALUE

FACIAL RECONSTRUCTIONS HELP
IDENTIFY MISSING PERSONS



STORIES OF IMPACT

BY MARVIN GONZALEZ

Anthony Falsetti has dedicated himself to giving a face to the faceless through his expertise in forensic anthropology.

Falsetti, professor of forensics at Arizona State University's West campus, has made a career out of identifying unidentified human remains—whether from mass fatalities, individual cases, or human rights violations.

Falsetti has worked across the globe, identifying missing persons from Sarajevo as deputy director of forensics science for the International Commission of Missing Persons in the aftermath of the Bosnian War to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake.

Since joining ASU, Falsetti has collected data for a prospective digital forensic imaging center. Falsetti hopes the center becomes an interdisciplinary training ground for future forensic artists and scientists who will help identify the more than 44,000 unnamed bodies in the United States.

He took a step closer to this ambition through PitchFunder—ASU's crowdfunding platform. Through the campaign, his team raised enough money to purchase an instrument crucial to making the imaging center a reality. "We were able to get the [NextEngine 3D] scanner and software, and we are going to start scanning skulls to create an archive," Falsetti says.

The portable scanner allows Falsetti to collect images from medical examiners' offices across the west. With the scans, Falsetti works with forensic artists to create facial reconstructions, which become part of a database. Once in the database, images can be matched to missing persons.

"Ultimately, we'd like to do this nationally," Falsetti says.

To learn more about crowdfunding through PitchFunder, visit pitchfunder.asufoundation.org.

> TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ASU'S FORENSICS PROGRAM AT ASU WEST CAMPUS, VISIT [NEWCOLLEGE.ASU.EDU/FORENSICS-SCIENCE-DEGREE](https://newcollege.asu.edu/forensics-science-degree).

DONOR IMPACT

BY CRAIG MORGAN

IT'S THAT SIMPLE

“YOU DO THINGS FOR EACH OTHER **BECAUSE YOU'RE A COMMUNITY**”

When Robert L. Fletcher returned to Phoenix after two-and-a-half years of service in World War II, he was “broke and in need of work like everybody else.” After trying his hand at a couple of businesses, he turned to farming, which grew to be more than a vocation—it became one of his life’s passions.

Helping hard-working families send their children to college became another. Fletcher and a group of farmers and ranchers teamed up to buy 325 acres in Tempe to help expand what was then known as Arizona State College, but Fletcher still saw an educational void on the west side of the Valley.

After lengthy discussions with local businessmen and lawmakers, Fletcher donated funds, matched by the Arizona legislature, to help create an ASU campus. He also convinced the Sands family to give up its lease on state-owned lands, paving the way for the ASU

West campus on Thunderbird Road between 43rd and 51st avenues.

Thirty years later, ASU West provides almost 10,500 students a rich, liberal arts education as well as programs that meet the demands of the twenty-first-century workforce. Recognized for its nationally unique New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, the West campus marries the best aspects of the small-college experience with the resources of a top-tier research university.

What motivated you to donate the initial funds for the creation of the West campus?

“Nowadays, it seems like nobody will do anything unless they get paid for it or get recognition for it, but in the old days, you all tried to help each other and make Arizona a better place. The street I grew up on, East Portland Street, everybody knew everybody. You helped your neighbor.

During the Depression, my mom would make a bigger pot of stew and say, ‘Bobby take this down to the Smiths or Joneses’ or whoever. That’s just the way we were raised.

“As the west side grew, there was no place really for the working-class people, like we were, to go to college and get a better education, and that was the main thing we were talking about: helping working-class families. It was important to me, because I didn’t go to college, but with my kids, in that era, it also seemed to be important to them, and it seemed to be important to America.”

Do you take any personal satisfaction in the effect you’ve had on the community?

“It’s bigger than I ever thought it would be by this time, but I don’t take anything out of it. I just figure that’s the Lord’s will, and he blessed me to be able to help out.”

Do you think gifts such as yours could pave the way for others to pay it forward?

“After serving in the war in North Africa and Italy, you knew what you went through, and you appreciated what you had at home and what you were given. I think what you’re asking me is how do you get your grandkids to appreciate what they have or what could be? How do you get other people to appreciate what they have and try to make it better? A lot of it has to come from your parents and the way they were raised, but a lot of it has to come from the examples that are set around you.

“It’s that simple. You do things for each other because you’re a community.”



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Yasmin Saikia is the Hardt-Nickachos Chair in Peace Studies at the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict and professor of history in the School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies at ASU. Her scholarship centers on issues that enhance our thinking on the ethics and politics of peace.

To read more about Professor Saikia and her work, see asufoundation.org/saikia.

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