

# Schools



## Fountain Hills Coalition

The new school year has begun, which means the Fountain Hills Coalition is back to work trying to make the local community a safer environment for youngsters to learn and grow, specifically by reducing substance abuse. A 501(c)3 organization, the Coalition is made up of representatives from around the Fountain Hills and Fort McDowell community, including government leaders, school administration, Town representatives, law enforcement, local churches and more. For more information or to get involved, visit [safehomesfh.org](http://safehomesfh.org). The Coalition's next meeting will be Thursday, Oct. 6, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at the Fountain Hills Middle School, where participants will be able to observe the Red Ribbon Day festivities occurring on campus.

## Text-A-Tip program gets results

During a recent meeting of the Fountain Hills Coalition, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office School Resource Officer, Deputy Jill Ochsner, updated members on the success of the Text-A-Tip program thus far in 2016.

The program is completely anonymous; allowing users to inform local authorities via text when something might need their attention. From alerting deputies to vandalism, disorderly conduct or issues on school campuses, Text-A-Tip has proven a helpful resource here in Fountain Hills.

According to Ochsner, 50 Text-A-Tip leads were deemed legitimate around town from January to August of this year. July was the slow month with 10 total notifications, with more than a dozen per month for the rest of 2016.

March was an especially busy month for Text-A-Tip leads with 18, while May and June offering 17 and 16 respectively.

At the school level, seven leads were deemed legitimate so far in 2016. Ochsner said that local students seem to be taking to the program well, understanding that seeing something while not saying something only hurts themselves, their classmates and their schools. The fact that the program is anonymous also helps in that regard.

All told, 14 arrests were made around town so far this year due to Text-A-Tip leads.

Ochsner shared details on several of these incidents. In March, two incidents occurred at the high school wherein one student was found to be in possession of alcohol while

another was in possession of marijuana.

In May, two suspects were reported for suspicious behavior via Text-A-Tip, both of which turned out to have outstanding warrants.

In June, Text-A-Tip helped shut down an underage drinking party where nine juveniles were arrested for underage drinking.

For those who wish to keep the Text-A-Tip number handy, simply save the number for CRIMES (274637). When you send a text to that number to report a potential crime, begin the text with "FH." Briefly explain where you are and what has happened, and the situation will be looked into. Again, the texts are completely anonymous and, according to Ochsner, they're helping keep Fountain Hills safe.

## School board meets tonight

The Fountain Hills Unified School District Governing Board will begin business quite a bit earlier than usual this evening, beginning September's business with a board retreat.

## McElligott up for grant

It was announced last week that Fountain Hills High School teacher Dr. Paul McElligott has been nominated to be in the final evaluation for the Global Teacher Award.

The Global Teacher Award was established to recognize an exceptional USA, Canada or international educator who has made an outstanding contribution to the teaching profession. This award is intended to highlight the importance of the teaching profession, and demonstrate the fact that teachers throughout the world deserve to be recognized and celebrated.

The Varkey Foundation, an international not-for-profit organization, will award a \$1 million grant to the winning candidate. Nominations for the 2017 prize opened in June 2016.

President Bill Clinton said of the prize, "After all these years, one thing I know... teachers matter most."

As Sunny Varkey, founder of the Varkey Foundation, says, "This prize is about unearthing thousands of stories of courage and inspiration. We want to inspire children from far-flung villages, towns and cities around the world to say 'I want that prize!' Let's get them aiming to be the greatest teacher in the world."

The board retreat is set to begin at 4 p.m. During this meeting, members will discuss the previous school year, as well as set board goals for 2016-17.

The regular meeting will begin at its usual time, 6:30 p.m. in the District Learning Center.

The highlight of tonight's business will likely be the consideration of an IGA with Paradise Valley School District for online curriculum. A discussion topic in late August, the board will tonight vote on the possible purchase of eight courses to kick off FHUSD's online offerings.

According to Superintendent Dr. Patrick Sweeney, if approved, the plan

would be to offer some form of these courses later this semester, with a wider rollout in early 2017. From there, FHUSD could offer additional online courses and grow its educational opportunities for students both inside and outside the local district.

Other key items making up tonight's School Board agenda are a trio of extra-curricular trips.

The board will tonight discuss a possible eighth grade Earthquest Trip scheduled for March of 2017, and vote on a seventh grade Star Gazers trip to AstroCamp in October and a high school Leadership camp scheduled over the upcoming weekend.



## Kiwanis Falcon Leaders

Andre Urda and Dani Meyers, center, were recently honored as September 2016 Falcon Leaders by the Noon Kiwanis Club. Presenting the honors were Middle School Principal Anita Gomez, right, and club President Mike Scharnow. Each month during the school year the club honors two outstanding students from FHMS. The club meets the first and third Thursday of the month at noon at the Kiwanis Activity Center.

## Terrific Kids





McDowell Mountain Elementary school and Noon Kiwanis member Charlie Fox are proud to present Joshua Peczek (kindergarten), Amayah Kill (first grade, not pictured), Rylee Olsen (second grade) and Marc Minero (third grade) as Terrific Kids for the week of Sept. 4. The program, sponsored by Noon Kiwanis, recognizes students for positive achievements with respect to attitude, helping out, kindness to others, etc.

## Saturday drive.

### A perfect time to talk.

An alarming number of teens are drinking, using marijuana and misusing prescription medication – which makes it urgent to find every opportunity to talk with your kids about the dangers of these drugs. To get a Marijuana Talk Kit, become a Safe Homes Network Member, or find locations to pick up a free Early Action Kit, visit:

[www.FHCoalition.org](http://www.FHCoalition.org)

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