

## Historic Event: First Senior Class Graduates

**City High School** strives to be a community of learners in which all members use their minds well. We engage with challenging academics and the unique resources of our city and region to become active citizens and responsible stewards of our world.

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**Tucson Small School Project** (TSSP) is dedicated to supporting City High School and to promoting professional development and community dialogue that foster smaller and more equitable learning communities for all students in southern Arizona. TSSP is a nonprofit corporation with 501 c3 status.

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*learning. working.  
creating. connecting*

Over two hundred people celebrated City High School's first Senior Graduation Ceremony at La Placita Village on the evening of May 23. The seniors proudly received their diplomas from teachers Sarah Bromer and Elliott Lax, as registrar and beloved office coordinator Lynn Schneuker read the names.

Senior Serena Rios gave the keynote speech and highlighted the spirit of friendship and new confidence she and others found while at City High. "Together we have made friends," Rios said, "we have traveled to the Grand Canyon and to New Mexico ... we have taken time to reach out to others and help them come out of their shell, and experience life like we have learned to do."

The senior class also invited founding staff members Brett Goble and Eve Rifkin to speak. Rifkin reflected on the diversity and accomplishments of the senior class, and Goble encouraged the



graduates to pursue their life's work with passion.

The ceremony opened and closed with music performed by students Che Hise-Gattone and Elliott Berry and teacher Charles Schnarr. Seniors Beryl Kelley and Serena Rios also sang a duet.

The PTO group City High Parents played an active role in organizing the event. They decorated the gazebo and courtyard, and coordinated the post-graduation reception. Senior parents Emilia Justo and Cadie McCarthy organized the senior families to bring a favorite dish to share with the crowd. The celebration stretched into the evening as the graduates lingered with family, friends, and teachers and enjoyed the bountiful buffet and movie-sized photo slideshow.

Soon-to-be-senior Tal Palmer-Gai was at the ceremony and hopes to have his graduation be similar to the one in May. "It was cool to see the first seniors graduate," Palmer-Gai said, "especially since I've been going to school with many of them since the beginning of City High."

**~Andres Cano, Student Contributor**



*The seniors go over details with the principal before the ceremony begins (top right); the lighted gazebo in La Placita Park serves as a beautiful backdrop for the event (above).*

## Principal Travels to Argentina with Fulbright Exchange Program

Carrie Brennan was one of 15 educators from the United States to participate in the annual US-Argentina School Administrator Exchange this July. After two days in the port city and national capital of Buenos Aires, the group traveled to the central province of Cordoba where they would spend the bulk of their time. The American educators each lived for three weeks with an Argentinian family, shadowed a school leader, and visited a variety of schools throughout the province to meet with teachers, directors, and students.

Carrie Brennan stayed with Olga Besso, the Argentinian school director who visited Tucson and City High School last October. Brennan explains, "I went with Olga each day to her rural school in the village of San Jose. The school is small with the equivalent of grades 7 through 12. It is quite humble in terms of resources, but the teachers and directors do a lot to engage the students and their parents." Besso and Brennan visited a number of other schools in the region as well, including two private bilingual Spanish-English schools, an urban vocational school, and other rural small schools.

~Jennifer Camano, Grants & Development Coordinator



*Carrie Brennan (front row left) with ninth grade students in the courtyard of the San José School in San José, Cordoba, Argentina.*

## Watching Our City High Garden Grow

City High School is now the steward of a 7-acre plot of county land along the west branch of the Santa Cruz River just south of Silverlake Road. Under the leadership of staff members Elliott Lax and Mike Spielman, City Works classes have been working for the past two years to restore the land to its previous productivity levels. (The plot was originally part of the Pharmacy Garden.)

This past year the garden began producing a limited range and amount of organic produce, some of which was sold at local farmer's markets by City High students. The City Works class also held the first annual garden party in May, when the sunflowers and pomegranate trees were blooming (see photos left).

I am excited about teaching the Garden City Works this school year. Here are a few priorities I have identified, and I know that students who take the garden class will have lots of ideas as well.

- Install automated drip irrigation to all plants and crops. This likely will involve a green energy source to power the timers and valves – solar and/or wind power generation.
- Plant, nurture, and harvest crops of vegetables, flowers, herbs, etc. Sell at local farmer's markets or provide to the culinary City Works class to include in school lunches.
- Take field trips to the UA agricultural outreach farm, an organic farm in Catalina, the Native Seed Search farm in Patagonia, a cactus nursery, and the community food bank.
- Build structures for the garden – shade ramada, outdoor classroom, tool shed, fireplace/barbeque, greenhouse, etc.
- Fall and Spring Garden Party – planned and carried out by students. Invite the community and neighborhood. Provide food, music, artwork, bonfire, etc.

The possibilities and potential for the garden are endless!

~Michael Herzog, Garden City Works Leader 07-08



## ***PREPARING FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR ...***

### ***Summer Renovations Expand Program Space***

The lower floor of 48 East Pennington Street is experiencing an extreme make-over this summer as we make way for five new state-of-the-art instructional spaces, additional offices and storage, and a student lounge. The project also includes upgraded lighting and airflow, bathrooms, and new flooring. Similar to the changes made to the upper floor in 2004, ceiling levels have been raised where possible and many of the walls are being constructed with sheets of plastic called PolyGal in order to create a sense of openness and transparency. The renovations will add approximately 6200 square feet of useable space and allow both City High School and Voices, Inc. to expand their youth programs. Funding for the project comes from individual donors, grants, and a loan to City High School from NCB Capital Impact, an organization that helps charter schools with facilities financing. Yarborough Development is the general contractor for the project. ***Photo right: New classrooms being constructed on the west side of the lower floor.***

### ***Making Sure Our Building Is Healthy***

Students, parents and other community members were understandably concerned and curious following news reports earlier this summer that nine Tucson charter schools, including City High, received fines from the EPA for not having an asbestos management plan. Our management plan is now in place, and available for review. We want to assure everyone that the building was safe and healthy when City High and Voices moved to this location in 2003. The extensive tenant improvements in 2004 and 2007 all met the high standards required for educational occupancy and served to make 48 E. Pennington St. even safer and healthier.



### ***New Teachers Add to Outstanding Staff***

Six dynamic educators will join City High School this fall. They bring a wealth of experience and content knowledge to their new jobs. Chad Blair (humanities) has an MFA in poetry; Leslie Cho Newman (Spanish) ran the local youth art program AIR; Stewart Croft (humanities) has had two years of success at City High as a teaching assistant and electives teacher; Jason Marrano (fine arts) launched the arts program at another charter school; Maria Luisa Ruiz (science) has extensive background in scientific research; and Roz Wolfe (math) comes to us after teaching in a variety of small schools from Alaska to Arizona. ***Photo left: art teacher Jason Marrano meets with Academic Director Eve Rifkin.***





48 E. Pennington St.  
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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS ...**

**AUGUST**

1<sup>st</sup> New Student Registration 9:00-4:00  
16<sup>th</sup> New Student Registration 9:00-4:00  
16<sup>th</sup> TSSP Board Meeting, 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
20<sup>th</sup> Teachers First Day Back to School  
27<sup>th</sup> Registration for Returning Students  
29<sup>th</sup> New Student Orientation  
30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> Whole School Retreat

**SEPTEMBER**

3<sup>rd</sup> Labor Day – No School  
6<sup>th</sup> TSSP Board Meeting 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
11<sup>th</sup> “City High Parents” PTO Mtg 6:00-7:00 p.m.  
19<sup>th</sup> Back-to-School Open House 6:00-8:00 p.m.

**OCTOBER**

4<sup>th</sup> TSSP Board Meeting 5:30-7:00 p.m.  
9<sup>th</sup> “City High Parents” PTO Mtg 6:00-7:00 p.m.  
11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Parent-Teacher Conferences; Half-Days  
26<sup>th</sup> End of Quarter 1  
30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> AIMS Retake Tests – Reading/Writing

**NOVEMBER**

1<sup>st</sup> AIMS Retake Test – Mathematics  
22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> Thanksgiving Holiday – No School

*Check out the school website for updated event info.  
[www.cityhighschool.org](http://www.cityhighschool.org)*