



# Key Club Ends Year with Project to Help Homeless

By Sophia Braccio '22



Volunteers assemble bags with essential items donated by Key Club members. Photo by Sophia Braccio.

NPX Key Club members ended the school year with an act of service by making bags for the homeless. The contents of each bag, which included a toothbrush, deodorant, masks, socks, and other essential personal items, were donated by the key club members or purchased with the remaining funds that the club has raised over the year. Student volunteers (including key club members and their friends) assembled upwards of 60 bags on May 20 and 21 during Lyceum. The volunteers and club officers took the bags home to distribute to those in need that they may see in their own communities. Current club President Saloni Godse tells us, "Key Club is all about serving others. Especially with Covid, we are really thankful that we have been able to give back to those who are most in need in our community this year. Thank you to our treasurer Miranda Waters for all the work you put in to coordinate this event and to all of our volunteers." Saloni will be preceded by next year's key club president, Caroline Ward. If you are a High School student interested in getting involved with Key Club, keep an eye out for member registration in the fall and follow @npxkeyclub on Instagram.

# Ms. Jacobson Reflects

## *An End of the Year Interview with NPX's Headmaster*

By Saloni Godse '22

The school year is coming to an end and this concludes Ms. Jacobson's first year as our headmaster. We are so grateful to have had Ms. Jacobson to guide our community through this tough year. The students and staff at NPX have persevered through the pandemic, constant schedule changes, and an academically rigorous year. Ms. Jacobson has been working hard with her leadership team to start planning for the next school year. Here is her reflection on this past school year and some insight into the next school year:

**Did you meet the goals you set for this school at the beginning of the school year? If so, what were they? If not, what prevented you from achieving them?**

"This year I set a personal goal to observe classes as often as possible. I ended up doing about 250 observations of teachers- this was less than I wanted to do, but I feel good about being in that many classes and seeing the good work of our teachers and students. The school's goal this year was to adapt and unify. We were somewhat forced to adapt and everyone did an amazing job at that but unifying was something we chose to do. We met that goal by building strong grade level and content area teams. We also ensured that classes were aligned- for example, all 7th grade lit/comp classes were doing the same thing at the same time regardless of the teacher. This made transitions due to online learning and Covid much, much easier. In addition to that, we formed an operations team at North Phoenix Prep that

met weekly to ensure all events and communications were unified. Our school leadership team also met weekly and tracked progress toward this goal.”

### What are you most excited about for the next school year?

“I am hopeful that we will be able to have a more normal year. We have missed out on many opportunities to build community and get to know one another better. Community is very important to me and I want NPX to feel like everyone’s second home and a place you miss when you leave. I am also excited to reset expectations next year. This year, we let a lot slide because of covid (for example, haircuts and dress code) and I am looking forward to elevating those expectations next year.”

### What was the highlight of this year?

“There were many highlights this year. I was able to become close with my leadership team and build a strong foundation of communication and trust. I am grateful that we were able to do some events, like the grade-level socials, field day, prom, and the senior dinner. Those things didn’t happen at every Great Hearts school this year and I am proud to be at a school where we made those events possible, despite the guidelines and restrictions. Another highlight was watching first year teachers overcome the challenges this year brought. Ms. Coffey, Mr. Marquez, Mr. Jameson, Mr. Dhakal, and Mr. Latham have been wonderful. We also added several veteran teachers to our staff who have been wonderful additions.”

### What are your overall thoughts about this school year?

“This was the hardest year of my life. I know that is true for others as well. I am proud of what we have done and proud of the NPX team, teachers, and students. I feel like NPX is my home and I love being here.”

### How does it feel having moved on from teaching to being a headmaster?

“I don’t feel like I’ve moved on from teaching. The Headmaster is the Head Teacher and I get to teach every day, just in a different way. My heart is still in the classroom and I am looking forward to teaching a 9th grade Biology class next year. All educators are teachers, we just live that out in different ways, depending on our roles.”

### As the headmaster, is there anything you would like to tell the student body?

“I am so proud of everything you have overcome this year—you are truly amazing. Thank you for being wonderful examples of overcoming challenges and enduring constant change. Your resilience has taught me and your teachers more than you know.”



*Ms. Jacobson is all smiles for a quick photo while she works the second to last parking lot duty of the year on Tuesday. Photo by Sophia Braccio.*

## Senior Trip Snapshot

By Miranda Waters, photo by Ms. Jensen

*“It meant a lot to have this trip as a way to make some final memories before we all go off to college. It was so much fun and I can’t imagine saying goodbye to all of these people without this trip.” -Sofija Brnovich*



*“This trip has been amazing and I’ve made so many memories... My favorite part has been the dinner with the whole class every night.” -Liam Black*

## Senate’s Future at NPX

By incoming Senate president Niat Solomon ‘22

As the school continues to thrive and grow, so does our student leadership! After a successful term of raising spirit and hosting fun socials, the year has finally come to an end. This year the Senate faced many new challenges, such as maintaining school unity amidst online learning and planning a safe prom during a pandemic. However, not only did they manage to pull it off but they took great strides forward, implementing new traditions, like student panels, to better communication and food sales every week. As this term comes to an end, and Senate elections for the upcoming year have been completed, the future of the Senate looks bright. There was an all-time high participation level with more candidates running all throughout highschool than ever before, and, as a result, there are many new faces in our school's student body this upcoming year. The current president, Alina Boorse, and vice president, Sophia Braccio, passed their positions down to me, Niat Solomon, and, and my new trusty sidekick, Truman Nack. We are so excited to improve the school and continue the trajectory that their former leaders began. We plan to focus on heightening our school spirit even further, and continuing to better the communication between the student body and the Senate.

When asked about how she feels the Senate did this past year, Alina said, “While there were many things I wish we had accomplished, I am proud that we continued to take steps forward even if they were small. We simply made the most of what we could this year!”

Mr. Black, the teacher head of our Senate, feels similarly about the performance this year, and is equally as excited to see our school grow this upcoming year: “We have selected a strong body of Senators and they are already laying the groundwork for next year and getting organized. We want to show everyone that being a student at NPX is not only an amazing academic opportunity, it is also a lot of fun and a truly warm and inviting community. There has never been a better time to be a Gladiator!”

# The May Sports Overview

By Miranda Waters '22

## *Track Sibling Duo Takes State*

The Division IV State Championships were held Friday, May 14 and Saturday, May 15 at Perry High School in Gilbert Arizona where Sam (junior) and Richie Johnston (senior) competed against one another for the last time. Sam said, "This track season was phenomenal for all of our athletes...", but Richie and Sam were outstanding, placing 1st and 5th in the 800 Meter, the 1600 Meter placing 1st and 3rd, and the 3200 Meter placing 3rd and 6th, respectively. They also competed on a 4x800 relay team with Max Kinney and Jonah Pearson where (Richie's words) the "...team's performance exceeded... expectations..." and took home the gold. Sam attributes a lot of his success to Richie and the brotherly rivalry they had: "We all pushed each other to become stronger. Especially Richie, my brother [who] had the biggest impact on me this season. He was both family and competition. He made me stronger... I don't know what I'm going to do without him next season." Richie was "... so happy that [he] was able to run track [his] senior year, especially after how last year's season was cut short." He "...loved training and competing with [his] friends from our school..." and is proud of his achievements at state. Richie feels "...honored to be a member of the NPX track program and... could not have thought of a better way to end [his] high school athletic career."

## *MS Tennis Finishes the Season Strong*

On Saturday, May 15 at Paseo Racquet Center in Glendale our Middle School Tennis team competed in the Great Hearts Middle School League Championships! Individual winners for the boy's competition include Neil Malhotra (8th grade) who placed first 1st place and Jack Lundstrom (7th grade) who placed 2nd. The individual winners for the girl's competition are Noelani Romo (6th grade) and Alexis Smith (6th grade) who both placed 1st and Elizabeth Patterson (8th grade) who placed 2nd. Be sure to congratulate the middle school tennis team!

## *Senior Results from State Track and Field Meet*



This year at The Division IV State Championships, the school name North Phoenix Prep was high on the placement sheets and history was even made at NPX! Richard Bickerstaff competed in the 110m Hurdles and placed 9th. He broke a school record with a time of 16.92 seconds! Mia Wahlheim placed 23rd in the 3200 Meter and broke a school record with a time of 14:06.37. Seniors Cora Moor and Isabelle Herrera on a team with Aleksandra Reno (freshman) and Kendall Kartler (junior) broke a school record in the 4x100 relay placing 9th with a time of 53.92 seconds. Seniors Becky Forbes and Mia Wahlheim got 14th place in the 4x800 relay on a team with Molly Forbes (freshman) and McKenna Martin (freshman) where they broke the school record with a time of 11:38.58. And Sofija Brnovich competed in javelin for the first time in NPX history where she placed 17th! Our senior track stars will be missed but they certainly left their mark on NPX before leaving!

# Senior Journalist Spotlight: Bianca

By Sophia Braccio '22

As the Class of 2021 prepares to graduate, ACTA GLADIATOR gives a heartfelt goodbye to one of our original club members and valued journalists. Bianca Rodriguez is the oldest student journalist on our team and has played a quintessential role in the growth of the paper by setting a precedent for interviewing community members and sharing the stories of others. Bianca was first published in ACTA GLADIATOR in Volume 1, Issue 1, where she spotlighted North Phoenix Prep's extracurricular choirs through an in-depth interview with Mr. Herrera. Her favorite article is a Teacher Feature she wrote on Mr. Pagani last year. She tells us, "I loved interviewing others to learn their stories. One of my favorite interviews was one I did with Mr. Pagani. He had a very interesting story to share, and I think we all learned so much from his interview." In the past year, Bianca contributed essential perspectives on distance learning and the senior experience that helped guide editorial decisions.

Bianca joined the school community at the beginning of her 10th-grade year. A member of the NPX Chorale, one of her fondest memories as a Gladiator was performing the National Anthem with the choir at a GCU basketball game. She leaves NPX with a sense of accomplishment and reflects on the

obstacles she overcame to get to where she is today. She shares that, "I am very proud that I got through this year. There were times I honestly thought I wasn't going to graduate. And, though there were many things I shouldn't have had to go through to get to this point, I am glad I just barely made it through in the end. I am proud that I finished high school." Bianca will be attending the State University of New York-New Paltz, where she plans to study digital media production. She is especially looking forward to returning with her family to her home state of New York, which she has missed ever since she left.

Bianca, thank you for your contributions to this newspaper! We hope you enjoy New York and find opportunities ahead to unfold and portray the stories of others the way you did for your readers!



Photo courtesy of Bianca Rodriguez.

# Hamlet is Rather Busy

By Scotlyn Mascarelli '22



*A special thank you to the following ACTA GLADIATOR contributors: Kendall Kartler, Ariel Antonini, Sofie Kassem, Scotlyn Mascarelli, Niat Solomon, Maximus Prusinowski, Miranda Waters, Saloni Godse, Sophia Braccio, Ms. Nelson, and Mr. Fleming.*

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