

North Star Youth Partnership Awards Annual Scholarships to Tri-City Area Students
Local Community Partner Honored for Impact on Lives of Youth

Prescott, Ariz. (May 15, 2026): Catholic Charities' North Star Youth Partnership has awarded 15 Prescott-area students with Grant McKee and Robert Caldwell Service & Leadership Scholarships. One student from Bagdad High School, three students from Prescott High School, and 11 students from Tri-City College Prep have been granted a total of \$42,500 in scholarships for higher education.

The program is named in recognition of Grant McKee and his cousin, Robert Caldwell, two of the Prescott Hotshot firefighters who perished in the 2013 Yarnell Fire. This year marks the 12th anniversary of the program. Since 2014, more than \$242,000 in scholarships have been bestowed to 125 recipients, including those from this year.

The scholarships are awarded to students who are graduating from high school or community college and exemplify Robert and Grant's giving spirit. All recipients are participants or group facilitators in the national Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) program, which North Star Youth Partnership launched in 2008 in Yavapai County. A proven national model and evidence-based program, PAL creates a peer-to-peer environment designed to encourage teens by building resiliency and assets through youth leadership, mentoring and community prevention activities. In addition to their years of PAL program participation, all scholarship recipients demonstrate an impressive array of high school activities, projects, and accomplishments.

The scholarships are made possible by Pamela J. Taylor, Cary N. Taylor, Lindsay Taylor, and the Paul and Patricia Taylor Family Foundation, in addition to The American Legion Post 6 - The Sons of the American Legion, and an anonymous donor.

"We are honored to foster the educational advancement of today's youth. The scholarship program gives back to the local community, while continuing the legacy of Grant McKee and Robert Caldwell," said Cary Taylor.

This year's Grant McKee and Robert Caldwell Service & Leadership Scholarship recipients are Ava Logan, Natalie Major, and Liv Norman from Prescott High School, Ciarra Moore from Bagdad High School, as well as Kelsey Bickel, Jaelin Boloron, Sophia Carr, Astrid Dickson, Romana Heath Van Horn, Ashlyn Kille, Leah Kuhn, Ava McQuaid, Audrey Schimberg, Gwyneth Stasko, and Annabelle Williams from Tri-City College Prep.

"We are so grateful for the community support, enabling North Star Youth Partnership to continue to assist students on their educational journey," said Diane DeLong, senior program manager, Catholic Charities' North Star Youth Partnership.

Catholic Charities' North Star Youth Partnership provides support to parents and schools by engaging teens in hands-on learning experiences that promote increased confidence. Programs include community service projects, opportunities to mentor and lead other youth, and exposure to new sports and outdoor recreation, to name a few. Over the past 29 years, North Star Youth Partnership has established a strong network of volunteers and partnerships with schools, youth-serving organizations, and businesses in central and northern Arizona to provide youth with this high-quality programming. Integral to the success of the program, these individuals and partnerships enrich and improve the lives of youth in a myriad of ways, and their dedication makes communities stronger.

In addition to the scholarship program, for the past 19 years, North Star Youth Partnership has presented its annual Community Youth Advocate of the Year Award to recognize the outstanding contributions made by volunteers who positively impact youth. This year's Community Youth Advocate Award has been given to Jennifer Kendall, the lead youth services librarian at the Prescott Public Library. She has been an integral part of the library's youth services department for 16 years, ensuring the highest quality of service for youth

and their families, from introducing favorite books, sparking a love of reading, or mentoring teens in service work. She has a key role in North Star Youth Partnerships PAL tutoring program, Homework Help, which is offered weekly at the library during the school year.

According to DeLong, “I’m proud to present the award this year to Jennifer for the difference she makes every day, connecting young people with books, encouraging curiosity, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.”

For more information about Catholic Charities’ North Star Youth Partnership, visit www.CatholicCharitiesAZ.org.

About Catholic Charities Community Services:

Founded in 1933, Catholic Charities provides care for the vulnerable of all faiths in central and northern Arizona through programs in foster care, early education, affordable housing (Housing for Hope), veteran services, refugee resettlement, and homeless outreach. Learn more by visiting www.catholiccharitiesaz.org. Social connections include www.facebook.com/CatholicCharitiesAZ and [Catholic Charities of Arizona: Overview | LinkedIn](#).