



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Hall of Fame Event Recognizes Community Members Who Demonstrate the Spirit of the Southwest Valley**

(AVONDALE, Ariz. – Oct. 6, 2022) Spirits were high as the community rallied together to celebrate and recognize five individuals and organizations selected by the cities of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, and Litchfield and Agua Fria High Union High School District. Sponsored by the Friends Of Agua Fria Foundation, the high school district hosted its Inaugural Hall Of Fame luncheon on October 5th.

Superintendent Mark Yslas emceed the event that honored police officers, coaches, organizations, and community leaders that positively impacted the lives of others. “Whether it be through bravery, compassion, or dedication,” Yslas remarked, “We have people from different walks of life, we have people from different industries, from different jobs and careers, but we’re all here together to honor and celebrate people that have made a significant contribution to our way of life.”

More than 100 people attended the event including community members, municipal leaders and school district staff.

Cuauhtemoc “Memo” Espinoza, Chief of Police of the City of Avondale, was the first to receive recognition. Chief Espinoza grew up in Avondale and graduated from Agua Fria High School. Serving in the police department for 25 years, it is clear that Espinoza has a deep love for his community.

David Ellison of the Buckeye Police Department, was also recognized for his contributions to the West Valley and was noted as being approachable and trustworthy. Officer Ellison served 10 of his 12 years in the department working at Verrado High School as a school resource officer. In addition to ensuring the safety of students, Ellison also volunteers in the community and speaks in government classes.

Litchfield Elementary School District’s Megan Chavez has made significant contributions to the community through her work as an exceptional needs instructional coach. Chavez, described as “passionate about special education,” has taught for 15 years. Her dedication to improving the lives and learning environments of her students has truly made a positive impact.

Walter “Sonny” M. Culbreth Jr. has been a Litchfield resident for more than 40 years. Due to his employment tenure with the City of Litchfield Park, he has seen his community grow and flourish

for the past 40 years. Coaching swim for 24 years at Agua Fria and Millennium high schools and working for the City of Litchfield for 34 years, it's clear that Culbreth has a passion and love for the community that goes beyond fulfilling his job responsibilities.

Helping One Woman is an organization that makes it a priority for women in the community to receive the help they need after an irreplaceable loss. Since the establishment of the Goodyear chapter in 2019, Helping One Woman has donated more than \$85,000 to 25 women in the community. Through sisterhood, Helping One Woman changes the lives of West Valley women one month at a time.

Superintendent Ysals intends to keep this tradition alive and annually induct other representatives from the community who significantly impact the Southwest Valley.

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*Agua Fria Union High School District was established in 1955. Today, the district serves the communities of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Waddell and part of Glendale with its six high schools: Agua Fria, Canyon View, Desert Edge, Millennium, Verrado and Agua Fria Online. Plus the District offers two alternative programs: Coldwater Academy and New Directions. More information can be found at [aguafria.org](http://aguafria.org)*