



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Tucson's Largest Charter School Celebrates 15 Years of Success**

*All three La Paloma Academy campuses commemorate milestone anniversary*

Tucson, AZ (May 22, 2017) – When La Paloma Academy first opened its doors in 2002, there were 350 students and one location. Today, La Paloma Academy has expanded its reach to three campuses and nearly 2,000 students. This growth makes the schools the largest and fastest growing charter school group in Southern Arizona. With the celebration of its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, La Paloma Academy is also among the longest operating charter schools in Tucson.

La Paloma serves grades K-8 with three convenient Tucson campuses: Central, near Grant and Wilmot; Lakeside, near Golf Links and Pantano; and South, near 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Drexel. Kindergarten classes are capped at 25 students in order to facilitate individualized instruction.

The schools offer a unique cultural atmosphere, emphasizing family values and incorporating the Six Pillars of Character, which focus on trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship to teach students essential life skills. The rigorous curriculum, implemented in the highest performing districts in the state, aligns with Arizona standards, frameworks, and curriculum calendars. La Paloma Academy uses benchmark assessment data to continually monitor students' progress, tracking both learning levels and instructional practices to achieve the highest academic success at every level.

Raena Janes, La Paloma Academy's founder, recalls how her dream of building a solid foundation for every child was realized. "After becoming a mother of twins, I realize we needed something different for students. It became my goal to build a tuition-free charter school system which would be open to the entire community and offer the elements I wanted for my children," says Janes. Based on her past accomplishments and the passion she had for her mission, Janes secured a \$750,000 loan from Bank of America. To supplement that loan, she sold charter school bonds and got private donations, eventually totaling \$13 million. The rest is history.

Raena Janes didn't stop there. As the schools in Tucson began to thrive, she knew other children around the state could benefit. "The success of La Paloma, which is Spanish for *the dove*, inspired me to start Heritage Elementary Schools in Glendale and Williams, and Liberty Traditional Schools in Phoenix and Douglas. All seven campuses provide tuition-free, quality education to any child in the community, and it all started with La Paloma," says Janes.

She has always had a clear vision of La Paloma's educational goals. In addition to focusing on academics and character building, each of the charter schools incorporates community service into the curriculum. Students at all seven schools learn about and contribute to their community through projects including cleaning up the local environment, contributing to seasonal charity drives, and celebrating local military heroes. The projects are all part of the goal to create not only well-educated students, but also well-rounded citizens.

As La Paloma Academy celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the administrators, teachers, and staff would like to thank the parents and families of all its current and former students.

"We are honored that parents have entrusted us with the education of their children. We're also grateful to our neighborhood partners for their constant support and dedication in helping La Paloma students achieve their goals." said Janes. "All of us at La Paloma Academy look forward to the next 15 years and all we can accomplish for the children of Tucson."

**To find out more about La Paloma Academy, please visit [LPATucson.org](http://LPATucson.org) or call (520) 721-4205.**

### **About La Paloma Academy**

As the largest and fastest-growing charter school system in Southern Arizona, La Paloma Academy continually discovers new fun and innovative ways to make the educational experience at each of its campuses entertaining and challenging. In just a few short years, La Paloma experienced unprecedented growth, expanding from one campus in Tucson with 350 students to three campuses with more than 1,800 students. Raena Janes, the founder and charter holder of La Paloma Academy, focuses her efforts on education with individualized instruction, incorporation of extracurricular activities and emphasis on the importance of family and community values. La Paloma Academy was awarded the State of Arizona's 2005 Excellence in Education Award. In addition, Ms. Janes was named as one of Tucson's 40 Under 40 in 2006, Phoenix's 40 Under 40 in 2011 and Tucson's Mentor of the Year in 2008. Visit the school's website at <https://lpatucson.org/>.

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