



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charter Schools Fill Niche for Parents Wanting Character-Based Education

Students learn basics plus skills to make them productive citizens

Tucson, AZ (08/30/12) – In an era when public school budgets and curriculum have been drastically cut to make ends meet, charter school systems are often the schools of choice for parents who want *more* for their children. The Arizona charter school system comprised of **La Paloma Academy, Heritage Elementary School** and **Liberty Traditional Charter School** remains committed to helping develop a well-rounded, healthy student and community member. In addition to learning about math, science, reading, writing, social studies, and the arts, the students at these charter schools learn about the importance of character traits including trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

What do charter schools have to offer?

- Charter schools offer more flexibility and give educators more control over curriculum.
- Parents have an option for where to send children to cultivate their talents and potential.
- Students of all backgrounds and needs become well-rounded academically and productive members of society with strong character traits.
- Students and families are held accountable and work hard to create a strong partnership to ensure parental involvement and student success.
- You get a private school environment, with a low student-teacher ratio, tuition free. Students wear uniforms and get a great, customized education with individualized attention from school staff.

“The bottom line is, when we as educators take time to look beyond the test and keep our eye on the bigger picture – our role in helping to shape and successfully send out into the world multifaceted individuals and contributing community members – we can continue to deliver unique learning opportunities to our students that encourage a healthy mind, body and character,” said Superintendent Raena Janes, who was recently profiled in a Family Circle magazine article, “A School That’s More Than Academics.”

Janes has been an active advocate for Arizona education – and choice in education – for many years, striving to build a solid foundation for every child. She serves as superintendent of three separate charter schools with seven campuses across Arizona: La Paloma Academy, with three campuses in Tucson; Heritage Elementary School, with campuses in Glendale and Williams; and Liberty Traditional Charter School, with campuses in Phoenix and Douglas. Janes received the 2011 Phoenix Business Journal’s 40 Under 40 Award and the 2006 Tucson 40 Under 40 Award, and was named the 2008 Tucson 40 Under 40 Mentor of the Year. Her efforts to turn students

into well-educated, productive citizens of Arizona were recognized at the state level, when she was presented with the State's Excellence in Education Award.

The Arizona State Legislature allowed for charter schools as state-funded public schools in 1994, saying parents should have more freedom to make academic choices for their children's education. Charter schools are contracted to provide tuition-free educational services. Among the legislated requirements, charter schools must adhere to state education standards, including AIMS testing, and follow state budgeting requirements. For more information on Arizona charter schools, go to www.azed.gov/charter-schools.

The largest and fastest-growing of the schools in Janes' charter school system, La Paloma Academy has experienced unprecedented growth since its inception in 2002, opening a second campus in Tucson in 2006 and a third in 2012. La Paloma Academy is now a top Tucson public school and home to more than 1,480 students across the three campuses.

"In addition to focusing on academics and character building, each of our charter schools incorporates community service into the curriculum," Janes said. "Students at our 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 our mission to create not only well-educated students, but well-rounded citizens and members of the community."

Here are a few unsolicited comments from parents with children in these schools on our Facebook pages:

- "La Paloma certainly has made a difference in my children's lives."
- "Heritage teachers and the entire staff care for the safety and education for all of the children who are lucky enough to attend the school. Any problems are recognized and addressed immediately. I am speaking as one parent to another; this is the best school for your child to be attending!"
- "My daughter loves (Liberty Traditional Charter School). It's all she talks about!"

To interview Raena Janes, superintendent of La Paloma Academy, Heritage Elementary School and Liberty Traditional Charter School, please call the contacts listed at the bottom of the press release.

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 superintendent 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 www.lpatucson.org.

About Heritage Elementary School

Heritage Elementary School, founded in 2002, is one of Arizona's fastest-growing charter school systems. The tuition-free, character-based charter school is home to two campuses, one in

Glendale and one in Williams, and serves more than 1,000 students in preschool through eighth grade. Both the Glendale and Williams locations offer bus/van transportation. Students who go to Williams are offered a five-day school week, while traditional schools in the area have been cut back to four days. Raena Janes, an active advocate for Arizona education and charter schools, is the superintendent of Heritage Elementary School. Visit the Glendale school's website at www.hesglendale.org and the Williams school's website at www.heswilliams.org.

About Liberty Traditional Charter School

Liberty Traditional Charter School is a not-for-profit charter school providing an exceptional educational environment that focuses on incredible academics, community involvement and family values. Our campus in Phoenix, Arizona operates out of two buildings: 45th Avenue building is home to first through eighth grades, while kindergarten classes are located just down the street on West Indian School Road. The second and newest campus recently opened in Douglas for grades K-5. Visit the Phoenix school's website at www.ltsphoenix.org and the Douglas school's website at www.ltsdouglas.org.

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