

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 30, 2008

Arizona's Teacher of the Year to Welcome Back Kyrene

Teachers in the Kyrene Elementary School District return on August 4 and this year all staff are being welcomed back to work with an inspirational kickoff, thanks to the generosity of the Arizona Grand Resort. The early Tuesday morning session will allow teachers and staff members to be appreciated by Superintendent, Dr. David Schauer and then challenged by *Arizona's Teacher of the Year*, Sarah Baird, who is a math coach at two Kyrene elementary schools.

As news stories are focusing on education budget woes and teacher cutbacks, Kyrene staff will be focusing on the future...and becoming energized about the unique opportunities today's climate offers to schools and the children in them. Ms. Baird, recognized last November as the top teacher in the state, has a unique message that will help educators visualize possibilities for meeting challenges that lie ahead. The event will set the stage for enhancing Kyrene's results and reputation even as our nation and community undergo incredible change. Parents and children will benefit from educators who are excited to get back to work and give children the excellent education Kyrene is known for.

After the event, most teachers will spend the majority of their first day back at work engaged in learning opportunities and planning for the arrival of students and families on August 5th and 6th during "Meet the Teacher" night. The concepts presented during this Back to School event will continue to be explored throughout the school year as Kyrene challenges each teacher "...to provide continuous academic achievement and personal growth for every student" as stated in the district's mission.

The Kyrene Elementary school district, with an instructional and support staff of nearly 1,800, currently has no facility large enough to accommodate a full staff meeting. The nearby Arizona Grand Resort generously offered the use of their pavilion at no cost for the Back to School event as part of a district/business partnership.

"We are very committed to giving back to our community and especially children with Arizona Grand Children's Charities," stated managing director Richard Behr. "It is events like this that contribute to teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm that in turn helps children learn. We are happy to offer our pavilion conference space for the Kyrene Elementary School district."

More on Sarah Baird, Arizona Education Foundation Teacher of the Year. This has been a year of incredible opportunities for Ms. Baird. She has shared and learned from teachers in every other state, she has been to Washington D.C. and met both the President and Vice President. This summer she attended Space Camp in Huntington, Alabama. Interviews will be available with Ms. Baird immediately following her keynote address.

The Kyrene Elementary School District is an excelling district serving more than 18,000 students in kindergarten through eighth grades at 25 schools. The District's boundaries encompass parts of Tempe, Guadalupe, Ahwatukee, Chandler and the Gila River Indian Reservation. Kyrene accepts students who do not live within District boundaries through its Open Enrollment Program. To learn more about the Kyrene School District, visit www.kyrene.org or call 480/783-4000.

The Arizona Grand Resort is located at the base of the South Mountain Preserve, boasts 640 residential-style suites, 100 Villas accommodations and recently completed a \$52 million renovation to enhance the property including all guest suites, main lobby, spa, golf course, and restaurants. Arizona Grand Resort offers 117,000 square feet of meeting and function space, including the 20,000 square-foot exhibit pavilion.