

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Importance of Building Strong Relationships is the Focus of San Tan Charter School's Annual Back to School Speakers Event

Teachers Gathered in a Safe and Socially Distanced Way in the School's Large Gymnasium to Hear a Number of Inspirational Speakers Who Focused on the Essentialness of Relationship Building

GILBERT, Arizona—Ever since San Tan Charter School first opened 14 years ago, providing teachers and staff with a Back to School Speakers event has been a key part of launching the new school year.

Recently, teachers and staff gathered in the large gym at San Tan Charter School in Gilbert for the annual Back to School Speakers event. To keep everyone as safe as possible, social distancing precautions were in full effect, everyone present wore a mask and there was only one day of in-person teacher training and professional development instead of the usual three; all other meetings and trainings were conducted via Google Meet, pre-recorded trainings and/or other virtual meetings.

As Kris Sippel, CEO and Superintendent of Schools noted, relationship building was the theme of this year's event, with the speakers focusing on socio-emotional connection and considerations.

“Since our inception as a school community, we have wanted to be known as a school that inspires, encourages and supports people in being and doing their best,” Sippel said, adding that during his speech, he presented a COVID-19 timeline and what teachers and staff could expect this year and next.



“I also asked for continued grace and flexibility that is needed for these challenging times.”

Alisa M. Johnson, a second-grade gifted teacher at San Tan Charter School also spoke during the event. Johnson, who is starting her eighth year at the school, presented a speech titled “Social Justice, a More Perfect Union.”

“We talked about ideas and concepts that can prevent us from going after the students in our class that are not keeping in step with the majority of the students, be it academically, behaviors, special needs, etcetera. Biases, particularly teacher bias is real and can be explicit as well as implicit,” Johnson said.

“We ended our discussion with the charge that in the middle of COVID and having to rethink how we deliver education, this could be the very catalyst for change to become culturally responsive teachers.”

Kami and Larry Kerby, a husband and wife team who specialize in helping parents and teachers thrive with children through their company, Kerby Seminar Group, also spoke at the Back to School Speakers event.

The Kerbys discussed “9 Essential Skills for the Love and Logic Classroom” with the San Tan teachers and staff. As Kami noted, the philosophy of this curriculum is deeply supported by the school’s values.

“The teachers and staff re-committed to lead and manage their classrooms with love and empathy,” Kami said.

“They left with a connection plan to implement because they know powerful relationships are critical in creating an environment where students want to learn.”

Adam Lee Brooks from Drive to Save Lives also spoke, encouraging teachers and staff to remember that everyone has the need for connection and belonging.

Sippel said he and the other presenters finished the Back to School Speakers event feeling positive and inspired to start the new school year.

“We also received a great deal of positive feedback from the teachers that focused on their appreciation for spending this time with them and providing such valuable, helpful, inspiring and encouraging information,” he said.

*****ADDITIONAL PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST*****For more information about San Tan Charter School’s Back to School Speakers events, and to speak with any of the presenters, and/or teachers and staff who attended, please contact Kris Sippel at 480-222-0811.

About San Tan Charter School:

San Tan Charter School is a Kinder-12th grade public non-profit tuition free charter school with two campuses in the East Valley within minutes of each other. The Power campus is a Junior High/High School serving students in grades 7-12 and the Recker campus is an elementary school serving students K-6 including a private Montessori preschool infant, toddler, and PreK. The school uses a Love and Logic® approach to classroom management that is focused on building relationships and communicating with respect. The school focuses on “Education with a Purpose,” which means the teachers encourage their students’ love of learning, which enables them to face challenges and develop critical thinking skills. San Tan Charter School also offers a championship athletics experience, individualized learning plans, and college and career ready programs. The school is focused on maximizing each student’s intellectual development with Gifted & Montessori classrooms, Honors/AP classes, Concurrent/Dual Enrollment classes and robust elective choices including career and technical education (CTE). For more information, please visit <https://santancharterschool.com/>