

ROUGHRIDERS NEWSLETTER  
SEPTEMBER 2022



# YOUNGKER HIGH SCHOOL

*Home of the Roughriders*



[www.yhs.buhsd.org](http://www.yhs.buhsd.org)

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 YoungkerHS

 @yhsroughriders

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

DR. MIKE SIVERTSON



Hello Youngker High School parents and guardians. My name is Mike Sivertson and I am honored to be the principal of Youngker High School. We are excited to begin the 2022-2023 school year and are committed to communicating with you regarding all of the amazing things that are going to happen throughout the school year at YHS.

It's hard to believe, but we are already into our 4th week of school and feel that we are off to an excellent start to the new school year. We are perpetually focused on student learning and are very proud of the feeling of positivity that permeates daily on our campus. It is truly a vibrant and dynamic learning environment. We are very proud of your faculty, students, and staff's daily contributions to our amazing learning environment.

Additionally, we are also committed to personifying and exemplifying the core values of the Youngker Way. The core values of the Youngker Way are: Innovation, Diversity, Character, Community, Pride, and Communication. Our Student Council students have created a mission statement that is founded in the core values of the Youngker Way. The mission, as defined by our students is, "As Roughriders, we take Pride in our Community and our Character by celebrating Diversity, encouraging Innovation, and promoting Communication."

As we proceed forward with the new school year, please encourage your student to consider becoming involved with our clubs, activities, and extracurriculars here on campus. Research supports that students that are engaged in activities outside of the traditional classroom demonstrate higher levels of academic success when they participate in clubs and activities. Youngker High School provides a robust number of extra-curricular, co-curricular, and activity clubs for students grades 9-12. We invite you to encourage your student to get involved.

We look forward to a continued partnership with you as we work toward providing an amazing learning experience for your student at YHS. Please be proactive in engaging with your student's teachers throughout the school year. Their emails are located on our website. Our teachers welcome your support and partnership, as we move forward together as an educational community.

We hope to see you on campus supporting our YHS students as we begin the fall sports and activities season. We welcome you to campus for what we know will be some amazing outside of the classroom events and activities.

Remember, Youngker High School is the place to be!!

Go Roughriders!!

Sincerely,

*Michael Sivertson*

Principal

# MEET OUR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF ACADEMICS

## MRS. TEMAKO ROQUE GARDNER



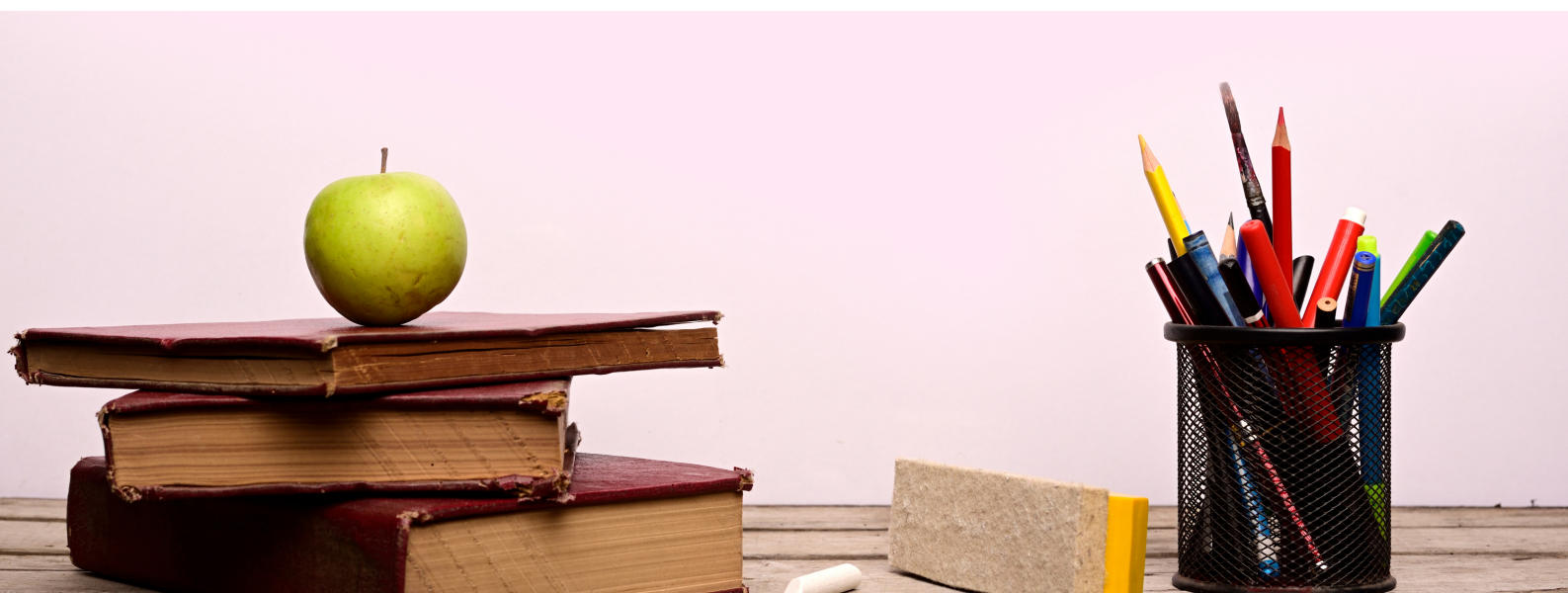
My name is Temako J. Roque Gardner and I am thrilled to be part of Youngker High School and the Youngker Way. This is my first year at Youngker High School and I am honored to have the opportunity to work on a campus with a rich tradition of a commitment to excellence in education and school pride. What a wonderful chance I have to learn from the amazing educators, staff and students.

On a professional note, I have been dedicated to the field of education in the Phoenix Metro area for 28 years having served in multiple capacities, including 4th grade and junior high reading and Social Studies teacher, K - 8 assistant principal, Pre-K -3 and K-8 grade school principal, and K-8 outreach coordinator. Most recently, I served for two (2) years as an Assistant Principal of Academics in Tempe Union High School District. I have a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Secondary Education with a middle school emphasis, a graduate degree in Educational Leadership, Arizona administrative certification, an Educational Specialist degree in Leadership, and a full SEI endorsement.

In my role as Assistant Principal of Academics at YHS, I support the school by overseeing registration, student enrollment, counseling, professional development, evaluation of faculty and staff, and other duties. It is my belief that every student deserves a high quality education. You will find that YHS provides a wide array of curricular opportunities on campus. Through educationally rich opportunities, our students become college and career ready. We offer a variety of academic options for all grade levels. These include: Advanced Placement (AP) courses, honors courses, vocational courses (CTE & West-MEC), and dual enrollment courses through the Maricopa County Community Colleges.

I wholeheartedly believe that it is paramount for the student, family and school to work together to ensure our students are not only succeeding in school but maturing and growing into productive members of our school community and vastly changing society as a whole. I encourage you to cultivate a partnership with us during your student's secondary experience. I am looking forward to seeing what successes this year holds for our students and staff.

And as always, Go Roughriders!



# MEET OUR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL/ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

MS. TONYA LEE



Hello Roughrider Families!

I am Tonya Lee your Assistant Principal over Athletics, Clubs, and Operations. This is my second year here at Youngker and I am excited to say that I am impressed by our students more and more every day. Our students here genuinely care about each other and strive to be better in and out of the classroom. I am seeing growth in campus involvement with our clubs and teams, an increase in our GPA's when I run our grade checks for our student athletes, as well as a desire to compete and dominate in our sports teams. Thanks to our Gear up team Mrs. El Habach and Mrs. Taylor, our Juniors and Seniors have already started to work on applying for colleges and universities and a multitude of different scholarships. We are so excited to see what schools our students decide to go to! It is truly inspiring to be surrounded by a staff that wants the best for every student and our amazing students who truly care about their own futures.

Our fall sports are off to an amazing start this year. Our cheer, pom, badminton, swim, cross country, boys and girls golf, and volleyball are already facing some tough competition in our new 5A conference. Football is still in the 4A conference, but we are playing teams from 3A, 4A, 5A, as well as 6A to get the best competition. We are so proud of our Student Athletes as well as our coaching staff this year as they tackle this year's Character Matters curriculum, where we do a deep dive into a character quality each week. Then at the end of the week, the team and coaches vote on the MVP of the week and the team celebrates that Student Athlete on social media. Keep a look out! We already have had some amazing Student Athletes represented.

I am sure you have also noticed that there is a lot of movement/construction around our campus lately. We are currently repairing the roof to our Administration building after a monsoon microburst as well as repairing 3 sets of stairs around campus. Starting October 3rd our auxiliary gym will be under construction for 9 months to build 12 more classrooms to help support our own booming school community. We will have to re-route SOME of our parking traffic flow in our student parking lot, but it should have minimal impact on drop off and pick up.

There are some amazing things happening around here at Youngker and I am grateful to be a part of it every day! Hope to see you out there at our next game!

GO ROUGRIDERS!



# MEET OUR ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF STUDENT SERVICES

MR. KELLY EPLEY



My name is Kelly Epley and I was born in Butte, Montana. My family moved to Phoenix when I was one year old, so I consider myself a native of Arizona. I grew up in Glendale riding horses, taking care of various animals, and was very involved in 4-H. I graduated from Greenway High School and attended both Glendale Community College and Ottawa University in Ottawa Kansas University on a football scholarship. I finished my college career graduating from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Science in General Business. After trying my hand at business management and owning my own business, I received my Post-Baccalaureate in Education in 1992. I acquired my first teaching job at my alma mater, Greenway High School and have been in education ever since.

I have taught and coached at various schools throughout my career including Greenway High School, Glendale High School, San Carlos High School, Thunder Mountain Middle School, Independence High School, Agua Fria High School, Desert Edge High School, and my current school, Youngker High School. My experience includes coaching football, wrestling, and track and teaching General Business, Computer Applications, a project-based technology lab class, PE-Health, Consumer Math, Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Algebra 2-Applications, Statistics and College Algebra. I also coached football at Glendale Community College in the early 90's, and the 2010's.

This is my eighth year at Youngker High School and my third as the Assistant Principal in charge of Student Services. I oversee state testing, student-achievement data, remediation, campus safety and discipline when needed. I take these responsibilities very seriously and understand the vital importance it holds in helping Youngker High School run productively, efficiently, and most importantly, safely. I intend to do everything I can to ensure Youngker High School is BUHSD's next A-School and our students have a positive and productive experience full of happy memories.

Go Roughriders!

# MEET OUR DEAN OF STUDENTS

## MRS. JACKIE GARCIA



Hello,

My name is Jackie Garcia and I am the Dean of Students here at Youngker High School. I have been a PE teacher for a total of 17 years, 8 of those years being here at YHS. I am a native of Arizona, grew up in Avondale, attended Agua Fria High School and played multiple sports growing up. As a result of those experiences, I developed a love for softball that helped me receive a scholarship to play at the collegiate level. Because sports have been my passion since I was young, they have been the driving force that led me to be a physical education teacher and coach. Recently, I have transitioned into the role of Dean of Students here on campus and I am very excited to work with students in a different capacity.

As the Dean of students, an important part of my responsibilities is to provide support for students regarding attendance as well as address student behavior. We have many resources here at Youngker that can help students develop important lifelong skills such as time management, accountability, and communication. My goal is to provide strategies to redirect behavior and promote healthy conversations to help them learn to be successful in and out of the classroom.

Throughout the school year, I will make it my mission to take a negative situation and turn it into a valuable learning lesson with a positive outcome that promotes accountability, growth, and confidence. The transition into high school and the lessons throughout are extremely important, and an experience I hope they will remember for many years after. The pillars that drive our culture of excellence will help our students embrace life after high school with confidence.

I appreciate all the support I have received from our community, and I am looking forward to having a great school year.

Go Roughriders!!



# YOUNGKER HS COUNSELING TEAM



Your YHS counseling team of 4 have been hard at work supporting over 2,100 students this school year. Celeste Taylor, Deb Jackson, Teresa Cabrera, and Spencer Meyer have worked to attend to the academic, socio-emotional, and post-graduate planning needs for our Roughrider scholars. The Gear Up team, consisting of Denise El Habach and Christina Taylor, hosts several events/workshops during and after school to support students in planning for their post-secondary goals. Gear Up and counseling involve families in the planning process through hosting events such as Senior Family Night, FAFSA Workshops, and Coffee with Coaches. In the first two months of this fall semester, counselors and gear up coaches were able to meet with each grade level in their classes to discuss graduation requirements, upcoming opportunities, advise about post-high school options, and administer a post-secondary planning session (PEPS) to plan for the counseling and gear up calendar of events. The YHS Gear Up coaches and school counselors are excited to provide more opportunities to our students and continue to support while in high school and after high school goals.

## CLASS OF 2023

Good morning parents and guardians of Youngker High School! My name is Naya Rodriguez and I am this year's student body president. The past 4 school years have been a quite ride for the class of 2023, and our student body would love to keep that up! In the past our school has prioritized creating a safe academically driven environment, capable of producing positive students and staff. This year we would like to continue that journey alongside our new initiative, campus involvement.

Our school provides the student body with tons of amazing opportunities to get involved! From sport to Student Council, to Magic the Gathering, and Japanese Culture Club. Every student every day can find a place and group to help better their high school experience.

Our mission statement, "As roughrider we take pride in our community and our character by celebrating diversity, encouraging innovation and promoting communications."

This new initiative will help us build on our mission statement to increase involvement in extracurricular, co-curricular, and activities around campus. We look forward to our continued partnership and hope to see you and the student body getting involved for the 22-23 school year!

Thank you and GO RIDERS!  
Naya Rodriguez



# SOCIAL STUDIES SPOTLIGHT



BY: REBECCA WEST



Many people associate the Social Studies Department with being solely a history department, while that may be the largest subject area, it is not the only subject. Youngker High School offers 2 additional courses in the social studies arena: Psychology and Sociology. Both are taught by Mrs. West, who is also an English teacher. Educationally, Mrs. West holds a Master's Degree in Psychology and an Education Specialist Degree. Additionally, she is Guidance Counselor and CTE certified

## PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is taught at the college level and offers a dual-enrollment credit; however, students not using the dual-enrollment can take it too. In this class, students learn about the workings of the human mind but also how and why people behave the way they do. Also, in this class, students explore the varying aspects of their personality and how it has developed over the course of their life.

## SOCIOLOGY

In Sociology, students learn about the various societies throughout time and how those societies have evolved and become what they know today. Additionally, in Sociology, they cover topics from self through world economics. Both classes are offered on campus and provide an environment whereby critical thinking is inspired and encouraged.

## WORLD HISTORY

## US HISTORY

## GOV/ECON

The inspiration and encouragement don't stop there. These 2 subjects tie in very well to our World History, US History, and Gov/Econ classes where critically thinking is a must. Through our 2 history departments students work through the various successes and conflicts of humanity. They delve into the progress society has made and look at the behaviors that led to them. For example, students are currently learning about Exploration and Interregional Interactions and the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment, which all deal with the interaction of people. In US History, students are learning about Westward Expansion and the Civil War and Reconstruction. They discuss the beliefs and politics that played a role in who we became as a country, thus fostering the students' minds to evaluate and analyze important turning points in history. In GOV/Econ, students are learning about the Branches of the American Government. The students are asked various questions about what each role serves in our government and how each creates a balance. Through these 5 expanded subject areas, Social Studies brings a form of citizenship and innovation to Youngker High School.



# SEPTEMBER RECOGNITIONS

## YOUNGKER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



JILL  
BRUNSCH



KOURTNEY  
KRIEBEL



CELESTE  
TAYLOR



KARA  
THOMPSON

## STUDENTS OF THE MONTH



Congratulations  
to our September  
Students of the  
Month at  
Youngker High  
School!



JOSHUA BUNNELL

Future Ready SOM



PAYTON MACIAS

CTE SOM

# Teacher Spotlight

Mrs. Christina Chadwick



Hello Roughrider Community!

My name is Christina Chadwick, and I am an English teacher, the Junior Class Student Council Advisor, and a volleyball coach here at Youngker HS. I started my teaching career way back in 2006 at Agua Fria High School, in Avondale, where I taught all-levels of English, served as a department chair, and coached volleyball over the 11 years I was there. I made the move to Youngker for the 2016-2017 school year to teach English. If you add it all up, I am in my 17th year of teaching.

From the time I was young, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. My grandpa was a Math teacher at Alhambra High School and my aunt works as a Speech Therapist in the Peoria Unified District, so the educational profession was celebrated in my family. Couple that family culture with my love of helping others and it just seemed to be the right step for me. It wasn't until I met my 7th grade English teacher, Dr. Judith Uselmann, that I started to think that maybe I could be an English teacher. Dr. Uselmann instilled in me a love of reading and writing and then encouraged me to help others in the class when they were struggling with a concept that came easily to me. She saw the potential in me, partnered with my desire to help others, and really solidified my future path.

I graduated from my alma mater, Grace Christian School, in 2001 and spent the next 2 years receiving my Associates Degree in General Studies from Glendale Community College before transferring to Northern Arizona University in 2003 to pursue my teaching degree. I graduated cum laude from Northern Arizona University in the Fall of 2005 earning my Bachelor of Science in Education degree with an extended English major. I spent 1 semester working at a charter school as a long-term substitute and got married to my husband, Colin, before being hired at Agua Fria for the 2006-2007 school year.

While at Agua Fria HS, I was able to combine my 2 loves—teaching and volleyball, when I was hired on as the Freshman volleyball coach. Working outside the classroom with students allowed me to see a different side to students and I realized how important it is for teachers to be involved on campus. I coached volleyball—Freshman, JV, and as a Varsity statistician—for a combined 9 years. I worked every home basketball game as the scoreboard operator, I attended the school plays, choir/band concerts, and chaperoned dances. I joined multiple committees to help better the overall culture of the school and even served as a department chair for a total of 5 years. During that time, I had my daughter, Charlotte (8 years old), and my son, Iain (5 years old), and they were a game-changer for me. I always strived to be the best version of myself each day at work but thinking about what I would do for my own kids if they were in my classroom took my teaching to a whole different level.

I soon realized that I wanted to work somewhere closer to my home so that I had more time with my family. For that reason, I made the move to Youngker HS so I could do what I loved to do—teach English, while still having quality time with my own children. I swore I would just teach and avoid all the other commitments, but work wasn't the same. I realized that to better know my students and the community I was serving, I needed to be involved outside of the classroom; I couldn't ignore that component to my job. It seemed only natural when I was asked to serve as the Junior Class Advisor for the 2017-2018 school year, that I should agree to be the advisor and work with these students to put on events, build school culture, and develop their leadership skills. Working as the advisor to these amazing students has helped me grow in ways I didn't realize I needed to grow. Our students at Youngker are absolutely incredible: they are creative, they are driven, they are supportive, and they are caring. Seeing these attributes in my Student Council students helped me approach my classroom teaching with a fresh perspective. Then, came the call to join the world of coaching at the end of last school year. Both of my children started school and that freed up my after-school time to jump back into the world of coaching volleyball. Working with student-athletes is a fun way to teach outside of my content. Instead of teaching English, I get to teach these athletes had to grow on and off the court.

As an educator, I strive to create students who can think critically, communicate clearly, and argue effectively. Each day in my classroom, I try to teach one, if not all 3 of these skills. English isn't just about reading novels and writing essays, in my opinion. Those materials are what we use to help students make connections with their own thoughts, their own world, and the world at large. In my classroom, you will see students engaging with a text in various ways: we read it, we annotate it, we draw connections to other texts or real-world events, we discuss it, and we write about it.

I love working at Youngker HS for so many reasons, but it boils down to the incredible students we serve and the supportive staff I work alongside each day. I am honored to work with your student(s) and I thank you for putting your trust in me. I promise that I am doing my best to uphold The Youngker Way in all that I do, in and out of the classroom.