



For Immediate Release: October 27, 2009
Office of the Associate to the Superintendent

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Oro Valley Elementary to celebrate “Adopted” Marines Homecoming

Tucson, AZ - Like many of their high school counterparts, the students at Copper Creek Elementary are celebrating a homecoming of their own this season-not for a football team, but for a member of the armed forces. Last year, Marine Sgt. Andrew Valora and his squad were “adopted” by Lynne Thatcher’s 2nd grade class at Copper Creek and subsequently received 10 care packages while they were on tours of duty in the Middle East. In addition to the usual food and toiletries that comprise standard military care packages, Thatcher’s class sent letters, photographs and drawings from the students as well as a videotape of them singing patriotic songs.

When word got back to Copper Creek that Valora was returning to Tucson from his 6th tour of duty, students, parents and staff joined together to create a homecoming event at the school for their soldier and friend. The festivities are slated to begin at 12:30 PM Wednesday, October 28th. Members of the media are invited to Copper Creek to attend the event that will feature student performances, remarks and treats from local businesses.

In addition to the support from Copper Creek parents and staff, several community members and organizations are contributing to the affair. The cupcakes are courtesy of Mini’s Cupcakes at La Encantada, the smoothies will be provided by Keva Juice of Oro Valley, decorations have been donated by New England Financial, and the revelers will enjoy the live musical stylings of national recording artists Les Baxter and the Factor.

“This is a truly unique and treasured experience for our school. What began as a simple service project quickly became a passion for many here at Copper Creek and Sgt. Valora’s visit should prove to be even more inspirational for all of our service-minded students,” said Dianna Walker, Principal, Copper Creek Elementary School.

Sgt. Valora grew up in Tucson and joined the Marines in December of 2003. He is currently assigned to Marine Wing Support Squadron 371, the “Sand Sharks”, out of Yuma, AZ as fire/rescue personnel. The Sand Sharks have reportedly gone down in the history books as having laid the second largest manmade landing strip ever during war time. Andrew returned home Oct. 6, 2009 and is slated to return back to Yuma after his leave is up this weekend.

Copper Creek, which has named an “Excelling” school since 2006 under the AZ LEARNS system, is one of the 11 elementary schools that comprise the Amphitheater School District. The Amphi District serves over 15,000 students in Northwest Tucson and Oro Valley. Copper Creek Elementary School is located at 1162 N Copper Spring Trail in Oro Valley.

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