

GLENDALE TODAY

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**INDEPENDENT
NEWSMEDIA**
Celebrating & Connecting Our Community

VETERANS



Brig. Gen. Brook Leonard, 56th Fighter Wing commander, and West Valley community members cut the ribbon signifying the grand opening of the Military and Veteran Success Center at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Nov. 9. The MVSC, managed by Kelly Mills, right of Mr. Leonard, is a community-supported, case-managed, holistic support center for transitioning service members, veterans and their dependents. [Submitted photo]

New veterans center at Luke AFB opens its doors

By Mark Carlisle
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Arizona veterans and active military service members now have a new resource to help them transition to life after the military as the Military and Veterans Success Center at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale officially opened Nov. 9.

By compiling a myriad of local resources available to veterans, the center strives to help current and former service members with a wide range of services, including employment, education, family, social support, physical health, housing, mental health, substance abuse, finances, benefit information,

legal help and spirituality.

"We want to welcome any individual in the community, and their dependents as well, to the center," said Kelly Mills, Military and Veterans Success Center manager. "If there's something that maybe they're looking for and they don't know what it is, come on by, and we'll help them figure that out."

The building, at the southeast corner of Litchfield Road and North Commissary Road, which was formerly Luke AFB's Visitors Center, is a property of Luke AFB, but the center is operated by Rio Salado College, part of the Maricopa Community College system.

Maricopa Community Colleges presented the center with a check for \$963,900 during the Nov. 9 opening ceremonies.

Rio Salado's main campus is in Tempe, but its Luke AFB campus is in the parking lot just south of the Military and Veterans Success Center. Rio Salado has 15 locations across the Valley.

The center's staff is calling the center the nation's first community-supported, case-managed, holistic support center for transitioning military, veterans and their dependents.

Maricopa County Supervisor Clint Hickman, who spoke at the center's opening

said a big part of the center's value comes from its proximity to Luke AFB.

"This veteran center is growing out of the Maricopa County Community College District and Foundation to have an anchor there close to Luke Air Force Base where a lot of these active duty people are going to transition into private life," he said.

Ms. Mills also said much of the center's focus will be on helping veterans and service members transition from military life to civilian life. She and Vernon Gibson, a success coach at the center and a veteran, said because military life is so structured, it

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SHOPPING Black Friday brings out shoppers – and thieves

By Mark Carlisle
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

As Thanksgiving comes to a close, Black Friday marks the official start of the holiday shopping season. However, with these high-volume crowds come high volumes of theft.

Glendale's major shopping centers saw stark rises in larceny, or the unlawful taking of another's property, over Black Friday weekend in 2016. Glendale Police Department and shopping center security teams are working to protect shoppers from theft this year, though there are precautions shoppers can take as well.

"We want to make sure that we're doing everything that we can as a police department to keep our citizens and visitors to our city safe," said Sgt. Scott Waite of GPD. "And so that's why we take the extra time and extra resources to put in those high traffic areas."

GPD will send officers to Glendale's main shopping centers – Arrowhead Towne Center, Westgate Entertainment District and the adjacent Tanger Outlets and Cabela's – to provide extra security throughout the holiday season, beginning on Thanksgiving, Mr. Waite said. Additionally, many large retail stores will hire off-duty GPD officers to

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NEWS BRIEFS

Abrazo to host free seminar about robotic tech, back pain

Abrazo Arrowhead Campus, 18701 N. 67th Ave., is presenting a free orthopedic seminar about how to manage lower back pain 6-7 p.m. Wednesday Nov. 29 in the hospital's Sierra Room.

Participants will learn about conservative treatments and therapies to help manage lower back pain caused by arthritis, degenerative disc disease and stenosis. They will also learn when it is time to reach out to a physician for back surgery, its benefits, risks and expected outcomes. The Renaissance System, the latest robotic technology for minimally invasive spinal treatment, will also be discussed. Board-certified orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Harvinder Bedi, who uses the Renaissance System at Abrazo Arrowhead Campus, will answer questions.

A free hot/cold pack will be distributed to participants as supplies last. For more information and registration, call 833-203-7524 or go to AbrazoHealth.com/BackPain.

Get ready for Glendale Glitters

Glendale's award-winning holiday lighting event kicks off at 5-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday Nov. 24-25 in downtown Glendale.

Glendale Glitters, which has become a family tradition across the Valley and Arizona, features the stunning display of 1.6 million LED lights, which will illuminate sixteen blocks of Historic Downtown Glendale, making it the largest free holiday light display in Arizona.

The Countdown to Glendale Glitters Show

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Community

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SURGERY

Abrazo robot helps perform spinal surgery

Smart-phone-sized device gives 80-year-old her mobility back

With the help of a small, robotic device at the Abrazo Arrowhead Campus in Glendale, a local spine surgeon was able to treat the chronic back pain of an 80-year-old Glendale realtor and give her her mobility back.

Bev Wilson and Harvinder Bedi, M.D., posed for photos with the Renaissance Guidance System that assisted Dr. Bedi with the surgery, at the Abrazo Arrowhead Campus Thursday, Nov. 16.

After eight decades of meeting and beating life's challenges – including polio – Bev Wilson was not about to accept there was nothing but more pain medications to ease her crippling back pain.

"It had been coming on for years and reached the point it was constant, like



Bev Wilson, left, and Harvinder Bedi, M.D., pose for a photo with the Renaissance Guidance System at the Abrazo Arrowhead Campus, Thursday, Nov. 16. With the assistance of the robotic device, Dr. Bedi performed surgery on Ms. Wilson in December to alleviate her chronic back pain. [Bette Sharpe/Special to Independent Newsmedia]

a bad headache," she said. "It became excruciating if I bent down or turned my body to do the most mundane things."

Shopping was almost un-

bearable, and she had to hire someone to clean her home.

"I couldn't stand or sit for extended periods of time," she said. "I couldn't even play cards with friends."

But Ms. Wilson would not give up.

"I had done a lot of research. I knew there had to be a way to fix my problems," she said.

She had degenerative vertebral collapse, severe disc degeneration, post-laminectomy syndrome and scoliosis. She asked her doctor for a referral to a spine surgeon, but the surgeon turned her down.

Then her positive attitude, mental strength and determination kicked in. She said she would not go down without a fight. Because of her family health history, Ms. Wilson knew the odds were she had a lot longer to live, and she did not want to exist for years in pain or in an opiate stupor with limited abilities. She asked for another referral.

Harvinder Bedi, M.D., agreed to do Ms. Wilson's surgery, but only at Abrazo Arrowhead Campus, at the corner of 67th Avenue and Union Hills Drive in Glendale, the first hospital in Ar-

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OUTREACH

Glendale Park Rangers recruit four-legged friend for community outreach

By Kimberly Larson
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The old adage says that dog is man's best friend. Glendale Parks & Recreation staff asked: What if a dog could be not just one person's companion, but a best friend to an entire community? Glendale's Park Rangers are in the process of implementing what is likely the first K9 community outreach program for a Parks and Recreation agency.

This furry, four-legged, innovative outreach tool named "Ranger," will be part

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ASSAULT

12-year-old assaulted in Glendale

By Chris Caraveo
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Glendale police announced a 12-year-old girl was sexually assaulted last month, and authorities are seeking the public's help in identifying the suspect.

Police said in October, the girl was in the area of 54th Avenue and Camelback Road when a male, now described as a black male between 20

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Composite sketch of sex assault suspect [Glendale Police]

CHALLENGER

Challenger Space Center Mural gifted to PUSD

By Bette Sharpe
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Executive Director at Arizona Challenger Space Center Beverly Swayman presented Robert McCall's last 360-degree mural, "Tour of the Universe," to the Peoria Unified School District Thursday, Nov. 9, at the district's regularly scheduled board meeting. The mural has a conserva-

tive value of \$250,000.

The building, at 21170 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria, is the former home of the Arizona Challenger Space Center, before PUSD took ownership of it in October. It allowed visitors to stand in the rotunda and gaze in wonder at the four-story high mural by Mr. McCall, a renowned space painter and illustrator.

Mr. McCall's masterpiece is a 360-degree mural that uses 27,000 square feet of canvas took six months to install.

"The board of directors and management team of the Challenger Space Center of Arizona are pleased that the legacy of Robert McCall will be preserved for generations to

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News Briefs

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starts at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 24th and at 6 p.m. Glendale's mayor and councilmembers light up downtown for the first time this season.

The display remains lit nightly through Jan. 6, 2018, 5-11 p.m. each evening. The Glendale Glitters Spectacular Weekend event will take place only from 5-10 p.m. Nov. 24-25.

Historic Downtown Glendale is located at 58th and Glendale avenues.

Glitters parking

Thousands of people will flood into downtown Glendale for the festivities during Glendale Glitters Spectacular Weekend 5-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday Nov. 24-25.

Those looking to avoid the hassle of hunting for a place to park can pay for preferred parking at either the parking garage located next to city hall, at 59th Avenue and Glenn Drive, or the garage next to Bank of America, at 58th Drive and Palmyra Avenue.

Another option will be a free shuttle operating

only for the Glendale Glitters weekend will transport passengers from Glendale Community College, 6000 W. Olive Ave., to downtown.

Marines Toys for Tots Ride ends in Glendale

The annual Marines Toys for Tots motorcycle ride will finish at Lucie's Sage & Sand Grill in Glendale, with bikes getting in by 4 p.m.

The restaurant, at Litchfield Road and Glendale Avenue near Luke Air Force Base, will host the end par-

ty for the ride that will depart from Harley-Davidson of Scottsdale, with all riders departing by 11:15 a.m., and aims to collect two-semi trucks full of new toy donations and \$15,000 in donations.

The cost for the ride is \$15 with a toy donation and \$20 without. Donations to Toys for Tots can also be accepted through Nov. 25 at Lucie's Sage & Sand Grill, ATA Taekwondo, 6740 W. Deer Valley Road or Arizona School of Real Estate & Business, 18185 N. 83rd Ave.

To register for the ride,

visit cutranoaztrooprun.org/events.

Westgate offering free horse-drawn carriage rides

Shoppers at the Westgate Sports and Entertainment District can kick off the holiday season with a retro ride.

The shopping center is offering free horse-drawn carriage rides Friday, Nov. 24 and Saturday Nov. 25.

The carriage pick-up and drop-off destination will be

in front of AMC Theatres.

Independent to close office for holiday

Independent Newsmedia's Sun City office, 17220 N. Boswell Blvd., will be closed Thursday, Nov. 23 and Friday, Nov. 24 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

The editorial deadline for the Nov. 29 edition of the weekly newspapers will be changed to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21 and the advertising deadline for that edition will also be changed to noon Wednesday, Nov. 22.

Surgery

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izona to use the Renaissance Guidance System.

"I just kept telling Dr. Bedi how I felt that I accepted the risks," she said. "He told me he wouldn't be able to do my surgery without the new navigation system."

Dr. Bedi, a board-certified spine surgeon, explained the smartphone-sized, robotic-guided, 3D technology offered the surgical precision her age and condition needed. Using minimally invasive techniques, with robotic-assistance, Dr. Bedi said he was able to perform Ms. Wilson's surgery with minimal blood loss, no ICU stay, and a shorter hospitalization than would have been required with traditional surgery.

In December 2016, Dr. Bedi operated on Ms. Wilson's spine with the aid of the Renaissance Guidance System. A month of rehab and six weeks of physical therapy followed Ms. Wilson's successful operation.

"Dr. Bedi told me my recovery would not be easy," Ms. Wilson said. "But I'm tenacious." She got a stationary bike and pushed herself to do all the exercises prescribed - and more.

It made all the difference. "I feel really good. I am leading a much better life," she said.

Five months later, she flew by herself to Washington state "with no assistance; no wheelchair; no walker and no cane" to visit family and attend her granddaughter's wedding, where she surprised the bride during the rehearsal dinner by reading a special poem she wrote for the occasion.

Now she is back selling homes in the Sun City area, playing cards with friends



Harvinder Bedi, M.D., demonstrates how he uses the Renaissance Guidance System to perform spine surgeries in less time and more precisely with the aid of the small robot (the area in blue) and 3D technology. [Bette Sharpe/Special to Independent Newsmedia]

and taking care of herself. Her office is in the Arrowhead Executive Center, behind the Toys "R" Us at the corner of 75th Avenue and Bell Road.

She wants people to know that they can overcome obstacles. "Attitude is important for healing," she said. "Age is no reason to lose hope."

Abrazo Arrowhead Campus is the first hospital in Arizona and the only one currently in the Phoenix area to use the Renaissance Guidance System. The Glendale hospital has had more than 100 patients use this technology so far. Dr. Bedi is the only Valley spine surgeon

using this system. Dr. Bedi uses robotic-assisted technology in his lumbar fusion surgeries.

Nearly one-tenth of Americans, 31 million, suffer from chronic back issues that limit their ability to live life to the fullest. Robotic technology is a new era in spine surgery the same way that laparoscopic surgery transformed general surgery in the 1990s.

Back pain is the single-leading cause of disability and one of the most common reasons for missed work.

Editor's note: Bette Sharpe of Glendale Daily Planet contributed to this report. See more of Ms. Sharpe's photos of the robotic device at GlendaleDailyPlanet.com.

Outreach

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of an overall mission to increase engagement with the public. Research indicates that dogs are social equalizers, serving as a bridge for communication or an ice-breaker in social situations. The effect that dogs have on people is exactly why this dog will be the perfect ambassador for the Parks & Recreation Division.

The department is looking to increase participation in programs, use at parks and in facilities, as well as educating the public about safety in those parks and facilities. The dog will attend city and community events, visit schools, hospitals and many other events and functions. Ranger will also be a huge component of implementing new programs like a Junior Ranger program and a tour guide program at Thunderbird Conservation Park.

While this working dog concept is certainly not new to the city of Glendale or other agencies, it is the first of its kind with a community outreach mission to be used in a parks and recreation setting. Glendale's own Fire Department for many years had a crisis response dog, Topaz, who re-



Ranger sports his Park Ranger vest while taking a rest at the Desert Ridge Marketplace, Saturday, Nov. 11. Glendale's newest Park Ranger was brought on for the Parks & Recreation Division's K9 community outreach program, which aims to increase engagement with the public. [Submitted photo]

sponded with his handler in traumatic situations, acting as a calming effect and distraction for children and adults alike. The Park Rangers' dog will have a secondary mission to become a responder for crisis response incidents for the Fire Department, as well. One of the funding goals that the team has is the specialized training that Ranger will need to go through to work in that capacity.

The funding for Ranger's care, supplies and training will come solely from donations and sponsorships. The Parks & Recreation Division is asking residents, businesses and other stakeholders to donate and/or sponsor this pro-

gram and support something that will touch tens of thousands of residents and visitors in Glendale and beyond. A GoFundMe account has been set up as a convenient way for anyone to donate any amount to the program. In addition, sponsorship information is available on our website, at www.glendaleaz.com/rangerk9.

At the same web address, organizations can request a visit from Ranger, as well, and find a list of upcoming events in which he will be scheduled to make an appearance. For additional information on Glendale Parks & Recreation programs, events, facilities and more, visit www.glendaleaz.com/parksandrecreation.

Assault

» From page 4

and 30, confronted and sexually assaulted the girl.

"Through great courage from her and her family she contacted us," Sgt. Scott Waite said at a news conference Thursday, Nov. 16.

The girl provided enough description for a composite sketch and noted various

tattoos on the suspect's body.

The department's biggest concern in this case is that the suspect may frequent the area.

The girl told authorities the suspect contacted her weeks ago, trying to bring up conversation before grabbing her arm.

Police are unsure whether he lives, works or knows people in the area.

"If he targeted her, how many others is he going after?" Mr. Waite said.

Silent Witness is teaming with Glendale Police on the investigation.

Both Mr. Waite and Silent Witness Sgt. Jamie Rothschild said they owe it to the girl to find the suspect.

Anyone with information can contact Glendale Police at 623-930-3000 or Silent Witness 480-WITNESS.