

Greetings from your SPRC
Staff-Parish Relations Committee

It was a busy summer, and this committee is meeting in person once again. I have been away for 7 weeks so some of this is old news. Highlights of the past few months include:

The confirmation of Marianna's H1-B visa. Thank you all for your generous financial and prayer support for this process. She can now complete her PhD and be able to stay with Catalina. Photo:

Good by to Pastor Matt Colby. After over 30 years of service in ministry Pastor Matt retired. We had a happy luncheon for him and guests included members of previous churches. He loved retirement gardening tools, pots, and a gift certificate. Many thanks for your love offerings.



Pastor Matt Colby and his wife, ?



Here is Jerry McWreath, our MC, pastor Mike with a member, and Fil and ? enjoying the party. We had a crowd of about 100 people.

On July 7th Catalina welcomed Pastor Kelli Knight as our new Associate Pastor. She comes to us from Chicago with a gift toward community building and outreach. She and her wife Mayah were treated to a warm reception after the service.

Many people coordinated these celebrations, and a few people stepped in the day of the event. SPRC is grateful to their generous spirit of community.



Employee Handbook: The Staff Parish Relations committees of 2023 and 2024 (and others) have worked to revise the Employee Handbook. The initial effort was led by Kent Batty, Emily Mason, Jeanne Manning, and in 2024 the work was completed by Laurie Campbell, Susan O'Brien, Diana Hill with legal review and advice from Tibor Nagy of Ogletree Deakins. It will be in print within the next month.

We acknowledge Mary Beth Butler for her work on the website and social media for CUMC. She has moved on to other service for Catalina. Her insight and advice have transformed our virtual presence with a sense of vibrancy. The position is being filled by Susan O'Brien for at least the next six months.

As Catalina progresses through this time of exciting changes designed to provide ministry in the 21st century, new staff positions may be opened and others combined. Stay tuned.

Day School Honors

We celebrate the work of Carolyn Lovell and her staff at the Day School for earning a Four Star Rating with Quality First. Four stars of a maximum of five stars is so close to perfect! Congratulations to our Catalina Methodist Day School.

Quality First is a program of First Things First (firstthingsfirst.org), Arizona's early childhood agency. First Things First funds Quality First to help early care and education providers improve the quality of their programs in ways that help young children learn, grow and thrive.

The Quality First Star Rating System is a voluntary quality rating system that helps families in the state of Arizona find quality child care. Quality star ratings are an important indicator of child care quality. A quality rating system also helps child care providers improve the quality of their care.

What is a Star Rating

The quality of each program is assessed using valid and reliable tools that focus on what research shows are the key components of quality early care, including adult-child interactions, learning environments and staff qualifications. Based on these assessments, each program is given a Quality First Star Rating, ranging from 1 to 5 stars.

Why Star Ratings?

First Things First launched Quality First to partner with child care and preschool programs around the state to improve the quality of early learning in Arizona. Quality First provides each enrolled program with coaching and funding, and the program's leadership and staff provides the dedication and hard work.

Quality First is about continuous quality improvement. The standards are high, and reaching the quality levels is often a long-term process. Programs achieving Star Ratings in the quality levels (3 stars and above) have met these standards. And all participating programs are committed to quality and are making improvements that help prepare kids for school and life.

Programs are assessed every one or two years, depending on their previous rating, and receive a new Star Rating with each assessment. Star Ratings help guide the improvement process by providing both an objective measure of each program's quality and a goal to achieve.

Criteria for Star Ratings Includes:

- **Health and safety practices** that promote children's basic well being

- **Staff qualifications**, including experience working with infants, toddlers and preschoolers as well as training or college coursework in early childhood development and education
- **Teacher-child interactions** that are positive, consistent and nurture healthy development and learning
- **Learning environments**, including age-appropriate books, toys and learning materials that promote emotional, social, language and cognitive development
- **Lessons** that follow state requirements or recommendations for infants, toddlers and preschoolers
- **Group sizes** that give young children the individual attention they need
- **Child assessment and parent communication** that keeps families regularly informed of their child's development
- For more information about Quality First, please visit www.qualityfirstaz.com.

What's next for the Day School? How can we support a Five-Star rating? We need to help increase the size and complexity of the outdoor play area. Let's explore the possibilities!