

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
& COOPER CENTER FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING**

TUSD superintendent Gabriel Trujillo, Pulitzer finalist David Fitzsimmons to celebrate new Camp Cooper program in livestream gala

The Cooper Center for Environmental Learning will announce new programs for Southern Arizona students at its first virtual community event on September 18th.

Key Points:

- The Cooper Center for Environmental Learning will host a live virtual gala on Sept. 18 starting at 5:30 p.m.; the event is free and open to the public.
- Cooper Center director Colin Waite will announce virtual field trips to support high-quality science instruction and will provide updates on the Center's annual crowdfunding campaign, which runs throughout September.
- The event will feature professional musicians Ann Hampton Callaway and PD Ronstadt, editorial cartoonist David Fitzsimmons, Tucson Unified School District superintendent Dr. Gabriel Trujillo and Dean Bruce Johnson of the University of Arizona College of Education.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TUCSON, Ariz. – September 8, 2020 – Since its founding more than 55 years ago, Camp Cooper has never gone dark during a school year, and not even a global pandemic will change that — this is the news that Cooper Center director Colin Waite will share at a live virtual gala on Friday, Sept. 18.

This fall, Camp Cooper will help teachers meet Arizona's science education standards with an all-new, no-cost offering: virtual field trips that share the wonder and knowledge of our Sonoran Desert environment. The programs are grade-specific (preschool through middle school) and combine live interaction with Camp Cooper educators, recorded video and supplementary materials that encourage students to explore their relationship with the natural world.

The new offerings come on the heels of a 10-week distance learning pilot of summer activities for kids and families — a program built on original video content created by the Camp's small education and marketing team. The pilot attracted more than 500 subscribers and marked not only the first time the Camp had offered summer programming but also its foray into virtual education and engagement.

Crowdfunding Announcements

Waite will also use the event to provide updates on the Cooper Center's annual crowdfunding campaign, moved from April to September this year in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

While the Center is a partnership of the University of Arizona and Tucson Unified School District, the bulk of its funding comes from private support, including grassroots donations. The Center hopes to raise \$30,000 this month with a goal to set a new record for the number of students reached in a school year despite being unable to host students live throughout the fall.

Link to crowdfunding campaign: <http://www.campcooper.org>

Event Details & Special Guests

- Jazz singer and platinum-album songwriter **Ann Hampton Callaway**, named Performer of the Year and Best Jazz Vocalist by Broadwayworld.com, writer on seven Barbra Streisand albums, Tony Award nominee for her performance in the Broadway musical *Swing!* and writer and performer of the theme song to the TV series *The Nanny*;
- **PD Ronstadt**, son of the late Michael J. Ronstadt and nephew of the legendary Linda Ronstadt — a fifth generation Ronstadt exploring the musical heritage of his family while also presenting new and original material, drawing inspiration from all the elements of his upbringing;
- Globally syndicated Pulitzer Prize finalist **David Fitzsimmons**, editorial cartoonist for *Arizona Daily Star*;
- **Gabriel Trujillo**, superintendent of Tucson Unified School District, in conversation with **Bruce Johnson**, dean of the College of Education at the University of Arizona.

Camp Cooper Happy Hour begins at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 18, livestreamed at the Cooper Center website <http://coopercenter.arizona.edu> as well as on Facebook, Youtube and Instagram.

Attendees can register for the free event online: <https://campcooper.eventbrite.com>

Quotes for Media Use

"My wife is a high school instructor, and we have a fourth-grader and eighth-grader in public schools. I know first-hand what parents and teachers are struggling with right now, and I know it's never been more critical that we support them with the fun, high-quality learning that Camp Cooper has always delivered. We've connected more than 130,000 kids to nature and science for more than half a century, and we're not about to stop now."

Colin Waite, Director, Cooper Center for Environmental Learning



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“I am always looking for opportunities for my students to explore science through investigation and observation. Camp Cooper allows students from our Southside communities and Greater Tucson to know themselves more deeply by connecting with their desert. Educators should take advantage of these resources, whether virtual or in person.”

Nicole Ramirez

Fifth-grade teacher, Gallego Intermediate School, Sunnyside Unified School District

“The staff and students of TUSD are so fortunate to have Camp Cooper right in our backyard. Camp Cooper's staff provide the opportunities for our students to build connections between science learned in our classrooms and science learned by exploring and experiencing our beautiful and diverse desert ecosystem. This school year, we are looking forward to expanding our students' interaction with Camp Cooper through virtual field trip experiences and remote learning experiences.”

Karyn Anton

K–8 STEM Professional Development Academic Trainer, Tucson Unified School District

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About the Cooper Center for Environmental Learning

The Cooper Center for Environmental Learning is a project of the University of Arizona (UArizona) College of Education, educating people of all ages with a goal of inspiring them to live more lightly on the Earth. Its work includes programs for grades K–12, outreach across the UArizona campus, community events, professional development for educators, training for future teachers and research on effective environmental education. Its flagship initiative, Camp Cooper, is a “living classroom” in Tucson’s desert foothills, run in partnership with Tucson Unified School District (TUSD). Each year, thousands of kids visit Camp Cooper for hands-on, outdoor lessons and activities designed to inspire youth to care about the environment by revealing the science and wonder of nature. Operating since 1964 and today funded almost entirely by grassroots donors and private grants, Camp Cooper now often hosts the grandkids of its earliest students, welcoming a third generation to its 130,000 alumni around the world.

- About The Cooper Center - Video: <https://youtu.be/mxqygk8AyAk>
- Cooper Center Website: <http://coopercenter.arizona.edu>

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Additional Resources

- Press Release Photos & Media: <https://coopercenter.arizona.edu/9-8-press-release-media>
- Camp Cooper Educational Videos: <https://coopercenter.arizona.edu/cooper-online>
- Ann Hampton Callaway: <http://www.annhamptoncallaway.com>
- P.D. Ronstadt: <https://www.peterronstadt.com>
- Crowdfunding details and donations: <http://www.campcooper.org>
- Class registrations for virtual field trips: <http://coopercenter.arizona.edu/trips>



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