

# THE VICTORY VOICE

*WHERE EVERY STUDENT'S  
SUCCESS IS HEARD*



QUARTER 2

  
Victory  
SCHOOLS  
#ForTheKids

# MISSION STATEMENT

*Provide essential and equitable education opportunities to the underserved and vulnerable populations ensuring that ALL students have the opportunity to win and achieve future success.*

## OUR CORE VALUES

*TEAM*

*WIN*

*WHATEVER IT TAKES*

*NO EXCUSES*

*100% EVERYDAY*

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SERVING VULNERABLE AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

## A VICTORIOUS MOMENT AT GCU

We are deeply grateful for the honor of having our CEO, Nick Schuerman, present the game ball at GCU Men's Basketball on 1/16. Nick, the owner and founder of Victory Schools, has dedicated his life to serving vulnerable and underserved populations, ensuring every child has access to the resources and education they deserve.

Victory Schools, with eight campuses—including our flagship Victory Collegiate Academy in Maryvale, Victory Futures Academy, and five K-12 autism schools—embodies this mission every day. Beyond Arizona, Victory Schools proudly extends its reach internationally through Escuela de Victoria in Puerto Peñasco, Mexico, serving students with special needs.

Joined by staff and students from across our campuses (VFA, VCA, VAA, and our District Office), this special moment was a true celebration of the impact of community, teamwork, and purpose.

Thank you, GCU, for this amazing opportunity to shine a light on the work we do and the lives we touch. ❤️ Together, we're making a difference!

# CELEBRATING A DEDICATED PARENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNER: GUSTAVO VARELA



At Victory Schools, we believe that strong communities are built on care, hard work, and a shared commitment to helping one another thrive. One individual who embodies all of these values is Gustavo Varela, a beloved parent and dedicated partner who has been with us for five years and continues to make a lasting impact on our schools and students.

Gustavo is the proud father of two high school students—his son and daughter—who are both sophomores at Victory Futures Academy, as well as twin daughters who are in 2nd grade at Victory Autism Academy. His commitment to his children's education is matched only by his passion for giving back to the schools that have supported them. Over the years, his involvement has extended far beyond his role as a parent. For the past five years, we've had the privilege of working with Gustavo as he manages the landscaping for six of our properties, including our schools and district office.

What sets Gustavo apart is not just his exceptional skill in landscaping, but his unwavering commitment to quality and service. Whether it's maintaining the grounds at our schools or ensuring the properties are always looking their best, his work is always top-notch. What many may not know is that Gustavo often goes above and beyond, offering his services at discounted rates without ever asking for anything in return. His generosity and dedication have made a significant difference, saving us countless dollars while improving our schools' appearances.

# CELEBRATING A DEDICATED PARENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNER: GUSTAVO VARELA



But Gustavo’s impact doesn’t stop there. He is deeply invested in giving back to our community, and one way he does this is through his work with our students. As part of our work-study programs, Gustavo regularly provides opportunities for students to learn valuable trade skills in landscaping and other hands-on activities. His mentorship gives students the chance to gain practical experience while building confidence, developing new skills, and exploring career possibilities.

It’s rare to find someone who excels in their profession while remaining so committed to uplifting others. Gustavo is the kind of person who notices a need and steps up to meet it, always with kindness and humility. His dedication to our school community, both professionally and personally, has made him an invaluable member of the Victory Schools family.

We are incredibly grateful to have Gustavo Varela with us. His work, his heart for service, and his unwavering support of our students and families continue to inspire us all. We look forward to continuing our partnership with him for many years to come.



At **Victory Schools**, we believe in the power of our mission—creating educational environments where students can thrive, grow, and succeed. But what truly sets us apart is that we don't just talk about our commitment to education—we live it. With 42 staff children enrolled across our eight schools, along with many nieces and nephews attending as well, the Victory Schools family isn't just a place of work, but a community where we believe in what we're doing so much that we send our own children here.

It's one thing for educators and staff to advocate for their school system, but it's a whole other level of trust and dedication when they choose to send their own children, nieces, and nephews to these schools. We've asked several members of our team to share why they've made the decision to enroll their kids at Victory Schools—and why they believe in the work we're doing.



## NICK SCHUERMAN, CEO OF VICTORY SCHOOLS

“As a parent, I know how important it is to find a school that truly understands and supports your child’s individual needs. My son is a sophomore at Victory Futures Academy, and my daughter is in 6th grade at Victory Collegiate Academy. Both of them are flourishing in their environments, and I couldn’t be more proud of the education they’re receiving. I’m not just the CEO—I’m a parent who believes deeply in what we’re doing here.”







## KRYSTAL LOWE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

“Being in education myself, I’m always thinking about how I can best support my own kids’ learning. I have two girls in 4th and 5th grade at Victory Collegiate Academy, and I’m proud of the nurturing and academic environment they’re part of. I know they are getting the tools they need to succeed both academically and socially, and it’s truly a blessing to watch them grow within the Victory Schools community.”





## RAYMOND BLOSSOM, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND TRANSPORTATION

“I believe in the approach we take here at Victory Schools. We are so intentional about meeting students where they are and providing them the resources they need to succeed. When it came time to choose a school for my kids, it was a no-brainer to send them to Victory Collegiate Academy. I see firsthand the positive impact we’re making, and I trust this system with the most precious people in my life—my children.”





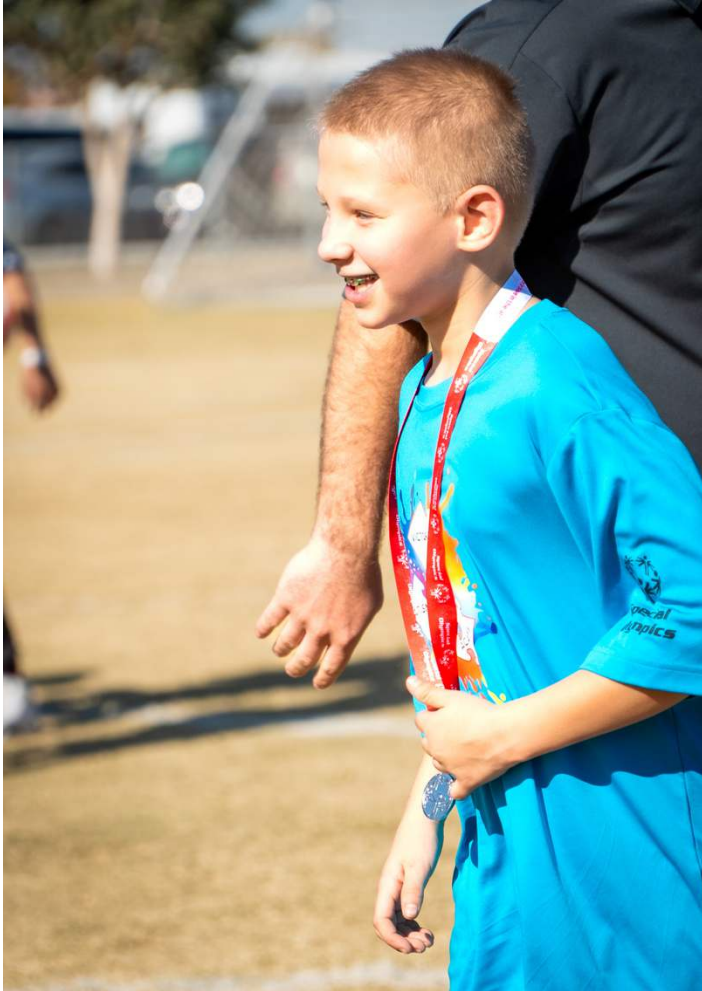
## CAITLIN SIMS, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

“Victory Schools is not just a job for me; it’s a place where I see my kids truly benefiting from an education designed to meet their unique needs. My two boys are thriving at Victory Collegiate Academy, and I can see the care and attention that each staff member brings to their work. As a parent and as an educator, I’m confident that Victory Schools is doing everything it can to support every student, and that includes my own children.”





# VAA PARTICIPATES IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS



At Victory Autism Academy (VAA), the Special Olympics holds a cherished place in our school culture. Our journey with the Special Olympics began during the 2022-2023 school year, when approximately 25 dedicated athletes competed in three sports. Since then, our program has grown tremendously. This year, we are thrilled to have over 70 athletes from all our locations across the valley participating in a diverse range of sports, including soccer, basketball, flag football, and track and field. One of the highlights of our program is the VAA-Lions soccer team, which has expanded to include over 30 players competing in both Individual Skills and traditional play. The hard work and determination of our athletes paid off this year with remarkable achievements:

- Individual Skills: Gold medal
- Traditional Teams:  
Silver and Bronze medals

Basketball:

- Gold for Phoenix
- Silver for Queen creek





# VAA PARTICIPATES IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS



These accomplishments reflect not only the talent and dedication of our athletes but also the incredible support of our staff, families, and community members. Your encouragement and contributions have been instrumental in making these successes possible.

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue building meaningful experiences and lasting memories together, whether on the field, the track, or the court. Thank you for being an essential part of our Special Olympics journey. Together, we're making a difference, one game at a time!



## **GET MORE OUT OF GIVING (GMOOG): EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

At Victory Futures Academy, our micro high school, we believe that service is a key component of developing compassionate, responsible, and engaged leaders. The Get More Out of Giving (GMOOG) program is an integral part of our educational philosophy, offering students meaningful opportunities to connect with their communities through volunteerism. This community service initiative encourages students to actively participate in organized service projects, build a deeper understanding of the value of giving back, and learn the skills that will shape them into tomorrow's leaders.



## THE POWER OF SERVICE AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

GMOOG offers students a structured yet flexible approach to community service, allowing them to immerse themselves in various local and state service projects. Through bi-weekly community service opportunities, students develop a strong sense of civic responsibility and engagement. They participate in hands-on projects, work with local non-profit organizations, and contribute to causes they are passionate about.



Each service opportunity is designed to foster leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Students learn to collaborate with peers, communicate effectively, and address real-world challenges, all while making a tangible impact on the lives of others. Whether they are organizing a charity event, volunteering at a food bank, or mentoring younger students, our students are actively developing skills that will serve them throughout their lives.



# EXPANDING HORIZONS THROUGH CULTURAL EXPOSURE



In addition to local community service, GMOOG provides unique opportunities for students to gain cultural exposure through quarterly out-of-state service trips. These trips allow students to extend their reach beyond their local community, contributing to projects in different regions and connecting with individuals from diverse backgrounds. By broadening their perspectives, students not only gain new experiences but also deepen their understanding of global challenges, further strengthening their commitment to creating positive change in the world.





# RESEARCHING CHARITIES AND FINANCIAL LITERACY



A key element of GMOOG is the integration of financial literacy, where students are encouraged to research and partner with charities they feel passionate about. Through their Future Funds accounts, students learn how to responsibly manage and allocate resources, giving them the practical skills needed to support charitable organizations effectively. They take ownership of their giving, researching charities, understanding their missions, and making informed decisions about how to contribute.

The financial literacy component goes beyond just managing money—it teaches students the importance of being intentional with their resources, creating lasting impact through thoughtful giving. This process empowers students to become responsible stewards of both their finances and their ability to make a difference in the world.



## A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

The "Get More Out of Giving" program is not only about benefiting the community; it is about enriching the lives of the students who participate. Many students express that their involvement in GMOOG has profoundly changed their outlook on life. From developing a sense of purpose to building long-lasting friendships, students experience the transformative power of service. As they engage with their communities, they grow emotionally, mentally, and socially—building a strong foundation for their futures.

"I never realized how fulfilling it could be to give back until I joined GMOOG," said Alex, a student involved in the program. "It's not just about volunteering—it's about making real connections with people, learning how to lead, and feeling like you're part of something bigger than yourself."



## PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

At Victory Futures Academy, we understand that the true measure of success lies not just in academic achievement but in how we contribute to the world around us. Through GMOOG, our students are not only learning about community service—they are learning to be proactive, responsible, and empathetic citizens. By cultivating leadership skills, financial literacy, and a deep commitment to service, we are preparing them to become the change-makers of tomorrow.

With every community project, each trip, and every dollar allocated to charity, our students are creating a legacy of giving—one that will continue to ripple outwards for years to come.



# NEW PENNY CAFE

BLVD

## VAA NEW 'PENNY CAFE'

At Victory Autism Academy, part of Victory Schools, our mission is to prepare students for lifelong success. A cornerstone of this mission is our dedication to offering hands-on learning opportunities through various internship programs. These internships provide students with real-world experiences, equipping them with essential skills for their futures.

At the start of each school year, every student completes an inventory assessment to explore their career interests. Using this assessment, along with a personalized interview process, we match students with internships that align with their aspirations and strengths. This approach ensures each student has a meaningful and tailored experience that fosters growth and confidence.



Our strong partnerships with local businesses and organizations are crucial to the success of these programs. These collaborations enable our students to immerse themselves in professional environments and gain practical skills. One exciting partnership we're thrilled to highlight is our collaboration with New Penny Café, located in the vibrant Avondale area.

The internship program with New Penny Café has been thriving for over a month now. During this time, our students have actively participated in a dynamic café setting, gaining invaluable experience in customer service, food preparation, and teamwork. By working alongside the talented team at New Penny Café, they have enhanced key skills that will serve them in culinary and hospitality careers—and beyond.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to New Penny Café for their dedication to nurturing the potential of our students. Their support has been instrumental in creating a rich learning environment where our students can grow both personally and professionally. Together, we're paving the way for our students to succeed and thrive in their future endeavors.

# GRAND CAYON UNIVERSITY BUILDS BRIGHTER FUTURES FOR VICTORY STUDENTS THROUGH THEIR CHANGING LIVES OUTREACH PROGRAM



At Victory Schools, we are deeply committed to ensuring every student has the support, guidance, and belief in their potential that they deserve. Many of our students face significant obstacles—ranging from generational trauma and economic hardship to emotional distress—which can make achieving success seem nearly impossible. However, through our partnership with Grand Canyon University (GCU) and the Changing Lives Outreach Program, we have seen firsthand the profound impact this initiative has had on the lives of our students.

## WHAT IS THE CHANGING LIVES OUTREACH PROGRAM?

The Changing Lives Outreach Program is more than just a volunteer project; it's a powerful resource for our students who need support in overcoming their challenges. GCU's undergraduate behavioral health students volunteer their time, expertise, and compassion, offering mentorship, psycho-educational group facilitation, and community engagement activities that help our students build resilience and discover their inner strength.

This program gives GCU students the opportunity to apply what they've learned in their coursework while making a meaningful difference in the lives of our students. It also provides them with a chance to actively participate in the community and contribute to human flourishing through genuine relationships that foster growth and hope.

# WHY VICTORY SCHOOLS EMBRACES THIS PARTNERSHIP

At Victory Schools, we serve a diverse student body, many of whom face challenges that hinder their academic success and emotional well-being. We know that true success is not solely measured by grades but by a student’s sense of belonging, self-worth, and resilience. The Changing Lives Outreach Program directly supports our mission to nurture the whole child, by ensuring our students receive the emotional and social support they need to succeed.

Through this partnership, our students gain access to positive role models who exemplify integrity, perseverance, and compassion. These mentors meet our students where they are, offering empathy and strategies to help them navigate the unique hurdles they face. The bond between our students and GCU mentors not only bridges the gap between hardship and success but also empowers our students to dream of brighter futures, grounded in the belief that they can overcome any challenge.

We are proud to have over 20 student volunteers from GCU across our campuses, who are making a profound impact on students from Kindergarten through High School, including those at our Collegiate and Autism schools. These volunteers are working tirelessly to create safe, supportive spaces for all our students, ensuring that each child—regardless of age, grade level, or background—has access to the mentorship and guidance they need to thrive.

## THE ROLE OF GCU STUDENTS: MENTORS AND CHANGEMAKERS

GCU students serve as more than mentors—they are advocates and allies who are dedicated to seeing our students thrive. Their work goes beyond academics and extends to social-emotional support, helping our students build confidence and acquire essential life skills. As mentors, GCU students provide:

**Academic and Social-Emotional Guidance:** GCU students offer assistance in overcoming academic challenges while building students’ emotional resilience and life skills.

**Encouragement for Healing and Growth:** By listening to our students’ stories and sharing their own experiences, mentors inspire hope and foster a healing environment.

**Creating a Sense of Belonging:** GCU students create spaces where our students feel seen, valued, and empowered to succeed.

These mentors also collaborate with behavioral health professionals to engage with the broader community, helping to address systemic issues and fostering a culture of care and collective flourishing.





## SUCCESS STORIES: HOW THE PROGRAM TRANSFORMS LIVES

The success of the Changing Lives Outreach Program is best illustrated through the stories of our students. One middle schooler, who had previously struggled with participation, found the courage to speak up in class for the first time, thanks to the support and encouragement of their GCU mentor. Another high school student, once disillusioned with education, discovered a newfound passion for learning, reigniting their motivation and vision for the future.

We've also seen tremendous progress in students who have struggled with social interactions. A student who had difficulty making peer connections found a steady and supportive mentor who helped them build social skills and navigate the complexities of relationships. As a result, this student became more comfortable interacting with their peers, ultimately fostering deeper friendships and a stronger sense of belonging in school.

For students who face instability at home, having a mentor has been life-changing. One student, dealing with family challenges, was able to find a compassionate and attentive mentor who provided not only a listening ear but also practical guidance on navigating difficult situations. This mentor became a steady source of emotional support, offering a sense of stability that was otherwise lacking in the student's life.

One of the most powerful stories comes from a student experiencing homelessness who initially believed that higher education, especially college, was out of reach. Through consistent mentorship and guidance from their GCU mentor, this student was encouraged to explore college options and supported in taking steps toward their educational goals. Today, this student is on the path to applying for college, equipped with a plan and a renewed sense of possibility for their future. Parents have shared how their children's confidence has soared, and teachers have witnessed remarkable improvements in classroom behavior and engagement. Our students are learning to persevere, demonstrate kindness, and support one another—creating a positive ripple effect that strengthens the entire school culture.

## A PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON SHARED VALUES

Victory Schools and Grand Canyon University share a commitment to service, education, and character development, making this partnership a natural fit. Together, we are creating lasting change by addressing not only the academic challenges our students face but also the emotional and social obstacles that often impede their success.

Through collaboration with behavioral health professionals, local businesses, and community organizations, we are ensuring that our students receive comprehensive, innovative support that meets their needs.

## LOOKING AHEAD: EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

The Changing Lives Outreach Program has already proven to be transformative for our students, but we are just getting started. As we continue to grow this partnership with GCU, we remain dedicated to expanding its reach and deepening its impact. With your continued support, we can empower more students, inspire healing, and cultivate a new generation of resilient, compassionate leaders.

To Grand Canyon University and its dedicated students, we extend our deepest gratitude. Your unwavering commitment to making a difference is truly inspiring. Together, we are changing lives and transforming communities. Lopes Up!



## ESCUELA DE VICTORIA (EDV) HAS OFFICIALLY COMPLETED ITS FIRST SEMESTER!



Marking a milestone filled with growth, learning, and heartwarming progress. For many of our students, this has been their very first experience attending school, making this journey all the more significant.

As students adjusted to their schedules and routines, we watched them build lifelong friendships and develop essential skills that extend beyond the classroom. Through various community events, they had the opportunity to apply what they've learned in real-world settings—bridging the gap between structured learning and everyday experiences.

One of the most remarkable moments for our staff has been witnessing students use their words for the very first time. Seeing them express their wants and needs—some for the first time in their lives—has been nothing short of incredible. Parents have shared touching stories about the transformations they've observed at home. Many have noted improvements in their child's sleep, willingness to try new foods, ability to communicate, and interactions with others.

The progress we've seen in just one semester has been nothing short of inspiring. We are beyond grateful for the unwavering support from our families, staff, and community. This is just the beginning, and we cannot wait to see what the future holds for our students at EDV!

Thank you for your incredible support and donations for Escuela de Victoria—we couldn't do this without you!



# HITTING THE RESET BUTTON ON TRAUMA WITH CHARACTER EDUCATION



## ADDRESSING GENERATIONAL TRAUMA THROUGH A WHOLE-CHILD MINDSET

In today's educational environment, where many students face challenges that extend far beyond the classroom, it's becoming increasingly clear that academic achievement alone is not enough to ensure success. To truly equip students for life, schools must prioritize character education alongside academics, focusing on emotional and psychological well-being. At Victory Schools, we understand the importance of addressing the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally. This is why we have developed a comprehensive character education philosophy that works to break the cycle of trauma and empower students to become leaders in their communities.

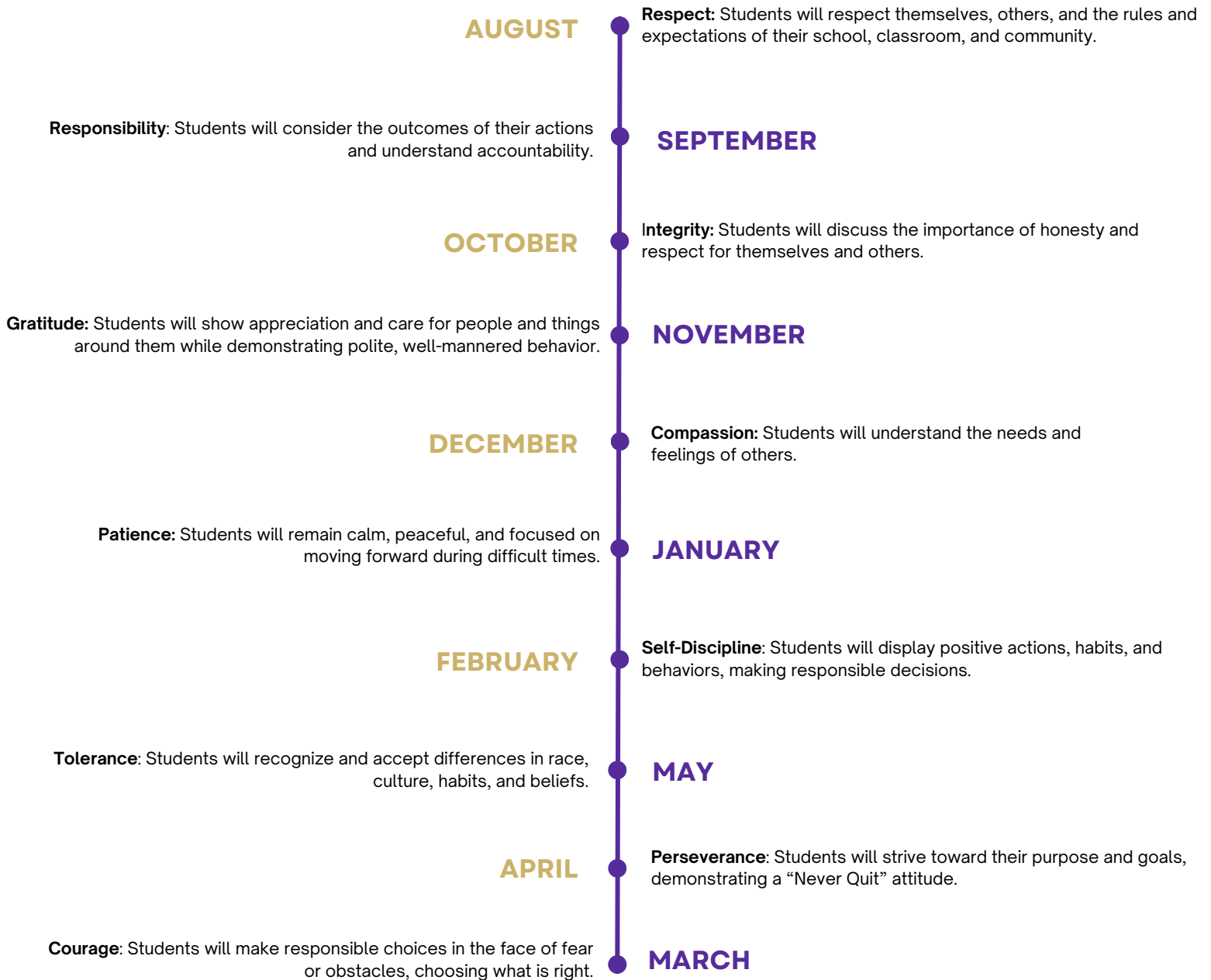
## THE POWER OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education is the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities that encourage students to make informed, responsible choices and to think critically. This education goes beyond teaching facts and figures, offering students the tools they need to navigate life's challenges with integrity, empathy, and resilience. By fostering strong moral values and emotional intelligence, character education helps students overcome adversity, including the generational trauma that many face.

At Victory Schools, our goal is to help each student reach their academic potential while also preparing them to be victorious with their character. We are committed to cultivating an environment where every student learns and displays high character, acquiring the skills that will lead them to success in all areas of life.

# THE VICTORIOUS PILLARS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

A key component of our character education system is our 10 Pillars of VICTORY, which provide a structured framework to teach and reinforce positive traits throughout the school year. Each month is dedicated to a specific character trait, providing students with a focused opportunity to practice these virtues in and out of the classroom.



Each of these character traits is not only taught but modeled by educators, staff, and community members. By dedicating an entire month to each pillar, we ensure that students understand the importance of these traits and are given ample opportunities to practice them in different contexts.

# A WHOLE-CHILD APPROACH: THE FOUNDATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

Our “Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Whole Child” initiative reinforces the belief that character education is central to the well-being of our students. This philosophy embraces the idea that in order to thrive, students need more than just academic knowledge. They need a foundation of emotional, social, and moral development that will guide them through life’s challenges.

For students affected by trauma, this approach is especially important. Trauma can affect a student's ability to focus, build relationships, or manage emotions. Character education helps address these issues by teaching students not only how to manage their own feelings but also how to empathize with others and create supportive environments.

## DEVELOPING TRAUMA-INFORMED CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

In partnership with Grand Canyon University’s Center for Character Education (GCU CCCE), Victory Schools is developing a character education curriculum that specifically addresses the needs of students who have experienced trauma. This curriculum takes into account the various ways trauma manifests in students' behavior and learning, providing tailored support to help them heal and thrive. We recognize that underserved populations, particularly those who have faced generational trauma, need targeted interventions that speak to their unique challenges. Our goal is to extend the reach of our trauma-informed character education curriculum beyond our local community, collaborating with schools and districts across the nation to ensure that all students, especially those from underserved populations, receive the support they need.

## ENGAGING FAMILIES IN THE CHARACTER EDUCATION JOURNEY

Character education extends beyond the classroom and into the home. At Victory Schools, we recognize that family involvement is crucial in reinforcing the values we teach. That’s why we partner with GCU CCCE to bring character education directly into our students' homes. Through Family Engagement Nights, GCU professors and students join us to host interactive sessions, providing families with the tools and resources they need to support character development outside of school. These events are an opportunity for parents and guardians to learn alongside their children, gaining practical insights into how they can foster emotional intelligence, empathy, and resilience at home. By strengthening the home-school partnership, we create a more cohesive and supportive environment for students to practice the character traits they are learning at school.



# A WHOLE-CHILD APPROACH: THE FOUNDATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF

To ensure that character education is deeply embedded in every aspect of school life, we partner with GCU CCCE to provide professional development for our teachers and staff. Through this collaboration, our educators are equipped with the tools and knowledge to integrate character education into the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and their social interactions with students. Teachers at Victory Schools are not just educators; they are character educators, leading by example and fostering a culture of respect, integrity, and perseverance.

## RECOGNITION AND COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

We are proud to announce that Victory Collegiate Academy has been selected as a Character Education School of Excellence within GCU CCCE. This recognition is a reflection of our ongoing commitment to character education and its impact on our school community. We will also be featured at the GCU CCCE February Summit, where we will share our successes and discuss the importance of character education in shaping the future of our students.

## A CALL TO ACTION

Character education has the power to break the cycle of trauma and provide students with the skills they need to overcome adversity. It is a vital tool in building resilience, empathy, and responsible decision-making—traits that will serve students throughout their lives. At Victory Schools, we are committed to nurturing the whole child, integrating character education into every part of the school experience, and preparing students to be champions of character in their communities. By focusing on both academic achievement and character development, we can ensure that our students are not only prepared for the future—they are equipped to shape it.



**THE VICTORY VOICE**



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