

Six Arizona Teens Honored at the 7th Annual Girls Change the World Summit in Tempe

2026 Scholarships That Celebrate Young Women Leaders Across Arizona

TEMPE, AZ, UNITED STATES, May 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Girls Rule Foundation](#) proudly celebrated the success of its 7th Annual Girls Change the World Summit, powered by Shine Your Light, held in Tempe, Arizona. The inspiring event brought together hundreds of teen girls, mentors, educators, business leaders and community supporters for a transformational day focused on girls learning leadership, confidence, and career skills - culminating in the announcement of the 2026 Girls Change the World Scholarship recipients.



This year's summit was especially impactful, drawing 132 nominations from 52 schools across Arizona, representing communities from Yuma, Prescott, Douglas and Phoenix. Each nominee was recognized with a certificate of nomination as an emerging leader making a meaningful difference in her school, family or community. Students were nominated by teachers, coaches, counselors and parents for their leadership, resilience, and commitment to impacting others. All the nominees were celebrated at the Summit in partnership by Girls Rule Foundation, Rio Salado College and City of Tempe.

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These girls are leading with courage, vision, compassion and determination. They remind us that girls truly can change the world.”

Dena Patton, Girls Rule Foundation co-founder and program creator.

After a competitive selection process, six outstanding

young women were chosen as the 2026 scholarship winners and awarded \$1,500 cash scholarships and 3 months of mentoring by The Girls Rule Foundation.

“We are incredibly proud of these young women and the example they are setting for the next generation,” said Dena Patton, Girls Rule Foundation co-founder and program creator. “These

girls are leading with courage, vision, compassion and determination. They remind us that girls truly can change the world.”

The summit featured interactive leadership workshops, hands-on goal setting sessions, inspiring key note speakers, networking opportunities and mentorship moments designed to help teen girls grow in confidence, career and leadership.

2026 Girls Change the World Scholarship Winners

Ana Cristina Del Castillo of Douglas High School

A statewide leader serving as AASC State President and SkillsUSA Arizona Region 6 Officer, Ana Cristina is creating a meaningful impact across Arizona through her leadership, vision and pride in her heritage.

Donya Fournier of Arizona College Prep

An internationally ranked archer with championships in the U.S., Canada and France, Donya is also a published author, TED-Ed presenter in New York City and speaks four languages.

Lucy Fisher of Desert Vista High School

Lucy leads with kindness, integrity and determination. From leading a 50-mile backpacking trip to serving as golf team captain, Unified Sports leader and NHS Vice President, she consistently uplifts and encourages those around her while pursuing a future career in finance.

Naeva Ortega of Sunnyside High School

Naeva is a dedicated student leader who helps plan the Annual Youth & Peace Conference while pursuing a multi-year aviation program on her path toward aerospace engineering. She leads with integrity, purpose and a passion for serving others.

Marlee Zee Ugarte of West Point High School

Marlee is a resilient and team-centered leader who demonstrates courage and responsibility across JAG, flag football, wrestling and tennis. She is known for consistently stepping up for others with kindness and strength.

Mikalyn Bailey of Basha High School Won the 2026 Fearless Girl Award

Mikalyn Bailey received the 2026 Fearless Girl Award, recognizing one extraordinary young woman demonstrating exceptional courage and leadership. A Flight Commander in JROTC, Chandler Police Cadet and Team Director for Basha’s mountain bike team, Mikalyn leads with a “we mindset instead of a me mindset.” She also created a clinic with the Arizona Cycling Association to help young women grow in confidence and skill through mountain biking.

Honoring the Sponsors Who Invest in Arizona Girls

Girls Rule Foundation also proudly recognized the six scholarship sponsors whose generosity helped make these awards possible. These community leaders and families are true champions

for girls and passionate believers in investing in the next generation of female leaders.

Scholarship sponsors included:

- Dr. Ashu Goyle and Nikki Goyle with Integrated Spine, Pain, and Wellness
- Hannah Chapman of X² Wealth Planning and Jack Barker of Juncture Wealth Strategies
- David Kearns, VP of Sales at Sparkling Ice
- Jill Sheldon & Co. at CMG Home Loans
- Eric Fellows, Owner of AZ Fellows Real Estate
- The Walker Family

The Girls Change the World Summit continues to grow each year as one of Arizona's leading leadership experiences for teen girls, helping young women build confidence, leadership skills, financial literacy and meaningful community connections.

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