

# ASU student-athletes bring Sun Devil spirit to Tempe elementary school

By Kaitlyn Beickel, ASU News  
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For students in the after-school program Kid Zone at Fuller Elementary — an A-rated city of Tempe school — a visit from Sun Devil Athletics student-athletes and Sparky the Sun Devil provided an enriching end to their day.

The visit was the result of a collaboration between Access ASU, Inferno Affinity Alliance, Sun Devil Athletics and the city of Tempe's Kid Zone program.

"These visits allow our student-athletes to connect directly with the local community and the next generation of students across Arizona," said Dylan Johnson, senior manager of student and community outreach at Access ASU and assistant advisor to the Inferno Affinity Alliance, a student-led group focused on supporting athletics and ASU traditions.

"By engaging with students who they can relate to, we're able to foster genuine relationships and provide positive reinforcement around postsecondary education," he said. "We've also begun integrating Sparky into select activations, with plans to continue building that presence to create an even more engaging and memorable ASU experience for students."

Sparky and track and field student-athletes Taylor Brown, Brennen McHenry, Alexia Schofield and Jayden Davis made their way to Fuller Elementary to connect with the K–5 students over coloring pages, bracelet making and playing games.

"Across our Kid Zone activations, we've engaged with over 200 students to date, creating consistent touchpoints that build familiarity, confidence and interest in career-connected learning pathways," Johnson said.

The ASU/Kid Zone collaboration has also included Tempe's Broadmor Elementary, McKemy Academy and Ward Traditional Academy.

"Long term, this helps build a stronger sense of connection between young students and ASU — bridging the gap between the athletes they may see on TV and who they are as people," Johnson

said. “That connection not only inspires students, but also sparks interest in engaging with ASU beyond the classroom, including attending games and experiencing Sun Devil Athletics firsthand.

“At several sites, we’ve also incorporated our Futurescape virtual reality experience, which has been a major engagement driver.”

Futurescape is a virtual game designed for middle school students (grades 6–8) to explore careers in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math). Students engage in mini-games that simulate real-world STEAM experiences across 15 industries and eight disciplines — including marine biology, manufacturing, engineering and forensic science — that are emotionally engaging and educational.

“The goal of these visits is to expose students to career-connected learning pathways early while creating meaningful connections with ASU students and student-athletes. Through activities like reading, games and a Q&A, we help make college feel more accessible, relatable and less out of reach at a young age, while also building early excitement around ASU and higher education,” Johnson said. “It reinforces ASU as a familiar and positive presence in students’ minds, giving them an early and meaningful connection to the university.”

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## **Main image**



A visit from Sparky and Sun Devil Athletics turned an ordinary afternoon into one that sparked curiosity toward college readiness for students at Fuller Elementary in Tempe. Photo by Amanda Romero/ASU Student Life

**Text image(s)**



Track and field student-athlete Jayden Davis works on crafts with students from Fuller Elementary on April 30. Photo by Amanda Romero/ASU Student Life





Track and field student-athlete Alexia Schofield (center, right) makes bracelets with students at Fuller Elementary on April 30. Photo by Amanda Romero/ASU Student Life



Students and teachers from Fuller Elementary in Tempe pose with Sparky and some of ASU's student-athletes during a special visit to the school's after-school program, Kid Zone. Photo by Amanda Romero/ASU Student Life