

First senior class graduates at Andre Agassi charter school

-- Seniors cross into the future in unique bridge ceremony --

-- Model school offers longer hours, small class size, accountability --

LAS VEGAS, June 12, 2009 –The first senior class of the Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy graduated today. The ceremony marked a milestone in the model charter school's development since opening eight years ago in West Las Vegas.

All 34 graduates are going on to higher education opportunities, with 26 attending four-year colleges and universities and eight attending two-year programs. A list of accepted and attending programs is attached.

Held on the school's W. Lake Mead Blvd. campus, the graduation was attended by school founder Andre Agassi and nearly 1,200 family members, classmates, teachers, community members, elected officials, and other supporters and donors who have played a role in the public charter school's development.

The traditional graduation festivities concluded with a unique ceremony symbolic of the graduates entering the future. The seniors crossed the 100-foot William J. Hornbuckle III Bridge that connects two of the high school's rooms, one only accessible to graduates where they sign a commemorative book and leave messages to inspire other students. During the crossing, students adhered the pennant of the schools they'll be attending to the bridge's clear glass railing. After everyone crossed, the graduates, accompanied by Agassi, returned to the bridge, where Agassi pronounced the Class of 2009 and the traditional "turning of tassels to the left." The students then tossed flowers to the crowd below.

Agassi Prep – as the school is affectionately called – opened in 2001 with grades 3-5 and expanded each year to its current K-12 status with nearly 600 students. The school was conceived from Agassi's belief that nothing has a greater impact on children's lives than the education they receive. "Early on, our team concluded that the best way to change a child's life was through education," said Agassi, a Las Vegas native whose Andre Agassi Foundation and charter school are dedicated to improving the lives of children in his hometown.

"Our graduates have received a comprehensive education at Agassi Prep and values from our Code of Respect and Commitment to Excellence instilled in them since day one that will serve them well into the future," Agassi said. "They go forward prepared to reach for their dreams and to make the world a better, more peaceful place. I know they will succeed."

Acknowledging the tremendous support the school and Foundation have received in making the graduation a reality, Agassi added, "I am also grateful for our community, which has been so generous with our Foundation over the years. It is because of you that this dream has come true and our students can thrive and receive a world-class education."

Agassi Prep's curriculum is designed to enhance students' character, motivation and self-discipline with individualized learning for college preparation. Some differences between the public charter school and other schools include:

- more learning hours with an eight-hour school day (two hours longer than Nevada public schools) and approximately 10 more school days per year compared to other Clark County School District schools
- average class size of 25 students

- all teacher on one-year contracts
- accountability culture from Code of Respect and Code of Excellence signed by students, parents and teachers, which includes parental involvement

The school receives a \$6,530 per pupil allocation from the State of Nevada with the Andre Agassi Foundation supplementing approximately another \$6,000 per pupil.

The Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy was dubbed a National Model Charter School by the U.S. Department of Education in 2003. In 2005, the middle school received an "exemplary" designation from the state of Nevada Department of Education, the only middle school in Clark County to receive this top-level honor. In 2007, the elementary school received an "exemplary" designation. Earlier this year, 100 percent of seniors required to take the high school proficiency exam passed.

"This graduation is a celebration and testament to the hard work of not only the students but also their families and extended family of teachers, community and the Foundation," Marsha Irvin, Agassi Prep chancellor, said. "We all continue to learn and innovate, and the future is bright for these seniors and the students who follow them. We are proud to send these bright young graduates out into the world ."

[Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy Accepted and Attending Higher Education Programs](#)

About the Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy

The Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy (AACPA) is a model public charter school whose goal is to offer academic programs designed to enhance a child's character, respect, motivation and self-discipline. Located in the heart of Las Vegas' most at-risk neighborhood, AACPA was created specifically to improve skill levels and combat lowered academic expectations while creating a climate of hope among this community's most challenged children. Learn more at www.agassiprep.org.