

The Phoenician Argonauts

Youth Sailing & STEM Program

Location	Camelback High School, Phoenix, Arizona
Home Waters	Lake Pleasant, Arizona
Training Vessel	Argo, a restored Laguna Windrose 22 sailboat

Mission

The Phoenician Argonauts are Phoenix students on a modern voyage of discovery, using sailing and STEM to explore wind, water, and their own potential. This program builds confidence, leadership, and real-world problem-solving skills through hands-on boat restoration, engineering projects, and on-water sailing experiences.

Program Overview

The Phoenician Argonauts is an inter-city youth sailing and STEM program that gives Phoenix students - many who have never been on a boat - access to sailing education, marine trades skills, and leadership development. The program combines three phases of learning that start on campus and progress to Lake Pleasant.

Three-Phase Learning Model

Phase 1: Land Yachts - Sailing in the Desert

Students design and build simple 3-wheel "land yachts" using bike wheels, plywood frames, and small sails. These sail carts are tested on campus to teach points of sail, tacking, basic physics, and safety before anyone goes near deep water.

STEM Applications: Speed vs. wind angle, sail shape testing, force analysis, engineering principles.

Phase 2: Boat Restoration - Marine Shop Class

Students restore Argo, a donated 22-foot Laguna Windrose sailboat, to Lake Pleasant and Arizona Game & Fish safety standards. Work includes sanding, painting, rigging upgrades, safety gear installation, and boat registration.

STEM Applications: Buoyancy and displacement, center of effort vs. center of lateral resistance, load paths in rigging, practical applied math.

Phase 3: Lake Pleasant Sailing Days

Students sail aboard Argo on Lake Pleasant under strict safety protocols: mandatory PFDs, weather limits, adult supervision, and clear crew roles. Shore-based STEM modules support students waiting their turn on the water.

STEM Applications: Weather analysis, navigation basics, hands-on seamanship, leadership rotation (skipper, tactician, trimmer, safety officer).

Who We Serve

Students from Phoenix neighborhoods with limited access to lakes, boats, and outdoor education. No prior sailing experience is required. The program is designed to be inclusive and accessible regardless of background or ability to pay.

Safety & Supervision

- All lake sailing days follow Arizona boating safety regulations and US Sailing youth safety guidelines.
- The program lead holds ASA 101 Basic Keelboat certification and works alongside a faculty advisor and district-required chaperones.
- Students wear USCG-approved PFDs at all times on or near the water.
- Strict weather limits and emergency procedures are in place.
- All volunteers complete district background checks and clearance requirements.

Educational Alignment

The program leverages US Sailing's Reach STEM curriculum, adapted for Phoenix and Lake Pleasant. Core instruction areas include physics, engineering, weather and environment, and leadership.

- **Physics:** Wind, lift, forces, buoyancy
- **Engineering:** Design, testing, materials, structures
- **Weather & Environment:** Local climate, lake conditions, decision-making
- **Leadership:** Teamwork, communication, responsibility, problem-solving

Community Partners

The program works with local sailing schools and clubs at Lake Pleasant - including Go Sail Arizona, Sailboat Shop, and Lake Pleasant Sailing Club - for dock space, safety inspections, and occasional guest instruction support.

Get Involved

- **Students & Families:** Contact us to learn about participation opportunities and upcoming sessions.
- **Schools & Organizations:** Interested in bringing students into the program or collaborating on curriculum? We'd love to talk.
- **Volunteers & Supporters:** We welcome volunteers, equipment donations, and community partners who share our mission.

Contact

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"Just as the ancient Argonauts sailed aboard the legendary ship Argo to unknown shores, the Phoenician Argonauts are Phoenix students charting their own course aboard Argo - discovering new skills, new confidence, and new horizons."