

WILSON LEGACY SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

APRIL, 2026

Wilson Legacy Scholarship



Empowering dreams, nurturing brilliance, and fostering a new generation of leaders who will carry forward the values of education, equity, and community.

Meet Wilson Legacy Scholarship Recipient

The first Wilson Legacy Scholarship will be awarded to Wilson College Prep Academy Senior Abdirezak Abdi, who will be pursuing a degree in aeronautical engineering, and working towards eventually becoming a commercial pilot. Abdirezak, who came to the United States from Ethiopia at five years of age, has overcome both economic and personal challenges, and will be a first-generation college student in his family. A member of Wilson College Prep faculty described Abdirezak in the following way. ***“this student is incredibly dedicated and hardworking. He has maintained strong grades throughout high school while taking only Honors and AP courses. On top of his rigorous course load, he took dual-enrollment classes and earned college credit by attending Saturday classes. He also chose to participate in the ACE program for multiple summers, continuing to challenge himself when most students take a break. His drive to learn and grow is truly impressive. What stands out most, though, is this student’s character. He is genuinely one of the most thoughtful students I have worked with – respectful, caring, and consistently supportive of others. He leads with humility and heart, and people naturally gravitate to him. He aspires to become a pilot, and I have no doubt he will excel, whether in aviation or any other path he chooses. His work ethic, curiosity, and overall goodness will take him far.”***



Meet Kayla Kolar – Wilson Legacy Scholarship's Newest Leadership Team Member

Kayla Kolar has been in nonprofit executive leadership for over 30 years and currently serves as the President and Chief Executive Officer of House of Refuge since Jan. 1, 2021. Prior to that, she was President and CEO of HD SOUTH, Home of the Gilbert Historical Museum for 15 ½ yrs. where she led the organization through \$1.5 mil of a \$2 million capital campaign and a complete rebranding from a history museum to a complex arts and culture nonprofit. Before that she was the Executive Director for the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, the Deputy Director of the Desert Botanical Garden, and a Division Sales Manager with the National Federation of Independent Business.

Kayla holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Illinois State University. She is a graduate of Gilbert Leadership Class XIV, was on the Gilbert Leadership Board of Directors for 7 years, is a past president of the board, and is a past recipient of the Gilbert Leadership Award. She holds a certificate in Leading Strategy Execution Through Culture from UC Berkeley Haas School of Business, and certificates from the Harvard Business School in Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management and Social Enterprise and Systems Thinking, as well as Women in Leadership from the Yale School of Management. Kayla is a graduate of the Gilbert Citizens Police Academy and was a 2024 Piper Fellow with the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust. Kayla currently serves on the Park University Gilbert Advisory Board, the PHX East Valley Partnership board, the ASU Polytechnic Campus Community Advisory Board, the Chandler Gilbert Community College Advisory Board, the Dignity Health Designated Procedures Oversight Board, and the Western Alliance Bank Community Board. She has 3 adult sons and lives in Gilbert.

HELP US GROW

Investing in Wilson College Prep graduates does more than fund education – it catalyzes hope, equity, and growth for the whole community. Your gift today plants the seed for a forest of achievement tomorrow. To make a direct donation through Phoenix Union Foundation for Education: [Wilson Legacy Scholarship](#) . To learn more on how together, we can change the odds – one scholarship, one dream, one future at a time please contact Leadership Team member Joe Hauer at 602-739-0533 or hauerscience@cox.net