



The Culture at Highlands Latin Cottage School In Paradise Valley

These are some of the different things we do as a community and the opportunities that we offer that set us apart as HLSPV:

We value camaraderie and good sportsmanship. Our students participate in a House System. We have 4 different houses. There are two for girls (Pegasus and Leo) and two for boys (Aries and Aquila). The children greatly enjoy the camaraderie that comes from being in a house as well as the friendly competition from competing against the other houses. The students will proudly tell you to which house they belong. They individually earn points each week that contribute to their house's points. At the end of the year, we tally the points and the winning house gets their name engraved on the house cup. The children cheer each other on and learn good sportsmanship and congratulate others in their achievements.

We wear uniforms at HLSPV. You may be surprised that the parents and the students really love them. The children look great in them but it also adds a sense of formality to what we are doing. What we are doing is important. And when we get dressed up in our uniforms it tells our brain this very thing. It's the same reason we dress nice to go to a formal occasion, why we would dress nice to go to church, or to meet dignitaries and important people in government. If something is important, we dress the part. And for that reason, we have chosen some really stylish, and affordable uniforms, that set that tone of importance and also give us unity. We are unified in our efforts and unified in our dress. The colors of our uniform are the colors of our cottage school as well as our state colors. It gives the children a sense of pride as well as patriotism. We are proud to wear our state colors and live in Arizona, we are proud to be Americans, and we are proud to attend and participate in Highlands Latin Paradise Valley,

We value the outdoors. Getting out in nature is important to our community. Our children have excellent study habits and learn so many wonderful things in their schoolwork, but we also want to create a whole, balanced child and intentionally spend time in God's creation. So, we make exercise, fresh air, and sunshine a regular part of our lives. Our Cardinals Nature Club meets every other Friday to do fun outings such as: go on hikes and observe nature, visit farms, go birding at the preserves, attend evening astronomy telescope outings, and more. Thus, we get to see firsthand all that we are learning in our classes. On the alternate Fridays we have a PE class led by the dads. The children learn how to play all the most common sports, but most importantly, they learn good sportsmanship as we are very strict about staying positive and keeping sports friendly and fun.



We value daily play and outside time as a boost for learning. We find an outside break actually improves the behavior of the little children for the in-class times. It creates a more focused child when they've had a bit of sunshine and a chance to run out their energy. The primary children get a midday break to play outside. The grammar and upper school children will often do classes outside when it makes sense and the weather permits. The children think it's a real treat if the teacher says a particular subject is outside for that day. For example, at various times of the day, different classes may come outside to say recitations or read the Book of Insects and search for bugs. The children who study the Book of the Birds will frequently see huge hawks sitting on top of the church steeple or nests with dove eggs in them hidden in bushes. Our campus is picturesque and surrounded by beautiful mountains and desert. We have found learning about Greek history while sitting in the grass underneath a massive olive tree, surrounded by blue skies and mountains, can be particularly inspiring.

We value the arts. All ages learn songs to sing for the Christmas Cantata and end of the year closing ceremonies. The Grammar and Upper school children will learn Latin hymns from *Lingua Angelica* and the Primary students will learn the children's Bible songs and folk songs to perform. First and second grades will learn the basics of rhythm, beat, tone, scale, and reading music in their music class. Once a month an art class is held at the director's house teaching different mediums. The children will create works of art that are saved and then at the end of the year we have an art show where the children can showcase their art. Our Cardinals Culture Club meets once a month to attend local ballets, symphonies, museums, and more.

We provide opportunities for gaining familiarity and comfortability with public speaking. The primary children have show and tell in their classes, which is the beginning of public speaking. The children who have memorized poems or famous speeches in their studies will have opportunities to recite them during morning assembly and earn points for their house. They also can recite their poems or Bible verses at the Christmas Cantata and End of the Year Celebration in front of parents and grand-parents. These opportunities are so simple but so incredibly valuable because, within our close-knit and friendly community, the students will learn from their earliest memories that public speaking is an enjoyable, rewarding experience and not something to be feared.

We value age integration. The result is that the older children practice leadership while looking out for the younger children, and thus they act much more mature, and the younger children look up to the older ones and consequently develop maturity. Homeschoolers have never been taught that it's not "cool" to hang out with a child of a different age, as often is the stigma in public schools. At recess the children will all play together - like a family.



Sometimes it's a giant game of freeze tag or other times they will all draw together. During the school day we will do morning assembly and etiquette lessons all together. The primary school children will do Bible time, midday play break, music, crafts, science experiments, and often read stories together. Each child is learning at his or her own level, taking away from the session what is appropriate for each of them. The grammar and upper school do Latin recitations together, some parts they do in unison, and some separate, each in turn (the younger children learn so much just by listening to the older ones). We also do *Lingua Angelica* (Latin hymns) together and then we split for individual Latin classes. Age integration doesn't work for all aspects or subjects of cottage school, of course, but for those that it does, it is a beautiful thing.

We value our freedoms. We are legally classified as homeschoolers according to [ARS §15-802 G 2](#). Education is conducted "primarily by the parents." Because of this we do not accept any government funds or tax dollars. Arizona has an incredibly strong homeschooling network and several of our families have received aid as needed through the various homeschool scholarships and grants that are available through the national and local Arizona chapters of HSLDA (Homeschool Legal Defense Association). The upside to not taking any government dollars is that we as a community are able to decide what is best for our community without government restrictions and regulations.