SCC adds real-life experience to health program

PROGRESS NEWS STAFF

Advance Community and Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health (NOAH) AND enhancing the practical learning experience for students enrolled in Scottsdale Community College's Community Health Worker program.

The Community Health Worker certificate program prepares students for entry-level roles as health navigators and community health workers in various healthcare sectors, including public health, hospitals, clinics, insurance companies, community-based organizations, and community-focused nonprofits.

The certificate coursework can be completed in just one semester, followed by an eight-week course of practical experience, making it ideal for those eager to enter the healthcare workforce quickly and pursue a variety of career pathways.

"These partnerships provide CHW students the opportunity to gain essential hands-on experience and apply classroom knowledge in meaningful, real-world settings," the college said in a release.

"SCC is thrilled to collaborate with Advance and NOAH," said Angelica Backalukas, SCC's Allied Health faculty and CHW program director. "These partnerships provide invaluable practical experiences, preparing our students not just to enter the healthcare workforce, but to excel in it."

Advance is a global health organization committed to improving health and providing hope through disease prevention, education, and treatment.

NOAH offers a full range of primary and preventive health services for people of all ages and stages of life, including community resources, counseling, dental care, family medicine, nutrition, pediatrics, pharmacy services, and psychiatry.

"These real-world experiences not only fulfill students' practicum needs, but also deepen their understanding of how integrated health services improve outcomes on the ground, making it a pivotal step on the path from learner to provider," the college added.

Information: scottsdalecc.edu/degrees-certificates/community-health.

Scottsdale native named 'outstanding' ASU grad

BY SHAUN LEVIN
Progress Guest Writer

Jake Okun, a Scottsdale native and recent master's graduate in robotics and autonomous systems, was named The University Outstanding Graduate for the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering during May 12 commencement ceremonies, where he was recognized in front of nearly 9,000 graduates and attendees by ASU President Michael Crow.

Each semester, the award is conferred upon a single graduating student whose achievements represent the pinnacle of academic excellence, community impact, and leadership.

Okun's selection is a testament not only to his extraordinary academic record but also to his significant contributions to ASU, the greater Phoenix community, engineering education, and technological innovation.

Scottsdale native Jake Okun won two prestigious awards at Arizona State University's commencement ceremonies earlier this month. *(ASU)*

Okun also received the Impact Award from the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, recognizing his service, leadership, and volunteer efforts that have positively impacted both ASU and broader communities. He was the only graduate student across all master's and PhD programs in the Fulton Schools to receive this award for Spring 2025.

On May 15, Okun was as the graduate convocation speaker for the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, addressing nearly 10,000 attendees at Desert Financial Arena. His speech reflected on his journey in robotics and innovation, and the value of leadership in engineering.

His passion for robotics and automation began back in elementary school and has grown exponentially in his undergraduate years at ASU, where he immersed himself in research, real-world engineering projects, and mentorship.

His work on wearable robotics, most notably a passive exoskeleton designed to reduce physical strain has earned him accolades.

A champion for service and leadership, Okun founded the BEST (Building Engineering Solutions Today) Club at Barrett, The Honors College, to foster innovation and collaboration among engineering students. He also led outreach programs such as EPICS High, helping inspire and mentor future engineers. His dedication to mentorship is a hallmark of his ASU legacy.

Okun exemplifies the spirit of the Fulton Schools, academic excellence, innovation with purpose, and service to the community. His future is incredibly bright, and he's already making a difference.

"Being selected as the Outstanding Graduate is not just a recognition of my academic work, it's a celebration of the incredible community that shaped me," said Okun. "I'm proud to be a lifelong Scottsdale resident, and I'm excited to continue building the future of technology right here in Arizona."

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11. Learn about exciting destinations, packing tips, and planning strategies to make trips easier and more fun.

Cool the Flame: Beat Inflammation, June 12. What you eat can help reduce inflammation and improve energy. Learn how to eat well and feel good.

Smartphone Photos Made Easy, June 16. This class provides easy tips on how to tell a story with each photo.

Understanding AI, June 17. Artificial intelligence can make life easier ad this class will show how and why.

Angels Among Us, June 18. Discover how guardian angels communicate, the signs they send, and how their guidance can bring clarity, comfort, and empower one's life.

Makeup Myth Busters: Truth Behind the Labels, June 19. A makeup pro shares beauty truths, product tips, and how to shop smarter.

Medicare Mystery Tour, June 23. Get a clear, simple breakdown of Medicare options and what matters most for health care.

Emotional Intelligence, June 24. Discover how understanding emotions can improve relationships, reduce stress, and boost everyday confidence. Learn simple tools to help stay calm, clear, and connected.

The Magic of Vintage Photography, June 25. Step back in time with a live demo of 19th-century photography. Discover how portraits were once made using glass, silver, and a little bit of magic.

A Little Spanish Goes a Long Way, June 26. Bridge the language gap with simple Spanish phrases.

The Holland Center is a nonprofit founded in 1986. The multi-generational arts and education center aims to nurture healthy minds, increase positive social connections, and provide "affordable, high-quality lifelong learning experiences.

Information: hollandcenter.org.