

Arizona Women's Partnership, inc.
Grant Recipient Profiles

www.azwp.org

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Arizona Women's Partnership, Inc.

The Arizona Women's Partnership, inc., a 501 (C) 3 non-profit, was created at the end of 2002 to assist grass roots non-profit organizations which help underserved women and children at risk in Arizona. Grants recipients are selected by an annual application and review process.

The total money awarded annually is dependent on the successful outcome of fundraising efforts.

The all volunteer AZWP, inc. has attracted corporate, small business and individual support to achieve this end. Media coverage of its mission, fundraising efforts, grant recipients and volunteers has been extensive.

Gubernatorial and Mayoral proclamations have been issued in support of AZWP, inc.

Since its inception, AZWP, inc. has had support from over 100 volunteers, as well as, numerous chefs, restaurants, culinary schools, resort hotels and jazz artists. Its featured events: Getting Our Just Desserts, which showcased female pastry chefs (now transferred to the Careers through Culinary Arts scholarship Program C-CAP), and Wine, Women & Jazz were both created by AZWP, inc. founder Paula Cullison.

The following profiles of many of the AZWP grant recipients will provide an insight into the important social services offered by the smaller non-profits in this state.

For more information on the Arizona Women's Partnership, inc. please visit www.azwp.org or call 602-863-9744.

Asian Pacific Community in Action

6741 N. 7th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85014

Doug Hirano-Executive Director

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The first challenge physician Kelly Hsu had to attend to back in August 2002 when she began the Asian Pacific Community in Action was to dispel the “modern minority myth”. This myth assumes that all Asians and Pacific Islanders are an affluent, highly educated and successful group. Because of the continuation of this stereotype, the API community is often times ignored in the academic and health care support system. Awareness in the rapidly growing API community, as well as the medical community, was lacking and causing serious problems, including fatalities.

As many as one in every ten Asian and Pacific Islanders carries a chronic form of the virus Hepatitis B, and most do not know. Twenty-five percent of these individuals will eventually die from a liver disease. The medical community’s awareness of Hepatitis B in Asian and Pacific Islanders is inadequate, and many do not request their patients be tested. Another problem in Maricopa County is that seventy percent of the API community is foreign born, and twenty percent of those born outside the U.S. are linguistically isolated, making access to health care difficult.

The Asian Pacific Community in Action hopes to curb the number of people undiagnosed with Hepatitis B, as well as other medical problems, through health education, translation assistance, and providing free health services. The APCA conducts health fairs with free education about cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dental health, and tobacco use. They also conduct free screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, and Hepatitis B screenings and vaccinations. Breast cancer awareness is also a high priority for the organization.

The APCA is trying to provide the resources for the large API community in Maricopa County. Most of the APCA’s support comes from grants, pharmaceutical companies, government contracts and organizations like the Arizona Women’s Partnership. The Arizona Women’s Partnership has been raising money for APCA since 2003, and according to Doug Hirano, is a great morale booster. The money has also allowed the organization to increase its staff. Two years ago the APCA had only one staff member and had to hire outside of the organization for tasks such as grant writing. Now with more staff, the organization is able to help more individuals seek the health care they deserve.

Arizona Coalition for Tomorrow Charitable Fund

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The Arizona Coalition for Tomorrow is committed to improving the health and education preparedness of low-income children by providing the environment for comprehensive health screenings and immunizations through an annual health fair. ACT began by providing “the missing link for children eligible for the Phoenix Head Start program, but lacking the necessary medical resources, and therefore unable to qualify,” explains Director Patti Herington. ACT broadened its reach in 2006 by including Valley preschools in the program as well, and now helps children aged 2 to 13 years.

Since 1991 over 18,000 children have been screened at the annual health fair. Once a year, children and their families attend the health event and are able to have all of their health needs met in one location. Dental, eye, hearing, and asthma screenings take place, as well as blood tests, immunizations, physicals, and Tuberculosis tests. Blood-pressure and diabetes screenings are made available to the adults. Establishing and maintaining health records and arranging for continued care, as well as transportation to and from the event is provided as needed. In 2005, literacy and reading readiness screening for 4 to 5 year olds was added. The health fair isn’t all business; children and their families are entertained by clowns and other Valley mascots during the event. The Phoenix Fire Department is usually in attendance with their truck on display, and arts, crafts, and face painting are provided by volunteers.

An event like this is made possible by partnering with various individuals and organizations like the Arizona Women’s Partnership. “We are so grateful for their contribution. Support from an organization like theirs is such a delight,” says Patti Herington. Financial support from the community as well as private organizations makes it possible to purchase supplies, plan the event, and raise awareness. Through the joint efforts of the Arizona Coalition for Tomorrow Health Fair and Head Start, the community is able to enhance the quality of life for Arizona’s children, their families and the neighborhoods in which they live.

AZ Blankets 4 Kids

P.O. Box 11206, Tempe, AZ 85284

Carole Willsey-President

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The quilters, sewers, knitters and crotcheters of AZ Blankets 4 Kids believe every child deserves the comfort of a homemade blanket. Seriously ill, needy and traumatized children from infancy to eighteen years of age are able to face difficult times through the tender loving care that is in every blanket. Since the organization began, over 34,700 blankets have been delivered to children suffering from serious illness, fire or major auto accident, sexual or physical abuse, mental or physical disabilities, or homelessness, providing something medicine alone cannot, love. “The children really treasure their blankets, it becomes like a friend, a source of security,” explains President Carole Willsey. The blankets are so meaningful that the children often take their blankets with them, through various medical treatments, group homes, and even off to college later in life.

The volunteers of AZ Blankets 4 Kids join regularly for Blanket Bees to sew together and serve a good cause. The Blanket Bees provide a fun and social atmosphere for the volunteers all for the benefit of children. Many of the volunteers began with Project Linus, a similar foundation, because they loved to quilt and sew, but had no one to give their blankets to. For those not interested in the bees, blankets, fabric, and other supplies can also be donated to the organization. Absolutely nothing is wasted and the women have found ways to turn salvage scraps in to beautiful blankets. If there is anything left over they feel they can't use, scraps are given to other organizations, such as Ugly Quilts, which make bed rolls for the homeless. The women then personally deliver the blankets, which are sewn in various sizes to accommodate various age groups, to children's hospitals and organizations such as Aids Project of Arizona, Child Protective Services, and Save the Family.

One of the most challenging aspects of running the organization is finding enough donations of child-friendly fabric, batting, and flannel for the premie blankets. The 2007 grant from the Arizona Women's Partnership has helped greatly when donations just aren't enough. The grant has enabled the women to buy much needed supplies, which allows them to produce more blankets, add more eligible recipient agencies, and subsequently reach more children in need.

Arizona Rising Suns Track Club

P.O. Box 2717, Peoria, AZ 85380

Sabestine Onyepunuka - Coach

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The Arizona Rising Suns Track Club was formed to provide after school activities for inner city and at-risk youth from the ages of 5 to 18 years. Through this club children are taught that the most important kind of success resides in their ability to improve themselves, give their maximum effort, and be the best that they can be. The coaches for the track club are all volunteers, and all have prestigious track backgrounds. In 1980 coach Sabestine Onyepunuka was a contender for the Nigerian Olympic Team, until a hamstring accident kept him out of the games. However, Onyepunuka's two daughters have become quite successful with the support of Rising Suns. Jessica and Judith Onyepunuka of Peoria joined the track club over a decade ago, and both may have the Olympic Games in their future; Jessica even received a full track scholarship to the University of Southern California in 2005.

Participating on sports teams is an expensive privilege many inner city families can't afford. Rising Suns is able to aid the city's children through the support of its community, fundraisers, and organizations such as the Arizona Women's Partnership. "Arizona Women's Partnership really helped Arizona Rising Suns with their financial contribution. It allowed for athletes that would have otherwise not been able to go, travel to Nationals", explains Judith and Jessica Onyepunuka. Although coaches are all volunteers, the track club incurs many other expenses. Coach Eddie Robinson remarks, "The funds provided by the AZWP will be used in a number of ways, such as uniforms for athletes that can't afford them, replacement equipment, and travel expenses. Without caring individuals in organizations like yours a lot of kids would not have a chance."

The same can be said for the track club. With the support of Rising Suns, many children are able to engage in a positive after school activity that keeps them off the dangerous streets. Through sports activities children learn about team work, perseverance, humility, and most importantly, how to have fun. With the encouragement from the Arizona Rising Suns Track Club, these city children will not only become better athletes, but more successful citizens as well.

Arizona Sexual Assault Network

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Through a collaborative statewide network, the Arizona Sexual Assault Network identifies and addresses sexual issues in the hopes of achieving a society free from sexual violence. Founded in 1998, AzSAN was born out of Arizona's great need for a statewide sexual assault coalition. The organization was incorporated in 1999, and is currently headquartered in central Phoenix. The network has one full-time staff member, a Board of Directors, dedicated volunteers and a growing membership of individuals and organizations. The support of members, volunteers and organizations such as the Arizona Women's Partnership, help to keep the network operational.

AzSAN serves the general Arizona population, but their principle stakeholders are Arizona's Child and Family Advocacy Centers and Rape Crisis Centers. According to the AzSAN website, "Advocacy Centers were created more than a decade ago, based on the premise 'together we're smarter' when responding to victims of violent crimes. These centers are designed to provide comprehensive victim services, while improving the investigation and prosecution of family violence." There are a variety of advocacy centers located throughout Arizona, and some are designed to provide onsite services to child victims of physical and/or sexual abuse or neglect. Other centers provide services to both children and adult victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and/or vulnerable adult abuse.

AzSAN also works to educate the public on the truth about rape by debunking many myths, as well as providing statistics and ways one may take action to end sexual violence in this state. Such tips include encouraging legislators to fund victim service programs, educating one's peers on the realities of sexual assault, and recognizing that no one deserves to be assaulted. In the years to come, the Arizona Sexual Assault Network hopes to continue to work on increasing their capacity so that they may adequately serve the entire state of Arizona.

Camp Verde Adult Reading Program

P.O. Box 733, Camp Verde, AZ 86322

Gwen Gunnell - Director

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The mission of the Camp Verde Adult Reading Program is to offer adults in Camp Verde and adjacent communities the opportunity to achieve personal goals through improved basic reading, writing, math and life skills. The needs of the people over the age of 16 that CVARP addresses range from having little to no reading skills and limited English language skills, to only requiring a small amount of aid to achieve a GED. The programs utilized by CVARP include: one-on-one tutoring in adult basic literacy, small-group classes in English for non-English speaking peoples, computer-aided instruction in literacy, English, and pre-GED skills, and Workplace Education classes and Skills for Living classes.

Although funding is the biggest challenge Director Gwen Gunnell faces, support from the community has been extremely generous. CVARP's volunteer base donates roughly 2,000 to 3,000 hours per year, and because many come from rural areas, some must drive over 20 miles. The recent Arizona Women's Partnership grant has also been of great contribution. "We were thrilled. Due to the nature of government funding, we can't buy food with their grants, but we can with the AZWP money. Their extra source of support has made a big difference!" exclaimed Gwen. The AZWP money has been directly used to fund the six to eight week program for non-English speaking women currently in session this summer. In the program participants keep a notebook of English words they don't understand, as well as learn about proper nutrition, the correct way to clean and prepare food, home safety, basic first aid, and simple fitness routines. The participants are all instructed by professional nurses, nutritionists, and paramedics.

Gwen remarked that she had seen several success stories pass through CVARP, but one woman stood out in particular. The woman had escaped to the US from a war torn country where her young son still resided. After learning English through a CVARP program and working three jobs, she was able to send for her child. With the continued help of CVARP, she recently passed her naturalization test, bought a brand new home and now works only one job. Through the advancement of language and basic life skills, CVARP is helping those in need meet their potential and achieve better lives.

Community Kids of Globe

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Community Kids of Globe began as a program dedicated to providing local foster children with a Christmas celebration. This program eventually grew to a large annual party, and currently Community Kids of Globe has progressed to providing disadvantaged children and their community with a multitude of programs and scholarship opportunities. Through the support of volunteers, government agencies and organizations such as the Arizona Women's Partnership, Community Kids of Globe has been able to award 3,060 high school students with scholarships to further their education. "The Arizona Women's Partnership gift also contributed to numerous fifty-dollar gift cards that were awarded to deserving local teachers, and all were greatly appreciated," said Community Kids Director, Donna Jones

Through the advisement of Child Protective Services, local pastors and individuals, the organization has been able to help the disadvantaged young people and their families with medical care costs, summer tuition programs, and added needs such as swim lessons. Community Kids of Globe also raise money through an annual fund drive by mail, as well as support that come from the growing mining industry. The community of Globe has likewise benefited from Community Kids; they have donated money to the local libraries, women's shelters, and a community arts program. What began as a small effort to give foster children an enjoyable holiday has now become a way for the Globe community to not only help their underprivileged youth, but also a way to benefit the Globe collective.

Eve's Place

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Margaret Pruitt – Founder

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Eve's Place is a non-profit agency that serves victims of domestic violence in Surprise, Arizona and the surrounding communities. Through the use of an Emergency Shelter, support groups, and an anonymous hotline, women in the Surprise region are able to access a place of safety and resources to combat domestic abuse. Support groups enable women to receive education and advocacy through a variety of community collaborations. Domestic violence survivors also receive support to increase their independence and self-sufficiency to ensure and continue a life-style free from abuse. The Emergency Shelter is available for women and children for up to six weeks. Here survivors are placed in a home-like atmosphere that is secure and quiet. Eve's Place provides counseling and transportation, as well as assistance with filing legal paperwork, looking for employment, and finding a new place to live.

In 2006 Eve's Place opened Eve's Treasures, a thrift store run predominantly by volunteers whose proceeds benefit the shelter and the women they help. Support for Eve's Place is also made possible by the Arizona Women's Partnership. "Without our contributors we could not open our doors and help all of the women and children that go through our house. We could not go to churches, clubs, organizations and businesses to assist in educating the public about the devastation of domestic violence," remarks President Velda King. Domestic violence occurs in all types of families, and affects one out of every three Arizona residents. Eve's Place hopes to continue aiding the women and children most affected by this violence by providing them the safety and resources they so desperately need.

Foster Angels of Arizona Serving Together / Arizonans for Children

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In September of 2000, a group of foster parents came together in the hopes of providing foster children with the resources and knowledge to enable them to break the cycle of abuse and poverty. With the aid of volunteers, donations and community support, FFAST has been able to develop numerous programs benefiting school aged foster children, who typically have nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Programs offered by FFAST include *Kids Learn FFAST*, a tutoring and mentoring program that matches children with a committed volunteer who provides educational and personal support for up to one year; *FFAST Track Transitional Learning*, a program aimed at foster children 14 and older focused on developing an education and career path to ensure foster children may transition out of the system successfully; *Kids in Action*, which focuses on the special interests of children like art, music, and computer skills; and *FFAST Friends Peer Mentoring*, a program that matches high school aged foster children with older alumni of the foster care system that can provide a positive role model.

There are over 10,000 children placed in the Arizona foster care system, and FFAST is but one small organization trying to fill a huge need. Community support has been generous, but grants like those from the Arizona Women's Partnership make a difference. "Support from the AZWP and other organizations allow us to retain our small staff, pay the operating expenses and ultimately keep our doors open. Without our services, many foster children would have nothing," notes Lauri Brown, the Director of Operations at FFAST.

Foster Angels was recently acquired by a larger Phoenix organization, Arizonans for Children. In addition to the FFAST tutoring and mentoring programs, foster children will now also have access to a variety of Arizonans for Children resources including three Children's Visitation and Activity Centers, the LifeBook Program, monthly birthday parties and more. The growth of FFAST will hopefully guarantee that Arizona's foster youth continue to receive the care they deserve.

Gabriel's Angels

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Pam Gaber - Founder

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When Pam Gaber began volunteering at the Crisis Nursery in Phoenix, she had no idea it would lead to the birth of her pet therapy organization, Gabriel's Angels. After having told the children at the nursery about her new Weimaraner puppy, Pam decided one Christmas to bring the dog in dressed as Rudolf. The children's response to Gabriel amazed Pam. The once vulnerable and troubled children were suddenly gentle and serene with Gabe; their demeanor changed completely. Shortly after Gabe's initial visit, Pam had him certified as a therapy dog and in August of 2000 Gabriel's Angels came to fruition.

With the help of grants that support grassroots organizations like those from the Arizona Women's Partnership, as well as donations and community support, Gabriel's Angels has doubled in size. The organization now has more than ninety Certified Therapy Teams, consisting of owner and dog, made up completely by volunteers. Each team visits facilities serving abused and at-risk children in the Greater Phoenix Metropolitan Area, and visit the same location either weekly or biweekly. Consistent visits by the same dog are paramount for the children and allow them to build trusting relationships. Through petting, brushing, hugging, and playing with the dog, the at-risk children are taught core behaviors such as trust, respect, and empathy. The children are also able to walk the dogs, feed and water the dogs, and reward the dogs for obeying basic commands. Learning how to interact with the animals properly provides the children with a framework for positive control in a relationship and also heightens self-esteem. Because the children Gabriel's Angels visit come from abusive and negligent environments, the child's interaction with the animal often provides the very first example of unconditional love. Gabriel's Angels not only provides healthy relationships, but also hopes to end the cycle of violence for both child and animal. Children raised in abusive homes often grow up to exhibit violent behavior. This behavior is typically inflicted on animals first, and humans later. By teaching the children to respect and nurture animals, they hope to stop the future abuse of people as well. Through these efforts Gabriel's Angels is offering neglected and at-risk children an opportunity to love and trust again.

The volunteers at Good Neighbor Food Services are committed to providing nutritious food boxes to the needy families, children, and the elderly; and to service all low income families of the Chino Valley community. The majority of those assisted by Good Neighbor Food Services are single mothers and their children. At least ninety-nine percent of their clients are living below the poverty level, with an average income of seven hundred to eight hundred dollars per month. Jobs in the Chino Valley area for women are mainly in retail, the service sector, and housekeeping. These jobs are often located miles from their homes, and transportation to and from work can be very limited. The majority of these jobs are low paying, most under seven dollars per hour.

On a predetermined day, mothers and other clients may visit the Good Neighbor Food Services facility and pay fifteen dollars for a food box, and must then return at a later date to pickup the box. Food boxes are ordered from the Westside Food Bank, usually about one hundred and twenty per month, and contain frozen meat, fresh produce, canned fruits and vegetables.

All of the workers at Good Neighbor Food Services are volunteers and the budget is sustained by grants, donations, and fundraisers. A grant from the Arizona Women's Partnership was of great benefit to the organization, and was primarily used to supplement operating expenses and add other food purchases to each box. "With additional funds, we can add such staples as eggs, flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil, and toilet paper. We do receive emergency requests for food which we have difficulty in filling, but we can expand this aspect of our organization with help from the AZWP," remarked Board President Ginny Fincher. By supplying the needy families, mothers, and elderly of their community with basic necessities, Good Neighbor Food Services is hoping to curb the pain of hunger and improve lives.

Growth Improvement for Female Teens

201 E Voltaire Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85022

Kristin Bradfield-Parrack - Founder

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Growth Improvement for Female Teens began in 1999 when schoolteacher Kristen Bradfield-Parrack discovered the young girls in her classroom were in desperate need of improving their self-esteem. Through her organization, Kristin hopes to empower young women to overcome life's challenges and recognize the gift of their full potential. By girls, and for girls, GIFT is one of the only programs to be truly run by a teen board of directors. "GIFT is driven by the philosophy that girls have the best solutions to the problems they face in their own communities," explains Kristin. The Teen Advisory Group, also known as TAG, meets monthly to determine the direction of the GIFT program and to learn about non profit governance through direct participation.

A spin-off of TAG, the Youth Facilitator program was partially funded with a grant from the Arizona Women's Partnership. "I appreciate AZWP's strong support of this project, as it is directly in line with their mission of promoting the status of Arizona women and empowering women's grass roots organizations through mini grants and publicity", notes Kristin. This new program teaches young women strategies for facilitating group discussions and planning sessions, so they may lead community organizing in their home neighborhoods and schools. The main objective of this program will be for girls to operate programs at GIFT's Sister-to-Sister Camp for 8th grade girls. Sister-to Sister provides a transition program for teen girls moving from middle school and junior high to high school. The program includes a summer retreat for over 200 teenage girls entering high school, and an ongoing school based empowerment program throughout the year. GIFT also runs the Inside-Out program which collaborates with the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections and the Girls' Circle Association. Together they provide a weekly support group to the girls in the Black Canyon Correctional Facility, as well as their community parole programs. With the aid of GIFT, the women in and outside of the correctional facility are able to increase their resiliency, self esteem, and have a better chance for a more positive life.

Havasu for Youth

P.O. Box 686, Lake Havasu City, AZ 86405-0686

Melissa Dobar - President/CEO

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Twenty-two years ago in the small community of Lake Havasu City, concerned parents came together to discuss the dangers their youths faced with regards to such issues as drugs and alcohol consumption. What started as a simple exchanging of information among parents has blossomed into a non-profit agency dedicated to empowering the youth of their community, especially disadvantaged children. Havasu for Youth now offers several programs geared toward enriching the lives of children, including their original program, *Project Graduation*, which has helped teenagers enjoy a safe graduation celebration free of drugs and alcohol for over twenty years.

The most successful programs for Havasu for Youth are those that provide after school support and added infrastructure in a child's life. Some of these programs include *Peer 2 Peer*, a tutoring and job training opportunity; *L.E.A.R.N.*, an after-school program for teenagers which provides prevention classes and mentoring; and the *Youth Enrichment Program*, which offers opportunities for children to play sports, participate in art classes and join summer camp programs. Grants, help from United Way, and community support are what make these programs possible. Support from the Arizona Women's Partnership has been crucial in helping children in youth enrichment programs. A single grant from the AZWP can lead to as many as twenty-five children being able to play sports, take dance classes, and other activities when they normally would not be able to.

Most of the children Havasu for Youth seeks to help come from single parent homes or are being raised by grandparents. Eighty-seven percent of the families Havasu for Youth sees are living at the poverty line or below. President Melissa is exceptionally inspired by the great-grandparents who have taken to raising their great-grandchildren, calling them "amazing". These children are often left with their great-grandparents after two generations of family members have been sent to jail, usually due to the effects of drugs. Because Social Security and disability funds are hard to access and usually not equipped to cover the expenses of raising children, these guardians must work extra hard to find resources. But through the generosity of community, Havasu for Youth is able to provide the skills necessary for their youth to become empowered and take on productive roles in society.

Working together with Social Services, the Police Department and other agencies, the H.A.V.E.N. Family Resource Center assists children and adult victims of sexual and domestic violence by reducing their trauma and increasing the success rate of prosecutions. Rather than sit in the stark and often cold surroundings of a police department or hospital, victims may visit the safe and comforting environment of H.A.V.E.N., which joined with Lake Havasu Abuse Prevention Project. In either the medical examination room, living room, or interview room people are able to speak with police officers, physicians, lawyers and counselors all in one location. Often times the comforting atmosphere of H.A.V.E.N. draws in victims who weren't comfortable at a police station or hospital, and would not have reported their abuse otherwise.

After visiting H.A.V.E.N., victims of violence are able to access counseling services specialized for abuse issues, and assisted with navigating legal matters. This assistance has been influential in producing more arrests and helping people overcome traumatic experiences. The center also offers a twenty-four hour Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Hotline as well as a Child Abuse Prevention program. Grants from the Arizona Women's Partnership were directly used to fund such services, particularly counseling programs. According to H.A.V.E.N. Director Mary Lou O'Connell, "finding funds for these services can be extremely challenging." Community awareness is also a huge challenge. Although organizations like H.A.V.E.N. have had many successes, abuse is still very prevalent, a fact that is difficult for much of the community to admit. The lack of awareness in the community furthers the difficulty to raise money; thus making grants and donations extremely important. Through the organized efforts of social services, the police department, volunteers and the community, H.A.V.E.N. will be able to continue helping the vulnerable victims of assault and abuse.

Maricopa County Task Force Against Domestic Abuse

P.O. Box 1806, Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Leah Myers - Chair

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The Maricopa County Task Force Against Domestic Abuse is dedicated to increasing public awareness, improving the care and treatment of those affected by domestic violence, and reducing violence in the community. The task force intends to reach these goals through networking, advocacy, political cooperation, and coordinated service delivery. The organization is comprised entirely of volunteers who are committed to providing services to survivors in critical need, and also strives to prevent family abuse in Maricopa County.

One vital way the task force aides individuals fleeing abusive relationships is through its Relocation Project. Victims in need of assistance with travel costs are referred through advocates from domestic violence shelters and other social service agencies to the members of the task force. Applications are then reviewed by the Relocation Committee and funds are awarded within twenty-four hours after verification that a place of safety and support is secured. The financial assistance provided may include airfare, bus fare, gas, car repairs, and truck rentals. Food, lodging, and other travel expenses are also supplied.

In 2001 and 2002 the Relocation Project aided 77 women, 2 men, and 100 children; however, funds for this project are severely limited. Assistance from organizations like the Arizona Women's Partnership has been crucial. According to Chairwoman Leah Myers, "The continued success of the Relocation Project relies entirely upon donations from the community and grant funding. One hundred percent of the AZWP grant was deposited into MCTFADA's Relocation Fund, and used to assist battered men, women, and their children. With these funds they are able to relocate to freedom, and a place of safety and support."

With continued support the task force will be able to advocate for underrepresented women. The task force also hopes to keep up with legislation and public issues that concern domestic violence. The Maricopa County Task Force Against Domestic Abuse persists in providing a safe place for members to freely share hopes, frustrations and ideas, and builds a base from which to create a mechanism for change in our society.

Payson Community Kids

300 West Wade Lane, Payson, AZ 85541

Marcy Rogers-Founder

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Marcy Rogers began her mission to improve the lives of low income children and their families out of her small apartment in 1996. Rogers' mission began by chance one day after she approached a small child walking alone at night outside of her apartment. The child, a three year-old girl named Stephanie, and her sister became Rogers' first children. Today, Rogers currently has 60 children and teenagers on her roster.

Due to the organization's rapid growth, Rogers quit her job as the Payson Housing and Development Coordinator and purchased a bi-level home, with the entire first floor devoted to PCK. The privately funded organization provides free after school and summer programs for local children six days a week. Each day the children receive a healthy snack upon arrival, and then begin the numerous activities that await them, which include piano lessons, art classes, tending the vegetable garden, swimming, playing on the playground, drug prevention classes, and Kung Fu, just to name a few.

With the financial support of Arizona Women's Partnership and other organizations, older children and willing parents can also receive work experience and a minimum wage income through Marcy. She currently has ten teenagers on the payroll whose duties include tending to younger children, cleaning, and preparing food. Low-income mothers are also able to benefit from Marcy's employment opportunities. One mother Marcy employed was eventually able to take a manager's position at the local golf course, and now makes enough money to support her family. "I want to help children in every aspect of their lives to make a big change, rather than just helping little bits here and there. If the parents can change their own lives, that benefits their children as well," explains Rogers.

Rogers not only provides a safe play environment and job skills for low-income families, but also basic needs such as clothing and food. Donations from St. Mary's Food Bank are handed out to the children to take home to their families, as well as necessities like underwear, socks, and toothbrushes. Through the combined efforts of Marcy Rogers, the community, and annual grants from the AZWP, the Payson Community Kids are able to lead more productive, healthy, and happy lives.

Power Paws Assistance Dogs

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Power Paws Assistance Dogs is dedicated to providing highly skilled assistance dogs to adults and children with disabilities throughout the United States. Power Paws also provides education and continuous support for working Assistance Dog Teams, as well as resources for individuals in the community with disabilities.

Power Paws trains Golden Retrievers and Labrador Retrievers in 90 commands focusing on assisting those with mobility impairments, such as paraplegics and quadriplegics. Power Paws also provides dogs to the hearing impaired and individuals with psycho/social disabilities, such as fears, phobias and Post Traumatic Distress Disorder. Some of the commands the assistance dogs learn are to open and close doors and drawers, turn lights on and off, push elevator buttons, and retrieve dropped items. Above all, the dogs provide love and companionship to their owners. Since 2001, Power Paws has certified 32 dogs and currently has over 40 dogs in training.

The dog trainers of Power Paws have all graduated from The Assistance Dog Institute where they learn how to select and identify puppies abilities based on their personality, as well as how to cultivate the puppies' talents while they grow to help them succeed. Trainers are also responsible for matching the puppy with their new owner to ensure a long and happy relationship. Power Paws also trains dogs through their High Schooled Assistance Dog Program. This educational program is designed to enhance the lives of at-risk teens through personal contact with animals, and the responsibility of caring for and training dogs. In this program teens learn self discipline, teaching skills, and disability awareness.

With aid from private donors, community support, and a recent grant from the Arizona Women's Partnership, Power Paws is not only helping the disabled, but also helping puppies find good homes, and troubled teenagers find guidance. Most importantly, through their specialized programs, Power Paws Assistance Dogs is able to empower adults and children with disabilities for greater independence.

Shoebox Ministry

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Laura Borgeson - Director

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Shoebox Ministries was founded in 1988 by Judy Borgeson when she saw there was a great need for hygiene products by the homeless and working poor. What began as a small venture in the spare room of her home has grown to a full functioning organization with an outreach that has extended across international borders. Shoebox Ministry continues to be the only organization in the Phoenix area dedicated to restoring dignity to Arizona's homeless through the distribution of toiletries.

“There are more than 15,000 homeless men, women and children in the Valley, and helping them can sometimes be a daunting task,” explains Director Laura Borgeson. The Shoebox Ministry collects donated toiletries and assembles four different types of personal hygiene kits into a shoebox, all of which last about one month. These shoeboxes are then sent to various shelters and agencies where they are handed out to deserving individuals, making sure they reach those who really need them. Kits are made for men, women and children and include such necessities as shampoo, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, women's sanitary products, socks, and razors. The ministry also holds drives for special kits during certain times of the year, including Easter Box-ettes in April, Mother's Day Purses in May and Father's Day Boxes in June. By providing these necessary grooming items, the ministry hopes to build self-esteem, thus improving the chances of homeless men and women returning to the work force and securing a place in society.

“Because Shoebox Ministry is always in need of items, and toiletry donations are sometimes hard to come by, support from organizations like the Arizona Women's Partnership have been important,” conveys Laura Borgeson. Volunteers have also been vital to the ministries success, which has impacted not only the local area, but has now become a state wide program. Through the continued support of the community, Shoebox Ministry will be able to further their outreach and help America's homeless and working poor.

Soroptimist International of the San Tans

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Margaret Coulter – Director

tel: 480-782-2221 e-mail: Margaret.Coulter@ci.chandler.az.us www.sisantans.org**Soroptimist International of Mesa**

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Candace Johnson - President

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Soroptimist International of the San Tans is a service club for business owners and professionals dedicated to improving the quality of life for women and families. Serving the East Valley since 1984, Soroptimist International financially supports several different awards programs such as the Making a Difference for Women Awards, which supports individuals, businesses and organizations that advance the status of women; Women's Opportunity Awards, which aid women who need training, education or upgraded skills to become employable; and the Violet Richardson Awards which honor high school seniors who have made outstanding contributions to home, school, community, country and the world. The club also makes contributions to local non-profits and women's shelters such as Girls Ranch, The Desert Cancer Foundation of Arizona, Paz de Cristo, and My Sister's Place. In addition to these programs, Soroptimist International also provides cash grants for GED candidates, food drives, and other support to the House of Refugee East transitional housing/self sufficiency center for the homeless.

Assistance for these programs is made possible through the contributions of various agencies and organizations including the Arizona Women's Partnership. "The grant funds received from AZWP were utilized to award scholarships to women who have overcome tremendous odds and obstacles, and to advance their education and career dreams. Additional awards were made to recognize women and young girls as well as regional organizations that work in our local community to improve the status of women in society. These awards were made at the club's annual Awards Luncheon in March of this year," explained Public Relations Chair, Deborah Arteaga. The name 'Soroptimist' is derived from the Latin words "soror" and "optima", literally meaning "the best for women". And through the support of the community, these professional women are achieving just that, the best for the worthy women of the East Valley.

Southwest Valley Literacy Association

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The Southwest Valley Literacy Association promotes pride, self-worth and productivity to adults through the use of immersion style English and literacy programs and community involvement. SVLA, formerly the Buckeye Literacy Association, was started by local librarian Dorothy Hunsman who traveled to the regional dairies and taught workers how to read, write and speak English. Today, SVLA helps individuals from all walks of life not only become literate in English, but also earn their GED and US citizenship.

During its pilot years the literacy association classes were taught predominantly by retired teachers. Director Kim Tengler is appreciative of the community support she receives, but notes that volunteers are becoming more difficult to recruit, especially tutors. “Literacy on any level is so important,” says Kim. “Without communication many people can’t function in their day to day lives. You hear so many say ‘foreigners need to learn English’. Well here’s a chance to step-up and help them. Without our help they have no other way to obtain these skills,” she notes. Those who participate in the SVLA programs are each given their own reading material so they may study at home. Support from the Arizona Women’s Partnership has provided enough funding for 75 people to receive study materials. “When we received the AZWP grant, I said ‘Wow!’” exclaimed Kim. “We had almost depleted our supply of extra books and information pamphlets, it was perfect timing!”

Southwest Valley Literacy Association has changed many lives, including a Dominican man and his family who had been working as a janitor at a local school. He spoke little English, and had tried to take classes, but was forced to move around for work. As a result, he was unable to complete one program. With the help of SVLA he was able to pass his naturalization exam in only six months. “He was so dedicated and just thrilled to death when he passed. It was amazing how much he accomplished in such a short time and great to see how proud he was afterwards,” explains Kim.

Timber Trails Children's Project

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Many children that come from low income families in the Greater Phoenix Metropolitan Area have never been outside of the city. Fresh air, pine trees, adventure and the thrill of summer camp are but a distant fantasy for most of these children. However, the organization Timber Trails is helping Phoenix's less fortunate youth experience the summer of a lifetime. When a group of children were preparing to leave for Colorado recently, they described the trip as "exciting" and "emotional...happy". One boy described Timber Trails as "generous" saying, "This is usually a really expensive trip, and it's really nice that kids like us can go, when we normally wouldn't be able to".

This year Timber Trails offered two different programs, one in northern Arizona and another in southern Colorado. Partnering with Deer Hill Wilderness Backpacking Expeditions and Centaur Leadership Horse Program, the children experience one week of backpacking, hiking, riding horses and sleeping under the stars along with an experienced wilderness staff. Both expeditions provide camping gear, sleeping bags, warm clothing and other necessities to the campers as needed. Through these programs the children learn leadership skills, patience, team-building and self esteem, all important skills to help them better their difficult lives in the inner city.

All of the children involved with Timber Trails are living below the poverty level, some qualifying as homeless. Fifty percent of these children are from single parent homes, most with mothers struggling to support her children, and some with one or more parent in prison. They often come from rough neighborhoods, and some have been innocent victims of gang violence, while others face violence in their own homes. Timber Trails provides the children an escape from the sweltering hot Arizona summer, idle days, and an unsafe environment.

According to Timber Trail's founder Elizabeth Hunzicker, the most challenging aspect of Timber Trails is raising funds and writing grants. The Arizona Women's Partnership has been effective in aiding Timber Trails since 2003 through its fundraising and easy grant application. With the support of organizations like the AZWP and several others, more than 575 Phoenix children have been able to experience the lasting joy of summer camp, and hopefully a more promising future.

Tucson International Alliance of Refugee Communities

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The Tucson International Alliance of Refugee Communities promote the well-being of refugees and immigrants by assisting them to become self-sufficient and integrated into American society. This is accomplished through programs that assist refugees and immigrants, who have been resettled in the Tucson and Pima County region, in areas of family strengthening, social services, housing, child care, education, crime prevention, community health, civic engagement, cultural preservation and leadership development. Since its founding in 1995, TIARC has become an umbrella organization for refugee communities in Tucson, and every year aids roughly 150 refugees.

The most challenging aspect for TIARC is helping the numerous single young mothers, with three to five children, who are illiterate with little to no working experience. Helping them to become as self-sufficient as possible in a short amount of time requires a large supply of funds. The Arizona Women's Partnership contributions over the past five years have specifically aided these single mothers and their children. "The AZWP grant allowed the TIARC to help illiterate women learn basic reading and writing and assist them in finding a job," said TIARC director, Amra Sabanic.

Single mothers have also been aided through collaboration with the University of Arizona Honors Civic Engagement Team by running the Liberian Family Literacy Project. Students from U of A visit families twice a week. One group of students worked with mothers in improving literacy and daily life skills, while the other group provided support and assistance to children with homework, study skills, cultural adjustment and other related issues. "We have children who improved their grades at school, a 64 year old woman who learned how to write her name, and a 34 year old single mom of four who learned basic writing skills and was able to find a job," explained Amra.

With continued support from the community and organizations like the Arizona Women's Partnership, TIARC hopes to continue its goal of assisting refugees to achieve economic self-sufficiency, an acceptable measure of social integration into American society, and the ability to utilize mainstream public and private resources so they may thrive in their new home.

United People Who Care Organization

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At the United People Who Care Organization, at-risk youth from the Winslow area are given aid and assisted in developing the qualities they need to become successful, responsible, and contributing citizens. UPWCO is a grassroots, non-profit organization and participants at its youth center could be classified as those who “fall through the cracks,” explains Director Wanda Wilhoite. Participants this summer range in age from 8 to 15 years, and come from poor homes where a good deal of their needs are not being met. Many of the children are part of a cycle of poverty, and experience such setbacks as academic failure, juvenile probation, thoughts of suicide, drug addiction, and detention center and prison incarceration.

UPWCO’s Youth Center and Youth Safe Haven program offer children welcomed respite from the heat and idle summers spent in un-air-conditioned motel residences and city housing. Through these programs participants gain access to mentors and tutoring, predominantly from retired educators. “We serve because we love children, and we loved teaching and mentoring when we were in the classroom,” notes Wanda. Children are encouraged to succeed through homework supervision, computer literacy, drug prevention, diversity, the arts, and a caring environment.

Nearing its ninth anniversary, UPWCO has been made successful due in part to its generous contributors, including the Arizona Women’s Partnership. “UPWCO's budget seems to be too small to generate much interest from the large donors. I am so happy that a board member saw AZWP’s first article in the Arizona Republic and suggested that I send in a request for funding. I am so pleased that AZWP empathizes with the needs that grassroots organizations have. AZWP's contributions are greatly appreciated and helped in getting more recognition as a needed Winslow, small, grassroots charitable organization,” remarks Wanda. By helping the Winslow youth succeed academically, the United People Who Care Organization hope to see them strengthen every aspect of their lives and break the cycle of poverty.

Unlimited Potential

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Unlimited Potential works to empower women, foster the healthy development of young children, and strengthen south Phoenix families and communities. Their philosophy is that education is a means to empower individuals for their own self-fulfillment and participation in the decision-making of the community. Unlimited Potential has offered community based education programs since 1986 to low-income families. Programs offered by Unlimited Potential include early childhood development, family activities, and social services.

The Early Childhood Program works with preschoolers, aged 6 months to 5 years, and their mothers. Parents are actively involved in the activities which help children gain communication, language, socialization, and preschool skills. Other family programs work to build and strengthen family and community ties and include frequent activities such as potlucks, movies, cultural events, and mountain hikes. Social service programs help families acquire needed resources to resolve legal, medical, financial and domestic problems. Many participants also receive assistance so they may enroll in job training and college programs.

These programs are made possible through the hard work of volunteers, board members, instructors and donors. The 2006 grant donated by the Arizona Women's Partnership was specifically influential for a teacher at Unlimited Potential. "The grant will cover partial payroll costs of a preschool teacher, Maria Rivera, in our Early Childhood Program. Maria learned English and got her GED at Unlimited Potential, and is enrolled part-time at South Mountain College working on her AAS degree in Early Childhood Development," explained former Director Jeanne Devine.

"We believe individuals can acquire the skills necessary to overcome formidable economic and social barriers, and become proactive in changing their lives and communities. To this end, Unlimited Potential places considerable emphasis on the power of education and self-esteem," remarked Jeanne. Through the continuation of these educational programs and support of low income families in south Phoenix, women and their children are empowered to discover their potential.

Washington Elementary Education Foundation

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The Washington Elementary School District is committed to achieving excellence for every child, every day, with every opportunity. The mission of the Washington Elementary School District is devoted to student achievement, and preparing all students to become responsible, successful contributors to our diverse society. United by a passion for learning, the Washington Elementary School District honors achievement, respect, integrity and responsibility as the form of their foundation. By emphasizing honest communication, safety, equal opportunities, and teachers and staff that lead by example, the Washington Elementary School District hopes to aid its students in achieving their dreams. Washington Elementary School District (WESD) serves a diverse population of more than 25,300 students in north central Phoenix and east Glendale. The largest elementary school district in Arizona, WESD comprises 32 schools; 21 K-6 schools, one K-5, one 6-8, two K-7 schools, three K-8 schools and four middle/junior high schools. All 32 WESD schools earned an achievement profile of performing, performing plus, highly performing, or excelling from the Arizona Department of Education during the 2005 and 2006 school years. With support from the community and grants from the Arizona Women’s Partnership, the Washington Elementary Education Foundation has aided WESD students with such programs as *Head Start*, a free lunch, reading performance through *Read First*, and an English language program supporting the 50 different languages represented at WESD schools. According to the WESD website, “All WESD students are challenged to achieve through the outstanding educational programs delivered at every level. All of the WESD curricula have been carefully aligned with the state-mandated academic standards, and WESD is a leader among districts in developing and implementing comprehensive student assessments that align with the curricula.” By bringing together students, educators, and community programs, the Washington Elementary School District and Education Foundation are able to supply their students with the skills they need to achieve success in the future. The AZWP, inc. grant enabled classroom teachers to provide enrichment projects for their students.

WellCare Foundation

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Marge Ebeling - Founder

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After watching mothers' faces drop when they were told how much a single visit to the pediatrician would cost, Marge Ebeling realized she had to do something to help. In 1999 she used her nursing and chaplain experience and began the WellCare Foundation to aid single working mothers whose incomes are too great to qualify for government aid, but too low to afford health insurance. Body, mind, spirit and emotion are assessed by the nurses at WellCare upon a patient's initial visit, and the women and their children are then given their own health care plan and referred to a practitioner. WellCare and the participating practitioners provide continuing and preventative care all free of charge. The help mothers receive from WellCare can transform a woman's life, and allow her to improve her children's quality of life as well. The foundation has seen many success stories, such as Francine, a mother and domestic violence survivor who was working a minimum wage job and having trouble making ends meet. After restoring her health, Francine became a "self sufficient warrior," as Marge described her, and was able to earn a college degree, as well as see her two children succeed in school.

Women are referred to the program through partners of the foundation, such as Homeward Bound and the YWCA, as well as from medical practitioners and children's schools. The WellCare Foundation also reaches mothers with their Pay It Forward Bears. The small purple teddy bears are given to mothers in need, and then passed on to others providing information about WellCare along the way. Community exposure has been a large factor in the success of the foundation, and one of the ways the Arizona Women's Partnership has helped. By providing awareness of the foundation, more than 90 practitioners have donated their time and services to the mothers and children in need. Support from the community has enabled WellCare to expand their staff, purchase medical supplies, add more clinics and ultimately reach more mothers. As Marge and her staff say, "everyone knows a WellCare mom". With the support and care this foundation provides, mothers are empowered to raise their children in healthier, happier and more stable environments.

WHEAT Clothes Silo

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The Clothes Silo, a nonprofit program of the World Hunger Education Advocacy and Training organization (WHEAT), began in 1985 and is a women's resale boutique providing professional clothing at no cost to women entering or reentering the work force through client assistance programs. The Client Assistance Program serves over 105 agencies (such as Homeward Bound, Fresh Start Women's Foundation, and the Phoenix Self Sufficiency Program) in the Valley which help Arizona women find suitable work and teach or update their job skills.

In 2004 The Clothes Silo also began the Job Training/Mentoring Project thanks in part to the funding provided by the Arizona Women's Partnership. "The effect of the Trainee Program goes far beyond the life of the Trainee, but to their families and to the additional women that we have been able to serve!" notes Executive Director Tamera Zivic. The Trainee Program serves three distinct job markets, Volunteer Coordination, Retail Management, and Non Profit Management. The program has been quite successful in providing women with the job training and experience they require, as well as increasing their self-esteem. The very first Trainee in the program, K.M., found a job immediately after completing 200 hours of training, and is pursuing a degree in Nonprofit Management. "We appreciate all that the AZWP do to support women in becoming the best that they can be. You are helping WHEAT and its Clothes Silo make hunger a thing of the past. We are women helping women succeed!" mentions Tamera.

The Clothes Silo is also open to the general public, with proceeds supporting the training and mentoring programs. By purchasing clothing and accessories from the resale store, women are able to help other women better their lives. Through The Clothes Silo's education and mentoring program, new work attire, and the support of partner agencies, Arizona women are able to achieve the necessary skills to become self sustaining and successful.