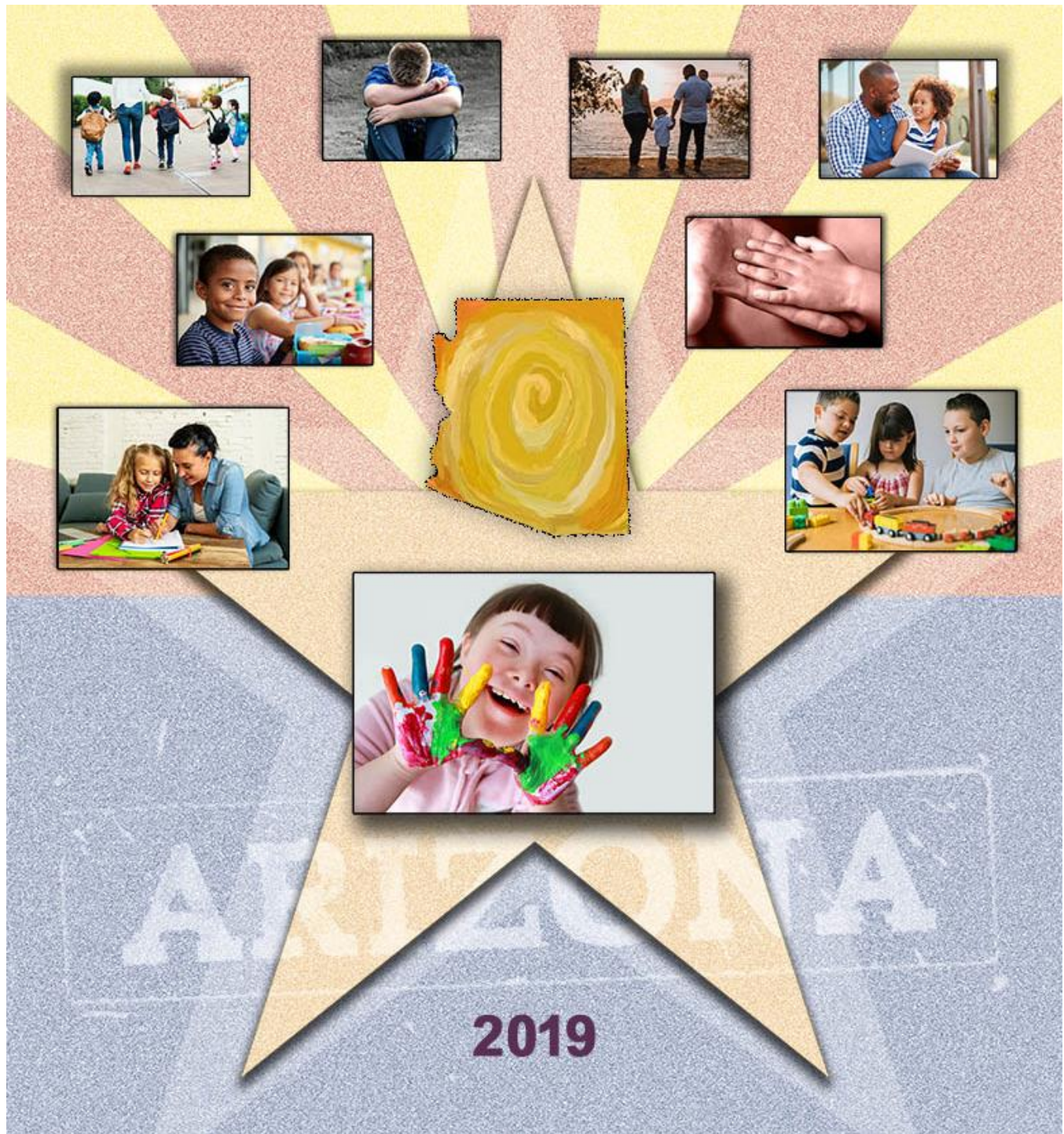


“Strong Families Thriving Children”

Apache Junction Community Town Hall Report

Apache Junction, AZ – October 18, 2019



STRONG FAMILIES THRIVING CHILDREN

**Apache Junction Community Town Hall Report
Friday, October 18, 2019 – Apache Junction, AZ**

Participants of the October 2019 Apache Junction Community Town Hall make the following findings and recommendations. This report reflects the consensus achieved through group discussions by Community Town Hall participants.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG FAMILIES AND THRIVING CHILDREN

In strong families, there is stability, routine, and consistency. Parents, extended family and the community provide a strong support system for children. Thriving children have a feeling of belonging within the family and the community. It helps for the family to have a church affiliation, friends, and connection to the larger community. Thriving children and families are resilient, and have the ability to bounce back from adversity.

There is economic security and the basic needs of families are met, such as a roof over their heads and food on the table. Health care is available, with early intervention where needed. Caregivers meet children where they are at and adapt their parenting skills to address the influences of social media and tech devices.

Caring adults provide proper guidance, and they discipline children but in a good way. It is clear to children that it is okay to fail so they can learn how to grow and bounce back from mistakes. Kids know that their home is a safe place to come where they will be loved and supported. They have a strong relationship with a caring adult, who may not be a parent. Parents are careful in how they talk with kids about issues. They work to break the cycle of poverty and drugs because when children grow up in a house of chaos, they tend to repeat the cycle because they don't know any different. Parents don't worry about keeping up with the Joneses and they recognize that while there is a place for participation trophies, it is more important for parents to figure out what programs and activities their children need to thrive, and find ways to encourage them to participate in those programs. Parents manage their own stress in order to tend to their children. They provide structure and a sense of belonging. Parents are socially active, and they model engagement and respect.

GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING ARIZONA FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Networking of resources would be helpful, with outreach to make people aware of what resources are available and how to access them. A brochure could be developed that would be given to new residents, for example when they buy or rent a home, that would welcome them to their new home and provide information about available resources.

Loss of job, lack of food, a health emergency, or an injury, often pose a barrier to obtaining the help that would alleviate those very circumstances. Remove barriers to families obtaining needed services, which include lack of transportation, fines, and lack of information about programs. If helping programs are to be available, the community needs to have jobs and affordable housing. Design programs that offer assistance with a "give back" component, so that people "give a little and take a little."

Education offers great opportunities for both children and adults. Make available a full spectrum of lifelong learning opportunities, including parenting classes.

WHAT I WOULD TELL ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS

Support better allocation of funding and more direct connection to resources and follow through. Reduce bureaucracy. Bring resources to people in places where they already are, such as schools. Project Connect is a great example of how this might work.

Prioritize and increase funding for education. Make funding equitable and adequate, which does not necessarily mean equal. Base funding on the needs of each community. Invest in education to invest in children, because they are our future.

Address the health care needs of families because many families are just one accident or illness away from financial ruin. Continuity of coverage and awareness of coverage availability and rights are both important pieces of this issue. Don't take away Kids Care. Regulate the cost of prescription drugs, and keep out of pocket costs as low as possible.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions at the Apache Junction Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Be more involved in my community and get others to become more involved or at least be more informed about opportunities.
- Continue to advocate for adequate funding for our educational institutions.
- Look at an opportunity for our Youth Advisory Council to engage in this discussion or another through a Future Leaders Town Hall.
- Reach out to community relationship facilitators to understand family needs and influence my circle of support to engage and prioritize support where it is needed.
- Ensure that the Apache Junction Unified School District creates a community resource manual for school personnel to guide parents and guardians to the needed resource(s).
- Research education funding mechanisms.
- Adopt a family in need.
- Work within my new group to help create more sense of community.
- Advocate that the government is not the solution, and that relationships on an individual level are the solution.
- Continue to connect to resources in the community and inform them about Head Start and what we do.
- Let people know about today's meeting.
- Promote our facility as a resource.
- Have resources for parents available at the school.
- Continue to advocate for health and wellness through Thriving Communities and Economic Impact.
- Create a parent resource list.
- Continue to promote partnerships in the community that have a positive impact.
- Contact the newspaper regarding articles explaining resources.

- Continue to work with communities to educate them about how to access health care and community resources.
- Help raise awareness in my community to strengthen families.
- Create awareness by sharing issues and information on social media.