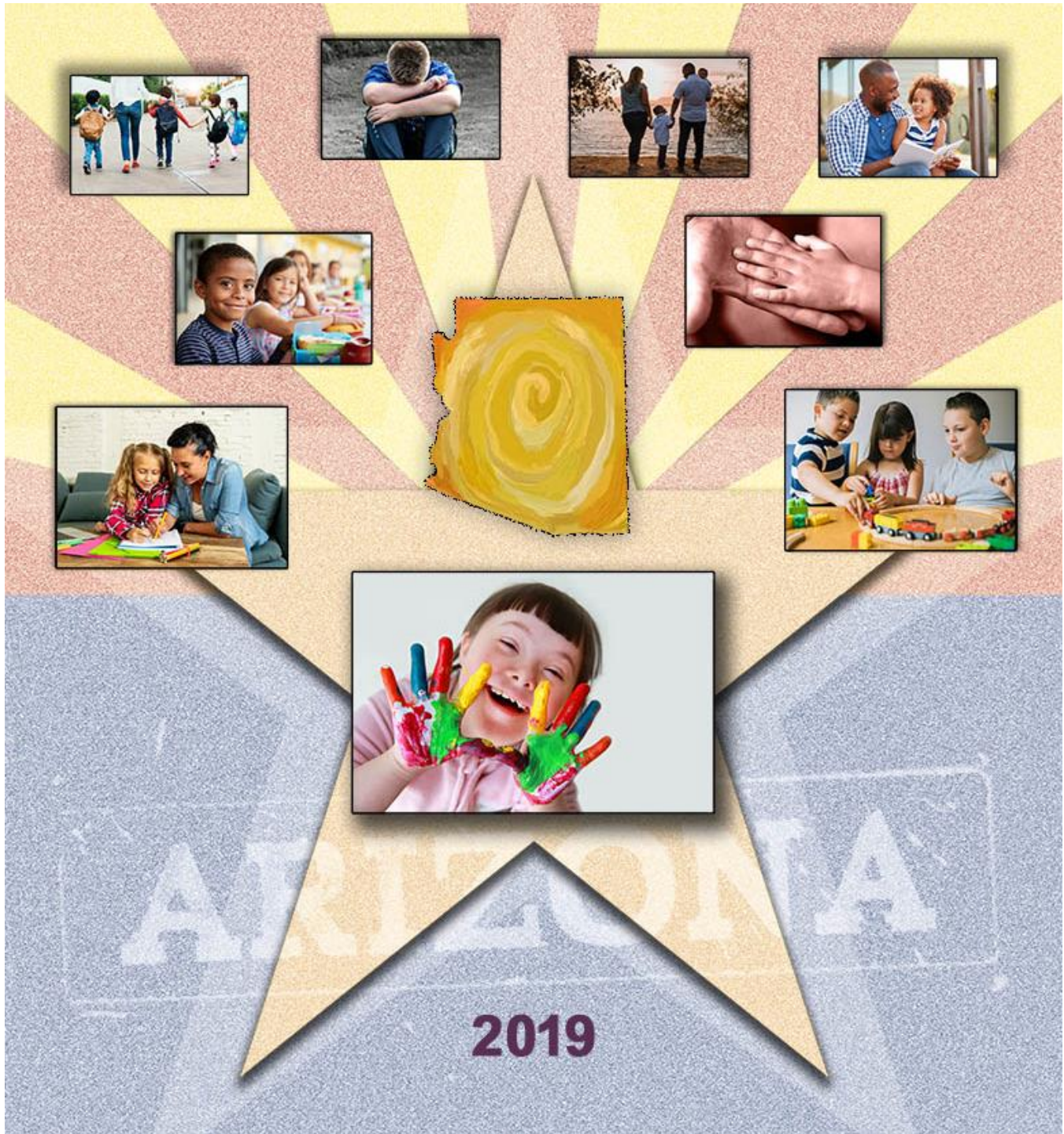


“Strong Families Thriving Children”

Cave Creek Community Town Hall Report

Cave Creek, AZ – October 8, 2019



STRONG FAMILIES THRIVING CHILDREN

**Cave Creek Community Town Hall Report
Tuesday, October 8, 2019 – Cave Creek, AZ**

Participants of the October 2019 Cave Creek 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

Strong families with thriving children are like a tree: what is important is not how it looks on the outside but the strength and health of the root system that provides the anchoring structure, and nurtures and protects the tree against the outside forces that otherwise might blow it down.

A strong family is founded on love and caring, has a supportive network, and establishes supportive expectations. Resources are easily found and accessible. Strong families have faith in something. Members maintain good communication, listen and pay attention to one another, set appropriate limits, provide appropriate nutrition, and provide appropriate and consistent oversight for children. There are trusted adults in the family, ideally two parents, and families also may be comprised of people who are not genetically related. Adults treat both children and one another with respect. Parental figures are present and involved, and they have good parenting skills. The adults act like parents, not friends, and lead by example. Adults are encouraging, not judging. Children are polite and respectful of themselves and others. Parents teach their children empathy and good citizenship, diversity, mindfulness, inclusion, and tools for coping.

Mistakes are made and overcome. Strong families deal with adversity as a team, and include children in problem solving. They have hope. There are supportive extended family members. Family and community support is available when families are under stress. Family members are taught to recognize the signs of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and they intervene or seek help early when ACEs occur.

Basic physical, financial and emotional needs are met. There is good quality childcare, and a safe and secure environment. Children feel loved, and have a sense of belonging, a voice, and a strong emotional connection. Pride, love and acceptance are not conditioned on performance. Communication comes from a place of love. Parents manage electronic devices, and place importance on spending quality family time together, like sharing family meals. Children receive a good education with an emphasis on employable skills.

GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING ARIZONA FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Create a space in the community that would bring everyone together, and connect and engage people in different segments to information and resources. Utilize coaches and other positive adult relationship and role models. Encourage employers to provide guidance and resources to those who have mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression. Link schools and libraries to resources in the community. Make use of retired people as volunteers.

Increase community education and collaboration between and among community entities, including faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, schools, government, and the media. Prepare people for marriage and parenthood. Provide better education about life skills and the problems and challenges that people face, including ACEs, drugs, and human trafficking. Make people aware of the benefits and dangers of electronic devices and social media. Improve this type of education for law enforcement and key professionals. Take existing outreach programs and strengthen their message and broaden their scope. Parenting education programs such as First Things First, after school programs, and in-school programs are all important. Take the town hall process and experience

into the schools and teach students how to communicate better. Expand programs that teach youth life skills, such as the program that teaches kids at risk how to identify when they are feeling out of control and how to control their behavior. Agree on morals and integrity and teach them to our youth. Use grass roots efforts.

The greatest opportunity for change is at the personal level. Know your neighbors. Un-gate the gated communities and encourage people to connect with one another.

Fund the needed resources, including in rural communities, so that families aren't left behind.

We need a vibrant economy to make these things happen.

Reduce funding for incarceration and increase funding for education.

WHAT I WOULD TELL ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS

- Fund education at least to the median level for the United States.
- Publicize the 211Arizona.org resource directory so that everyone knows that it exists and how to access it.
- Have counselors available at all K-12 schools, including for social and emotional counseling programs in the classroom.
- Improve the tax code to make the 501(c)3 deduction unlimited.
- Prioritize children because children are our future.
- We need programs for our youngest, most vulnerable children ages 3-5.
- Encourage physicians to spend more time with families and children.
- Have resource centers that are available for everyone, and fund parenting support and education programs.
- Ensure that we have a thriving economy.
- Money has been taken from middle class to address the programs for the poor; this has started the decline of the middle class.
- Revisit how welfare benefits are distributed.
- Increase oversight and review by the Department of Child Safety (DCS) of policies associated with child predators. Put the safety of families ahead of businesses, and encourage businesses to support families.
- Shift funding from incarceration to programs that strengthen families and children through prevention and treatment.
- Institute the 24/7 Sobriety Program as a policy for drunk driving to reduce arrests and keep parents employed and in the home.
- Encourage people to reach out to their elected representatives to advocate for programs and resources needed by families and children. Ask elected representatives to get out into the community to "walk a mile in our shoes" to see problems first hand, to listen to their constituents and to act.
- Address the disparities in health insurance coverage. Find ways for the state to provide coverage comparable to that provided by private employers.

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 Cave Creek Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Share Town Hall information with families.
- Learn about community resources and share with families.
- Assist abused families with baby-sitting.
- Become more engaged in monitoring my children's social media and use of electronics.
- Encourage my grandson and fiancé to attend faith-based marriage counseling and childcare before they get married.
- Share my knowledge of the Adverse Childhood Experiences and protective factors with my colleagues and neighbors in my community.
- Strive to strengthen my family.
- Work to support my children.
- Create and hold space where family can connect to God and be supported in their family life.
- Be engaged in helping other families thrive.
- Continue to grow my commitment to local problems and my faith-based values and integrity in my community.
- Host a child abuse prevention workshop for community members.
- Investigate and advocate for ways Kiwanis can support the forgotten youth.
- Become acquainted with who my elected officials are.
- Make an effort to stay in touch with elected officials.
- Create stronger family unit by working with police to create a database that allows police to know in advance if a call comes from a family with a child who has special needs.
- Be an advocate and partner with other non-profits, faith-based organizations and schools to educate as well as to provide resources to provide education and increase prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- Continue to volunteer and support nonprofit organizations in reaching families and children with programs and services to meet their needs as well as identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Bring all discussed ideas to our nine legislators and ask them what they plan to do.
- Bring additional resources to the people who need our support.
- Talk to my representatives, get involved and advocate for funding for all communities and age groups – not based on income levels.
- Help to find/promote the establishment of a Cave Creek/Carefree/Desert Hills Community Resource Center.
- Educate myself on various family services already in place and become a resource on those services.
- Get involved in local community groups.

- Communicate with state legislator about needs of community as identified in Town Hall.
- Join another organization that focuses on Strong Families Thriving Children.
- Be an advocate for social and emotional programs, as well as support school staff and other community organizations.
- Become more politically active.
- Continue to learn new skills to help me be a better grandparent.
- Continue to support my local libraries.
- Continue to improve my skills as a marriage preparation monitor.
- Encourage the accessibility of resources for children and families.
- Dedicate my time and energy to work with Kiwanis to develop programs that promote programs for children.
- Explore idea of Town Halls in schools with the Superintendent.