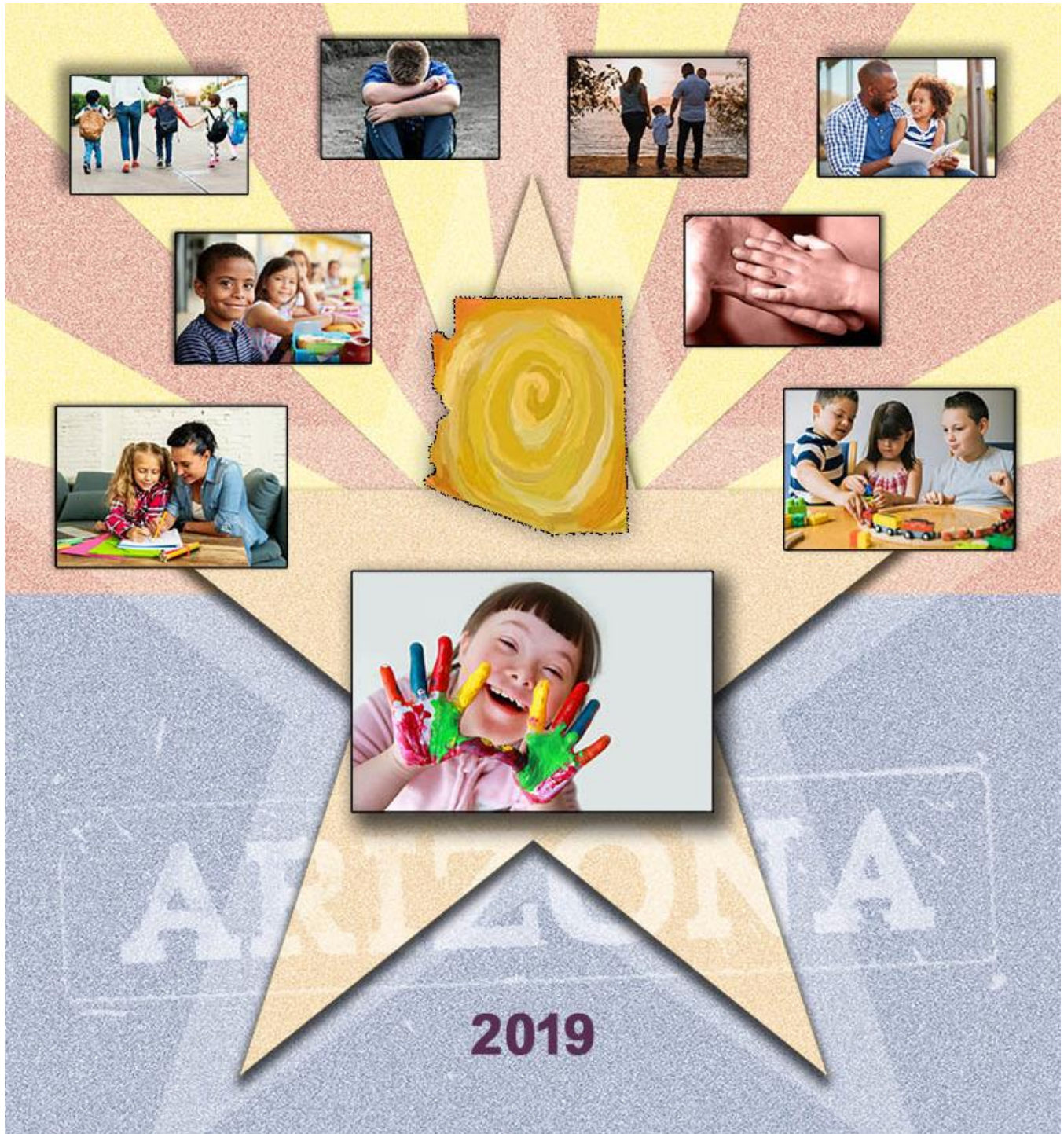


“Strong Families Thriving Children”

White Mountains Community Town Hall Report

Pinetop, AZ – October 11, 2019



STRONG FAMILIES THRIVING CHILDREN

White Mountains Community Town Hall Report Friday, October 11, 2019 – Pinetop, AZ

Participants of the October 2019 White Mountains 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

Family means different things to different people and may be different for different cultures. Family is a group of people who take care of one another and support one another, and it may be a place of employment. Families provide love and respect and nurture their children. Ideally a family unit would have two parents, as single parents, particularly teen mothers, may struggle to provide what children need. At the heart of family there is structure and a sense of connection and support.

Strong families have safety, support and a sense of belonging. They have access to enough food and health care, including behavioral and dental. There is family support, spiritual belief and community pride, so that family members feel rooted in the community, with a sense of connection. Children have a sense of self-worth. There is quality family time and good communication among family members and with others in the community. Expectations are clearly communicated and consistently enforced. Strong families spend quality time together and try to schedule that time. Parents monitor the use of electronic devices, particularly at mealtimes, and serve as good role models. There is access to family intervention services as early as possible.

Strong families have a livable income, and access to education, job training, and the other tools they need to achieve financial stability. They have access to high quality nutrition, and high quality, affordable childcare. In strong families children are exposed to new experiences, cultures, languages, foods, and people.

GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING ARIZONA FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Existing programs and resources may have to be restructured, consolidated or expanded, and information about those programs better disseminated. Provide 100% access to the 10 services people need to survive and thrive. Break down silos and do a better job of connecting people to resources, and connecting people working in the field to one another so that they can connect the people who need help to the available programs and resources.

Look to local programs, such as MAMAs, that could be expanded or scaled up, and to national programs, such as Nurse Family Partnership for which there is evidence of effectiveness and consider adopting those programs. Focus on adopting and expanding evidence-based programs and highlighting effective programs.

People of all ages need access to formal and informal education. Ensure that people understand the causes and consequences of behaviors such as drug abuse, domestic violence, and other ACEs. Increase knowledge about available resources and access to resources. Parents need information about parenting. Programs such as the family engagement center at Blue Ridge School are wonderful examples of the benefits that partnerships between schools and the community can provide. At Blue Ridge parents can not only drop off their children for after school programs, they can obtain education themselves, everything from parenting classes to language training.

Build a network of community programs to support families under stress, such as support groups, food banks, and substance abuse treatment and parenting programs, and find ways to

incentivize participation in parenting programs. Eliminate the stigma associated with the use of such resources.

Create opportunities to model healthy relationships, recognizing that there are families that are the product of generations of high stress and trauma. Provide high quality after school programs that kids want to participate in. Offer programs that will support families to keep children in their homes with access to the services they need.

Quality childcare that is appropriately licensed and available 24/7 will support the needs of working parents.

Ensure easy access to dental and behavioral health and routine medical care. Provide reliable public transportation and safe sidewalks so that children can walk and bike to school. Offer more activities for children, such as 4-H programs. Communities need faith-based organizations as well as community centers.

Programs that improve the economic health of the community and offer a hand up rather than a handout will strengthen families. Support for entrepreneurship can be extremely valuable. Teach basic life skills such as economics, cooking and sewing. Establish workforce development, training and education programs that are holistic and aligned with employer needs.

Prepare first responders with tools to help address the problems they will encounter in the field.

Make sure providers are compassionate, supportive, knowledgeable and not judgmental. Solving these problems and connecting people to the resources they need should not be about “those people over there.”

Rural communities need to have jobs that pay a living wage, and have affordable, accessible and safe housing.

WHAT I WOULD TELL ARIZONA’S ELECTED LEADERS

Fund education in schools, businesses, and the community, including workforce training and development.

Create a common access portal for information and resources that families need, and make sure that these facilities train their front-line staff to know what services and resources are available.

Create high quality, affordable childcare, with wraparound care, implemented through a tax credit or other tax incentive.

Create family-centered schools, serving as a one-stop center that become a hub for family services.

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 White Mountains Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Visit Family Engagement Center and learn how to engage our NAMI WM Chapter with them.
- Continue to make Family Engagement Center at Blue Ridge grow.
- Education.
- Continue to volunteer at Blue Ridge Elementary School kindergarten.

- Get involved in the Family Engagement Center at Blue Ridge Elementary.
- Commit to making sure staff and Pastors of the Church will be ACEs trained.
- Find ACEs resiliency training resources and learn as well as advocate within the community and work to incorporate ACEs and resiliency training.
- Work to improve the fabric of communication so partners/providers do a better job of complimenting others services as opposed to duplicating services.
- Connect others who are active in community work to break down silos, connect resources and increase educational opportunities on ACEs and resilient factors in Navajo County with some key groups and leaders in Apache County.
- Continue collaboration with organizations.
- Share knowledge and resources.
- Continue educating myself, family and staff on strong families/ACES/SA.
- Help bring education and resources to communities.