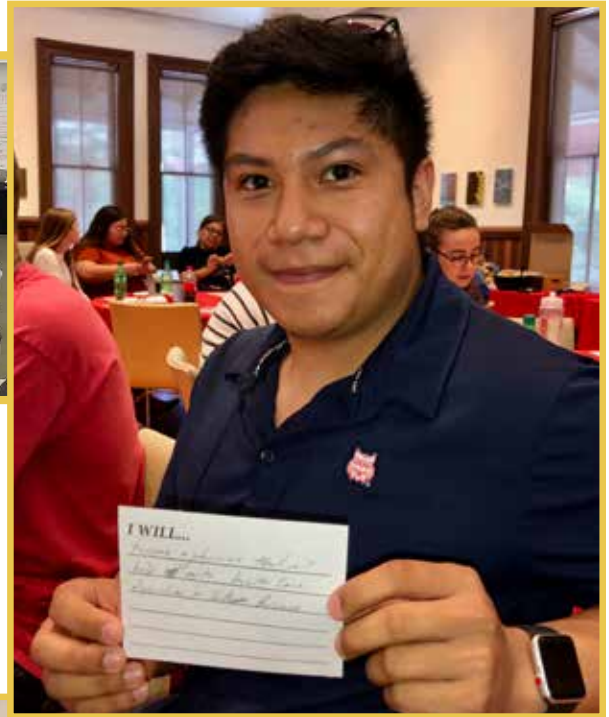


FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALLS ON “STRONG FAMILIES THRIVING CHILDREN”



FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALL LOCATIONS

Arizona Western College – Yuma Campus

Camelback High School

Mesa Community College

University of Arizona – Tucson Campus

Yavapai College – Prescott Campus

In collaboration with AzCASE - Casa Grande, Surprise and Flagstaff

KEY POINTS FROM FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALLS ON “STRONG FAMILIES THRIVING CHILDREN”

PRINCIPAL GOALS FROM ARIZONA’S FAMILIES

- Help children to thrive physically, socially, emotionally, psychologically and academically.
- Develop a healthy and balanced relationship within families.
- Promote a safe environment.
- Provide a positive web of support to include parents, foster parents, guardians, extended family and community.
- Make sure parents and children understand that support, trust and respect are essential to a healthy family environment.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG FAMILIES AND THRIVING CHILDREN

- Family members feel comfortable openly discussing issues and goals.
- The environment is one of tolerance, mutual respect, strong bonds and understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- There is an appropriate balance of love, encouragement and discipline that makes children feel safe and establishes healthy boundaries while recognizing their autonomy.
- Members of the family spend quality time together and constantly work on improving their communications with each other.
- Strong families enjoy economic stability and sufficient, reliable resources to provide nourishing food, clothing, housing, medical/dental care and mental healthcare.
- Parents express and demonstrate positive values and character, and observe traditions to provide a sense of belonging.
- Children are encouraged to prepare for life’s challenges, set high expectations and pursue life goals.

CHALLENGES FACING ARIZONA’S FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

- Difficulties that arise from a lack of economic resources, job instability, work-related stress and the unavailability of transportation.
- Issues within families such as parents with limited education or language ability, domestic violence, drug abuse, mental illness, disability and divorce.
- Lack of quality bonding time due to work hours, no or limited role models for parents and children, school and work pressures and poor access to family enrichment programs.
- Inconsistency within the educational system and the cost of post-secondary education, which severely limits the opportunities to succeed for many children.
- Generational cycling of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- A lack of parenting training, a shortage of trained professionals to help children and an insufficient emphasis on building protective factors.

GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING ARIZONA FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

- Provide more resources for students at schools including counseling, mentoring, tutoring, health services, and mental health.
- Offer more afterschool programs that give children the opportunity to engage in sports, the arts and community organizations.
- Create courses on life skills, career planning and building positive relationships.
- Advertise programs available in the community and build connections between social service organizations to simplify access for families.
- Ensure that everyone has access to affordable healthcare to include medical and behavioral health benefits.
- Improve transportation resources, especially in rural communities, so parents and children can get to work, school and needed services.
- Offer specialized programs for the families of incarcerated individuals and those dealing with drug addiction and mental illness.
- Focus on building self-sufficiency and working through obstacles rather than just temporary aid.

WHAT I WOULD TELL ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS

- Spend time with families and in schools to gain a perspective on how others view the world and better understand the issues they face.
- Support more funding for afterschool programs.
- Increase public school funding and ensure that funding is equitable so that every child has an equal opportunity to learn and grow.
- Strive for diversity in the selection of leaders to ensure that all voices in the community are heard.
- Allocate more money for grants and scholarships to increase the financial aid for students to attend college.
- Invest in providing better school facilities and up-to-date technology.
- Eliminate the stigmas associated with poverty, drug abuse and criminal history.
- Offer preventive mental health services in schools and more resources to families in their homes as well as youth on their own.
- Reduce food deserts by sponsoring community gardens to make healthy food available to families at little or no cost.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

- Donate to programs that aid children with abusive families and donate to local programs such as Launch Pad.
- Raise awareness about our perceptions/judgments toward different people.
- Volunteer in afterschool programs and create new clubs for college/ jobs support groups.
- Find funding within the city limits as part of the Youth Advisory Board in Prescott.
- Take the issue off paper and make it personal and bring this issue to school by having real people tell their real struggles. Attend clubs and assemblies to raise awareness.
- Participate more in the programs for people in need or who are seeking information.
- Continue to support students by helping them develop the life skills necessary to become successful leaders.
- Complete my education and become a social worker and help people with mental health issues.
- Become a physician who will help reduce the health care disparities in southern Arizona.
- Seek out those in my school and community who need help finding opportunities to be successful.
- Pay it forward in the Phoenix metropolitan area and Arizona as a future certified occupational therapist.
- Make a personal effort to spread awareness of events like this.
- Increase awareness of these issues and opportunities among elected officials by educating them one at a time using word of mouth and social media.
- Vote and be involved in the policies and election of city officials.
- Educate myself about policies and laws that directly impact the under resourced and low income communities in Tucson.
- Encourage others within my community to reach out for help and make their voices heard.
- Get more involved in the PTA to promote changes at the school level.
- Advocate for open access and equal opportunity for students to enroll in various academic opportunities regardless of economic status or possible barriers.
- Discuss these topics with my peers and others, such as teachers and adults, who are able to make changes happen.
- Understand how the Boys and Girls Clubs help families by providing afterschool programs.
- Apply what I learned today in my everyday life and make sure that my friends and family members, including my parents, understand the importance of these issues.
- Remember that my parents do try their hardest and help out at home even without being asked.
- Spend more quality time with those I am responsible for and continue to promote and participate in parental education.
- Talk to other parents on how to be a responsible parent and show love to their children.
- Advocate for cultural awareness and better integration of international children in to our society.
- Educate myself about ACEs and engage in future discussions on the subject.
- Become more involved in the organizations in my community that sponsor programs to improve the self-sufficiency of individuals and families.