

# CREATING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

## AzCASE Virtual Future Leaders Town Hall

April 29, 2021 – Online via Zoom

### YOUTH STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Youth are the future leaders of our world and it is important to hear from them and have their participation to keep them engaged and interested in what is going on in our communities.

Youth have unique perspectives. With their open minds, youth can bring new perspectives to the community so that adults can understand more about where they are coming from.

Adults are usually trying to figure out what is wrong with young people amongst themselves. Instead, they should talk to youth and reach out to them directly to listen and hear their voice.



### WHAT ARIZONA’S ELECTED LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

Youth can best be mobilized and utilized to increase the vibrancy and resiliency of a community. A big part in getting kids involved is actually reaching out to them and letting them know that they can get involved and make them feel like they are part of the community and can make a difference.

Having more adult guidance and mentors will enable youth to be more active in the community. Youth needs to be recognized for their efforts to participate.

Some youth groups work with city governments to plan events where they teach other youth how to utilize communication skills to take initiative on issues that are important to their community.

### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

One of the biggest things would be for adults to demonstrate that they are interested in what youth has to say and that they are willing to listen and have them be involved directly.

Adults can exemplify this by telling youth that they are not little children, that they are young adults and that their opinions do matter. If adults are willing to understand youth opinions, it would help engage more youth in important conversations. Giving feedback and acknowledging that they’ve been heard is also really important.

To quote one of the participants, “It would make us feel really involved if community leaders legitimately asked us why we are doing what we are doing.”

### CREATING SAFE SPACES

If “adults that care” would make the first step and share what has been difficult for them, or if adults can share when they also don’t like the systems that are in place instead of showing up like they can handle everything, that would make youth feel safer.

Having mentors or adults to talk to one-on-one would be more comfortable and a lot more useful. Kids need mentorship. With COVID and online schooling it is difficult to get that at home. Having that support would be great.

While we can list issues that our community has all day long, our biggest issue is finding people who care. There is a need to try and get young people more motivated. Wanting to improve your community should not be an extra credit activity, but a human need.

### **TAKING ACTION**

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions during the AzCASE Virtual Future Leaders Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

#### ***I WILL...***

- We would love to work with Arizona Town Hall and AzCASE.
- Network with Arizona Town Hall. The reason why it feels so overwhelming is because the issues are so big. With the support from Arizona Town Hall, we can feel a little bit less helpless.
- Advocate for access to counselors as a very important resource to students. One of the campaigns we've already been working on is having counselors at our schools. We don't have a guidance or a mental health counselor.