

Equity for All Arizonans

THE SALVATION ARMY COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

October 10, 2023 – Online via Zoom

DEFINING EQUITY AND ITS IMPACT

Equity is supplying extra support so people can raise themselves out of a low-income position, address a disability or otherwise address limiting factors so that people can participate more completely and reach their full potential.

The Salvation Army has a presence everywhere and is known for connecting people to the right service—providing connections to equitable support which is different from “equal” support and doing so in a nondiscriminatory manner. Equitable support is providing unique support to meet the unique needs of a population or group. It’s meeting people where they’re at.

For example, in a year with record temperatures, it means providing extra shelter, water and support for those who do not have a place to go in the heat and who are willing and ready to receive assistance. For those who do not want services, it may be directing them to those services or places that can provide assistance.

OPTIMIZING EVERYONE’S POTENTIAL AND IMPROVING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EQUITABLE APPROACHES

Equitable approaches are important for education and career opportunities specifically for those with disabilities, differing socio-economic status, as well as for differing genders, races, ethnicities, and sexual orientation. A socio-cultural approach that allows children to leverage their background and that fosters a connection to their teachers and peers will help children succeed.

We could have even more impact if we start earlier in our school systems with equitable access to education and opportunities. Using technology would be one way to positively impact more children as would other tools such as creative approaches and even encouragement that builds their belief in themselves—a belief that they can succeed.

Children and their families should have an opportunity to be heard so that we can equitably address access to education and professional opportunities as well as participation in community and faith-based events. We should not discount someone because of their gender or disability. We should look for ways to make services more available to those who have differing needs and explore equitable and creative approaches that serve unique needs.

We need to provide people with opportunities to participate fully in their community. Croc centers have been immensely helpful for providing equitable opportunities to children and their families. While highly successful, we may be able to have even greater positive impact through additional community needs assessments that allow community members to be heard and to provide feedback.

In sum, society, our country, and the world would all benefit from an earlier and more equitable approach to children and their families.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS

Politicians, parents, educators, employers, spiritual leaders the media, and those we are trying to help all have a role in taking the actions needed to address opportunities for equitable approaches that will optimize the potential of people and their communities. When addressing changes and assigning

responsibility, we need to balance equal parts of empathy and accountability to inspire and leverage leaders.

It takes continuing education on everyone's part. We need to continue to get the word out on the services that the Salvation Army and others provide so that people will know where to get services that meet their needs. We need to involve stakeholders, including those we serve, along the way.

The media is a huge player in education and getting the word out. Sadly, the media tends to focus on the bad news. It would be helpful for them to provide more positive messages, but the question is, "Why should they?" We need to find more ways to incentivize the media to provide more coverage of positive stories. It can help to have a relationship with the media. We also need to find alternative ways to reach the community with information, whether through individual and direct efforts or social media, because there are many resources that go unused.

Ultimately, we are all responsible for changing the focus on the stories and the messages we communicate. We can start with a methodical and long-term effort that includes supporting and subscribing to local media. Our efforts should include providing examples to others of how we are all connected, and how an equitable approach has a positive impact on the entire community. They should demonstrate why we all need to play a role. We can also provide them with examples of how they can apply equitable approaches.

It's important for us to participate in local elections and to find ways to ensure that our voice is being heard. It starts with us.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS TO 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 Salvation Army Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Vote.
- Discuss this with my students and vote.
- Discuss equity and equality with my father and stepmom.
- Continue to educate myself on the issues of equity and equality and will continue to vote.
- Specifically patronize minority owned businesses.
- Attend upcoming town halls and continue the conversation.
- Follow the Lord and the standard He has set as to look at the value of people regardless of status. To serve and communicate with people to empower people to be the change.