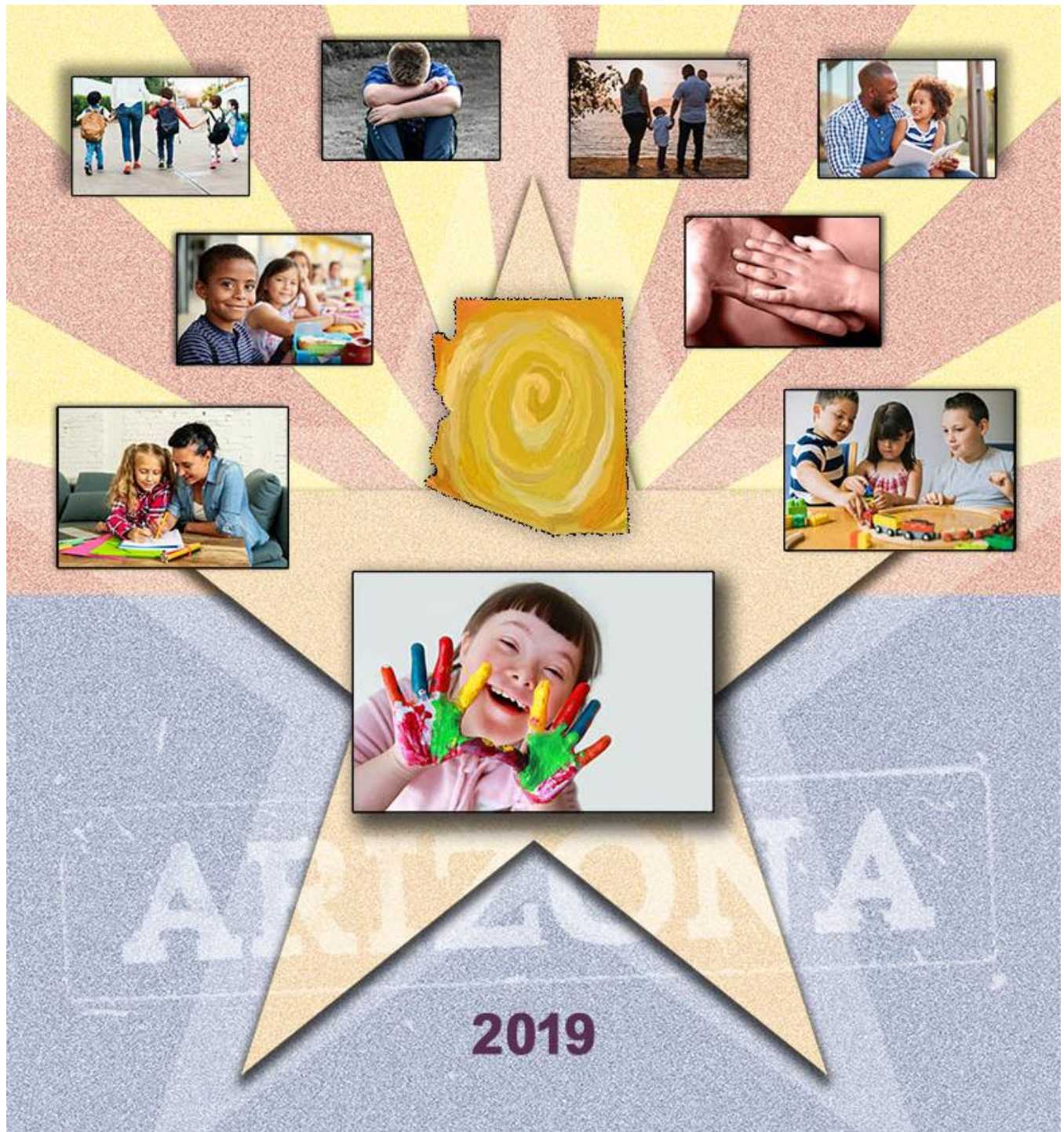


“Strong Families Thriving Children”

Sierra Vista Community Town Hall Report

Sierra Vista, AZ – October 7, 2019



STRONG FAMILIES THRIVING CHILDREN

**Sierra Vista Community Town Hall Report
Monday, October 7, 2019 – Sierra Vista, AZ**

Participants of the October 2019 Sierra Vista 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

In healthy families parents provide a supportive and financially stable environment. A thriving family is drug and abuse free. All families go through trials, but a strong family is resilient, and has good coping skills. In healthy families there is some element of family time, and parents are present for the children. There is good communication, and children feel valued and safe. Thriving children feel safe to make mistakes, have a healthy level of independence, and have the space they need to grow and mature.

In healthy families parents are present for their children. Strong families spend quality time together and put the family first. Children are well nourished. The family has healthy routines, and there may be organized chaos.

Strong families are aware of their own circumstances and feel able to ask for help when needed. They are supported by their extended family and their community. They have financial resources, and access to quality education that includes parental involvement, quality health care, and mental health care.

GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING ARIZONA FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

We can strengthen Arizona families and children by building infrastructure to support families and encouraging community organizations to be involved in the community and to share information. One of the best ways to do that is through programs sponsored by employers, such as support groups including support groups for kids in schools, and skill building groups for young parents and parents to be, including the skills of empathy. Help young people get the skills they need to have a sense of purpose and hope. Provide community centers where families and children can learn the life skills they need such as budgeting. These community centers can also serve as places kids can go after school where adult supervision is available.

Foster more collaboration among social service and community organizations. Establish a clearing house or hub where all community resources and social services are available, directly or through referral. Improve access to mental health care and offer more resources for post-natal mothers and their children. Develop options outside the faith communities to help people prepare for marriage and child rearing. Build trusting relationships with children and families to identify those who need help. Eliminate the stigma associated with accepting help. Hire more great teachers to strengthen families and help children thrive.

Reduce the negative impact of geographic isolation by increasing the amount of activities available, assessing the issues, and being intentional in programming. Ask families and children in rural communities what they want and need. Hold round tables and conferences. Adequately fund non-governmental organizations that are providing services that in other areas are provided by government.

WHAT I WOULD TELL ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS

Value education and educators, specifically public education. Increase funding for public schools. Raise taxes as needed to fund public education adequately and reassess how schools are funded. Incrementally and consistently improve Arizona's overall funding status vs. the rest of the country. Address Cochise County's property tax issues to help solve its education funding problems.

Protect AHCCCS and Kids Care and devote more resources to early childhood development, and more and better access to mental health care.

Promote the formation of new partnerships that support families and children. Schools and businesses both make great partners and supporters of families. Attach family resource centers to schools. Provide incentives for various employer programs that support strong families.

Rural communities need more resources and programming specific to their challenges. The voices of these communities need to be included at the table whenever issues affecting families are being discussed.

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 Sierra Vista Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Tell others about the value of a Town Hall meeting.
- Share the ideas and information with others at my church.
- Work in Douglas to develop strong families and thriving children.
- Use this information at our next County Roundtable.
- Share with others what Town Hall is about and what goes on at the meetings. Encourage others to attend, especially Pastors from the DFA (Discovery Forum Alliance), an Ecumenical Group.
- Participate in the Statewide ACE's Project headed by Dr. Ghandi from Childhelp to collect ACE/PCE data from 13 other FAC/CAC's within Arizona.
- Educate myself on community resources.
- Share information with those in need or to organizations/people working with those in need.
- Continue to build connections with individuals and organizations that have the same goals and seek out opportunities to collaborate.
- Continue to educate myself about local issues and provide educational opportunities for my community.
- Discuss with my employer the possibility of hosting community town halls to discuss strengthening families.
- Provide information about existing resources in our community to our church members and other community people to help them with their concerns.
- Raise awareness of the issues and recommendations discussed today.
- Continue to work at the school districts in providing education and training classes as well as implement support groups for our children within schools (sexual/physical abuse, sexual violence, drugs).
- Be the best Grandpa I can for my grandchildren and my wife and family.

- Take this idea to our Rotary Club & Healthy Communities Committee and adapt or start at least one new project that will impact families.
- Use my position as a Community Engagement Specialist to spread the word about the different programs in the community where I work. Help decrease the duplication of services funding, so those monies could be used for other needs.
- Shift my focus from just children to family ministry to help build strong families rather than just strong youth.
- I plan to share ideas learned today on my council Facebook page and perhaps to prepare an op-ed.
- Work to identify someone in every county community to attend Arizona Town Hall, both the community and statewide events.
- Use my skills and the organizations of which I am a member to support families and help them make good decisions.