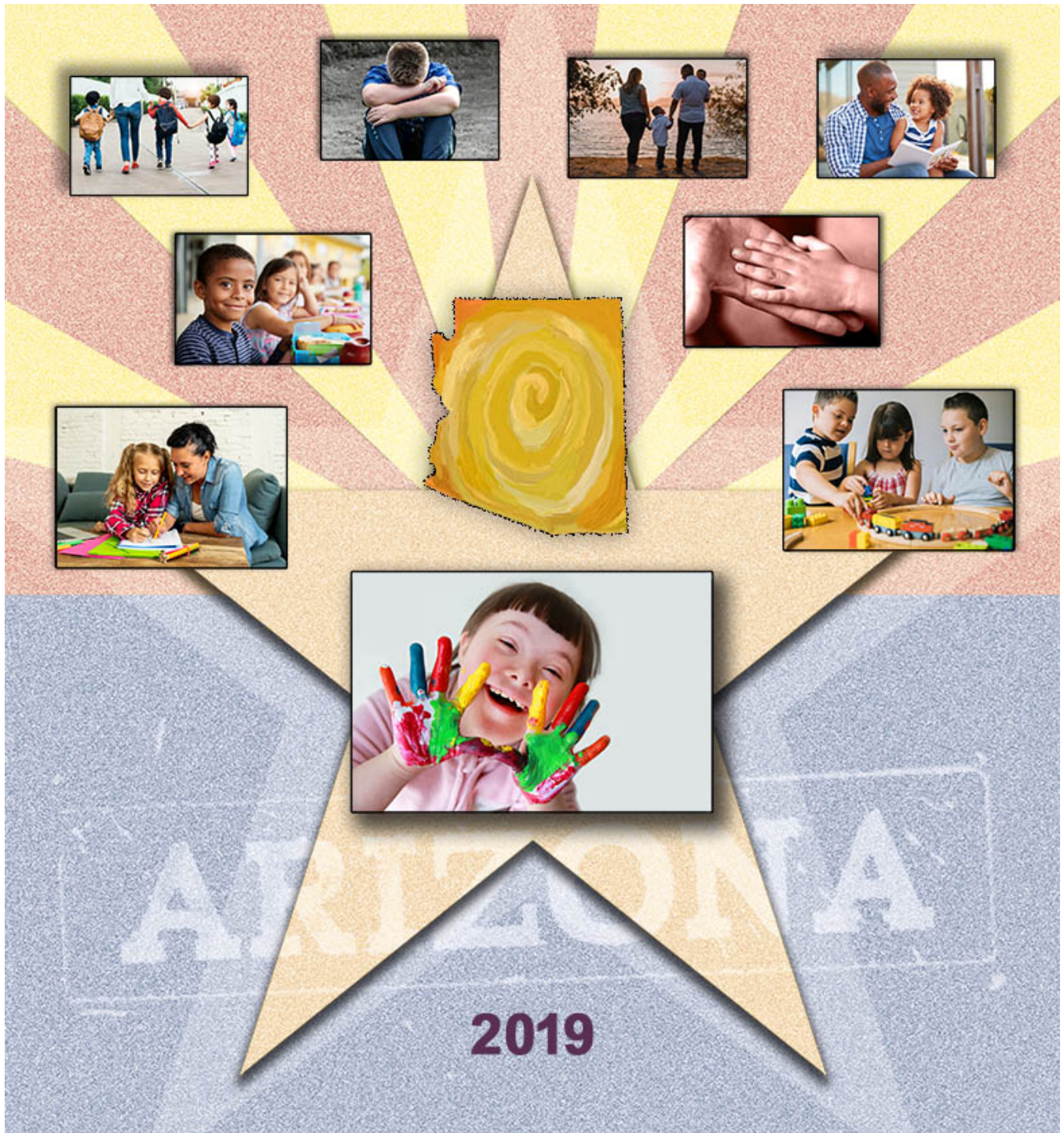


“Strong Families Thriving Children”

UMOM Community Town Hall Report
Phoenix, AZ – September 17, 2019



STRONG FAMILIES THRIVING CHILDREN

**UMOM Community Town Hall Report
Tuesday, September 17, 2019 – Phoenix, AZ**

Participants of the September 2019 UMOM 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

The many forms of families are recognized and supported to help them thrive. Strong families are loving and nurturing with parents or others who are emotionally and physically stable and who model positive values and positive life skills.

Strong families and thriving children have emotional and financial stability, including access to stable housing and healthy food. Strong families have the knowledge and ability to recognize and care for their children's needs, including both physical and mental challenges.

While technology can create challenges, proper use of technology can help strengthen families.

Strong families have connections, relationships and a sense of belonging in order to be resilient. They are connected to and communicate with each other. Connections to outside resources and support, including employers and faith-based communities, help families to thrive. Access to counseling, emotional support, employers and support services (preferably through "one-stop shopping") are available to parents. For children, there are other caring adults who can step in when the parents are unable or unavailable.

GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING ARIZONA FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Increase and simplify access to needed services, including access to affordable, sustainable housing, transportation and affordable health care.

Provide better access to community resources, whether through schools, faith-based communities or neighborhood gathering spots. Better leverage schools as resources for families, children and organizations, using school facilities to provide needed support services and connect community members to each other.

Normalize the need for help and provide easy access to resources for those in need to prevent injury and trauma to children and families. Allow for much needed emotional support for those who feel alone and overwhelmed.

Focus on prevention to create opportunities to strengthen families, such as early childhood services, preventative healthcare, early education for children, and education for parents so they have knowledge of good, culturally sensitive parenting skills. Educate government and other organizations about trauma informed responses. Educate families and agencies about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), protective factors and how best to remove stigmas, and other roadblocks that prevent vulnerable populations from seeking needed assistance.

Establish proactive collaborations with those providing services and those who need them. Use the media to educate the public about these issues and inform them about access to resources. Explore and apply for grants to help meet the financial requirements needed to implement some of these recommendations.

WHAT I WOULD TELL ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS

- The most important items families can have are stable housing, childcare and education.
- Walk the city and the streets. Take the bus. Get out and learn what Arizona families are dealing with.
- Ensure that government agencies are trauma-informed when providing services.
- When you make laws, be aware that there is a uniqueness to those in need and there needs to be some flexibility with generalized laws. For example, court systems and protocols need more flexibility for individuals. We also need changes to the laws to be quickly implemented.
- Create a process that makes it easier to get desperately needed services, including mental and health care.
- Invest in prevention including policies that keep families and children in their homes.
- Invest in education, life skills, and diversion services that assist the homeless and prevent people from entering the criminal justice system.
- Use the money currently spent on jails and prisons for prevention and diversion services.
- Invest in home visitation programs to assist parents.
- Demonstrate that you truly care about these issues by supporting the actions discussed in this report.

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 UMOM Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Fuse human experiences and stories with political action, such as the Red for Ed movement did.
- Use personal stories to educate elected leaders in a way that creates legislation addressing the problem.
- Empower other families with knowledge on how to obtain resources/information/help, etc.
- Strive to maintain the focus on rehabilitation and reunification.
- Engage in more interaction with families and make others know that their voice will be heard.
- Do my best to better inform others about how trauma has an impact on society, specifically as it relates to understanding the community and its dependence on strong families.
- Look for increased opportunities to educate the community on trauma and its effects on mental health and overall family stability.
- Help to mitigate the difficulty of navigating complex systems for families.
- Advocate for policies supporting families, including contacting local, county and state elected officials.
- Vote and help get out the vote.
- Talk to the mayor of Phoenix about inclusionary zoning.
- Become more active in engaging with my Legislative District representatives and those running for the Senate and House of Representatives in support of issues for families.

- Offer support and provide connections to all families in my personal networks by lending an empathetic ear and transportation and childcare when families need support.
- Continue to develop, implement, and grow family skills needed for success by consistently providing comprehensive, holistic, and innovative modalities to those who are underserved.
- Inform other senior citizens regarding working with SSI, housing, transportation, families, affordable housing, affordable health care, and affordable childcare.
- Become a success story and then be more active and vocal in the right settings to assist in connecting decision makers in the community by rehumanizing those affected.
- Make the most of opportunities to communicate support of strong families and healthy children.
- Get involved in advocacy programs that support strengthening Arizona families.
- Support candidates for local and state office for whom healthy children, families and communities is a priority.
- Continue to educate myself and use this discussion and the Town Hall final report to better understand how my organization (UMOM) can more effectively meet the needs of the clients we serve.
- Bring community partners together to connect with our agency (Department of Economic Security).
- Attend additional Town Halls and continue to educate myself.
- Share this information with the leadership within my organization to shape future strategies.
- Communicate what I've learned today, pass on ideas and "think outside the box."
- Work with colleagues at the Capitol and within government agencies to increase data collection/sharing and cross-systems collaboration.
- Continue to educate myself on topics that affect my community and be an advocating voice for those that do not feel they have one, but they do.
- Communicate my knowledge on ACEs to families I work with and provide the support to help families increase their resiliency.
- Listen with empathy and model strong social capacity and competency. Continue to share how important early childhood education is as well educating parents on short term training opportunities available to earn a living wage.
- Do my best to halt the cycle of ACEs within my immediate family and provide them, as well as others, the education to prevent future traumatic experiences from occurring.