



# Arizona Community Action Association

Advocating, Educating and Partnering to Prevent and Alleviate Poverty

November 2011

## Arizona Community Action Association Newsletter

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### SAVE THE DATE for the 2012 ACAA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

May 9 - 11, 2011

More information to come!

### 10 Things We Are Thankful for at ACAA:

### Happy November!

We are rapidly approaching the Thanksgiving holiday, and while so much is happening that is truly unsettling in our world, there are also many things to be thankful for in the work we do.

At ACAA, we are thankful for many things, including: A great Board of Directors who have worked to improve the lives of low-income families for years, serving more families than ever this year; we are thankful for a great staff who have all grown and learned and served during this year; we are thankful for our many community partners who continue to educate our communities about the needs of the low income and the current circumstances, and who advocate every day for programs and services so desperately needed by so many, and who work tirelessly to improve our system of support. We also thank those who fund our programs and our elected officials who work to create meaningful programs and solutions to the problems we all face today.

And so, as we move toward a new year (which will be here sooner than any of us are prepared for), let's take the time to acknowledge the truly good work being done in Arizona every day, and resolve to ensure even more is done and accomplished to creatively solve the issues we all face.

Thank you for all you do!

Cynthia Zwick  
Executive Director



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10. **Media** for covering issues that matter to ACAA and those we serve throughout the state.

9. The **elected officials** who continue to fight for and support important programs and services.

8. Our **contracted Partners** for your commitment and hard work helping families in every corner of the state.

7. **ACAA's Committee members** for your continued dedication and support.

6. Our **Community Action Network** for providing valuable services in your community in these times of unprecedented need.

5. Our **utility partners**, for your continued dedication to the Home Energy Assistance Fund and Weatherization Program.

4. **Each other!** The staff at ACAA is a group of bright, committed individuals and we consider ourselves fortunate to get to do the work we do together.

3. Our **Board of Directors** for their continued support of ACAA's staff as we work to carry out our mission.

2. The **families and individuals** we talk to every day, who courageously share their experiences and engage in advocacy to help themselves and others in their community.

## ACAA Staff Volunteers with Project H3 Vets for Survey Week



Monday, November 7th was rainy and cold at 3:30 a.m. as ACAA staff members Kelly and Katie pulled into the parking garage to join over 100 other volunteers for the first morning of the Project H3 Vets Survey Week. For three mornings, Kelly and Katie went out with a team of 3 other individuals in the earliest hours of the

morning to meet and talk to homeless individuals. Armed with a map, jackets, water and granola bars for people they encountered on the streets, and surveys, they drove and walked the streets.

In total, ACAA's Team (Lucky #13) met over 30 people and completed interviews with 7 homeless veterans.

Project H3 VETS is a collaborative initiative coordinated by the [Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness](#) and aligned nationally with the [100,000 Homes Campaign](#) and the [VA National Homeless Veterans Outreach Campaign](#). Starting Veterans Day week, approximately 175 community volunteers and stakeholders began identifying and using the Vulnerability Index to survey 1,100-1,200 homeless veterans by the close of the Arizona StandDown on February 5, 2012.

Data collected during and after [Survey Week](#) will target the most vulnerable veterans at greatest risk of premature death on the streets with permanent housing and support services through the HUD-VASH program. Other veterans will be targeted with additional resources to best meet their needs.

ACAA was proud to have two of our staff join in this amazing endeavor. We encourage our membership to learn more about Project H3 Vets and how you might be able to help. And we send a huge THANK YOU to those who are coordinating this amazing



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1. **Our Members**, without whose support and dedication to our mission of preventing and alleviating poverty statewide we could not do the work we do. THANK YOU!

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project, as well as to the brave men and women who served in our armed forces. May they all have a place to they can call home.

## **ACAA Needs Your Help to Get Out the Vote**

The Center for Voting and Democracy reports that 86% of people with incomes above \$75,000 claim to have voted in presidential elections as compared with only 52% of people with incomes under \$15,000. The Center also reports that a study of roll-call votes under the 107th and 108th Congresses showed that legislators were "three times more responsive to high-income constituents than middle-income constituents and were the least responsive to the needs of low-income constituents."

Non profits play a critical role in ensuring the populations they serve and the issues of importance to them are represented. Unfortunately, outreach activities often go undone because of fears about what may be allowable under the law. Among many great resources out there to help, here are a few.

[http://www.independentsector.org/election\\_rules\\_and\\_resources](http://www.independentsector.org/election_rules_and_resources)

<http://www.nonprofitvote.org/>

Early in the New Year, ACAA will roll out the next phase of our Marguerite Casey Foundation grant by kicking off voter registration campaigns around the state geared towards low-income individuals and families. If you are interested in having ACAA work with your organization to increase voter registration and engagement activities in your community, please contact Kelly McGowan at [kmcgowan@azcaa.org](mailto:kmcgowan@azcaa.org).

## **Your Voice Matters: How ACAA is Reaching Out In Communities**

In early 2011, our staff started work on a new grant from the Marguerite Casey Foundation, aimed at movement building with low-income individuals and families statewide. We kicked off with Community Forums, inviting community members and service providers in 4 counties (Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, and Coconino) to come together and talk about what's happening in their community. These forums were a great platform for identifying some of the unique strengths



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of each area, as well as some of the struggles we are facing on the whole as well as individually as counties. We look forward to sharing some of the findings and ideas that came from these four Forums very soon.

As we move into the next year, we have big plans on the horizon! We are working to set up advocacy trainings in each of the communities where we held a Community Forum, as well as hoping to identify other communities interested in joining our movement. We are also kicking off a Voter Registration campaign, as well as some other exciting initiatives which will be introduced as the time comes!

We hope you will continue to join us at the Forums when we are in your community, and that you will also provide us information and feedback on the kind of work happening in your area so we can find creative ways to work together.

If you have questions or suggestions, please let us know by emailing Katie ([kkahle@azcaa.org](mailto:kkahle@azcaa.org)). Thank you!

### **Weatherization in Arizona**

In 2009, the State of Arizona received approximately, \$60 million from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to weatherize 7,162 homes. These funds helped created 142 jobs. According to the Governor's Office of Energy Policy, as of September 30, Arizona invested more than \$40 million to weatherize 6,052 homes. There \$19 million of unexpended funds includes \$3.1 million in Sustainable Energy Resources for Consumer (SERC) grants. ARRA weatherization grants are expected to end March 31, 2012. Thank you to our partners across the state for your hard work and commitment in assisting families lower their utility bills to make their homes better places to live.

### **School Budget Cuts Hit Arizona**

The Arizona Legislature's massive cuts to education have now been implemented in schools all around the state.

School districts are coping with both the loss of \$218.3 million for full-day kindergarten and losing tens of millions of dollars in per-student funding. Schools have also been hit with across-the-board cuts to pre-school programs; funding for books, computers and supplies; and for dropout prevention and AIMS



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intervention.

These budget cuts affected teachers, students and learning every day. Some cuts increased class sizes, which can hurt academic performance. Losing classroom supplies like textbooks and computers put Arizona students at a competitive disadvantage, especially in lower-income school districts where the cycle of poverty is already difficult to overcome.

Parents, educators, students: *Saving Arizona's Future* would like to hear from you. What is happening in your child's classroom? Have supplies been cut? Are teacher's aids missing? Have music, art, or physical education been cut back? Our organization is collecting personal stories describing what the budget cuts mean to you.

If you or someone you know has a story or observation to share, please log on to the public *Saving Arizona's Future* Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/#!/savingarizonasfuture](http://www.facebook.com/#!/savingarizonasfuture)) and post your story. Also, please forward this request to your friends and neighbors.

Arizona families deserve a state budget that works for our children and our schools. It's time to talk about what budget votes at the capitol mean for our classrooms and our future.

### **Actors Theatre Needs Your Help!**

Actors Theatre in Phoenix needs your help! The Theatre has been in operation for 26 years, but tough economic times are making it hard to keep the doors open. In the past, Actors Theatre has helped ACAA and many other non-profits through fund-raising events, and now needs our help in spreading the word about their need for contributions.

The small theater company is raising funds to try to stay afloat. If you are interested in donating, you can do so through this link:



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<http://www.atphx.org/index.taf?mnid=support>

### **Upcoming Events in the Community**

\* Coconino County residents, please join ACAA for an Advocacy training on Tuesday, November 29th at 5:30 p.m. Dinner and childcare provided free of charge with your RSVP to [mbarrios@azcaa.org](mailto:mbarrios@azcaa.org) or 602-604-0640. The training will be held at the Coconino County Community Services building in Flagstaff. Call or email us for more information.

\* On December 8, 2011 City of Phoenix's Human Services Department will host an annual Volunteer Recognition for volunteers at our senior centers. This year, over 750 volunteers contributed 148,465 hours at the City's 15 Human Service Department Senior Centers.

\* On December 15, 2011 there will be the Grand Opening of the new Helen Drake Senior Center, which will replace the Manzanita Senior Center located in a leased facility. If you need more information, please contact ACAA.