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Arizona Community Action Association

Advocating, Educating and Partnering to Prevent and Alleviate Poverty

September - October 2011

Arizona Community Action Association Newsletter

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Dear Monique,

As I write this piece for the ACAA Newsletter, I am mindful that while the temperatures in Arizona have started to cool off, the state of the economy has not cooled. Discussions continue in Washington focused largely on how to reduce the deficit, with many of the program funds that serve vulnerable families fighting to survive. I am also very aware that the level of need in all our Arizona communities continues to grow while resources to address the needs remain stagnant at best, or are being reduced or threatened with further reductions. While I know these times can be discouraging, we really don't have the time to dwell on that discouragement for there is way too much work to be done. I am certain that working together, we can continue to provide the resources and support needed to allow families to obtain the tools needed to achieve their goals.

At ACAA, we are involved in a variety of initiatives and efforts to maintain funding, to raise awareness about the realities of life for many in our community who find themselves unemployed, hungry, fighting in homes they have worked so hard to own, and to help families find and use their voices to speak out on issues important to them, their families, and their community. You will be receiving requests to assist in these efforts periodically, and many of you have been incredibly responsive to our requests for help. Thank you! Your help and support is vital as we work to ensure tools and resources are available to families and agencies.

If there is any way that we may be of assistance to you as you work with families and individuals within your community, please let us know.

All of us at ACAA hope that the information provided in this Newsletter is useful and informative. If at any time you need any additional information or have stories, news, or other information you would like us to include, please let us know.

Thank you for all you do!

Cynthia Zwick
Executive Director

Welcome New DES Community Action Programs and Services Manager, Raoul Sada!

Raoul Sada became the new DES Community Action Programs and Services Manager in August 2011. He replaced Ms. Sandra Mendez who took a position with The National Association for State Community Services Programs. Raoul comes to DES with extensive experience in the Non-profit arena. Raoul has served as the Executive Director for several large organizations such as the American Diabetes Association, Caregiver Resource Institute and Friends of Foster Children Foundation. Raoul shared that he is very interested in issues related to poverty intervention and prevention. He brings a "can do" and entrepreneurial perspective to the position. He has been in the non-profit sector for over twenty-five years. The majority of his career has been leading and managing statewide organizations.

Arizona's SNAP Experience Raises Awareness

September 12 - 18 was Arizona's Hunger Awareness Week, and ACAA was proud to join many other organizations from across the state in activities to raise awareness of hunger in Arizona. This year's Experience was a little different from previous SNAP Challenges conducted. ACAA asked participants to live on the average benefit level for a single person in Arizona (\$29/week as of July 2011) for 7 consecutive days, and to try to do so while conforming with the USDA's new MyPlate recommendations.

Participants spanned the state of Arizona, with a few signing up from as far away as Missouri and Thailand. In all, 53 individuals registered with ACAA and completed the SNAP Experience during Hunger Awareness Week, contributing to ACAA's blog at <http://arizonasnapexperience.wordpress.com> and sharing their experience with friends, family, and co-workers.

We would like to thank everyone who participated this year for contributing to hunger awareness. ACAA has been contacted by groups both in and outside of Arizona who are interested in using the SNAP Experience model, and we encourage you to [contact us](#) if you're interested in doing so!

We would also like to thank KTVK Channel 3 news for their wonderful coverage of ACAA's staff undergoing the Experience. You can [view that story here](#).

Global Water Introduces Low Income Relief Program (LIRP)

Global Water's Low Income Relief Bill Assistance Program (LIRP) was recently approved by the Arizona Corporation Commission. ACAA and Global Water are currently in contract negotiations to implement the program. The program will serve customers of Santa Cruz Water Company, Palo Verde Utilities, Valencia Water Company (Town Division and Greater Buckeye Division), Water Utility of Greater Tonopah, and Willow Valley Water Company. LIRP will pay for current and past due charges, deposits, late fees, reconnection fees, returned payment fees, and after hours service fees (where applicable). Households must be at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines. This is a very exciting opportunity for ACAA as it is the first water program to join the Home Energy Assistance Fund.

**Congratulations to
Coconino County
Community Services!**



We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our partner agency Coconino County Community Services and their Executive Director Verna Fischer on their recent honor at the National Community Action Foundation Conference in San Francisco. Coconino County received the Community Economic Development Spotlight Award for their Basic Business Empowerment program. This program aims to encourage small business development and support potential small business owners, both financially and with skill building activities, throughout Coconino County. Congratulations to everyone involved in this great program for his distinguished honor!

WACOG's Brian Babiars Recognized for 38 Years of Service



Brian Babiars, WACOG Executive Director and an employee of the organization for the past 38 years, was presented with the Spirit of Leadership Award during a special celebration Friday night. At the WACOG Gala, Babiars gave the credit for his success to those who he has worked with over the years.

"Obviously this isn't why we do things," he said of the award. "We do them because they are the right thing to do. But I certainly appreciate my staff and friends and collected officials and other supporters of WACOG here tonight. This means a lot to me."

Babiars has been the executive director of WACOG for the past 26 years. He began his career with the organization on Sept. 23, 1973, exactly 38 years to the day he accepted the award on Friday.

He became deputy director of WACOG in 1978 prior to his appointment as

executive director in 1985.

His public service includes serving on the Yuma City Council in 1971, on the Yuma Elementary School District 1 board from 1977 to 1979 and on the Arizona Western College district governing board from 1982 to 1992, including two terms as chairman.

Locally, he was one of the early supporters of the Boys Club of Yuma, serving on its board of directors and a term as its president.

Babiars served on the AEA Federal Credit Union Board of Directors from 1998 to 2010 and recently on the AWC Bond Committee, which resulted in a successful building program passed by Yuma County voters.

Statewide, Babiars has served on the Arizona Community Action Agency board for more than 25 years. ACAA is a statewide organization representing social service agencies.

While at ACAA, he served on numerous committees, including vice chairman of the board and chairman of the Energy Committee.

Read more: <http://www.yumasun.com/articles/yuma-73260-board-wacog.html#ixzz1a7cpOr6H>

Please Help ACAA Welcome our 2011-2012 Hunger Fellow and MSW Intern!

ACAA is honored once again to have an Emerson Hunger Fellow placed in our office for 5 months to work on a special project in the hunger field. Sarah Bagge joined us in September and will be with us through February.

Sarah was born in Augusta, Georgia and grew up in Nairobi, Kenya. She majored in International Relations at Wheaton College, and has subsequently worked on a CSA farm in Oxnard, CA and served as a public benefits counselor and VITA tax preparer at a CBO in New York City. Despite the assurances of the ACAA staff, she is still worried about haboobs, but is otherwise looking forward to exploring Phoenix and working with Katie on improving SNAP outreach to Latino households as an Emerson Congressional Hunger Fellow.

If you wish to contact Sarah or can be helpful to her project, please email her directly at sbagge@azcaa.org.

ACAA is currently in our 4th year of hosting an intern through ASU's School of Social Work. We're pleased to welcome Jessica Mahon to the ACAA offices. Jessica is currently pursuing her Masters in Social Work with a focus on planning, administration, and community practice. Prior to living in Phoenix, Jessica attended the University of Notre Dame where she studied Psychology and Gender Studies, and had the opportunity to be involved in many social justice and advocacy initiatives. Professionally, Jessica is interested in community organizing, human rights, and leadership development amount at-risk youth.

If you wish to contact Jessica, please email her directly at jmahon@azcaa.org.

Project Connect is Coming to Surprise

Be our guest at **Project Connect**.

Who:

Individuals and families who need assistance with housing, shelter, benefits, identification, and other basic health and human services. We invite people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of losing their current housing or shelter.

What:

Employment services, medical care, affordable rental services, clothing, personal care items, spiritual support, behavioral health, substance abuse services, foreclosure options and prevention information, shelter providers, haircuts, food, showers, bicycle repair, DES, Social Security, Veteran benefits and more. If you have children, a supervised area for children to play while you meet with service agencies will be provided.

When:

Thursday, October 20, 2011 Arrive between 8:00 AM and 2:30 PM for services

Where:

Christ's Church of the Valley - Surprise 14787 W. Cholla St., Surprise, AZ 85379

How to get there:

Walk, bicycle, drive, carpool with a friend, or bus Shuttles will pick up hourly at 8, 9, 10, and 11:00 AM (+/- 15 minutes)

Valley View Community Food Bank, 1115 W. Nevada Ave.,

Youngtown St. Vincent de Paul, 14102 N. Nevada St.,

El Mirage Dysart Community Center, 14414 North El Mirage Road.,

El Mirage St. Mary's Food bank, 13050 W. Elm St., Surprise, AZ 85374

Questions:

Erika Moore at 602-631-4897 (office) or 602-703-9208 (mobile)

ArizonaSERVES Invites You to the Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Service-Learning.

Save the Date for the second annual Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Service-Learning, November 4-5, 2011. ArizonaSERVES, a Task-Force created to help connect faith-based and non-profit organizations to help meet needs in our communities, invites you to attend this teleconference on Child Care.

This Summit is ideal for representatives from community and faith-based organizations, K-12 schools, higher education, youth development organizations, community service groups, corporate/business, and government agencies.

For more information and registration, please visit www.azsummit.org

Free Breast Cancer Screenings at Walgreens

Various Walgreens locations will be holding free breast cancer screenings through the month of October. To qualify, you must be 40 or older and meet income guidelines, be uninsured or unable to pay insurance co-pays over \$100, not have had a mammogram within the past year, not be breastfeeding or pregnant, live in Maricopa County, not be eligible for AHCCCS, and agree to future Well Woman program provider referral services.

For more information, including locations, please call 1-888-233-6121 or visit www.pink365.org.

