



Horizons

Fall 2009 - Working with Arizona's underserved communities

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITIES, DEVELOP RESOURCES TO PROMOTE THE POSITIVE GROWTH OF THEIR CHILDREN

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

On September 9, 2009, Luan Wagner Burn, Ph.D. retired from Arizona Youth Partnership, after leading the organization for more than fifteen years.

When Dr. Wagner Burn joined Arizona Youth Partnership in 1994, the agency operated as Pima Youth Partnership (PYP) and served only four communities in the rural and under-served areas of Pima County. "At the time PYP was often confused with 4-H because we worked in rural communities in Pima County and brought leadership skills training to youth in those communities," Dr. Wagner Burn recalls. When hired, Dr. Wagner Burn was the fourth Executive Director in as many years to lead PYP, which provided resources to Ajo, Marana, New Pascua Yaqui Reservation, and Sahuarita and operated on a budget of \$60,000. Pamela Treadwell-Rubin, Board President in 1994, remembers the energy that Dr. Wagner Burn brought to AzYP. "When the Search Committee recommended [Wagner Burn] to the Board, we knew the organization



Luan Wagner Burn, Ph.D.

regrouped and focused the agency on growing in three key areas: 1) teaching youth decision-making skills; 2) teaching parents how to communicate with youth and each other; and 3) developing community coalitions that had come together around issues faced by youth in their community. The strategy paid off and AzYP was able to endure the economic recession. "We grew, we stabilized, we prospered."

In June 2009, Dr. Wagner Burn announced her retirement after a

year of commuting between her home in Las Cruces, NM and AzYP's administrative office in Tucson. With the news of Dr. Wagner Burn's retirement, the Arizona Youth Partnership Board of Directors assembled a panel of current and former board members to select a successor. After a rigorous twelve week interview and vetting process, the group had made their decision. "The Search Committee shares the same sense of excitement and promise that we felt 15 years ago, in making our recent recommendation for the hiring of AzYP's new Executive Director, K. Daniel Stoltzfus," said Pamela Treadwell-Rubin, chair of the board appointed Search Committee. On August 15, 2009, the Board of Directors unanimously voted to appoint K. Daniel Stoltzfus as AzYP's Executive Director. "We are confident that Mr. Stoltzfus brings excellent management skills and a strong vision to lead AzYP forward into the next chapter of its journey,"

Mr. Stoltzfus, a graduate of New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, brings over 15 years of community development, outreach and substance abuse recovery program experience to AzYP. "I am passionate to help youth and their families avoid the consequences of risky behaviors and substance abuse," says the New York native. "I hope to build on the outstanding legacy of leadership of Dr. Wagner Burn by positioning AzYP to not only work to prevent substance abuse among youth and strengthen families, but also to help them build futures full of hope in communities across Arizona."

Children's Exposure To Violence

A 2009 survey conducted by the Office Of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has found that, nationwide, 60.6% of youth are exposed to violence by age 17.

In their news report, OJJDP stated, "The violence that millions of children and youth are exposed to in their homes, schools and communities, whether as direct victims or as a witness, can disrupt their development in many ways."

Select Report Findings

- 36.7% of youth report being exposed to assault with no weapon or injury in the past year.
- 19.2% of youth report being exposed to community assault in the past year.
- 9.8% of youth report being exposed to family assault in the past year.

Source: Office Of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Justice Bulletin "National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence." October 2009.

would never be the same, and we were right." During her tenure as Executive Director, Dr. Wagner Burn grew the agency from ten full- and part-time staff to more than 50 in 2001.

This expansion was cut short, however, by the September 11 terrorist attacks and consequential recession. "That year the organization lost the majority of its federal funding, cutting the annual revenues roughly in half." Following the budget cuts, Dr. Wagner Burn

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With the recent debate about rising health care costs, the work of substance abuse prevention and programs that equip youth to make healthy choices take on renewed importance. Yet, a recent report from Columbia University called **Shoveling Up: The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State, and Local Budgets** reported that substance abuse cost government at all levels nearly half a trillion dollars but only 1.9 percent of the spending went into prevention programs.

Personally, I've spent the past 10 years with nonprofits that work to "shovel up" the consequences of addiction—such as homelessness and broken families, so I was ready to step into a proactive approach such as prevention. When I joined Arizona Youth Partnership (AzYP), I realized just how vital our work is in underserved communities and Native American reservations to help youth avoid drugs/alcohol and equip them to make healthy relationship choices.

Here at AzYP, we regularly ask youth in communities we serve—what are the greatest problems you face? It is important that youth tell us what questions they are asking before we attempt to come up with the all answers. One of the top needs they identify is HOPE.

The community to support youth must include a broad array of partners such as: faith-based organizations, health services, treatment programs, law enforcement agencies and other youth agencies. When collaboration is continuously cultivated, youth have access to hope through a broad range of opportunities and community resources.

As we work together, we can not only prevent more youth and families from suffering the devastating consequences of substance abuse and risky behaviors but we can also help them build futures full of health and hope in communities across Arizona. Will you join us in this effort by making a contribution to support the work of Arizona Youth Partnership?

Arizona Youth Partnership is an Arizona Qualified Charitable Organization. Your contribution to AzYP between now and December 31, 2009 may earn you a dollar-for-dollar tax credit (up to \$200) on your Arizona income tax return. Please contact your accountant for more information.

Thanks for standing with us to help youth, families, and communities prevent substance abuse and promote healthy lifestyles.

Serving with you,

K. Daniel Stoltzfus
Executive Director



Daniel Stoltzfus, M.P.A.

The Benefits Of Healthy Marriages

Building a healthy marriage may take work but the benefits indicate it is worth the effort; research shows that, on average, married men and women live longer, have better mental and physical health, report being happier, have higher incomes and build more wealth.

Marriage is also associated with an amazing list of benefits for children. In fact, researchers say that children raised by their own married parents do better, on average, than children that aren't, across all notable measures. Even in marriages couples report as only "good-enough", the adults and their children do better than others that live without the benefits of marriage, provided the relationship is free from violence and other negative influences.

Researchers have found the following benefits for youth who are raised by parents in healthy marriages, compared to unhealthy marriages:

- More likely to attend college
- More likely to succeed academically
- Physically and emotionally healthier
- Demonstrate less behavioral problems in school
- Less likely to be a victim of physical or sexual abuse
- Less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol
- Have a better relationship with their mothers and fathers
- Less likely to be sexually active as teenager

Source: "What Policymakers Say About Healthy Marriage."
<http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/policymakers/whattheysay.cfm> (17 Mar. 2008),
Administration for Children & Families, 2008

HEALTHY MARRIAGES-STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

In the summer of 2009, Arizona Youth Partnership's (AZYPA) Healthy Marriages/Strong Families project was awarded "Promising Practice" status by the federal government. The award was based on internal and independent evaluations which showed significant findings that the program improves participants' relationship skills. Overall, sixty-nine percent of program participants reported increased relationship satisfaction. Out of 226 federal grantees, only 16 received the Promising Practice distinction.

"We knew that healthy children must have a healthy home life," says Pat Merrill, Director of Youth and Family education for AZYP, who oversees the project's statewide operation. "The truth is in the numbers, and our numbers tell us that people **want** to be great parents and raise healthy, successful children. The Healthy Marriages program gives them everything they need to do it."

AZYP's Healthy Marriages/Strong Families (HMSF) project uses the **PAIRS For Life** curriculum, which coaches participants in strengthening communication and conflict resolution skills, increasing satisfaction and emotional intimacy, and firmly promotes family bonding. The program targets couples who have children enrolled in a Head Start program and who are in a

committed relationship with their partner. In 2008-2009, the HMSF project served 228 couples living in rural Arizona. Staff provided education and skill development to married and committed couples during weekend retreats at various resorts throughout the state. "Most of our parents don't have the financial means for a 'weekend getaway'," tells Martha Gomez, Project Coordinator for the Sonoran Desert Region. "Having the retreats at a resort gives them a mini-break in addition to strengthening their relationship. It's like a vacation with school built in!"

Many participants have expressed interest in becoming further involved with the HMSF program, and show great appreciation for its benefits. "I used to hate coming home to my wife..." says one participant. "Now, with the tools that we learned during the weekend, I can't wait to come home and be able to discuss issues with my wife. I never



Couples learn then practice intimacy and communication techniques.

knew that we had such a strong marriage. All we needed were the tools." In addition to increased relationship satisfaction, other positive outcomes of the program include increased communication and conflict resolution. These skills all foster stable family environments benefiting, not only the couples, but their children as well.

Originally funded in 2005, under then First Lady Laura Bush's Healthy Marriages Initiative, the Healthy Marriages/Strong Families project is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. "Children want us in their lives, and they need us in their lives," said First Lady Bush in 2005. "Each of us has the power to make a difference in the life of a child."

For more information on AZYP's Healthy Marriages Program or to register for a retreat, contact:
 Julie Crag- 928.200.5448
 Martha Gomez- 520.907.5195
 Teresa Martin Del Campo- 928.701.0419

Program Coordinators are enrolling for the following Retreats:
 December 5 & 6- Casa Grande
 December 12 & 13- Tucson (Spanish)
 January 23 & 24- Tucson
 February 6 & 7- Safford



Ten couples successfully complete the program at the Francisco Grande Hotel & Golf Resort in Casa Grande, AZ.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE in the programming AzYP provides to its communities.

HOW? By contributing to AzYP through the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit. Your donation will help sustain and enhance programming that keep our children healthy, hopeful, and drug-free. **It is easy**; just send the attached envelope with your donation.

How Does the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Work?

Contributions to Qualified Charitable Organizations, like Arizona Youth Partnership, may earn a dollar-for-dollar tax credit (up to \$200) on your Arizona income tax.

“Tax credit” means that the amount you owe in taxes is reduced by the amount of your credit. If you have already paid more than you owe, you’ll receive a tax refund from the Arizona Department of Revenue.

How Do I Qualify for the Charitable Tax Credit?

You will receive a tax credit (up to \$200) and your total state taxes will be reduced by that amount if:

- You give to one or more qualified agencies, such as Arizona Youth Partnership.
- You have itemized charitable contributions on your Arizona income tax return at least once since 1996.
- You itemize your 2009 Arizona return.

What about Private and Public School Tax Credit Programs?

It is important to know that the Charitable Tax Credit program encourages gifts to charitable organizations that assist the working poor. It is **completely separate** from the Private School Tuition Credit and the Public School Activity Credit. Qualifying taxpayers may participate in **any or all** of these programs for additional tax credits.

All donations must be received by December 31, 2009 to be eligible for the 2009 tax year.

All donations received after that date will be processed for the 2009 tax year.

If you have questions on tax credits, please call Arizona Department of Revenue: 1-800-352-4090 (in Phoenix call 602-255-3381), access the website at www.revenue.state.az.us, or contact your tax advisor.

How Do I Donate?

Just send back the attached envelope with the amount you want to donate and your check or credit card number. We’ll do the rest!

For more information about contributing to Arizona Youth Partnership, please contact Joseph at (520) 744-9595 or joseph@azyp.org.

www.azyp.org
Fax: 520.744.2127
Phone: 520.744.9595
Tucson, AZ 85741
3275 West Ina Road, Suite 135

