

Blue Ribbon agencies show healthy vital signs!

Six Human Service Categories. The Collaboration for a New Century (CNC) has identified six areas that it believes are essential to creating opportunities for lower-income working families: 1) child development; 2) youth mentoring; 3) affordable housing; 4) job training; 5) family support (addiction intervention, counseling, care giving etc.); and 6) affordable healthcare.

What's so special about these Blue Ribbon programs?

Criteria for Effectiveness. The CNC, with assistance from the Valley of the Sun United Way, has found these "best practice" programs to have five strong characteristics. They are 1) innovative, 2) community-based, 3) holistic, 4) collaborative, and 5) outcome-focused. The 2007 and 2008 Blue Ribbon agencies are profiled below. Each year, these Blue Ribbon agencies positively impact the lives of some 50,000 individuals.



	2007	2008
Child Development	<p>Glendale Family Development Center</p> <p>Since 1970, they have provided thousands of families with social services, such as counseling, parenting classes, education and advocacy, but their greatest service is their accredited, yet low-cost child care, preschool and after school programs. Among only 10% of childcare programs in Arizona that meet the gold standard of the National Association for Education of Young Children.</p>	<p>Aid to Adoption of Special Kids (AASK)</p> <p>The agency is dedicated to the placement of children with special needs into permanent, loving homes. AASK's goal of building and preserving families is met through parent training and education, birth parent counseling, adoption placement, specialized medical foster care for young children, post-placement case management, support and supervision, and community education. Each year, some 3,000 people turn to AASK to find out how they can change a foster child's life. AASK found loving families and foster homes for over 500 children last year.</p>
Youth Mentoring	<p>Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona</p> <p>Provides adult mentors who offer their time and guidance to children who are seeking a positive role model in their lives. "Big" and "Little" friendships build character, strengthen integrity and promote personal responsibility. One of only 11 national model programs identified by the University of Colorado as effective in reducing delinquent behavior.</p>	<p>Phoenix Youth At Risk</p> <p>The agency provides mentoring to at-risk and homeless children/youth rarely served by other organizations. Since 1989, they have transformed the lives of over 2,000 youth by providing a structured curriculum-based program designed to build confidence and support youth in increasing academic performance and decreasing delinquent behavior. After 6 months in the program, 73% of youth demonstrate behavioral improvements.</p>
Affordable Housing	<p>Community Services of Arizona (CSA)</p> <p>In addition to providing various human services, CSA operates a statewide first-time home buyer's assistance program while providing affordable rental housing. In a typical year, 65 families become first-time homeowners, over 400 households receive intensive homeownership education and counseling, nearly 400 homeowners receive emergency home repairs, and over 3,000 families reside in CSA's affordable rental housing.</p>	<p>Homeward Bound</p> <p>Founded in 1990 by a grassroots committee of community activists, Homeward Bound is a transitional housing program for homeless and domestic violence families with children. They are recognized as one of the largest providers of transitional housing in Arizona. Homeward Bound has received the highest rating given by "Charity Navigator" for organizational efficiency and capacity – 4 stars.</p>
Job Training and Placement	<p>Arizona Women's Education and Employment (AWEE)</p> <p>Since 1981, the agency has empowered nearly 40,000 individuals, providing employment assistance, life skills and job readiness training, as well as financial literacy. To ensure permanent success, AWEE remains in contact with each program participant for two years after completion to provide on-going support and encouragement.</p>	<p>Arizona OIC (Opportunities Industrialization Center)</p> <p>Founded in 1967 as an organization designed to address the critical employability needs of Phoenix's economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority citizens. Arizona OIC has served over 50,000 individuals and placed more than 30,000 in meaningful jobs. Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC) nationally have a 75% placement rate in full-time positions for the individuals they serve.</p>
Family Support	<p>Save the Family Foundation</p> <p>Founded in 1988 in response to the need for comprehensive community services dedicated to assisting homeless families with children in their transition to self-sufficiency. Save the Family serves 265 families annually with housing and support services that break the cycles of abuse, homelessness, and poverty. Their efforts have been proven effective for 90% of the clients who complete the program.</p>	<p>Helping Hands for Single Moms</p> <p>Their mission is to empower single mothers to provide for their families independently. The agency assists moms in attaining a college education, affordable housing, and financial literacy. While enrolled in college, each mom receives a combination of financial aid, money management and life skills training, and care from a mentor. Since beginning in 2001 as a pilot project, they have grown to serve 45 families. To date, they have an 84% stay-in-school retention rate, and 75% of the moms graduate with a college degree.</p>
Affordable Healthcare	<p>Chandler Education Foundation – San Marcos Resource Center (now Chandler CARE Center)</p> <p>This nationally recognized Center provides a children's clinic as the area's only source of free medical treatment for low-income children. Its work represents a broad collaboration of health organizations, individual donors and volunteers. This school-based clinic serves over 13,000 kids annually, and has seen a positive correlation in academic results and reduced absenteeism.</p>	<p>St. Vincent De Paul, Virginia G. Piper Medical and Dental Clinic</p> <p>Each year, this clinic provides more than \$2 million worth of medical and dental services to low-income, working families who are unable to afford insurance coverage. More than 160 physicians and dentists volunteer more than 13,600 hours of their time and professional expertise each year to make basic health care available. The Clinic receives more than 13,000 patient visits for medical and dental care annually. They also provide education and medical counseling to help their patients prevent future health complications.</p>