



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

October 24, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The fabric of Arizona's social safety net has unraveled, as a result of the state of our economy and the values reflected in last year's state budget allocations. The loss and reductions of services has had devastating effects on those in our community whom we serve. Please join us for the upcoming **Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors Community Outreach & Advocacy Summit** on January 29th, 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM in Casa Grande. The Community Outreach and Advocacy Summit will provide an opportunity for dialog among grandparents, human services professionals, elected leaders, and government agencies. This is an opportunity to come together to speak up for kids and to formulate an action plan to address the challenges faced by grandparents raising their grandchildren.

Recent census figures tell us that nationwide, 5% of children in 2009 lived in the care of their grandparents. In Arizona, the percentage is 6%, about 106,000 kids. This rate in Arizona has doubled since 2000, while the nationwide percentage has remained fairly constant. Grandparents step in to raise their grandkids because the parents are disabled or have died, are in prison, or perhaps suffer from mental illness, substance abuse or other issues that make them unable to care for their children.

Grandparents become parents all over again to keep their families together and to keep their grandchildren out of the costly foster care system. Many grandparents face challenges with housing, transportation, child care, after-school care, and health care for themselves and their grandkids. Recent state budget cuts in Arizona have made it harder for grandparents to get basic assistance to keep their grandchildren thriving and their families intact.

Now is the time to come together and create a collective voice for the most vulnerable in our communities! See you in January.

c/o Children's Action Alliance Southern Arizona
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Attached is a flier about the summit; please share it with your program participants, friends and colleagues.

For further information, please contact:

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Sincerely,

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