

## **EARLY INTERVENTION & PREVENTION**

### **Ready to Learn**

New scientific evidence demonstrates that parents and other caregivers help mold and shape their babies' brains for life, long before they enter school. The evidence gleaned from new technology indicates that the brain is tremendously affected by outside influences from birth to age five. Therefore, Mesa United Way has established the *Ready to Learn* initiative to educate parents, grandparents, caregivers, and the community at large about the importance of proper brain development for children from pre-birth to age six.

The *Ready to Learn* initiative is a partnership with people in business, government, labor, education, and health and human service agencies working together to ensure children have the tools they need to succeed in school. *Ready to Learn* accomplishes its goals by focusing the community's energy on the following areas: educating people about how children develop and encouraging them to make a commitment to help all children succeed; aiding parents to obtain the health and human services they may need; and, building partnerships with individuals and groups who work with children and families so that all children's needs are met.

Mesa United Way sponsored the "Ready to Learn" conference on February 7, 2003, and over 1,000 individuals attended. The conference featured internationally renowned brain expert Dr. Bruce Perry, who presented the latest research about the relationship between early life experiences and emotional, cognitive, and physical growth. Most recently, Mesa United Way developed Native American and Hispanic Ready to Learn Committees, and is pursuing train-the-trainer sessions with culturally appropriate materials. In addition, the City of Scottsdale recently adopted a resolution in support of the Ready to Learn initiative.

*For further information, contact Mesa United Way at (480) 969-8601.*

### **Success by Six**

Research demonstrates that children's physical, social, intellectual and emotional development in early childhood is vital to their success. Ensuring that children ages 0-6 receive key resources can directly contribute to a positive quality of life.

United Way's Success By 6 Initiative is a national community-based movement of public and private partners that work together to deliver proven solutions that ensure all children ages zero to six are healthy, nurtured and ready to succeed. In more than 350 cities throughout the United State and Canada, United Way's Success By 6 is creating effective community-based solutions that contribute to the positive quality of life for young children. Success By 6 Initiative through Valley of the Sun United Way focuses on improving outcomes for children ages 0-6 throughout Maricopa County. The initiative helps ensure that children have the resources they need for healthy physical growth, social and emotional development and quality early learning experiences.

Since last spring, the Success By 6 Initiative program has grown tremendously. A panel of 20 volunteers from the business, philanthropic, education, health, government and nonprofit communities is helping guide the direction. Together this group has collectively identified two broad strategies or “pathways”, including a focus on increasing public awareness and education efforts, as well as increasing access to quality early learning experiences among children in identified low-performing school districts.

*For further information, please contact Cory Underhill at Valley of the Sun United Way at (602) 631-4800.*

### **Jobs for Arizona’s Graduates (JAG)**

JAG is a 20-year old national nonprofit program that strives to assist at-risk and disadvantaged youth by encouraging them to stay in school and explore post-graduation careers and opportunities. Specifically, JAG aims to decrease high school dropout rates, increase graduation rates, increase youth employment and reduce social service costs associated with unemployment. Each state, school district, and school implements the program in its own unique manner.

In Arizona, JAG served over 800 high school students in 2001-2002. The following high schools have JAG programs: Camelback, Carl Hayden, Dysart, McClintock, Peoria, and Tolleson. Funding for the JAG programs comes from various sources, including the Arizona Department of Education, Department of Commerce, Valley of the Sun United Way, American Express, Bank of American, Motorola, and APS.

For further information, please visit [www.jag.org](http://www.jag.org).

### **Youth Initiatives**

Investing in youth through intervention and prevention programs creates safer neighborhoods, healthier communities, a more productive workforce, and provides opportunities for success. Several programs that partner school districts (Agua Fria Union High School, Tolleson Union High School, and Buckeye Union High School) with municipalities and community based organizations have resulted in reduced drop out rates and higher academic achievement. Keeping Excellence in Youth Support (KEYS) provides crisis intervention services to students and schools 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Assuming Responsibilities of Manhood (ARM) provides support for teen fathers. The REACH program provides one on one translation for monolingual migrant high school students. These programs work by helping students make healthier lifestyle choices and by building the four cornerstones of success: self-respect, self-esteem, self-restraint, and self-responsibility.

## **PLANNING FOR OLDER ADULTS/PLANNING FOR ALL AGES**

### **Life Options**

National data demonstrates that one in four Arizonans is now a “baby-boomer”. The leading edge of this huge age cohort will be eligible for Social Security in 2008 and boomers will begin to redefine retirement options as they have done with other phases of their lives. Demographers project that the State’s current population of seniors will grow

from 17% in 2000 to 24% in 2020 and 26% in 2050, with the number of those over the age of 85 increasing the fastest. Average lifespan now reaches into the eighties, leaving people with a third of their lives after retirement in which to pursue dreams, find another career, become students again, volunteer, travel or play. With medical advances, illness occurs later in life, if at all. Our mental models of aging and retirement are undergoing a transformation as scholars recognize that only a small percentage of seniors are frail or impaired, and that there are huge potential contributions seniors can make to their communities.

There is a whole spectrum of possible funding strategies for seniors, ranging from addressing basic needs, to promoting healthy aging and avoiding disease, to maintaining physical and mental health functioning, to assisting people to remain at home as long as possible, to promoting engagement in the community. To this end, a grant to Libraries for the Future and Civic Ventures supported the formation of the Maricopa Commission on Productive Aging, which produced a *Life Options Blueprint*.

This blueprint identifies the core and optional components of Life Options Centers, which will target the increasingly large numbers of adults approaching retirement or those who have already left full-time employment. The Centers offer a designed space for people to learn about community opportunities to volunteer, to link to supportive services, employment opportunities, wellness information and educational opportunities. Planning grants will be made to collaborative partners based on proposals submitted to the Trust by September 1, 2003.

*Details are listed on the Piper Trust website at [www.pipertrust.org](http://www.pipertrust.org).*

### **Central Village**

Along the same lines of bracing for the influx of aging Baby Boomers, the nation's healthcare system and facilities for independent living must be prepared. Metropolitan Phoenix is in critical need of solutions that blend the tradition of charitable offerings with consortia of corporate responses, so that current and future requirements for a quality lifespan can be addressed. To this end, the Foundation for Senior Living has developed the concept of a community-based model for care, *The Central Village*.

Located in the central corridor of downtown Phoenix, ***The Central Village*** will be a unique gathering place, where enrollees can enjoy services of a café, health and wellness center, education and training center, entertainment venue and Adult Day Health Care center. Every aspect of the Central Village embraces the concept that seniors are just as diverse as other adults, with a great variety of capabilities, needs and taste. The focus is on potential growth for people of all ages.

Featured within *The Central Village* campus will be an Adult Day Health Care center, Respite Facility, Cafe, Healthy Living Center, Education and Training Classrooms, Theater and Treatment Areas. *The Central Village* will present a complete array of daily activities and special events for the benefit of clients, their caregivers and the general community.

*For further information, please contact (602) 285-0505.*

### **DOVES program**

Domestic violence affects victims of all ages, but victims of varying ages may require different types of support and shelter. Older victims, for instance, may require shelter for short periods of time, and may need support focusing on economic, social, and religious beliefs about separation or divorce.

The Domestic Older Victims Empowerment and Safety (DOVES) program provides education and necessary support for late in life victims of domestic violence. DOVES provides support groups throughout Maricopa County, and recently opened the Maricopa Elder Emergency Housing Program to house victims of late life domestic violence. At the shelter, victims may obtain up to two weeks of free housing. Finally, DOVES offers transitional housing for up to two years, including counseling, support groups, and case management.

This is the first domestic violence transitional housing program designed for victims age 50 and older in Maricopa County. The DOVES program is a collaborative effort between the Glendale Human Services Council, Area Agency on Aging, PREHAB's Faith House, Foundation for Senior Living, YWCA of Maricopa County, Experience Plus Placement Center, Senior Horizons, Family Service Agency and TLC Staff Builders.

*For further information, please contact (602) 264-4357.*

### **Communities for All Ages (CFAA)**

Several agencies and individuals recognize the need to develop alternative strategies to address the coming age wave and the current struggles of our young people. Key strategies are to strengthen the bonds across ages and cultures, and ultimately have older adults and young people be resources to each other and their communities. Broader issues like mobility and transportation, health care, land use, housing, and social services, also need to be examined and solutions identified. Other states are recognizing that the coming age wave does not have to be a disaster. Florida and other states and cities offer models for making communities "elder ready" and, thus, better for all ages.

Locally, the Arizona Community Foundation is sponsoring the CFAA initiative to develop community planning and public policy toward an intergenerational agenda and constituency to advocate for better programs, policies and budgets affecting people of all ages. The core elements of a CFAA are:

- ✓ Focused on a Life-span perspective
- ✓ Opportunities for lifelong civic engagement, learning, and productivity
- ✓ Planned efforts to promote meaningful cross-age interaction
- ✓ Access to quality health care and social services across the life course
- ✓ Support of care-giving families
- ✓ Collaboration across systems and organizations

The Arizona Community Foundation's 2003 CFAA initiative activities include the following: 1) Hosting Regional Conferences (Maricopa County conference is September 24, 2003 at Fiesta Inn in Tempe), 2) Launching the CFAA Discovery into Action Grant Program, and 3) Identifying support organization(s) to assist the pilot sites.

*For further information, please contact Suzanne Quigley at (602) 381-1400 x16.*

## **WEB-BASED PROGRAMS**

### **211**

Information and referral has been the lifeline to health and human services linkages to the public at large for the last 30 years. To this end, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was petitioned by United Way of America (UWA), in partnership with the Alliance for Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), to reserve the 211 number as a call number for accessing information and referral assistance in relation to health and human service concerns.

Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW), the Office of the Governor, Arizona Department of Economic Security and the City of Phoenix (Preliminary Sponsor Group) are partnering in this effort. Forging alliances statewide with sponsors and stakeholders, VSUW is facilitating a process that will result in the activation of a web-based system integrated with a call center for the Community Service Link and 211 systems.

A blue print and conceptual plan design will be developed defining the necessary software requirements and technical capabilities of the web-based system. Ultimately, a Request for Proposal will be prepared to develop the web-based Community Service Link and the 211 systems. Background research is currently being conducted for best practices, cost/benefit analysis, and crisis preparedness. While much of the data is being compiled from experiences throughout the country, emphasis is being placed upon what works best for the State of Arizona.

### **Data Partnership**

Although various local datasets are available in printed materials, on the Internet, or in various state and local agencies, there is a deficit of local socioeconomic data available in one location and on the web for use by human service agencies, municipalities, and individuals. Such data is essential to planners, grant writers, and others in order to accurately capture and paint a picture of local needs and changing demographics. In addition, many individuals and professionals who could benefit from existing datasets are unaware the data exists or do not have easy access to the information.

For this reason, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW) are continuing to develop a partnership to collect and present existing socioeconomic indicator data relevant to the Maricopa Region. It is the goal of the Community Data Partnership to collect accurate data, present it in an understandable format, and make it available to as many community members and groups as possible.

The data collected for this “Community Data Partnership” will be assembled in a publication called “Community Vital Signs”, and will include categories such as Demographics, Health, Crime/Safety, Education, Civic Engagement, Housing, Families, and Employment. Each dataset combines information from several sources ranging from federal, state and local nonprofit agency data. Data is not only displayed on maps and in charts but also analyzed by local experts. Sources are consistently cited so as that users may access additional information or make inquiries to the original source. The publication is anticipated for release in Fall 2003, and the web version is expected to follow approximately one year later.

*For information, please contact Debra Determan at MAG at 602/254-6300.*

### **Benefits Check-Up**

The Piper Trust is interested in working with human service agencies to better address the needs of seniors in the Valley. This large demographic sector of the population will impact our communities in terms of health care, social services, land use, transportation, and housing. It also provides an expanding group of people whose time and talents may help to make the Valley a better place to live. Working together to plan for this burgeoning population and its impact will allow us to develop more responsive and comprehensive approaches. One way to assist this demographic is to assist them with understanding and obtaining the benefits for which they are eligible.

To this end, the Piper Trust is working on a program called “Benefits Check-up”. This program will provide information to seniors and their caregivers about senior-oriented or senior-eligible programs along with instructions on how to apply. This Internet-based program currently includes federal and state information. The Piper Trust is partnering with St. Luke’s Health Initiative and BHHS Legacy Foundation to bring Benefits Check-up to Arizona. Local program data must be incorporated into the national database, along with a design for linking seniors with information. The foundations are working with the Governor’s Office, state agencies, the Area Agency on Aging and other agencies serving seniors to tailor the program to local needs.

*For information, please contact the Virginia Piper Charitable Trust at (480) 948-5853.*

### **Arizona Self Help**

One of the biggest challenges faced by low-income families is locating programs that are available to assist them. Social service agencies also find this to be true when assisting clients with needs outside of their own scope of services.

The Arizona Community Action Association (ACAA) has been on the forefront of bridging this gap through the *People's Info Guide: Where to go for help*. Now, ACAA has created Arizona Self Help, an innovative web-based eligibility estimator for programs serving low to moderate income Arizonans. The Arizona Self Help website is free, easy to use and private. The entire screening process will take under 15 minutes to complete. Regardless of computer experience or reading comprehension level, the site is easy to navigate in English or Spanish. The user is asked questions that pertain to household members, income, and living expenses. Finally, Arizona Self Help will tell the user if they might qualify to receive Food Stamps, WIC, School Lunch Program and emergency

food. However, Arizona Self Help cannot guarantee eligibility; the users must still apply for each program.

The first phase of the program will be available in August 2003 by logging on to [www.arizonaselfhelp.org](http://www.arizonaselfhelp.org). Information will be provided on programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Child Care Assistance, Head Start, AHCCCS, S.O.B.R.A., Kids Care, Earned Income Tax Credit, LIHEAP, and Federal Housing Assistance.

*For further information contact Pam Shand at ACCA at (602) 604-0640.*

### **Community Information & Referral**

Community Information & Referral, Inc., is a nonprofit 501 (c )(3) social service organization which offers a 24-hour bilingual Helpline (602-263-8856) available to people in need of human services such as homeless and domestic violence shelters, emergency food box, financial utility assistance, health care, legal assistance, substance abuse treatment, child and senior services. A comprehensive community resource database is available through its website at [www.cirs.org](http://www.cirs.org). Over 250,000 calls for help are responded to each year!

### **HMIS**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires homeless continuums of care to implement client-tracking systems by 2004. This system must include at least 50% of the beds in the entire Continuum. In Maricopa County, the MAG Continuum submitted an application and was awarded supportive services funding in the 2001 application cycle.

Community Information & Referral, Inc. is the administering organization of the Maricopa County Continuum of Care Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The system is also used as a bed reservation and client tracking system for homeless and domestic violence shelters. HMIS maintains an unduplicated count of homeless individuals and the services rendered to them.

HMIS was successfully implemented in 2003 following an extensive planning phase. The HMIS has now replaced the internal IS in the state's largest (400) bed shelter and is replacing systems in other smaller organizations. Implementation is running one year ahead of schedule. Currently Community Information and Referral is the umbrella agency for HMIS.

*For further information, please contact Roberto Armijo at (602) 263-8845 x 111.*

## **HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION**

### **Transit: Demographics and Social Change**

Maricopa County is projected to grow from approximately 3.1 million in 2000 to 6.3 million in 2040, driven by migration from other states and immigration from Latin

America. Key questions remain, though, as to how the transportation system will keep pace with the growth.

Findings of the 2001 *MAG Regional Transportation Update Demographics and Social Change Issue Paper* suggest the following: the transit system needs to be more responsive to its users' characteristics, mobility from the central cities of Maricopa County to the urban boundaries need to be reviewed and provided, senior and youth populations need to be accommodated, and alternative transportation systems need to be considered. The report also reviews employment trends, the impact of immigration on transportation, and growth in the central cities of various races and ethnicities.

*A full copy of the report may be found at:*

*<http://www.mag.maricopa.gov/archive//PUB/agenda/RTP/DEMOGRAPHICS%20ISSUE%20PAPER.pdf>.*

### **Maricopa County Work Links**

In an effort to assist low-income individuals with work-related transportation needs, Maricopa County developed the Work Links program. This program provides employment and employment-related transportation options to low-income persons to and from child care, employment-related medical appointments, employment sites and interviews, and job training or school. This program provides transportation for 3 months, and allows beneficiaries to re-qualify for another 3-month period.

Methods of transportation assistance provided include the following: bicycle (includes helmet & lock), bus tickets/passes, car repair/vehicle emissions, van routes, Valley Metro carpool/vanpool, gas stipend, taxi, and vehicle registration/insurance. The program is offered free of charge, and includes the entire Maricopa County area.

### **Maricopa County Special Needs**

This program is committed to providing transportation to the most transit dependent populations in Maricopa County. The Special Needs program provides transportation assistance to elderly, disabled, and low-income individuals, and provides home delivered meals to elderly homebound individuals.

The program duration is indefinite, and includes the following types of trips: medical appointments, dialysis, senior center trips, home delivered meals, shopping trips, social services appointments, recreational trips, and adult day care. The program is free of charge to participants, and serves the following communities: Aguila, El Mirage, Fountain Hills, Chandler, Avondale, Wickenburg, Glendale, Tempe, Gilbert, Buckeye, Wittmann, Peoria, Scottsdale, Guadalupe, Cashion, Surprise, Sun City, Mesa, Gila Bend, Sun City West, Phoenix, and Tolleson.

## **FINANCIAL LITERACY**

### **IDA Program**

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are savings accounts of working poor families. IDAs are a new, powerful tool in the fight against poverty. They signify a changing philosophy about the roots of poverty-that poverty is not just a lack of income, but rather the result of families not having assets. The savings accumulated by families who fit economic eligibility standards (earned income and few or no assets) are matched by a variety of source funds. As a result, these families may then use the total savings plus the match to purchase important family assets such as a home, a business, or the financing of post-secondary education or training.

In Arizona, IDA programs exist in Chandler/Gilbert, Mesa, Avondale, Tempe, Phoenix, and Tucson. Participating banks include National Bank of Arizona and Wells Fargo. The Assets for Arizona Alliance is a group of IDA program administrators, funders, financial institutions, bank regulating agencies, philanthropies, faith-based organizations, cities and towns, the State of Arizona Department of Housing, elected officials and other interested persons and organizations working to expand Individual Development Accounts in the State of Arizona. The Alliance meets almost monthly and usually in Maricopa County.

*For further information, please visit <http://www.assetsaz.org/> or [http://www.nedco-mesa.org/html/ind\\_dev\\_accts.htm](http://www.nedco-mesa.org/html/ind_dev_accts.htm).*

### **Earned Income Tax Credit**

Created by Congress in 1975, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides a lump sum payment to working individuals and families below certain income levels. This program puts money in the pockets of workers with modest incomes. Surveys show that recipients use the tax credit to pay utility bills and credit card bills, buy clothes for children and make long-deferred purchases of furniture and household needs.

However, the IRS estimates that there are tens of thousands of individuals that are income eligible for the EITC but are unaware of the program and its benefits. Since many of those who are eligible are also utilizing city or other social services, education on the EITC benefits our communities. Furthermore, many of the EITC dollars would be spent by community residents in their own communities.

*For further information, please contact Linda Jackson at the IRS at (602) 207-8881.*

### **Direct Deposit**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) encourages Social Security beneficiaries to utilize direct deposit for their benefits checks. The SSA cites the efficiency and safety of direct deposit as opposed to mailed benefits checks. Social Security has delivered more than 1.8 billion direct deposit payments worth \$1.9 trillion, and not one has ever been lost or stolen.

In addition, SSA states that direct deposit helps save tax dollars. It costs 43 cents to print and deliver a federal payment check. It costs 2 cents to make the same payment by direct deposit. The millions of dollars Social Security saves each month by making electronic payments means more money to pay future Social Security benefits.  
*To sign up for direct deposit, beneficiaries may call 1-800-772-1213.*

## **COMMUNITY INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS**

### **Immigrants**

While the economic and cultural fabric of Arizona and Maricopa County are woven with the influences of an ever-increasing diversity of people, there are inherent burdens placed on already stressed systems of education, health, and social services. The needs of immigrant people vary widely according to legal status, economic capacity, cultural acceptance, and accuracy of information about rights and eligibility for services. Whether the driving force is delivering a humanitarian response to people in need, or bolstering the economic viability of our community, it is certain that addressing the health and welfare of immigrants is imperative in stabilizing the overall quality of life for us all.

### **Day Labor Centers**

In certain locations throughout the Valley, dozens of day laborers gather informally to look for work opportunities. Contractors drive by the congregations and hire workers. In some locations, though, local business owners and residents object to the congregating crowds and complain to the local jurisdiction about safety and other issues.

Two local responses have formed. In Phoenix, the City Council established the Valley's first publicly subsidized day labor center in the northeast part of town earlier this year. The Macehualli Work Center was designed to bring safety and organization to the area's businesses and residents by providing a facility for immigrant workers to seek and secure local day labor. This program welcomes hundreds of day laborers everyday, and parcels out work through a raffle system.

In Chandler, the Light and Life Day Labor Center opened in May 2003. This facility was privately funded and planned by the Iglesia Metodista Libre church. This facility continues to struggle in its early months to attract employers to the location, but plans to work with local contractors and media to get the word out about the facility. Meanwhile, other local communities continue to study the issue, and look to cities such as Los Angeles where day labor centers have functioned for several years.

### **Uncompensated Medical Care**

Thousands of foreign nationals in need of emergent as well as sophisticated and specialized medical care seek treatment at Arizona hospitals because such services are simply not available in their homelands, particularly in neighboring Mexico. Foreign nationals often take advantage of the "medical parole" authority delegated to the INS,

which allows INS agents to waive through the border anyone in need of medical care. Medical parole creates legal status for these individuals, without linking them categorically to any source of payment. All hospitals that contract with Medicare are required by federal law (EMTALA) to screen and stabilize any patient that comes through their doors, regardless of ability to pay or citizenship – this is described by the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA) as an unfunded federal mandate.

Another challenge is that many undocumented Mexican nationals pass through Arizona and the other U.S. border states en route to other locations within the U.S. These individuals do not intend to stay within the U.S. border state of entry, so they may not qualify for emergency care reimbursement under the state Medicaid program (AHCCCS). Adding to this population is a significant group of individuals who have every intent to stay in the U.S. but lack sufficient proof of residency (i.e., an address, P.O. Box, etc.), which is required in order to be eligible for state emergency services.

According to AzHHA, the annualized cost to Arizona hospitals for providing uncompensated medical care is \$150 million. AzHHA is asking Congress to enact legislation that provides reimbursement to hospitals and other providers that demonstrate uncompensated care losses due to treating immigrants, and to expand state Medicaid programs in border states to provide adequate services to both documented and undocumented immigrants.

*For further information, please contact AzHHA at (602) 445-4300.*

### **Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program**

By definition, refugees are apart and different from legal immigrants, as refugees did not plan to leave their countries of origin and make a new life in Arizona, without benefit of support from relatives, friends, knowledge of English, familiarity with the culture, and all the societal support systems.

The Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program has been in operation since 1978. The Arizona Department of Economic Security/Division of Aging and Community Services/Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) is entirely funded with federal grants from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)/Administration for Children and Families/US Department of Health and Human Services.

The RRP is responsible for the administration and coordination of assistance and services to newly arrived refugees in Arizona. Categories of assistance include: (1) Refugee Cash and Medical Assistance (eight month eligibility from date of arrival to the United States), (2) Core refugee employment and employment-support services, i.e., Job Development and Placement, English-as-a-Second Language, and counseling/case management, (3) Non-core services such as refugee community based development, special services to refugee women, and refugee mental health services, and (4) special funding projects including the Refugee Targeted Assistance Program, and Special Services to Older Refugees. All assistance and services are short term and are not designed to replace mainstream assistance programs.

## **POVERTY MODELS FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

### **Circles of Support**

The rationale behind the “circles of support” concept is that people in poverty are often isolated from the natural circles of support that many of us can lean on when our livelihood or sense of well-being is threatened. Natural circles of support may include family, friends, neighbors, or faith communities.

Circles of support programs, then, develop community leadership teams comprised of volunteers from local churches, neighborhoods, and other associations to form support networks that help families look beyond welfare and poverty. Such programs were originally developed in Canada and at the Move the Mountain Leadership Center in Iowa.

Currently, Circles of Support programs are either in development or implementation phases in the cities of Tempe, Phoenix, and Mesa.

*For further information, please contact Wayne Tormala at the City of Phoenix at (602) 495-7044.*

### **Housing Solutions**

Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) is a voluntary program designed to assist families in achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency through education and job training. The program motivates and assists participants with identification of career goals, and assists with development of a plan to achieve goals related to jobs and housing. FSS programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) via the municipalities, in accordance with the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 and amendments in 1992.

All families and individuals currently participating in Section 8 Rental Housing are eligible for FSS. The municipalities’ housing departments administer the program in an effort to promote the development of local strategies to coordinate the use of rental assistance.

In addition, the City of Tempe instituted a rental reinvestment partnership program. The program offers five-year forgivable loans for the moderate rehabilitation of existing rental units. The rehabilitated units that participate will be rent and income restricted for five years to ensure affordability. Loans of up to \$14,999 are available.

*For further information on the FSS programs, please contact your local municipal housing office. For further information on Tempe’s rental reinvestment program, please contact (480) 350-8950.*

### **Home Ownership Program**

The Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, which was chartered by Congress in 1978 as a public nonprofit, provides community investment as well as the technical assistance and training necessary to rebuild neighborhoods. Neighborhood Reinvestment operates the NeighborWorks Network, a coalition of 223 local organizations in urban, suburban, and rural regions that provide loans and hands-on assistance to their neighbors.

In the Southwest Valley, the NeighborWorks program is the Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) of Southwestern Maricopa County, and consists of residents, business, and government leaders dedicated to improving the quality of life and community pride through community-based activities designed to revitalize neighborhoods.

NHS offers housing rehabilitation services such as cost estimates and on-site inspections, as well as a revolving loan fund to finance home rehabilitation and improvements. In addition, NHS offers home ownership education and counseling, down payment and closing cost assistance, acquisition, rehab, and resale, and in-fill development. Finally, NHS offers leadership development, Youth Building Trades Program and other neighborhood improvement projects. Since its establishment in 1998, NHS has accomplished the construction of 48 new homes, 21 major home rehabilitations, 42 home rehabilitations, and various other church and community projects.

*For further information, please contact NHS at (623) 932-9077.*

### **Ensure to Insure**

The number of Arizona residents without health insurance is increasing at a rapid rate. Some have estimated the percentage of uninsured in Arizona at 28% -- the highest rate in the nation.

Out of concern for the number of uninsured residents, their out-of-pocket medical bills, and the weight that uncompensated care places on the medical system and on taxpayers, the City of Tempe instituted the Ensure to Insure program. Passed by Resolution in December 2000, this program requires contractors and consultants bidding on City contracts worth \$30,000 or more to provide medical insurance to permanent employees and employees' dependents. In addition, contractors submitting bids to the City must ensure that its major subcontractors (those subcontracting for an amount of at least 10%) provide medical insurance for their permanent employees and the employees' dependents.

Several organizations have endorsed this program, including the NAACP, AFL-CIO, Children's Action Alliance, and East Valley Catholic Social Services.

*For further information, please contact the City of Tempe at (480) 350-5373.*

## **ASSET ASSESSMENT/NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

### **East Valley**

As municipalities and human service agencies struggle to provide services in these leaner economic times, it is vital that such providers make decisions based on an accurate assessment of local needs. To that end, the East Valley cities of Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert, Tempe, and Scottsdale, together with Mesa United Way and Valley of the Sun United Way, convened a work group in July 2002 to discuss design and implementation of an accurate East Valley Needs Assessment (EVNA).

Since then, the group has met regularly to discuss specific data needs such as demographic analyses, and long-term goals such as the establishment of collaborative partnerships. The EVNA released a request for proposals and subsequently contracted with a facilitator to conduct an in-depth analyses of each community's needs, available services, and service gaps.

The EVNA is convening a regional summit on November 14, 2003, at the Mesa Sheraton. Information such as perceptions in the community, socio-economic profiles, and data on community resources will be shared.

*For further information, please contact Debbra Determan at MAG at (602) 254-6300.*

### **West Valley**

The human services needs in the West Valley have significantly changed due to the remarkable population growth that has occurred. As a result, Glendale Human Services Council, Inc. (GHSC) and ASU West's Partnership for Community Development have begun identifying the human resources assets and needs in Northwestern Maricopa County.

Both entities are currently meeting with agency representatives serving clients in Northwestern Maricopa, conducting needs assessment sessions and attending the Western Maricopa DES Advisory Council meetings and beginning to quantify information indicating the needs of the community and the community's ability to effectively respond to those needs. GHSC, Inc. and ASU West's Partnership for Community Development are also planning to initiate and facilitate community forums to collect additional data that will indicate the community's needs.

*For further information, please contact Paige Thomas at the Glendale Human Services Council at (623) 937-9034.*