

**Tohono O’odham Nation  
Grantee  
Narrative Report Highlights –  
FY 2013 Quarter 1 & 2**



**FIRST THINGS FIRST**  
*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

**United Way of Tucson and Southern AZ — Great Expectations Professional Development**

**Successes:**

**Tohono O’odham Community College: Improving transition strategies for Tribal kindergarten children**

- Participants came together for their first CoP meeting in October and participated in writing skills activities that focused on the development of observational poems. The outcome yielded several poems and a general consensus among CoP members about replicating this activity in the form of a family writing event. Students received an assignment to design a family event to be conducted later in the year.
- The following includes a poem written by two cohort members that integrates both English and O’odham words to describe their observations in nature:

*Small black butterfly looks like night.  
The fire smells like cemait in the air.  
The soft wind hits my back and face like swimming in water.  
I heard one bird chirping close to me like it was talking in my ear.*

\*Note: “cemait” is the O’odham word for tortillas

**Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)**

- 28 Coordinators and key Community of Practice staff attended CLASS seminars in September to learn how to observe in and rate the classrooms of teachers who are enrolled in Great Expectations for Teachers, Children, and Families.
- 19 attendees elected to take the on-line reliability rating test from October through December; all 19 passed the test, which will allow 19 Community of Practice coordinators and key staff to assess classroom climate, classroom management, and Instructional Support; they can provide in-depth coaching and Instructional Support to their cohort members; Instructional Support is a key to building and strengthening young children’s cognitive development, critical thinking skills, and other essential skills needed for successful school trajectories.

**Expert Consultants**

- Sue Bredekamp, Ph.D., and Carol Copple, Ph.D., the authors of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) and the lead consultants on the Great Expectations grant, were in Tucson for 3 days to discuss a framework on which to build and tie together all Community of Practice adult learning activities. They will return to Tucson 3 more times this year to hold focus groups, to talk with each Community of Practice Coordinator, and to review ideas with the grant director in order to draft the learning framework. The framework will be a tool that teachers can use to develop and/or implement high quality, evidence-based learning programs for young children.

**Tucson Unified School District: Improving instructional support in public preschools**

- Hired in December, this new CoP Coordinator wasted no time in organizing a collaborative planning process for the development of a three-part curriculum based on the book, *Powerful Interactions* that will be delivered to pre-K staff in the following spring. Through the joint effort of two Quality First coaches and the Helios funded *Read On, Tucson* Instructional Coordinator, this curriculum will

provide pre-k staff with effective strategies for teacher-child interactions and teaching practices measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

**University of Arizona - College of Education: Supporting higher education early childhood degree completion**

- Success this quarter was demonstrated by the announcement of the December 2012 graduation of the first Early Childhood Education Master's student. Faculty continues to support cohort members' successes as evidenced by the development of a website by Dr. Sonya Gaches that offers step-by-step guidance in the program enrollment and degree completion process. This website is available by visiting: [www.uaecema.weebly.com](http://www.uaecema.weebly.com)

**Collaborative Efforts:**

**AZ Department of Education:**

- The grant director met with Amy Corriveau of the AZ Department of Education (ADE) to arrange for an ADE staff person offer workshops in Tucson on the Arizona Early Learning Standards. Since November of 2012, ADE has held two seminars for Pima County's early childhood teachers, administrators, and grant staff. ADE is not charging for these seminars.

**Quality First Coaches:**

- The directors of the Quality First grants at the Valley of the Sun United Way and United Way of Tucson and Southern AZ contacted the Great Expectations project director to discuss ways in which National Experts who consult with Great Expectations might present special full-day seminars for Quality First coaches in Southern AZ. Three National Experts have been contacted by the Great Expectations project director, and dates and topics are in the planning process. Details will be available in the next Quarterly Report.

**Collaboration with early childhood education community and stakeholders:**

- The 100+ Pima County agencies, school districts, social service organizations, and institutions of higher education that belong to United Way's First Focus on Kids Impact Council remain as secondary partners and continue to support our work by attending workshops and encouraging their staff to join Communities of Practice as cohort members. First Focus of Kids has a Professional Development subcommittee, and some of the Great Expectations grant coordinators attend the meetings, depending on their time commitments. The anticipated result of this collaboration is that the input of community stakeholders is considered in the implementation of this work and that the ECE community is kept up to date on the results of the work of this grant.

**Collaboration between/among Communities of Practice and other FTF funded programs:**

- The Grant Director convenes regular meetings with CoP Coordinators and UWTSA Great Expectations staff to promote effective collaboration among grant partners and to provide intentional opportunities to reflect on the work and plan for continuous quality improvement that will lead towards better systems building efforts and efficient methods of documenting evidence of changes.
- Also, the Community of Practice at Pima Community College has established a close working relationship with faculty in the Mathematics Department at the College because the Department supports the efforts of the embedded tutors program that is part of this grant. The Early Childhood faculty and staff and the head of the Mathematics Department have submitted a proposal describing the embedded tutors program to the NAEYC Professional Development Institute to be held this summer in San Francisco.

In addition, the Coordinators of the Communities of Practice and United Way grant staff concentrate on interacting with staff from the following First Things First-funded strategies and programs:

### **Quality First:**

- Several of the Community of Practice Coordinators have made efforts to connect with staff from other FTF funded efforts. For example, some Coordinators have communicated with Quality First coaches to identify possible strategies for collaboration. These include working together to support specific providers and inviting coaches to participate in Communities of Practice. In addition, staff from UWTSA has established formal strategies for collaboration between Great Expectations and Quality First, including information sharing and special professional development opportunities designed for coaches and Quality First participants to attend together. The anticipated result of this collaboration is effective coordination of programs, maximized resources and reduced duplication of efforts.

### **TEACH and REWARD\$:**

- Coordinators worked together to provide information to new cohort members and connect them to TEACH and REWARD\$ (UWTSA CoP and PCC).
- The Family Support and Home Visitation Director at United Way of Tucson and Southern AZ works with the Early Childhood Professional Development Director to make sure the partners in the former group attend events at which national experts speak and/or local consultants conduct special sessions on coaching or systems thinking.
- The Early Childhood Professional Development Director meets regularly with the United Way director of *Read On, Tucson* to make sure that Instructional Support activities and early childhood school readiness are linked.

### **Tohono O'odham Nation – Parent Outreach and Awareness**

#### **Successes:**

- This grant agreement only became active in September 2012 so time to fully implement activities for the 1st quarter was not achieved. This is not an issue for the remainder of the grant period as the program is now fully up and running.
- Meetings are now ongoing with Districts, Communities, Parents and Caregivers

#### **Collaborative Efforts:**

- The program continues to meet as part of the Early Intervention Collaborative Group that includes HIS, Tohono O'odham Nation Health and Human Services, Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities Desert Survivors and AzEIP.

#### **Barriers:**

- Process and procedural differences between the Tohono O'odham Nation and First Things First continue to be resolved. A meeting was held in Sells on 2/5 with all grant partners as part of a continuing effort to align systems.

### **Tohono O'odham Nation –Community Based Parent Education**

#### **Successes:**

- This grant agreement only became active in September 2012 so time to fully implement activities for the 1st quarter was not achieved. This is not an issue for the remainder of the grant period as the program is now fully up and running.
- The program hosted it's first community event which was attended by over 28 families and will be replicated at recreation centers on the Tohono O'odham Nation.

#### **Barriers:**

- Process and procedural differences between the Tohono O’odham Nation and First Things First continue to be resolved. A meeting was held in Sells on 2/5 with all grant partners as part of a continuing effort to align systems.

### **Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona –Food Security**

#### **Successes:**

- Implementation coincided with the start of the Education Department’s Head Start calendar

#### **Collaborative Efforts:**

- One of the sites was closed during attempted delivery. The driver had to multiple calls before reaching someone who could direct the delivery to another location. Cheryl Encinas was contacted and provided contact information for each delivery site and sent a complete list of names and phone numbers for each.

### **Quality First**

#### **Successes:**

- Weekly coach meetings are held individually in Tucson and Sierra Vista. These meetings are conducted to provide opportunities for coaches to work with their peers on issues and to share ideas. These meetings also serve to define and clarify program expectations. One monthly meeting with our entire team is used to ensure consistent practices in coaching and implementation of QF. The time is often used for professional development by inviting presenters that have specialized expertise in areas of interest to the team, such as: Nancy Ortiz, who provided information on family style dining, and Wholonomy Consulting, which provided focused technical assistance on specific components of the Coaching for Change strategy.
- UWTSa is collaborating with VSUW, SWHD, ASCC, CFR, ESBF, and Judy Jablon, one of the authors of *Powerful Interactions*, to plan a three day training on the Powerful Interactions model for the coaches, supervisors, and administrators in February 2013. UWTSa is confident Powerful Interactions will assist coaches in supporting providers to advance instructional support practices.
- The program is seeing a consistent rise in assessment scores, number of Points Scale assessments, and increases in star ratings. When the program staff conducts program reviews of coaching agency partners, they receive very positive feedback from providers in regard to their satisfaction of coaching services.
- Staff continue to achieve an increased level of collaboration and progress on statewide consistency. The collaboration around policies, procedures, coach training, and orientation has deepened the relationship of the statewide partners and has enabled the program to be more effective. The entire coaching partnership engages in "parallel process" as staff continues to use aspects of coaching pedagogy at all levels of the partnership.

#### **Collaborative Efforts:**

- **Nutrition:** Multiple special education and service projects in nutrition and physical activity to improve health outcomes for children. Partners include CFR, Pima County Health Department (PCHD), UWTSa–FFK, Arizona Nutrition Network, and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The anticipated results are improvements in knowledge for staff, parents and children receiving nutrition education and training, improvements in nutrition and physical activity environments for children, and increases in the development and implementation of center and home wellness policies.

- **Great Expectations for Teachers, Children and Families Community Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals:** Supports the professional development of early education providers, students, business, and community leaders. This strategy offers 10 Communities of Practice to specific target populations and creates an early education career ladders pathway. The anticipated results are that over 1,400 early education professionals will improve their early education knowledge or skills through specialized training and on-site coaching support. Staff has identified multiple Quality First sites and several coaches that participate in this strategy. Staff from the Professional Development Alliance and QF continues to meet to identify specific strategies to increase collaboration between the two programs.
- **Early Education Partnerships – Early Childhood Partnerships of South Pima & North Pima County:** Coaches in both North and South Pima County participate in the Early Childhood Partnership meetings. They support and encourage QF providers who attend. Both of these partnerships seek to provide professional development and to connect the community to information and resources about high quality early child care programs. The anticipated result is for the community in these areas to become connected and to improve the quality of early childhood-related services. In addition, the coaching team works collaboratively with Project MORE (More Opportunities for Rural Educators), recruiting more providers in the North and South Pima regions, and Project BEST (Believing in Education through Support and Training), which provides training and support for early child care centers on high quality infant/toddler care.
- **Child Care Health Consultants (CCHC):** Coaches are working collaboratively with CCHCs in their region(s). In addition, coaches are acting as a liaison between CCHC and the QF site. Coaches have attended site visits with the CCHC for those sites where the CCHC is not well-known. Anticipated result is to develop a good working relationship between CCHC, QF Coach, and the QF Provider.
- **Southern Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children (SAZAEYC):** One of the QF coaches serves on the SAZAEYC board, and several others from the coaching team are active members. Anticipated results for this collaboration is to advocate for young children, promote high quality early care and education, and provide professional development and networking opportunities.
- **RPC Meetings:** UWTSa staff regularly attends RPC meetings to stay informed on the needs, discussions, and opinions of the FTF Regional Councils. This information assists UWTSa in providing information that may be helpful to the council when needed. In addition, UWTSa staff communicates with Regional Directors as needed to ensure effective service delivery.
- Coaches worked collaboratively with Community of Practice instructors from Inclusion and Project Best in order to better support teachers who are participating in COPs.
- Two sites in North Pima have been working with Talking Matters, a FTF North Pima RPC strategy, to improve interactions with children, and increase Instructional Support scores on the CLASS tool. Coaches are invited to attend trainings alongside staff members.
- Coaches collaborated with Arizona Infant Toddler Institute (AITI) to support one of the primarily Spanish-speaking sites in understanding best practice in caring for infants and toddlers.

**Barriers:**

- One continuing challenge for agencies is not having the QF Implementation Guide and other forms available in Spanish. Though the Implementation Guide in Spanish is available on the Extranet, many child care providers do not have ready-access to it, are not comfortable using it as a resource in its electronic form, and/or are unable to print the entire document. This limits the provider's ability to fully engage the resource and understand the program, which increases her reliance on the coach

for this basic knowledge. Each coach has a printed copy of the Implementation Guide in English and Spanish that they have available on coaching visits. They attempt to answer any program questions by modeling the use of the Implementation Guide, so that providers can become accustomed to doing so as well. Spanish-speaking coaches have translated documents into Spanish for their providers as they are needed.

- It has proven difficult to share the Implementation Guide and Quality First Assessment results in Spanish for Spanish-speaking homecare providers, as they are dense and lengthy. The coach must translate these results into Spanish and it is very time-consuming. It would be helpful if this extra work were taken into account for coaching intensity requirements. In order to improve this issue, the grantee is giving coaches with Spanish speaking providers lower caseloads so they have more time to translate materials.
- Directors and teachers at many corporate sites are finding participation difficult. Staff is allotted specific time constraints and there is usually little or no time left for meaningful coaching. While Directors and Teachers may see the value of Quality First, they have too many other responsibilities to make coaching visits a priority. In order to minimize this barrier to fully engaged participation, meetings are scheduled with corporate directors and management who would like to meet so we can explain the program and expectations of the Director and staff.

## **TEACH**

### **Successes:**

- This quarter, TEACH collaborated with FTF to develop policy around the deferment of Quality First TEACH Scholarships. TEACH has developed and is implementing the new deferment policies and procedures. Two hundred and forty eight sites across the state have been contacted and have deferred a total of 441 scholarships. Of the 441 deferred scholarships, 111 have been assigned to other candidates. As a result of the new deferment process, TEACH has seen an influx of scholarship applications. Two hundred and eighteen new applications have been received for Associate's Degree scholarships and 12 applications for Child Development Associate (CDA) scholarships. Many of these scholars will begin courses during the spring 2013 semester, while others will begin in either the summer or fall semesters. TEACH has issued 264 contracts this quarter and authorized 1449 college credits. TEACH has three confirmed Associate's Degree graduates and seven scholars have earned their CDA Credential this quarter.

### **Collaborative Efforts:**

- TEACH is currently in communication with each of the community colleges to schedule classroom presentations for the spring semester early childhood courses.

### **Barriers and Solutions:**

- TEACH continues to follow up on the deferment letters that have been issued to Quality First programs that have not yet utilized the TEACH slots. TEACH has discovered the many of these programs are not responding to the request, therefore are requiring multiple follow-ups by TEACH Program Specialists before falling into the auto-defer process, which allows TEACH to defer the scholarships by default. If a program is auto-deferred, they are notified by mail and are provided with the information on how to reacquire the scholarships if they wish to utilize them in the future.