

Accomplishments to Date

Work continues on the final development of the First Things First 3-5 Year Strategic Plan which will be presented along with implementation strategies, budgets and timelines at the April Board meeting for approval .

We continue to implement our strategies to increase public awareness of First Things First. Specifically, we have:

1). Scheduled an FTF Update Presentation with the Arizona School Boards Association for March 20.

2). Provided Community Outreach Training in Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff and Casa Grande.

A total of 40 Regional Council members and FTF staff participated in the trainings. In addition, the final Phoenix session was videotaped, and the video will be made available on the Intranet. We also will be able to put the video on a DVD and send it to interested participants. A formal survey has been sent to all participants, and an updated report will be provided by March 23. An informal survey was completed among initial participants, and some of their comments included:

From Regional Council Members:

- I thought the training was excellent! Just about everyone can think of at least one “group” to whom they could present, either formally or informally, about why FTF is so very important and how the funding is impacting their community. – **Sally Downing, Vice Chair, North Phoenix Regional Council**
- I found it to be very helpful in knowing how to better do First Things First outreach in my community as a council member. I also found the examples of things that I as a council member can and can’t do while attempting to influence others to be helpful. I enjoyed the exercises we were able to do here in our regional office that allowed us a chance to practice the suggestions given. I would encourage other council members across the state to take advantage of this opportunity in future seminars. – **Cindi Alva, Vice Chair, Graham/Greenlee Regional Council**
- I walked away with some needed tools to engage the public. I definitely felt more empowered and prepared to approach an elected official, the press and my own sphere of influence. Especially loved the opportunity to role play. – **Judi Gottschalk, Chair, Central Phoenix Regional Council**
- As regional council members, we should be the strongest advocates for First Things First in terms of helping to educate our communities about the benefit of FTF to the children and families that we serve. This training offers us the opportunity to learn about the tools and techniques at our disposal to do outreach and to make outreach simple and objective. – **Mauricio Martinez, Member, South Phoenix Regional Council**

From FTF employees:

- As a Coordinator, one of the most helpful discussions for me was about the messages that are out there and how we can counteract them with positive information. – **Erin Lyons, Regional Coordinator, North Pima**

- I found the information in the Community Outreach Seminar useful and interesting. I found the “thinking outside the box” suggestions of how to spread the FTF message in our communities to be very helpful - ideas that I hadn’t thought of before. – **Shari Elkins, Regional Coordinator, Graham/Greenlee**
- I found the seminar really helpful. I particularly liked the Power Point RPC Presentation. Even if you’re not giving a presentation, reviewing and familiarizing yourself with the content can really be help when you have to give a quick impromptu explanation of why First Things First is important to our communities. I also liked the many suggestions given to advocate for First Things First. Many of which I never would have considered. – **Stacy Jo Griffis, Administrative Assistant, Colorado River Indian Tribes**
- “The Outreach Seminar is very engaging. It gives a clear concise understanding on appropriate public relations and how to properly disseminate the goals and purpose of First Things First. I personally enjoyed having the tangible activity worksheets to use during the community relations piece. It gave me an eye opener on how many people I can impact in one day by talking about First Things First. I valued this training! it’s definitely worth the time and resources.” - **Cindy Pemberton Marshall, Outreach Coordinator, Yavapai**

3). Increased the number of fans on our First Things First Facebook page to almost 400.

4). Story Bank. By the end of March, we will have launched our online Story Bank on both the Web and Intranet so that we can collect FTF Success Stories from our employees, Regional Council members, Board members and community stakeholders. In the mean time, stories can b e sent directly to Communication@azftf.gov .

5). Regional Council Member Recruitment. We have produced a variety of materials to support Regional Partnership Council recruitment, including guidance documents on recruitment and media outreach, newspaper and newsletter advertisements, the script for a radio public service announcement, a statewide press release, a template for a region-specific press release, and a leave-behind post card with a link to our online recruitment materials

Media Relations

We have reached out to members of the Capitol Press Corps – The Arizona Republic, Arizona Guardian and two wire services – Capitol Media Services and the Associated Press – to schedule initial interviews for Executive Director Allvin. The Associated Press has asked to meet with us after the Special Legislative Session ends. The others have not committed to a meeting, but we will continue to reach out to them.

We have provided extensive information and records to *The Arizona Republic* for an anticipated front-page feature on First Things First. That article was slated to run March 14, however, the publication date has been changed to March 21. Extensive work also has been done to prepare FTF stakeholders to respond to the article once it is published by telling the FTF story in their communities.

We also provided information to the Tucson Weekly for an article that appeared on March 12. Based on stakeholder feedback, we anticipate future articles from the same writer and will continue to provide information as requested.

On March 9, FTF issued a press release regarding House Concurrent Resolution 2001. That press release resulted in Director Allvin and/or Member Basha being quoted in a wire service article that appeared in the Arizona Daily Star, the Arizona Guardian, the Arizona Daily Sun and several blogs.

We responded to various interview requests as a result of the Special Legislative Session. Chair Lynn was interviewed by KVOA Channel 4, along with a Tucson family receiving support through one of our home visitation grantees. Executive Director Allvin was interviewed by KPHO Channel 5, and KTAR radio in Phoenix.

Regional Partnership Councils have continued to do a wonderful job earning positive media coverage for First Things First. Among the articles that have appeared are:

- A family resource center is in the works (Nogales International)
- First Things First battles proposal in state Legislature (Sierra Vista Herald)
- Pre-school grows; after-school program set (Green Valley News and Sun)
- Health screening for children (Payson Round Up)

Liz Barker Alvarez – (602) 418-2427