



## FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

AGENDA ITEM: External Affairs Status Update

BACKGROUND: The attached report provides information on progress related to external affairs efforts for the period of April 2012 through late May 2012. The report is segmented into several focus areas, including:

- Communications
- Community Outreach
- Government Affairs
- Tribal Affairs (see report under separate cover)

RECOMMENDATION: For informational purposes only.



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## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

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### Communications

#### **Paid Media**

Think Fast. They Do!

First Things First's second paid advertising campaign – focused on the amount of brain development that occurs between birth and age 5 – launched this month! Throughout the month, the ads will be appearing on television, on the radio, on billboards, in cinemas and across various online media. The creative concept continues the warmth of our first production, and adds a fascinating element of computer-generated imagery to simulate brain activity in all the children involved.

All of the formats invite the viewer/listener to visit First Things First on Facebook, where facts and figures about the importance of early childhood to every facet of society are presented in exciting, interactive ways. Viewers have the option of getting engaged in the early childhood conversation right there, or if they'd like additional information, they can go to a new micro-website that provides more details in the areas of brain science, early childhood's role in educational success, and the impact of early childhood on various issues, including economic development, reduced government spending and military preparedness. There are also special sections just for parents in both environments.

The campaign focuses heavily on engaging the audience via online methods, as this is the way in which many civic minded individuals and many new parents communicate and engage with issues. We encourage members of the Board and public who are not yet friends with FTF on Facebook ([facebook.com/AZFirstThingsFirst](https://facebook.com/AZFirstThingsFirst)) or who are not yet following us on Twitter (@azftf) to join the conversation!

#### **Earned Media & Social Media**

There were about **40 stories** about FTF and/or its grantees in media statewide since our last report. Many of these stories were the result of efforts by our community outreach staff on issues such as new regional council member recruitment and activities surrounding the Week of the Young Child. In addition, there were six columns submitted by CEO Rhian Evans Allvin to the *Arizona Republic* that ran in 6-12 Community sections each. Column topics included: encouraging members of the public to get involved in Week of the Young Child Activities; supporting a Department of Economic Security public awareness campaign to help parents select safe caregivers for their children; acknowledging the efforts of early educators during Teacher Appreciation Week; honoring Arizona moms; highlighting the role of early childhood in closing Arizona's achievement gap; and, encouraging parents to use the summer to help their kids prepare for kindergarten.

Our social media presence continues to grow. We have 2,349 fans on Facebook, up by almost 100 since April, and 253 people following First Things First on Twitter (up by 30 since April's report).

## Community Outreach

### **Week of the Young Child**

The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The purpose is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. All across Arizona, First Things First partnered with local AzAEYC affiliates, Head Start programs and schools by participating in activities to celebrate the week during April 22-28, 2012.

There was reading, singing, science, art, games, picnics, and even a fitness day for kids on the Colorado River Indian Tribes. Children from a preschool in Coconino County sang the national anthem at a Diamondbacks game in Phoenix. Several children's school readiness fairs providing valuable information for parents were held in Nogales, Flagstaff, Yavapai, Tolleson and Buckeye. First Things First in Cochise sponsored an event for 1000 children of active duty military families. A Hispanic sister-celebration, Dia de los Ninos was celebrated at local parks in Phoenix, San Luis and Yuma.



Children in preschool classrooms from Lake Havasu Unified and Bullhead City Elementary School Districts provided artwork for the Wells Fargo Bank displays via regional council members Alisa Burroughs and Debra Weger.

Governor Brewer signed a proclamation, "*recognizing organizations and communities working to improve early opportunities to provide a solid foundation for all children in Arizona.*" Town councils in Kingman, Parker, Payson, Globe and Miami, along with the Gila County Board of Supervisors also made proclamations. A message from the Navajo Nation's First Lady, Martha Shelly, about the importance of early childhood was broadcasted on 10 public radio stations. A special PSA ran in Graham and Greenlee counties. Earned media was garnered from over a dozen print, radio and television outlets.

There were also two unique statewide and local business partnerships for Week of the Young Child. 6,000 patrons using the Basha's Cub Houses in 20 stores throughout the state received a Born Learning Playbook, courtesy of First Things First. Wells Fargo Bank branches in five areas of the La Paz/Mohave region displayed children's artwork from two school district preschools. This was made possible by the influence of Misty Howell, Market President for Wells Fargo Bank, who is the business representative on the regional council.

### **Site Visits – Policymaker Engagement**

A picture is worth a thousand words, but *showing* community leaders our good work for young kids can be worth much more. The community outreach team is conducting site visits for key leaders in their communities, helping them experience early childhood firsthand, and hopefully, creating a lasting

impression. In this report, we are highlighting two site visits—one in the Yavapai Region and the other in NW Maricopa.

4/25/2012--The Beaver Creek School Superintendent Karin Ward conducted a tour of the Quality First Preschool opened only two years ago to showcase how early childhood programs positively impact school achievement. County Supervisors Thomas Thurman and Chip Davis; Jessie Rodriguez, Director of NACOG; members of the Beaver Creek Regional Council, Inc. and FTF Yavapai Regional Partnership Council members participated.

They also saw the new community library where Superintendent Ward highlighted early literacy telling the crowd, *"Preschool education makes a difference for kids, being in the classroom and being ready to read."* After the tour of the preschool, Supervisor Chip Davis congratulated Ward on the progress the school has made for this community. He spoke to the group about the importance of supporting a community from *"cradle to grave"*. The visit and a photo were published in Beaver Creek's E-Newsletter by Janet Aniol, a member of the Beaver Creek Regional Council, Inc.



Rimrock, AZ--County Supervisors, FTF Yavapai Regional Partnership Council and community members enjoy watching preschoolers sing together.



Surprise, AZ--Each month's parent education workshops focus on a different theme – this particular month was weather and a weather forecaster activity was a hit with these young kids.

1/19/2012--City of Surprise Councilmembers Jim Biundo, Skip Hall and Vice Mayor John Williams got an actual look at a parent education program taking place inside the Northwest Regional Library in Surprise, AZ. Each month, families learn fun and educational activities they can do with their young children to promote early literacy skills. The Parents as Partners for Early Success program by Southwest Institute for Families and Children is funded by the First Things First Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council. Along with the three City of Surprise council members, Northwest Maricopa Regional Council member Karon Ford also attended.

*"It was impressive and wonderful to see how the children and parents were fully engaged in all of the different activity stations,"* said Councilman Jim Biundo. *"I wonder who has more fun learning - the kids or the adults!"* As a result of the visit, the Surprise City Council members that attended the visit are actually looking into what they can do to further support early childhood development and health in the city of Surprise, including possibly supporting some type of programming themselves.

### Government Affairs

#### **State Legislature - SCR 1031/HCR2005:**

Both pieces of legislation attempted to create sunset provisions for ballot measures dealing with public funds. Both bills also sought to apply this sunset provision retroactively. Applying a sunset clause retroactively would have had the effect of sending FTF back the ballot in 2014 and every 6-8 years

thereafter. SCR 1031 was held in committee during the legislative process – a parliamentary mechanism that essentially killed the bill. At *sine die*, HCR 2005 was still sitting in the Senate Rules committee. As such, it too failed to make it any further in the legislative process. Throughout the legislative process, FTF was active in meeting with key Legislators to share concerns on the potential impact of these measures.

### **Outreach to Mayors**

FTF staff and RPC members recently met with the mayors of Tucson and Mesa. We are continuing to coordinate meetings with the mayors of Phoenix, Flagstaff, and Chandler. These mayors recently agreed to come together to create the Mayors' Futures Forum on Education to discuss city-level priorities around education. These meetings are designed both to provide briefings on First Things First's work in cities – and also to educate and encourage mayors to consider the importance of early childhood development and health as they continue their dialogue on education through the Mayors' Futures Forum.

### **Tribal Affairs**

*See full report under separate cover.*

### **Staff Contacts**

Sam Leyvas  
Vice President, External Affairs  
602.771.5068

Liz Barker Alvarez  
Sr. Director, Communications  
602.771.5063

Beverly Russell  
Sr. Director, Tribal Affairs  
602.771.5034

Diane Umstead  
Sr. Director, Community Outreach  
602.771.5020

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### FFN Sub-Committee Update for May 2012 Program Committee

- ✓ The FFN sub-committee developed a definition and list of promising practices that will be incorporated into the updates to the First Things First Standard of Practice for the FFN strategy.
  
- ✓ *Potential* future work topics include: determining a baseline of knowledge/competencies for FFN providers within the PD framework, setting a pathway for FFN providers along the EC continuum of quality and also a pathway to regulation for interested providers.
  
- ✓ There is related work happening in the Arizona Alliance for Family, Friend and Neighbor Child Care (AAFFNCC) and we will be watching for opportunities to come together with that group.
  
- ✓ Next FFN sub-committee meeting will be held in September 2012

Family, Friend and Neighbor **Definition** (approved 5/16/12):

Family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care refers to a broad range of child care arrangements provided in the home of the child or caregiver, by extended family members, friends, neighbors and other unrelated adults, for a fee, or free, while parents need to be away, go to work or go to school. Family, friend and neighbor care is also often referred to as *kith and kin, informal care, unregulated and license exempt child care, or relative care.*

(References documents: BUILD Initiative, CLASP, Families and Work Institute: Sparking Connections Report.)



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### Promising Practices:

Promising models in working with FFN providers are those that include some variation of the following components:

- In-home support for FFN caregivers: with some variations of duration and intensity, caregivers are visited in the home and supported towards individualized goals (quality safety, nutrition, etc.)
- Community-based training and professional development: Professional development through group meetings and trainings delivered in a series of ongoing sessions that will bring home-based providers together with qualified and experienced staff in a community setting to learn elements of quality care and safety and that are responsive to the needs and diversity among FFN care providers. Child care should be provided and the sessions should take place at a time convenient for the FFN providers.
- Playgroup opportunities: In socialization or “Play and Learn” models, caregivers and children participate together in activities in a center-like setting offered in different sites in the community with the spaces ideally equipped with a variety of activities that are intended to promote cognitive, language, and physical development. Staff facilitators, whose backgrounds range from early childhood to parent education, model interactions with children for the caregivers.
- A pathway to regulation: Additional resources and financial supports for providers who wish to become certified or licensed.

Within all models and approaches there should be consideration of and opportunities for the following:

- Distribution of or financial incentives to help purchase safety and quality improvement equipment/materials
- Resource and referral information on health and development of young children and resources available in the community
- Resource and referral information on being a regulated provider or obtaining certification related to early childhood education