



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 August 2012 through mid-September. The report is segmented into several focus areas, including:

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

RECOMMENDATION: For informational purposes only.



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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

Community Outreach

Cross-Regional Speaker's Series Trainings Build a Cadre of Early Childhood Ambassadors

Building grassroots awareness that inspires action by individuals across the state of Arizona is a shared responsibility and requires consistent messaging for all those who speak about the importance of the early years—to neighbors, church groups, business leaders—everyone.

Community Outreach staff work diligently to motivate and teach others simple ways to spread the word about early childhood and First Things First in their communities. Currently, there are two distinct Speaker's Series trainings offered that build on each other: *Early Childhood, Everyday* (basic messaging) and *The Write Way* (writing effective early childhood impact stories).



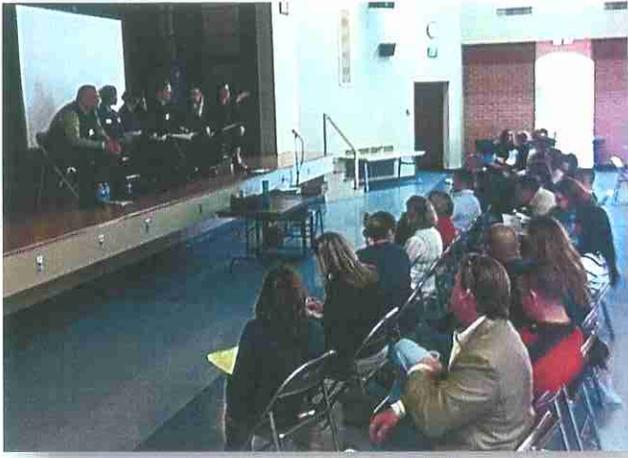
Tomara Proctor who participated in a speaker's training with the Phoenix Community Outreach Coordinators, is shown here facilitating her own Speaker's Training to colleagues at South Phoenix Healthy Start

Over the past two years, the Central, South and North Phoenix regions have collaborated to provide eight cross-regional trainings to over 150 community members on *Early Childhood, Everyday*. Statewide, seventy trainings have been held creating a group of 850 people who are enthused, informed and ready to act as public awareness ambassadors in building the movement on behalf of Arizona's youngest kids.

Tucson Community Leaders get the WHOLE story on Education

For 30 years, emerging leaders in Greater Tucson Leadership (GTL) have participated in an Education Day. They learn about education from kindergarten to high school. Last year, a GTL graduate who is now a First Things First Community Outreach Coordinator helped shift their curriculum to tell the whole story—that learning begins at birth.

During the ten-month program, students are exposed to nine subjects that affect Pima County in order to expand their knowledge, connect them to leaders and encourage them to take action toward community change. Early childhood was woven into Education Day with site visits to Quality First child



GTL students listen to a panel of experts discuss access and affordability of quality early childhood education in Tucson

include more visits to early learning sites and a presentation by a local First Things First Board Member.

Because You “Gotta Have Faith”

How do you partner with the faith community to implement programs? “It starts with building relationships,” said Imam Anas Hlaydel from the Islamic Center of the Northeast Valley in Scottsdale, Ariz. Imam Hlaydel along with panelists Reverend Jan Olav Flaaten, Bishop Mark Millett and Rabbi Bonnie Sharfman explored ways faith-based organizations work in partnership with the community to strengthen families at the recent First Things First Early Childhood Summit.

The Northeast Maricopa Region has actively worked on building relationships with the faith community. Religious leaders from the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths have been engaged in dialogue about the



Rabbi Bonnie Sharfman, Imam Hlaydel, Reverend Jan Olav Flaaten and Bishop Mark Millett participate in the panel discussion “Faith in our Future: Nurturing our Kids through Faith Connections” at First Things First Early Childhood Summit

importance of early childhood. Meetings have occurred with staff from the Ethiopian Methodist Church, St. Patrick Community Church and the North Scottsdale United Methodist Church. Presentations about First Things First were given at Temple Solel and the Islamic Community Center of East Valley. Information about funded programs was provided to Chaparral Christian School, the Jewish Community Center, Christ’s Church of Fountain Hills and Resurrection Lutheran Preschool and Daycare.

“When we talk of reaching out to families to offer support and resources for school readiness, it’s easy to underestimate the important role that the faith community takes on as entry into the family system,” said Mary Permoda, FTF Northeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council

care centers and a presentation on the foundational role of early childhood within the education system.

GTL students witnessed first-hand, the long-term positive effects of a high-quality early learning experience for young children. After these forty leaders learned of the importance of the first five years, they had a hardy discussion and came away with a better understanding of the impact on their specific industry or market, as well as the potential impact for the community at-large. This year’s Education Day will

member and moderator of the panel. Faith in the future involves nurturing kids through faith connections today.

Communications & Media

Paid Advertising

We recently completed the Spring/Summer FY 12 flight of First Things First's paid advertising campaign focused on the amount of brain development that occurs between birth and age 5.

The ads appeared on television, on the radio, on billboards, in cinemas and across various online media. All of the formats invited the viewer/listener to visit First Things First on Facebook (AZFirstThingsFirst) and readyAZkids.com, where facts and figures about the importance and relevance of early childhood to every facet of society are presented in exciting, interactive ways.

The campaign focused heavily on engaging the audience via online methods, as this is the way in which many civic minded individuals and many new parents find information, communicate, and engage with issues (please see Social Media update below).

Topline campaign results for traditional media include: billboard impressions of 57,459,344; mall placement impressions of 2,836,000; and cinema impressions of 4,496,000. Topline campaign results for online advertising (not including Facebook or pay per click) was 9,785,690 with 59,484 "clicks".

The External Affairs Unit is analyzing the awareness campaign data and is preparing a more detailed summary report of the campaign.

Earned Media

There were **11 stories** about FTF and/or its grantees in media statewide since our last report, including an Op-Ed in *The Arizona Republic* Opinion section authored by First Things First CEO Rhian Evans Allvin on the link between a quality early education and the ability of young kids to meet the rigor of Arizona's Common Core Standards in kindergarten. In addition, there were two columns submitted by Rhian to the *Republic* that ran in 5-8 Community sections each on topics including the FTF 2012 Annual Report and infant language development (inspired by Dr. Patricia Kuhl's keynote at the FTF Early Childhood Summit).

Social Media

More and more Arizonans are getting engaged with early childhood through our social media channels. We now have 3,720 friends on Facebook--**up by more than 200 since the last report**, and 338 followers on Twitter--**up by almost 40 since the last report**. Facebook followers **increased another 7.5%** since the last report. In total, this represents a **56.5% increase** since the beginning of the latest media flight to the date of this report.

Government Affairs

Federal Sequestration: Early Childhood Funding

Increasingly, the conversation in Washington and across states is focusing on the series of planned, across-the-board budget cuts known as "sequestration". The Office of Management of Budget (OMB), has released the Obama's Administration's view on what potential cuts would be and which programs they might effect.

Sequestration was created in August 2011 as part of the Budget Control Act of 2011, which ended that year's stalemate over the federal debt ceiling. Because Congress failed to agree on a deficit reduction

plan, the Budget Control Act calls for \$1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts over the next decade - divided equally between defense and "non-defense discretionary" programs. Non-defense discretionary spending is the term used to refer to spending on a wide range of domestic programs including education, health, human services, and labor.

Somewhat ironically, Congress enacted the law with the expectation that across-the-board cuts would be so devastating that lawmakers would be forced to come together to agree on a long term budget solution. These budget reductions are scheduled to take place starting January 2, 2013. Reductions, totaling approximately \$100 billion in next year's federal budget are expected to hit both defense and domestic programs.

Entitlement (mandatory) programs not subject to annual appropriations, including TANF, SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), Social Security, and the Child Nutrition programs, are generally exempt from sequestration.

However, many child care and early education programs are threatened by sequestration - including child care subsidies and Head Start. Child care subsidies are comprised of both mandatory and discretionary funding streams. As such, only the discretionary portion (approximately half) of child care funding would be threatened by the sequestration. Head Start is a discretionary program and would be fully subject to budget reductions.

August 2012 estimates by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) indicate that non-defense discretionary programs will likely be cut by 8 percent in 2013. This is about on par with the OMB report's estimates of 8.2 percent.

The conventional wisdom in Washington is that everyone seems to agree that sequestration is extremely serious – but meaningful and productive conversations by policymakers about how to head it off have yet to take root. This will likely come after the November elections and Congress returns for a "lame-duck" session.

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