



## 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 October 2012 through November 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.



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

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## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

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### Earned Media: Seamless Statewide Coordination

Earned media is a critical component of our work to increase public awareness of the importance of the early years. Due to its broad reach and varied audience, it represents a critical touch point in efforts to provide early childhood information through a variety of community-based voices to reach all Arizonans.

As previously reported, First Things First saw **an increase of 72 percent in earned media coverage** between Fiscal Year 2011 and 2012. That success was due in large part to increased and more coordinated media outreach by FTF Communications staff in the Phoenix office and Community Outreach staff embedded across the state.

This year, we are building on that success through statewide monthly media pitches about early childhood topics leveraged through local media relationships.

Some examples of our early successes include:

#### **Central Regional Area**

The Graham/Greenlee Region has secured regular articles in two unique monthly newsletters. The *Graham County School Superintendent's Newsletter* reaches 1,000 education professionals and community leaders and is a highly respected and well-read publication. FTF has earned a spot in this publication with no limit to the size of the article. The regional council leveraged this media opportunity through Donna McGaughey, Graham County School Superintendent, who serves in the school administrator seat on the FTF Graham/Greenlee Regional Council. The newsletter has covered such topics as: Quality First, the Imagination Library, Week of the Young Child, Early Childhood Standards, and Library Services for toddlers and preschoolers. **FTF Community Outreach Coordinator Paulette LeBlanc** regularly fields questions and comments from readers on the early childhood-related stories

Because they both attend monthly Community Networking Meetings, Paulette formed a relationship with Royce Hunt, Director of the Safford Senior Citizen Center, who agreed to provide front-page space for early childhood in the *Senior Citizen Newsletter*. Ms. Hunt has been a long-standing champion of FTF and understands that many of our senior citizens have responsibility for the care of their grandchildren. Each month, Paulette submits a short article about an issue related to young children from the senior citizen's vantage point. Past topics include: the importance of reading to children, using library services, keeping children hydrated, and using sunscreen for all outdoor activities. Readers have indicated they appreciate this helpful information.

Through both of these relationships, FTF is raising the awareness of the importance of early childhood in the far eastern part of the state.

### **Maricopa Regional Area**

The Northeast Maricopa Regional Council has partnered with the *The Arizona Republic's* new neighborhood sites on azcentral.com. These sites feature what is known as user-generated content, meaning that community organizations and/or readers submit the content for the online publication. Each month, **Northeast Maricopa Community Outreach Coordinator Tina Oluyi** submits an article about a timely early childhood issue or a program funded by First Things First. Past articles have included tips for parents on preparing children for kindergarten, the importance of early oral health care, and a profile of the region's early literacy strategy in partnership with Scottsdale's public libraries. Based on our experience over the past few months with this new opportunity – FTF plans to expand submissions of user-generated content to the rest of the *Republic's* neighborhood sites and other user-generated sites statewide.

Central Maricopa grantee New Directions Institute (NDI) was featured in the Arizona Chinese-language online and print publication, [Sunbird Arizona](#), highlighting a project with the Chinese community that is providing community-based parent education workshops to families in the Chandler area at the Eastern Art Academy. As a follow up and in collaboration with NDI, **Central Maricopa Community Outreach Coordinator Conrad Lindo** conducted an FTF presentation to the Eastern Art Academy, which was attended by the Editor-in-Chief of the Arizona Chinese News. As a result, a second article was written in *Sunbird Arizona* highlighting First Things First and NDI.

There is also an article pending in [The Korean Arizona Times](#), an online and print publication targeting the Korean community throughout Arizona. Conrad arranged to showcase the Family Resource Centers in Central Maricopa to Dr. BK You. Dr. You wants to reach out to the Korean community in the East Valley by writing an article in the *Korean Arizona Times* on the programs available through First Things First. Dissemination of the article is planned for late December 2012 or early January 2013.

### **North Regional Area**

A regular blogger for the online *Daily Courier*, Richard Haddad, attended a local child care conference in Prescott where he learned about First Things First. He decided to write his next article about the importance of early childhood and contacted **Yavapai Community Outreach Coordinator Claire Louge** for more information. Mr. Haddad wrote an informative piece on Arizona's commitment to young children. Local early childhood supporters, including regional partnership council members and grantees, were made aware of the article and took the opportunity to post comments in support of the topic.

During a celebration parade for the Navajo Nation Fair, winners of the event's baby contest and First Things First staff distributed children's books. A local radio announcer noticed the books and other FTF information and called the regional office. Coincidentally, the radio announcer is also the Visual Production Teacher at Chinle High School. He invited **Navajo Nation Community Outreach Coordinator Memarie Tsosie** to make a presentation to his class. The high school students decided they would like to focus their fall video production on the importance of early childhood and the good things happening for young children in the community.

## Phoenix Regional Area

**Community Outreach staff in the Phoenix regions – Susana Ibarra Johnson and Marlene Hanan** – capitalized on long-standing media connections to secure an on-going collaboration with the City of Phoenix's government access cable television channel. After meeting with the station manager of Phoenix Channel 11 and sharing information about the importance of early childhood, the station manager found the perfect outlet for an informative video about the work of First Things First through its educational unit, know99 Television on Cox Cable channel 99.

Student interns from the ASU Cronkite School of Journalism produced a 90-second news segment about the importance of reading to young children. The video was aired on Channel 99 in March and April 2012 and featured a mother and her 3-year-old daughter participating in an early literacy program funded by First Things First. The segment was so well-received that the station offered to produce and air a second news segment and has recently committed to producing two stories per year. The second piece will focus on grandparents raising grandchildren and the support a grandfather received from a Family Resource Center funded by First Things First. It is scheduled to air in January/February 2013. We are proud of the great collaboration with an important media partner and the opportunity to share the vital role that early childhood plays in the educational continuum with a television audience that may not have previously been aware of First Things First and the importance of early childhood.

To view the first video, visit [know99 Television](#) and click on First Things First under Featured Productions.

## Southeast Regional Area

When national and local headlines read "*Census: Tucson sixth-poorest large city*" and Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild was quoted in the [Arizona Daily Star](#)\* saying "*one problem is the high rate of poverty among children in Pima County, which is included in the Tucson metro area,*" First Things First regional council members saw an opportunity to engage in the conversation. **Community Outreach Coordinator Lisette Demars** arranged for members of the regional council to write letters to the editor. First Things First North Pima Regional Council Chair Scott Ingram's letter was run as a [Guest Opinion](#). FTF staff assisted him in framing the response to the article so appropriate early childhood messaging was woven into his letter.

## West Regional Area

When the Public Affairs Coordinator for the City of Yuma was organizing a back-to-school fair and needed contacts from local agencies, she met the area's **Community Outreach Coordinator, Nena Garcia**, who is fluent in Spanish. As a result, First Things First was invited to record an interview with *Yuma Le Informa* on Channel 73. The interview provides the viewer with an overview of First Things First in the region and airs 6 to 8 times during a single day. After the success of this single show, Nena proposed a series of interviews showcasing different grantees who speak about their local programs for young kids. So far, four grantees have been highlighted in the series.

In addition, during FTF's Summit in August, Yuma regional council member Marybeth Turner attended the speaker's training: *Early Childhood Every Day*. Afterwards, she referred Nena to the editor of *Raising Yuma Magazine*. The member saw this as part of her role to build awareness of the importance of early childhood. The magazine distributes 10,500 copies quarterly to local elementary schools and is also online. Contact was established with the editor, and the magazine has a strong desire to focus on the early years as part of the education continuum. To date, **Yuma Regional Director Rudy Ortiz** has been

interviewed and First Things First will be featured in the November/December 2012 edition. FTF has also been invited to write a regular column in 2013.

### **Continuing Momentum**

The efforts noted above are part of the reason why there were **26 new earned media stories** about FTF and/or its grantees statewide since our last report. In addition, there were five columns submitted by **Rhian Evans Allvin** to the *The Arizona Republic* that ran in 5-8 Community sections on topics including: FTF's early childhood obesity policy brief, Babies' Battle of the Bulge; fiscal year 2014 regional allocations; the role of early learning programs in promoting stability for young children of deployed military personnel; the effects of malnourishment on early brain development and long-term school success; and, that gratitude is a skill best learned when young.

In addition, public engagement through our social media channels continues to grow. FTF now has almost 4,000 friends on Facebook (3,927, **up by 211 since the last report**), and 424 followers on Twitter, **up by almost 90 since the last report**.

### **Government Affairs**

#### **52<sup>rd</sup> Arizona Legislature**

The Arizona Legislature will see a significant number of fresh faces when its regular session begins in January 2013. Thirty-seven of the state's 90 lawmakers are new to the Legislature; have changed chambers; or returned after having served in the past.

The 37 incoming lawmakers account for 41 percent of the Legislature and include seven former House members moving to the Senate, a trio of lawmakers who served in the past, and one senator who shifted to the House.

Republicans will retain control of the state Legislature, but with slimmer margins over Democrats. The House of Representatives will have 36 Republicans and 24 Democrats, compared with the current 40-20 split. The Senate will have 17 Republicans to 13 Democrats, compared to today's 21-9 makeup.

In the Senate, new committee chairmanships were recently announced. One of the more notable changes for 2013 includes the naming of Sen. Kimberly Yee as the new chair of the Education Committee. Yee replaces Sen. Rich Crandall who was reassigned as the new chair of the Transportation Committee. Full committee assignments in the Senate are still pending.

In the House, new committee chairmanships and assignments were also recently announced. Below is a rundown of several of the more relevant committees:

#### **Education**

1. Doris Goodale – Chair
2. Doug Coleman – Vice Chair
3. John Allen
4. Paul Boyer
5. Heather Carter
6. Justin Pierce
7. Eric Meyer

8. Catherine Miranda
9. Lisa Otondo

### **Health**

1. Heather Carter – Chair
2. Paul Boyer – Vice Chair
3. Kate Brophy McGee
4. Phil Lovas
5. Kelly Townsend
6. Sally Gonzales
7. Eric Meyer
8. Victoria Steele

### **Higher Education & Workforce Development**

1. Jeff Dial – Chair
2. Ethan Orr – Vice Chair
3. Doug Coleman
4. David Stevens
5. Bob Thorpe
6. Lela Alston
7. Jonathan Larkin
8. Macario Saldate

### **Appropriations**

1. John Kavanagh – Chair
2. Justin Olson – Vice Chair
3. Paul Boyer
4. Tom Forese
5. Rick Gray
6. Adam Kwasman
7. Michelle Ugenti
8. Lela Alston
9. Chad Campbell
10. Stefanie Mach
11. Andrew Sherwood

### **Reform & Human Services**

1. Steve Montenegro – Chair
2. Kelly Townsend – Vice Chair
3. Debbie Lesko
4. Carl Seel
5. Steve Smith
6. Andrea Dalessandro
7. Sally Gonzales
8. Juan Mendez

First Things First has already started to reach out to new and returning legislators.

## **Tribal Affairs**

*See full report under separate cover.*

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