



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

AZGA 2018 Summit!



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors is a statewide coalition of aunts, uncles, fictive kin and grandparents who stepped up to care for children who for a variety of reasons could no longer remain in their own home. We are the reason children are not in foster care, group homes, or other non-familial settings.

Our mission is to support, mobilize, educate, and advocate for better laws and policies to help us care for and raise strong, resilient children.

Over 230 adults and children attended this year's summit at the Salvation Army Kroc Center on September 8th. This year's policy panel featured Arizona State House Representatives Rebecca Rios (D, LD27) and T.J. Shope (R, LD 8), and Department of Economic Security Program Administrator for Foster Care and Post Permanency Supports, Gillian Vanasse.

Attendees had an opportunity to hear the panelists' views on ways to improve support for kinship families, share their stories and suggestions with panelists, and ask questions.

In the afternoon, clinical social worker Kenny Miller gave a presentation on trauma and attachment issues. Kenny helped the audience understand the origins of developmental trauma in children and provided parenting interventions specific to addressing unmet relationship needs from the first years of life, as well as the trauma now lingering in "body memory". Our keynote speaker was the Honorable Leah Landrum Taylor. Leah's leadership and passion for kinship issues made her a phenomenal presenter.

For this year's advocacy activity, participants wrote a letter to their state senator, sharing their personal stories and asking for an opportunity to meet. This year there will be many new legislators in both the House and the Senate, providing an excellent educational opportunity for all of us to get involved. Letters will be delivered after November's election.

While the adults networked and interacted with panelists, the children enjoyed a day camp which included swimming, playing and watching movies. We would like to thank our generous sponsors: **Arizona Department of Health Services, First Things First, AARP Arizona, Arizona's Children Association, Pima Council on Aging, Aid to Adoption of Special Kids, Primavera Foundation and the Association for Supportive Child Care.** Thank you for helping us make this year's summit a success, and we hope that all of you can join us at next year's summit!



Candidate Education Event in Southern Arizona

On September 26th, Southern Arizona legislative candidates **Victoria Steele (D, LD9), Andrés Cano (D, LD3), Domingo DeGrazia (D, LD10), State Rep. Kirsten Engel (D,LD10) State Rep. Todd Clodfelter (R,LD10), State Rep. Randy Friese (D,LD9), Marcela Quiroz (D, LD11), State Sen. David Bradley (D, LD10), Alma Hernandez (D, LD3) and Hollace Lyon (D, LD11)** attended an educational forum.

The Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors, along with Children's Action Alliance, Southwest Center for Economic Integrity and several other non-profit organizations hosted the educational event for candidates at Casa De Los Niños. Attendees learned about some of the challenges kinship families face including financial disparities between licensed foster families and unlicensed relative caregivers. Child welfare organizations stressed the importance of financially supporting kinship caregivers to help children stay in safe, familiar homes.

ELECTION DAY IS ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH. PLEASE VOTE!

More Information About Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors: www.azga.org
Maricopa: to find out when the next Phoenix meeting is, please email info@azga.org
Pima: Contact Ann Nichols (520) 312-8067 or annwnichols@gmail.com