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Home Neighbors 12 community advocates honored for efforts to combat poverty

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12 community advocates honored for efforts to combat poverty

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Twelve community advocates from across the state will receive 2017 Heart in Hand Awards from the Arizona Community Action Association for their individual and collective efforts in the battle against poverty at the annual ACAA Statewide Conference, July 27-28 at The Scottsdale Resort at McCormick Ranch.

The two-day conference also will recognize recipients of the Beating the Odds Award, President's Award, Margie Frost Champion Against Poverty Award and Legislative Leadership Awards. The conference is sponsored by APS, SRP, Southwest Gas, UnisourceEnergy/TEP and Marisol Federal Credit Union.

"Our Heart in Hand honorees consistently and passionately go about their work to make change in our communities by providing help and support for so many who are under served," said ACAA Executive Director Cynthia Zwick. "They never look for recognition, but they are incredibly deserving."



Pastor Emmanuel Allen of the R.O.O.T.S. Recreation Center, Glendale.

2017 Heart in Hand honorees and their nominators are:

San Tan Valley Compassion Care Center

The San Tan Valley Compassion Care Center is uniting the church, community service organizations and non-profit agencies to be a transformational presence in the San Tan Valley. Services are free of charge and have been developed specifically to address the needs in the community through strategic partnerships. Partners bring their programs, staff and resources to the Compassion Care Center to assist community residents. Services include parenting, pregnancy counseling, English as a second language classes, citizenship preparation classes, job services, food, clothing, utility assistance, behavioral health counseling, and help in applying for benefits. The Center offers free space to agencies to meet with

clients and share information and provide their services.

Pastor Lindsay Winebarger, Pastor Bill Markley, Pastor Elida Markley at Church for the Nations, Phoenix

Pastor Lindsay, Pastor Bill and Pastor Elida, as they are known, not only define the word "service," but make it their life's mission to spread service and love to everyone they meet. The three pastors have partnered with the City of Phoenix Human Services Department Permanent Supportive Housing Program to coordinate and provide purposeful and meaningful mentorship opportunities to individuals and families who have transitioned out of chronic homelessness into permanent housing.

Sonya Montoya, Northern Arizona Council of Governments Head Start, Flagstaff

As the Family Services Manager for NACOG's Head Start program, Ms. Montoya works with staff to identify services and support for families to attain self-sufficiency. She applies her extensive knowledge of families experiencing a range of social issues and her leadership to develop agency policies, management systems and training to address the needs of many families. Creative and personable, she also is the Arizona Coordinator for the University of Connecticut Family Development Credentialing program, which has strengthened the Arizona Family Head Start Program's professional development



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system.

Nolberto “Chuco” Waddell, Volunteer, Hayden

A volunteer at his local Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site for five years, “Chuco” puts in long hours and all day Saturday helping people with their taxes. Always making room for one more, no matter how long his day has been, “Chuco” is the primary reason that the VITA site was able to increase the number of clients served this year even being down by a volunteer.

Amy Schwabenlender, Valley of the Sun United Way, Phoenix

A passionate leader of strategic work to end hunger and homelessness in Maricopa County, Ms. Schwabenlender has been a volunteer board member on the Maricopa County Community Services Commission for more than 10 years, providing invaluable direction, guidance, oversight, advocacy and leadership to the Maricopa County Human Services Department as it addresses the causes of poverty in local areas. At the United Way, she coordinates efforts among various organizations to develop permanent supportive housing solutions to end chronic homelessness.



Monica Margailan.

Monica Margailan, Mesa Community College, Mesa

A single mom of two and grandmother to two more, Ms. Margailan is currently coordinator of Community Outreach at Mesa Community College, where she has worked for more than 18 years. As a member of the Mesa community, she champions the working poor she works with to build strong educational bonds that improve a family’s financial and educational health. Her tools are mentoring, tutoring and seeking community partnerships to help fill gaps that exist.

Stephanie Ray, White Mountain Community Services Council, Show Low

Ms. Ray’s long-time dream to help people came to life when she founded the nonprofit White Mountain Community Services Council, which collaborates with other nonprofits in the local area. By bringing together the services of this diverse group of providers, this small rural community can leverage their funding and help more people.

Carol Cuming, Western Arizona Council of Governments, Yuma

Ms. Cuming is most identified by clients as the key to their positive experiences at WACOG. For 19 years, she has been the welcoming face to those in crisis and emotional distress, calming and reassuring clients they will be helped in any way possible. Ms. Cuming will retire this year. She has been the “Heart of WACOG,” with a history of service to others and vulnerable populations. Before joining WACOG, she worked at the local WIC office and raised her family of four as a single mother. .

José Rivera, Manager, Interfaith Community Services, Tucson

A fierce advocate for his clients, Mr. Rivera exemplifies what a caring community can do. He tenaciously seeks assistance once eligibility is determined, doing whatever it takes to ensure his clients do not fall through the proverbial cracks. Humble and polite, Mr. Rivera treats every client at Interfaith Community Services with dignity and respect.

Pastor Emmanuel Allen, R.O.O.T.S. Recreation Center, Glendale

Working diligently for the Glendale community, Pastor Allen and his wife dedicate their time and efforts to providing more opportunities for youth. He and a troop of Breakthrough Life Church volunteers opened the R.O.O.T.S. Recreation Center in 2014 when the city faced budget cuts that reduced community activities. The center has come back to life with tutoring, sports and other youth activities that were among the casualties when the city was forced to close 15 of 20 recreation sites. In a neighborhood burdened by poverty, his emphasis is on free classes for the less-privileged families of Glendale. Summer programs include dance, art, inspirational speakers, new sports and family nights. Currently, 400 children are registered at the center.

For information, visit www.azcaa.org or call (602) 604-0640.

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