Children in Southern Arizona Find Their Own Voice

The mission of Children's Action Alliance is to represent the interests of every child in Arizona, so it is with great enthusiasm that we report the opening of an office in southern Arizona. It is staffed by Penelope Jacks, an attorney whose background is in poverty law, lobbying, and policy development. The office is at the Udall Center for Policy Studies where she is a visiting scholar.

The Success By 6 Children's Campaign — Southern Arizona Committee, funded by grants from Honeywell, Intergroup, the Tucson Community Foundation, and the Melody S. Robidoux Foundation, had its organizational meeting in October 1992. Melody Robidoux chairs the committee which includes physicians, attorneys, former members of the Arizona legislature, judges, social service providers, and other concerned community leaders.

Because southern Arizona differs both culturally and politically from Phoenix, it is essential that a leadership group emerge who can and will speak in a meaningful way for the children and families of their communities. It is critical that southern Arizona's legislators be mobilized and influenced by an informed group of local leaders who will speak about the status of their children and thus enable the statewide agenda of CAA to receive even stronger support. There are also some children's issues particular to southern Arizona more effectively handled at the community level. Now there is a knowledgeable presence to advocate solutions to those problems.

The first project of the Southern Arizona Committee was the publication of the Pima County Kids Factbook which is a free-standing profile of child well-being in Pima County, prepared and paid for by the Robidoux Foundation. The factbook draws upon research originally published in the statewide Kids Count Factbook 1992. The Pima County Kids Factbook shows that despite its progressive image, on twelve indicators, Pima County's children fare worse than kids statewide.

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TURNING THE BUDGET NIGHTMARE INTO PLEASANT DREAMS

If we at CAA have learned nothing else in five years of advocating for children, it is that our state budgeting process is an unending exercise fraught with frustration and absent of long-range policy. We sense that our government officials, on the whole, truly want to do right by Arizona's children but find themselves caught trying to balance the budget, meet the state's needs, and enact a tax cut simultaneously. The result is a start-stop approach driven by the loudest public tragedies of the moment.

We hear the familiar refrain: "We believe in nurturing children. We know it is important and cost-effective but we can't afford to do it this year because of the weak economy and other budget priorities." Even when CAA has been able to achieve legislative successes for increased investment in effective programs, those fledgling programs are threatened with abandonment because the crisis call has shifted to some other public obligation. It has become clear to us at CAA that our children's future is linked to a fundamental rebuilding of the state budget, not incremental patching up of a flawed structure.

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5 YEARS OLD:
A Celebration of New Beginnings

The following is reprinted from the Children's Action Alliance Annual Review 1993 to show as many of our friends and supporters as possible might share in this 'State of the Alliance' message.

Children's Action Alliance turns five years old in 1993 and, like all "5-year-olds," the complexity and intensity of our challenges is bringing us to a new developmental stage. The problems associated with our "infancy" have been resolved; we have offices, staff, friends, supporters and a solid presence in the community. Today, when we raise our voices as advocates for this state's children, there is authority and credibility with what we have to say. And there is an increasing need for us to speak out.

CIAA's developmental age aside, after five years we have come face-to-face with the same observation made more than twenty years ago when President John Kennedy took office. Within a few days of moving into the Oval office, the young President was asked for any surprises he might have encountered. He responded, "I was surprised to learn that things really are as bad as we said they were during the campaign."

Today in Arizona, as it was five years ago when we began, we have mounting evidence that things are as bad as we've been saying they are. And, in many respects, they are worse.

Despite our successes, and we have had significant victories, our single most important goal continues to elude us: irresponsible of the new awareness of children's issues, we still lack what might best be called a universal children's ethic. As a state, we have still not learned to accept responsibility for all of our children.

Absent this ethic, the political and policy debate continues to be shaped by the dynamics of competing agendas rather than a unified approach to resolving children's issues. We continue to allow the short-term rationalization of limited resources cloud our judgement and ability to see beyond tomorrow or the next day.

This age of complexity and intensity, as it is for most "5-year-olds," signals a time when we have the opportunity to move beyond the difficult task of building awareness and on to the even greater objective of helping our state take action.

Certainly, without CIAA's efforts over the past five years, the current widespread understanding of children's issues would be far less significant than it is today. But awareness is only a preliminary step; it is an intermediate objective and not the ultimate goal.

All of this, however, does not leave us with a feeling of pessimism. On the contrary, there are significant signs of hope and optimism that stretch from Arizona to Washington and back again.

Our new President has made it clear that children are not only on his agenda, they are a top priority of his administration. And it will fall to those of us who call ourselves advocates for children to support his initiatives or, should the situation arise, be strong in reminding him of his pledges.

In Arizona, it seems that the collective news media has "discovered" the plight of our children and embraced them with an intensity that holds tremendous promise. As advocates, we welcome them as allies in the ongoing effort to raise awareness and promote solutions.

At a time like this it is tempting to either rejoice in our accomplishments or become depressed over all the work that still remains to be done. I suggest that, like the question of whether the glass is "half-empty or half-full," the best response is to find another glass: new, more creative ways of thinking and solving basic problems.

In addition to the visits, the "graduates" of this program were briefed on the latest statewide data on child well-being made available by the KIDS COUNT Partnership. Through the Arizona Children's Campaign, an associated project of CIAA, the participants were provided with policy briefings and positive action steps. The results have been exciting. We have seen increased awareness, statewide, concerning children's issues. We can only speculate about the impact of these initiatives but do see impressive media coverage regarding all aspects of children's issues, businesses embracing our concerns, increased grassroots interest and support, and public polls which continually reinforce that vulnerable children can no longer wait to grow up healthy, well-educated and happy.

Our second year will continue to include more community and business leaders from across the state. Visions of Arizona's Children is funded through a grant from The Annie E. Casey Foundation. For additional information, call Bandeau Pri-Tal at 266-0707.

GOVERNOR PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

While addressing over 100 religious leaders and child advocates, Governor Rife Symsington vowed to restore proposed cuts to children's programs. He was speaking to participants in the CIAA/Arizona Ecumenical Council legislative advocacy workshop held in February. He specifically pledged to restore the $1 million state commitment to the $300,000 for Health Start, a prenatal outreach program; and to maintain current funding levels for the state comprehensive preschool program.

He went on to state that he would make $200,000 available for programs for runaway and homeless youth. He pointed to Honeywell as a leader in early childhood initiatives, demonstrated through the unique public-private partnership which launched the Health Start program. The Governor also declared he would work for start-up funding of statewide child family review and prevention teams.

He discussed the importance of early childhood immunizations, and emphasized the significance of a proposed public relations campaign, and the establishment of a statewide tracking system. He stated that he believes juvenile violence must be dealt with "swiftly and decisively" and that better parenting and programs such as Project Intervention are the keys to stemming this violence.

Immediately following the Governor's hour-long speech, key legislators and leading representatives from the fields of education, criminal justice, health, children's behavioral health, and poverty presented workshops detailing policy questions related to these issues. Kay Lively, President of the Arizona Education Association delivered the luncheon keynote.

The day concluded with a stimulating debate on the role of government in solving the deteriorating condition of Arizona's children and families. Moderated by Mary Joyce, a reporter with The Arizona Republic, a panel of experts from across the political spectrum addressed pertinent policy questions. Panelists were: Robert Robb, managing partner of Nelson, Robb, Davil & Delehut; Rick DeGraw, former director of a political consulting firm and current marketing director of Rio Salado Community College, Representative Susan Gerard, Republican Chair of the House Banking and Insurance Committee; and Representative Debbie McClure Davis, Democratic Minority Whip.

Carol Kerner concluded the conference with a call to action. She urged participants to contact their elected representatives and tell them to restore the cuts in children's programs and to help them understand that investing wisely in children is the key to Arizona's future.
The Arizona Children's Campaign, a nonpartisan project to improve the quality of life for Arizona's children through impacting public policy, was steered off course early this year by imminent threats of legislative budget cuts. Despite the fact that the situation is getting worse for the state's children, budget proposals at the state legislature would wipe out all the incremental gains made as part of the Arizona Children's Campaign in the past three years.

The Arizona Children's Campaign, a nonpartisan project to improve the quality of life for Arizona's children through impacting public policy, had been meeting with policy makers and citizens to enlist their support in stopping these proposed cuts. As we go to press, subcommittee budgets have been adopted with few of the cuts restored. If the legislature is still in session, then it is imperative that you call your legislators and ask them to oppose the proposed cuts.

The Arizona Children's Campaign has taken the stand that the only way Arizona can become and remain a great state is through economic growth which includes a sound infrastructure. To do this, the state should expand upon programs that work — programs that invest in long-term gains and eventually decrease public assistance. There is irrefutable evidence of programs that are working such as:

**Prenatal Care.** One out of three of Arizona's pregnant women now receive inadequate prenatal care. The state legislative budget proposes reducing the number of women who would be eligible for prenatal care through AB520 by reducing eligibility from its current level of 146% of the federal poverty level down to 135%.

**Health Start.** In 1991, Healthy Choice stepped in and challenged the state legislature to institute this prenatal outreach program with a $100,000 grant. The agreement was that the state would match the grant with an initial line item of $100,000 and continue the program with $200,000 each year after this. This innovative program has shown considerable success in decreasing the number of low birthweight babies — a huge savings in public health care since the average stay in intensive care for one premature, low birthweight baby is $20,000 — 50 times more than preventive prenatal care. Now the legislature, in a short-sighted measure to save $100,000, proposes to eliminate the program.

**Immunizations.** Nearly half of Arizona's two-year-olds are not fully immunized with even lower percentages reported for children in rural counties. Immunized children not only face horrible risks of preventable disease but ultimately cost the state tremendously in emergency and rehabilitative expense. Yet, the legislative budget proposes eliminating over $300,000 for county grants which are needed for immunizations and other public health services.

**Quality Comprehensive Preschool.** Over 200,000 Arizona children live in poverty and we are ranked ninth worst in the nation. Comprehensive preschool programs for at-risk children have been proven to have a tremendous positive impact on a child's development and ability to stay in school. Only one-third of the children who could benefit from such a program are now receiving it. Yet, the legislative budget proposes cutting over $500,000 and no longer targeting preschool funds to "at-risk" districts.

**Nutrition.** Hungry children cannot learn. A pregnant woman who does not have good nutrition stands a greater chance of having a low birthweight baby. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a program funded primarily with federal dollars to provide mothers and babies with adequate nutrition and classes to teach them long-term nutrition. Arizona began contributing to this worthwhile program two years ago but is now serving only half the families who need it. Now, the legislators propose eliminating the state investment of $1 million which translates into fewer women and children benefiting from the program.

**Runaway and Homeless Youth.** Over 5,000 children run away or become homeless every year in Arizona, usually as a result of a dysfunctional family. We know that intensive family preservation, temporary shelter, and crisis management usually results in family reunification. Last year, for the first time, Arizona began with a seed grant from the child abuse prevention fund to build upon the paltry 51 beds we have available to these youth today. Yet, both the Governor's and Legislators' budgets propose eliminating the $175,000 line item to runaway and homeless youth programs.

**Update on Active Legislation**

The Campaign is not only fighting budget wars, but also working to institute new legislation. This year's theme: "Invest in Children or Arizona Won't Work" is based on providing children with a Healthy Start, a Head Start, and a Fair Start. These investments are meant to prevent many child deaths and illnesses immediately and get hundreds of young children ready for school while saving later dollars in care for the sick, remedial education, teen pregnancy, welfare, and prison expenses.

In 1993, the Arizona Children's Campaign is urging the legislature to adopt the following:

**HB 2148 — Family Child Care: Study Committee** establishes a study committee to examine family child care. Passed House Human Services Committee on 2/10/93. Passed House 3/4/93. (Sponsored by McGarvie-Davis, Solokeman, Hermon, Salcido).

**HB 2312 — Runaway and Homeless Youth** which establishes comprehensive services for runaway and homeless youth and their families. Passed House Human Services Committee on 2/10/93. Passed House 3/4/93. (Sponsored by Solomon, McCune-Davis, Beatty, Cunnigham).

**HB 2144 — Health Start; outreach which would expand the Health Start preschool outreach program with a $500,000 appropriation. No action.** (Sponsored by Cunningham, Horton, Nichols, Garcia).

**Update on Policy Initiatives**

The Arizona Children's Campaign is urging the legislature to adopt the following:

- **Healthy Start** (HB 2148) which would expand the Healthy Start preschool program.
- **Runaway and Homeless Youth** (HB 2312) which establishes comprehensive services for runaway and homeless youth and their families.
- **Family Child Care** (HB 2148) which establishes a study committee to examine family child care.
- **Head Start** (HB 2144) which would expand the Health Start preschool outreach program.
- **Immunizations** (HB 2148) which would increase funding for immunization programs.
- **Quality Comprehensive Preschool** (HB 2144) which would increase funding for preschool programs.
- **Nutrition** (HB 2148) which would increase funding for nutrition programs.

For an up-to-date report on the status of these policy initiatives, please call the Children's Campaign at (602) 262-0707.

Dr. Kipp Charlton Honored with Horace Steele Child Advocacy Award

Children's Action Alliance celebrated its fifth birthday at its Annual Meeting and Reception on March 4, 1993. It was on this occasion that Dr. Kipp Charlton, M.D. was honored as the latest recipient of the Horace Steele Child Advocacy Award. Dr. Charlton was recognized for his distinguished work and outstanding contributions to children's health and safety. Dr. Charlton is one of the founding members of the Crisis Nursery and continues his devoted work as the volunteer on-call pediatrician. He has been a leader in Maricopa Medical Center and is often a frequent lecturer on the topic of child abuse identification/prevention. Dr. Charlton has also worked tirelessly as a child advocate and has carried the utmost respect of his colleagues, as well as the love of the children of Arizona.
The first year of the KIDS COUNT Partnership in Arizona, 1991, was spent gathering data in an intense effort to draw an accurate profile of Arizona's children. The data published by the Morrison Institute for Public Policy as the KIDS COUNT Factbook: Arizona's Children 1992 revealed a growing underclass of one-quarter of whom are in poverty, one-half of whom are undernourished and, confirmed with some reliability that things are going to get much worse before they get better.

An interpretation of that data was published by CAI as The State of Arizona's Children: Action Agenda 1992. It served as a wake-up call to all Arizonans, particularly policy makers, about the deteriorating condition of our children and how that impacts the social and economic future of Arizona. Over the course of 1992, the statistics began to sink in. Media coverage increased and the plight of children made front-page news. Despite the obvious heightened awareness, there is no indication that the data have changed and we are presently attempting to head off legislative budget cuts that will certainly deepen the crisis for Arizona's children and their families.

Our approach for 1993 became clear when we realized that data was not enough to guarantee action. We know that the deteriorating condition of children is not inevitable but rather a direct result of policy choices. Therefore, we have taken a strong stand to preserve the programs that we know "work" and support those programs with public policy that ensures prevention and family preservation.

This year's KIDS COUNT report details the major public programs affecting children that either lack policy or are driven by crisis response policy. We have also taken a position on each of those programs that will guide us toward preventive policy and away from the expensive policy that currently governs most of our public responses to children. To obtain a copy of The State of Arizona's Children: Action Agenda 1993, contact the CAI office at 266-0670 or call Gail Jacobs for further information.

Another problem which continues to haunt advocates for children is the state budgeting process. The incremental changes for children that have occurred in the past few years have generally been accomplished through reallocations, a short-term permanent solution. This means that funding for children's programs is continually at risk every budget session as funds are raided and silently switched. Costs for maintaining programs that only answer crisis situations can run from 30% to 100% more than programs that invest in preventive policy. And it is getting worse every budget year.

The KIDS COUNT Partnership, funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is seeking to provide alternative methods of state budgeting by examining the conditions that currently hamstring state legislators and researching other budgeting methods that might assist in reversing our inefficient fiscal policies. This 18-month effort called Arizona's Alternative Budget is part of the KIDS COUNT Partnership. (See article on cover.)

New KIDS COUNT Research Hot Off the Press

Data compiled during the first year of the KIDS COUNT Partnership showed a serious decline in the well-being of children statewide. However, the condition of children in the state's rural counties is particularly alarming. So, that evidence is that led the Morrison Institute for Public Policy to conduct more in-depth research into child well-being in rural areas.

They studied in particular Maricopa, Yuma, Pinal and Yavapai Counties examining specific indicators of child well-being. The analysis and resulting policy recommendations were published in January 1993 as Kids Unfair: Children's Issues in Rural Arizona. The report is available from the Morrison Institute at 955-4525.

CAI and CIGNA Sponsor Arizona's First Summit for Children

On October 4, 1992, from business and foundation leaders from around the nation came to Phoenix to join hundreds of Arizonans as they sought to develop strategies and obtain commitments to raise the well-being of all Arizona's children. The day-long conference entitled Arizona Summit for Children: Invest in Children or Arizona Won't Work.

Mark DeMichie, immediate past president of the Children's Action Alliance, opened the event by calling together a powerful group of child advocates, medical professionals, educators, social service workers, policy makers and parents intent on being agents of change for the state's children.

CAI Launches Child Welfare Effort

Through a grant from the Margaret T. Morris Foundation, CAI has built on the work of our four-year old task force on Homeless Children and Youth and created the Arizona Child Welfare Committee. The 22-member committee is chaired by Joyce Stein, co-chaired by Barbara Polk.

Although the work of the committee has just begun, they have outlined an ambitious agenda for 1993. The committee will hold a series of roundtable discussions with leaders in behavioral health, resulting in the publication and distribution of a white paper which outlines the current crisis in children's behavioral health to clearly understand language. The paper will conclude with suggested short- and long-term solutions.

The committee is continuing to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Task Force on Runaway and Homeless Youth by advocating for the passage of House bill 2355. This bill represents the final compromise language from the 1993 legislative session and outlines a plan for serving runaway and homeless youth. Last year's bill died in the final hours of the legislative session. In addition, the committee is working to procure a general fund appropriation of $200,000 to ensure the continued funding of present runaway and homeless youth programs.

Arizona has one of the highest child death rates in the country. CAI served as a member of the Interagency Task Force on Child Fatalities, and we are working with them in enactment legislation (House bill 2180) that will enable the creation of child fatality review and prevention.

Arizona is last in our rate of child support collections. Committee members are serving as a catalyst for more effective child support enforcement. We are also working with state legislators to ensure welfare reforms which offer humane incentives for families to become self-sufficient, opposing the automatic transfer of juvenile offenders to adult court, and working to publicize the effectiveness of the Healthy Start child abuse prevention program. We are currently researching public policy initiatives in the area of adoption.

For more information on CAI's Child Welfare Committee, call Irene Jacobs at 266-0670.

Douglas Attonson, Executive Director of The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated exclusively to disadvantaged children, opened the day with a thought-provoking presentation compelling business leaders concerned about the nation's "bottom line" to pay particular attention to children as their future work force.

Calling the Children's Action Alliance "one of the most credible, committed and articulate voices for kids anywhere in the country," he asked our state's leaders to make a renewed commitment to assist today's challenged families in succeeding through public policy initiatives designed to help families develop the potential of their children.

Robert O'Brien, Executive Vice President of CIGNA Corporation, the nation's largest health insurance company and co-sponsor of the event, discussed actual corporate initiatives designed to combat the deteriorating condition of our children. Barbara Gerson of the HCA Corporation elaborated on her company's approaches to investing in children through pro-family policy.


David Liedermann, CEO of the Child Welfare League of America, closed the day's proceedings with the call to put all our energies into building national and state public policies that will reverse the downward spiral of America's families and children.
Child Care Issues Remain Primary Focus of SUCCESS By 6

It took two very atypical working mothers, in the case of Zoe Batel and Rhima Wood, to get child care out of the closet and onto every television set and newspaper in the country. And nothing could have had a more dramatic impact on public awareness as to the breadth of the problem. It is precisely that stinging public outrage that Success By 6 hopes to capitalize on in the coming months. It seems that many more are listening now to the cry for quality child care and early childhood programs.

In addition, there are problems with local zoning ordinances, three different state agencies involved in child care regulation, high turnover rates among providers, insufficient numbers of providers, struggling referral networks, lack of liability insurance among providers, and many other deeply troubling problems within our system of child care.

Success By 6 is involved on many levels in attempting to move these problems "out of the closet" and into full view so that corrective action can be taken. A new publication, The Quiet Crisis: Turning Up the Volume on Infant and Toddler Child Care in Arizona, has been developed under the direction of the Success By 6 Early Development Committee and will be published this spring with the assistance of Honeywell and the Melody Rubalds Foundation. It addresses the serious child care deficit in Arizona and the lack of public policy that encourages quality care. The document is intended to assist in the solution-finding process that will be set in motion should the proposed legislation be passed this session. This legislation will establish a Legislative Study Committee to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the family child care system in Arizona.

Corporate Arizona and Child Care

Dr. Sue Bredekamp, chair of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, was in Phoenix on September 11, 1992 to address valley executives and community leaders on "Improving Child Care for America's Families: Innovative Corporations Lead the Way." Dr. Bredekamp stressed the importance of quality care to achieve optimal development and pointed out once again that tomorrow's workforce is being raised in today's child care centers.

Companies such as AT&T, Motorola, Honeywell, and IBM are already investing in programs to increase the supply and improve the quality of care. The event was sponsored by AT&T.

Preschool for At-Risk Children

We are delighted to report that since 1990, Success By 6 has played a major role in gaining $3.6 million for the at-risk preschool project. Presently, over 750 four-year-olds designated "at-risk" participate in comprehensive preschool programs in 34 school districts. We have been collaborating with the Arizona Dept. of Education on a new publication, available soon, called "Guidelines for Quality Comprehensive Preschool Programs.

Child Care Improvement Project

While working on encouraging more entrepreneurs into the field of child care, it is essential that we continue to provide support to existing child care enterprises that are stretching to improve the quality of their care. One of the best means to do this is to assist child care centers in obtaining accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Their standards are high and a proven way to better care for children.

We took it over a year to secure the financial resources, CAA is delighted to report that the Arizona Department of Economic Security and Health Services made a commitment to match funds with the Honeywell Foundation beginning this past August. The project was off the ground with the hiring of Christa Colunga, a highly qualified early childhood specialist, as Project Coordinator.

Ms. Colunga has successfully identified, recruited, and implemented a process to provide training and technical assistance to 30 child care centers serving over 2,500 young children.

Prenatal Care

A comprehensive report on prenatal care was delivered to the Governor, Speaker of the House, and President of the Arizona Senate this past October. The legislative committee, established under a 1991 priority bill of the Arizona's Children's Campaign, details in its report the specific cost savings to Arizona of providing early prenatal care to pregnant women. The findings outline the need to increase affordability of services to pregnant women, as well as improve the accessibility of services, including streamlining eligibility and enrollment processes for pregnant women to participate in the ABECCS program.

As part of CAA's effort to ensure that every woman receives prenatal care, we continue to encourage full funding of the highly successful prenatal outreach program, Health Start, while working in conjunction with other organizations to improve eligibility levels.

Good Beginnings Partnership

Since 1986, through its Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Demonstration Project, the Flinn Foundation has committed approximately $4 million to establish comprehensive, school-centered programs. The purpose of these programs is to provide to pregnant and parenting teens the services required to allow them to remain in school, to gain access to needed health care for themselves and their infants, and to prepare for a positive future.

In a unique partnership with Success By 6 serving as the catalyst, Honeywell has committed $500,000 over two years to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the nine programs now in place across the state. The "Good Beginnings Partnership" will be formally announced in April.

CAA Establishes Endowment Fund

A long-time wish has been fulfilled at CAA as we are delighted to announce that the Children's Action Alliance Endowment Fund, under the management of the Arizona Community Foundation, has been created through the generosity of the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation and The Melody S. Rubalds Foundation. The purpose of the Endowment Fund is to provide future financial security for CAA as well as create an additional repository for donors wanting to ensure that the work of CAA continues.

Endowment gifts may be in the form of cash donations, bequests, life insurance proceeds, or any trust for which CAA may be designated the beneficiary. If you would like more information on the CAA Endowment Fund, contact Gail Jacobs at 266-0707.
Budget Nightmare, continued from Cover

Thus, with the beginning of the new year, GAA embarked on a challenging new project: Arizona’s Alternative Budget. With an 18-month grant from the Arizona Education Foundation, GAA was able to hire a project manager with considerable experience in state government and its fiscal history. From both a fiscal and children’s perspective, we are studying such questions as “where are we now and how do we get here? How do we compare to other states? What are we accomplishing?” With a foundation of accurate and objective data, we want to tell our fiscal story in a language that the average Arizona citizen can relate to. We are looking for alternative and affordable ways to become better investors with our public dollars. We believe there is a way to end Arizona into the next century. We believe we can afford to support our children and families. In fact, we can afford to continue our neglect. We’re already experiencing astronomical government expense because of past neglect. This process must be turned around.

We hope to create budget recommendations which will include preventive investment and meeting present needs. We will use our research findings to suggest a step-by-step plan to release us from this spiral of decline and build a healthy future for all Arizonans. For further information on this project, call Dana Naikan at 266-6707.

Southern Arizona, continued from Cover

Success By 6 Children’s Campaign — Southern Arizona Committee also recently participated in the Vision of Arizona’s Children program by conducting a tour of Tucson programs that work with young families. Legislators and community leaders had an opportunity to see the faces of the children behind the statistics. The program will run several times a year so that as many people as possible will come to understand that it’s not that we don’t know what to do for kids; we just don’t do enough of it.

On the community level, Success By 6 Children’s Campaign is concerned with the availability of preschool, after-school and summer child care, access to immunizations, increased WR funding, and creation of teen-parent education classes in the Tucson Unified School District. The campaign works with organizations, coalitions, and task forces that focus on children’s issues to effectively change and implement local policies that impact kids. A full conference on the integration of health and social services in schools is planned.

The Success By 6 Children’s Campaign — Southern Arizona Committee is already making an impact. Local media now frequently consult the staff and committee members for information about children and children’s issues. News stories and editorials citing our data have appeared regularly, and staff and committee members sit on several committees concerned with children’s issues. For further information, call Penelope Jacks in Tucson at 621-7189.

American Express continues commitment to family child care

For the past several years, GAA has worked to improve the quality of family child care through the benefit of a grant from American Express. Our major effort of 1991 was the publication of The Zoning Barrier to Family Child Care, a report which methodically exposed the difficulties that child care providers face when confronted with local laws which conflict with state regulations. In 1992, GAA successfully worked with the city of Mesa to change their ordinances. This year, we have targeted five cities — Phoenix, Tempe, Scottsdale, Peoria, and Glendale for our efforts. We are working with city staff, zoning commissions, city councils, and family child care providers to effect the needed changes.

We are also still active participants on the DSS Child Care Regulatory Review Committee which for several months has been investigating options for raising child care standards, establishing consistency among regulators, and assessing how to best meet the developmental needs of the 45,000 children already enrolled in centers and homes throughout the state. In addition, we drafted legislation to address all family child care issues through a legislative and community-based task force which will report their findings and recommendations to the Legislature and Governor by December 31, 1993. Please contact your state representative and ask them to support HB 2312 “Family Child Care, Study Committee.”

Earned Income Credit a cash bonus for the working poor

One of the most effective ways to immediately assist poor working families with children is through the federal Earned Income Credit. This program, unlike most other public assistance services, puts CASH into the hands of those who need it most. But low-income families often miss out on this benefit because they don’t know about it, they don’t file income taxes, or they are overwhelmed by the process required to get it.

GAA is dedicated to getting this information to the families who qualify, so we are printing the EIC Fact Sheet in part and request that you help us get the word out by reprinted this information in your agency or employee newsletters, posting it at your place of business, sharing it with your religious leaders, or making phone calls to friends and associates who have a communication pipeline to low-income families with children. If you want even more information, you can call 202-480-1080 for kids and all sorts of free materials.

The EIC can mean $400 or more to families who qualify, which is sometimes enough to raise them and their children out of poverty. Your partnership in this endeavor could mean the difference for thousands of Arizona’s children.

THE EARNED INCOME CREDIT FACT SHEET

Who is eligible for the EIC?

The Earned Income Credit is a tax credit for working families that had income last year of $22,570 in 1992, and at least one child living at home for more than half the year. The credit is available to both married and single parents. Even families that earn too little to owe federal income tax can be eligible for the EIC. More than 14 million families now qualify for this credit.

How much is the EIC worth?

The basic EIC for families with one child is worth a maximum of $1,524 in 1992. For families with more than one child, the basic EIC is worth up to $1,884. The amount of the credit varies according to a family’s income level. Most eligible families earning between $6,000 and $14,000 will qualify for at least $1000.

How does the EIC work?

The EIC is a “refundable” credit. This means that eligible working families can benefit from the credit even if they owe no federal income tax. Eligible families that owe no income tax receive a check from the Internal Revenue Service in the amount of their credit.

If a family does owe income tax, the EIC reduces the amount of taxes owed. If the family’s credit is greater than the amount of taxes it owes, the family’s tax bill will be reduced to zero and the IRS will send the family a check for the remainder of the EIC.

How can families receive the EIC?

Eligible families must do two things to receive the EIC. First, they must file a federal income tax return. They may use either Form 1040 or 1040A. Second, families also must file a tax form called “Schedule EIC” with their income tax return.

How does the EIC affect public assistance benefits?

A family’s EIC payments do not count as income in determining its eligibility or benefit levels for AFDC, Medicaid, food stamps, SSI, or public or subsidized housing.

Are families with a foster child eligible for the EIC?

Low-income working parents with a foster child may receive the EIC, even if the parents have no other children. If the parents have no other children at home, however, the foster child must reside with the family for the full year for the family to qualify for EIC payments.

Where can families get answers to questions about the EIC?

• Families can obtain free help from IRS operators during regular weekday business hours by calling 1-800-829-1040.
• Or they may call the IRS office in Phoenix which is 640-3500 and offers bilingual assistance.
• Or they can listen to a recorded message on the EIC, 24 hours a day, by calling the IRS “information” service at 1-800-829-4477. Request Topic 42 for the English message. For the Spanish message, press * (star), pause, 2, and finally press 754.
• To reach the EIC message for hearing impaired persons who have access to TDD equipment, the IRS number is 1-800-829-4059.

Families can have their tax forms filled out for free through VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance). VITA volunteers are trained by the IRS to provide free tax help to low-income families. For free tax preparation services in your area, call 1-800-829-1040.

THE 1992 EARNED INCOME CREDIT CAMPAIGN
Making Kids Number One

Children's Action Alliance (CAA), founded in 1988, is a private, nonprofit organization that works to make children's issues the subject of intense thought, debate, and action by all policy and decision makers, the news media, and the public. Through research, publications, media campaigns, public education, and advocacy, we focus attention on the need to build broad-based support for public and private investment in successful policies and programs that improve the lives of Arizona's children and families.

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