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Supporting early childhood education positively impacts Arizona's future

By Marion Rhoades

The children of today are tomorrow's leaders, which is why it is crucial Arizona children have a solid educational foundation.

Since all Valley residents have a stake in preparing future generations, we should also play a role in helping children thrive.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2009 "Kids Count" report, Arizona ranked 40th in the nation in overall child well-being.

The report, which evaluates states on 10 indicators, including dropout rates and poverty, illustrates the need for Arizonans to focus on education in order to give our children the best chance to succeed.

During the past 75 years, The Junior League of Phoenix, a volunteer organization of more than 1,300 women, has provided service and financial help to positively im-

GUEST Commentary

Marion Rhoades



pact the lives of Valley residents.

The organization has been instrumental in noteworthy community projects and events, such as restoring the Orpheum Theater and the Rosson House, and helping to bring the Arizona Science Center, the Children's Museum of Phoenix and the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure to the Valley.

Our efforts from 2009 to 2014 will be focused on early childhood education.

Research shows that children who participate in early childhood programs are more

likely to complete school and less likely to require welfare benefits, become teen parents or partake in criminal activities.

We are working to address these needs with two programs that increase use of curriculum programming for literacy, as well as three programs that increase parental involvement, improve at-home reading and raise community awareness.

By concentrating efforts on family literacy and preparing children for kindergarten, we hope to have a positive impact on the community.

Paradise Valley residents can help this worthy cause by attending the first annual Valley Impact Luncheon, featuring *New York Times* best-selling author and inspiration behind the popular Medium television show, Allison DuBois, as the keynote speaker.

Hosted by The Junior League of Phoenix, the luncheon will take place Dec. 3 at the

Camelback Inn in Paradise Valley, and will raise funds to address the urgent need for early childhood education.

Ms. DuBois has worked to promote the welfare of Arizona children by serving on the task force to initiate Amber Alert in Arizona, and producing and starring in public service videos to teach children how to survive attempted abductions.

The event kicks off at 10:30 a.m. with a silent auction featuring items such as a private dinner with Ms. DuBois, jewelry and vacation getaways, followed by lunch at noon. Tickets to the luncheon are \$125 per person.

For more information or tickets to the event, visit www.jlp.org/viluncheon.

Editor's note: Marion Rhoades is the 2009-10 president of The Junior League of Phoenix.

LETTERS

Honor children's good deeds at Thanksgiving

It's that time of year again!

The temperatures are falling and our thoughts begin turning to holidays and family time together.

This year has been a challenging time for many families, so with the year coming to a close, there is also a sense of renewed hope of what lies ahead.

This Thanksgiving when everyone takes turns naming what it is they are thankful for, we encourage all parents and caregivers to give thanks to the children in their lives who are making good choices.

Too often we focus on fixing the negative, but never stop to think about and praise

the positive choices our children make every day.

Positive reinforcement is sometimes the best way to encourage ongoing good behavior in our loved ones.

Caregivers of all kinds play a significant role in a child's life. If you are a grandparent, aunt, uncle, sibling, mentor or coach, you can guide a child toward healthy choices at every stage of life.

This Thanksgiving and holiday season, take away the pressure, enjoy each other's company and give your child a gift they will always remember. You!

Devon Engel

Partnership for a Drug-Free America, Arizona Affiliate, chairman

HOT Topics

FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE:

The mayor should be elected by Paradise Valley residents. But a person should not have to be mayor unless he/she has previously served on our council. Given the way past and present council members have handled the town's issues, I would not want any of them to serve as mayor! We do not need any more old, recycled council members representing us. We need fresh, new ideas.

Reply at www.newszap.com.

CORRECTIONS

The *Town of Paradise Valley Independent* strives for accuracy and is pledged to bring errors that have appeared in our newspaper to the attention of our readers. In addition, we offer a "right of reply" to the people about whom we write. Readers who disagree with the content of a news story or the way it was

handled or edited are welcome to respond with a letter to the editor or guest commentary and all such letters will be given priority over other submissions. We invite readers to call our newsroom at 623-445-2777 to report an error. Readers may also e-mail their comments to pvalleynews@newszap.com.

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Visit the *Town of Paradise Valley Home Page* and click on "Public Forum" to see what others in the community are talking about, or to join the discussion. These are hometown sites dedicated to free speech with civility, so no personal attacks or profanities, please.



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The Independent welcomes submissions from its readers. Opinions, calendar items, stories ideas and photographs are welcome. Items may be mailed, faxed, e-mailed, or

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The Scottsdale Independent is published by Independent Newspapers of Arizona. Independent is owned by a unique trust that enables this newspaper to pursue a mission

of journalistic service to the citizens of the community. Since no dividends are paid, the company is able to thrive on profit margins below industry standards. All after-tax surpluses are reinvested in Independent's mission of journalistic service, commitment to the ideals of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and support of the community's deliberation of public issues.

We Pledge ...

- To operate this newspaper as a public trust
- To help our community become a better place to live and work, through our dedication to conscientious journalism.
- To provide the information citizens need to make their own intelligent decisions about public issues.
- To report the news with honesty, accuracy, purposeful neutrality, fairness, objectivity, fearlessness and compassion.

- To use our opinion pages to facilitate community debate, not to dominate it with our own opinions.
- To disclose our own conflicts of interest or potential conflicts to our readers.
- To correct our errors and to give each correction the prominence it deserves.
- To provide a right to reply to those we write about.
- To treat people with courtesy, respect and compassion.

Memberships

