Single Mom Scholars RISE to the Challenge

Guest article by Ryan Sermon

As global pandemic struck our community last spring, students in our Single Mom Scholars program faced an added set of challenges: economic uncertainty, parenting through a pandemic, and managing their children's remote learning as well as their own.

Even during the best of times, college moms face the difficult balancing act of dividing their time between parenting, studying, working, and self-care. Moreover, these parents face the additional pressure of risking their day-to-day financial support on their way to completing degrees.

The Single Mom Scholars program, which provides merit-based scholarships, aims to mitigate as many hindrances and roadblocks as possible so that these college moms can graduate.

Scholarship recipients receive membership to AAA, access to auto repairs, a financial aid award annually, and

Photo courtesy of Stephen Yeakley

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A Word from Tom

Dear Friends of ICS!

As we start 2021, it is partnerships that have brought us this far and they will be the key to our future successes. If we have learned anything these past months, it is that we can accomplish more together. I would even venture to say we will not succeed attempting to do it all ourselves. No organization can. There is great synergy working together and doing what we are best at.

Partnerships are important because they provide us with an opportunity to find solutions to multifaceted challenges by using our unique skills and resources. Our partnerships with all our community foundations, corporations, faith communities, government agencies, donors and volunteers have been transformational. These partnerships have allowed us to serve more people with greater efficiency.

Mother Theresa said it best “None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.”

Tom McKinney
Chief Executive Officer

Single Mom Scholars
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many more benefits. Some of these benefits include services for their child(ren): tutoring; back-to-school supplies; and participation in extracurricular activities. However, one of the most unique features the program provides is an atmosphere for scholars to gather and discuss their experiences with others who might share a similar reality. An already challenging situation has been exacerbated by a global pandemic, Covid-19. Women in the program are able to authentically broach a range of topics and bounce off solutions to issues that are pertinent:

- Parenting during the time of corona
- Being a student and shifting to online courses
- Balancing college schoolwork with the educational needs of their child(ren)
- Uncertainty about the job market after graduation

Even during these turbulent times, these scholars are embraced with solace, comfort and a listening ear.

This type of program, which emphasizes a two-generation (2Gen) approach, is part of a larger national coalition of initiatives, policies and other programs. This model aims to promote higher education success for parents and its impact on creating a college-going culture within the household for their child(ren). Through essential partnerships with the Women’s Foundation of Southern Arizona, Social Venture Partners Tucson, Pima County resources, and individuals in the community, this program continues to provide college moms with the resources to assist them in completing their academic program. Through the early support of community partners and donors, this program was first launched as Helping Hands for Single Moms Tucson in 2015. In order to enhance the infrastructure, efficiency and impact to meet the increasing demand, both the Helping Hands Tucson and ICS Boards voted in 2017 to integrate the program into ICS under its new name, Single Mom Scholars. The incorporation of the Single Mom Scholars program, echoes the commitment and investment that ICS has towards economic self-sufficiency.

One of the quickest growing segments of college students are single mothers. Data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study indicates “of the 3.8 million students who are raising children while in college, roughly 2.7 million (or 70%) are mothers. Most student parents are mothers and more than two in five student mothers are single.

-Institute for Women’s Policy Research

See the emergent need to create dedicated workspace with the shift to home-based learning due to COVID-19. Spaces to Learn helped out Single Mom Scholars by providing donated items such as desks, lamps, bookshelves, laptop stands, headphones and lap desks.

Spaces to Learn exists to help students and families create a successful environment where they can learn, study, and organize themselves to make remote education more productive and personal. Learn more at spacestolearn.com

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In December, ICS celebrated with a Winter Wonderland Drive thru. It was a welcome dash of holiday cheer in a whole new way. We enjoyed some sweet treats and delightful holiday music provided by Joyful Hearts String Quartet. Thanks to all who stopped by and to all our volunteers for your vital service.

Major shifts have rocked our world and local community since this time last year. Down to the tiny molecules of our very being, we see how our actions affect others. The same is true of the impact of one small act of kindness in volunteering for ICS. Whether it is in the act of distributing food, smiling as you drive a senior to an appointment, or sharing any of the ICS services with others, we are all in this as one connected entity.

As words like ‘messenger RNA’ are now mainstream, to conversations that discuss vaccines, so is our message with the same RNA and DNA as we have held for 35+ years. Helping others in need is what we do and volunteers are the heart of this mission. Thank you, ICS Volunteers!

You can find out more about volunteering at ICS at icstucson.org or contact Tori Carlson, tcarlson@icstucson.org or 520-526-9308.

ICS Staff Updates

Welcome

Jay Deskins, Faith Community Engagement Coordinator
Jay is a born and bred Kentuckian. He has served as a congregational pastor, a regional minister, a substitute teacher and a cave tour guide. A majority of his work in the church was with youth and children. He has a B.A. from the University of Kentucky and M. Div. from Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis, IN). He and his wife have lived in Tucson for 3 years and love calling Tucson “Home.” Jay is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Fun Fact: Jay is a Kentucky Colonel.

Colleen Trevino, Single Mom Scholars Program Coordinator
Colleen comes to us from years of work as a sexual assault victim advocate, domestic violence shelter coordinator and family support worker. She has moved all over the country as part of a military family, and is settling back in Tucson where she is originally from. She has extensive experience working with children and families alike, and built a program on the Tohono O’odham Nation which she is extremely proud of. Colleen brings skills in crisis intervention, customer service, and strategic planning to our team. She also offers organization skills, kindness and a desire to serve others to our organization, and is excited to join our team.

Fun Fact: Colleen was an extra in the movie Buffalo Soldiers (1997) with Danny Glover. She got to meet, dine, and hang out with him and some of the main cast members.

Kristen Vann, Health and Senior Services Director
Kristen, most recently was the Director of Admissions of Acadia Healthcare. She has 20 years of healthcare experience with extensive experience in healthcare operations. Kristen also has and excellent understanding of organizational, finance and strategic practices. She is analytical and results oriented. Her experience should be an excellent fit for our strategic goals of going deeper with those we serve and those needing our services.

Fun Fact: Kristen loves here cowboy boots and riding horses.
Gifts of Love
Spreading Joy!

We were able to distribute gifts to more than 600 children, teens and seniors during the 2020 Holiday Gifts of Love Program - making their holiday just a little brighter. Thanks to compassionate donors, including a number of faith community partners who adopted whole families. Luke Pearson, our ICS Intern did an amazing job coordinating with the help of volunteers Colleen O'Leary, Katherine Townes, Carol Lange Carol Hahn, Susan Hirsch, Seri Boetcher Victoria Hanley , John and Darla Cavanaugh, Brian and Marilee Fitzgerald , Dee Dee Connell, June and Greg Golden.

Faith Community Engagement News

ICS welcomes our newest partner faith community!

Greater Faith Word Church International is very excited to be partnering in service with ICS. These faith communities and their members are eager to get involved with ICS and our work in the community. Here are some other ICS faith communities in action:

Six Faith Communities adopted more than 200 children during our Gifts of Love Adopt-A-Family Holiday Drive.

Oro Valley Church of the Nazarene donated all offerings collected on Christmas Eve to ICS.

Dove of Peace Lutheran Church held a classical concert on New Year’s day to benefit ICS, hosted this year at Christ the King Episcopal Church. Many Faith Communities have held food drives this year at

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Interfaith Community Services was founded in 1985 by six faith communities and is proud to work with 119 partnering faith communities today.

Abiding in Christ Fellowship - Abiding Savior Free Lutheran - Agape Christian Church International - Aldea Spiritual Community - Alive Church - Alive in Christ Lutheran - Arizona Yage Spiritual Assembly - Ascension Lutheran - Bahá’í Faith - Baha'i Faith - Oro Valley - Beautiful Savior Lutheran - Canyon del Oro Baptist - Capilla del Sol Christian - Casas Adobes Congregational UCC - Casas Church - Catalina United Methodist - Christ Church United Methodist - Christ Presbyterian - Christ the King Episcopal - Church of the Apostles Episcopal - Church of the Everlasting Gospel - Church of the Painted Hills UCC - Community Christian Church Marana - Congregation Anshei Israel - Congregation Bet Shalom - Congregation Chaverim - Congregation Or Chadash - Congregation M'kor Hayim - ConnectionPointe Church - Connections Vineyard - C.O.R.E. Life Ministries - Cortaro Vista Community Church - Country Club at La Cholla Chapel - Desert Dove Christian Church - Desert Skies United Methodist - Desert Valley Adventist Church - Dove of Peace Lutheran - Ebenezer All Nations Seventh Day Adventist - Faith Christian Fellowship of Tucson - First Christian Church - First United Methodist Church - Fountain of Life Lutheran - Grace St. Paul’s Episcopal - Grace Temple Missionary Baptist Church - Grace to the Nations Church - Greater Faith Word Church International - Hope City Church - Immanuel Presbyterian - Islamic Center of Tucson - Living Grace Ecklesia - Lord of Grace Lutheran - LifeBridge Church - Lutheran Church of the Foothills - Maranatha Seventh Day Adventist - Ministerios Manantial De Amor - Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church - Mountain Shadows Presbyterian - Mountain View Baptist - Mountain Vista U.U. Congregation - New Hope/Nueva Esperanza United Methodist Church - New Life Bible Fellowship - New Life Community Church of the Nazarene - New Spirit Lutheran - Northminster Presbyterian - North Tucson Stake of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints - Northwest Baptist - Northwest Community Church - Northwest Community Friends Church - Oro Valley Church of the Nazarene - Oro Valley United Church of Christ - Our Lady of the Desert Catholic Church - Our Saviour’s Lutheran - Pantano Christian Church - Resurrection Lutheran - Baptist Church - Congregational UCC - Rising Star Baptist Church - Saguarooni Catholic Church - Sanctuary United Methodist - Santa Catalina Catholic - Shalom Mennonite - Southside Presbyterian - St. Albans’ Episcopal Church - St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, and St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Rincon Congregational United Church of Christ designated a generous portion of an endowment grant to ICS. We are deeply grateful for the contributions of our 119 partner faith communities! Together we’re impacting many lives for the better. To schedule a visit at one of our offices, or to have ICS staff or board members speak to your congregation, or to explore your congregation joining us in the good work described in this newsletter, call our Director of Outreach and Partnerships, Tim Kromer, at 520-526-9290.

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35 years ago, six congregations founded Interfaith Community Services (ICS) on the belief that we, as a community, can do more and help more people when we come together in partnership. Those original 6 faith community partners have now blossomed into partnerships with 119 faith communities. ICS has also expanded partnerships with other non-profits, businesses, and government agencies. The values of cooperation and partnership are a part of the DNA that has made ICS successful over the decades.

In 2020, ICS has seen our partners come forward to help like no time in our organization’s history. Our partners have found creative ways to help in the midst of this unprecedented situation. When members of faith communities found themselves furloughed or laid-off, they stepped-up to volunteer at the ICS Food Banks, deliver groceries to homebound seniors, or take food bags directly to other faith community partners in areas of high need. Many faith communities held special drive-thru food drives to keep members and volunteers safe while raising food for hungry families.

Some of these faith community partners set huge goals to help the community. One of these faith community partners is St. Mark’s United Methodist Church. John Yost, the ICS Advocate at St. Mark’s UMC said, “In 2019, St. Mark’s donated 1,040 pounds of food to the ICS Food Bank. We thought that was good. COVID-19 changed everything. We have been working together in collecting and delivering food donations to the ICS Food Bank since March, even though the church buildings have been closed for many months. We then set a challenge to the congregation to raise 10,000 pounds and have been overwhelmed by their response. We love ICS and are proud to be a faith community partner since 1985!”

At the time of this article, St. Mark’s UMC has blown past their goal and has raised close to 16,000 pounds of food.

Like St. Mark’s UMC, there have been many faith communities who have gone above and beyond during this challenging year. Without their support, ICS would not have been able to respond to the increased need in our community. We want to thank all of the faith communities who partner with ICS for your continued commitment to helping our neighbors in need.

Partnerships: what we can accomplish together

Free Tax Help is now virtual!

Starting in January to get started visit getyourrefund.org/en

- Picture ID
- Original Social Security card for EACH family member
- Proof of income
- Documentation of deductible expenses
- Account and routing numbers for direct deposit of refunds
- Prior-year tax return
- If you purchased health insurance through the Marketplace, Form 1095-A and dependents’ proof of income.

Both spouses must be present if filing Married Filing Jointly or Married Filing Separately. Maximum annual household income of $66,000 to receive this free service.
Memorials and Tributes: 10/1-12/31/19
Memorials and gifts of honor are a special way to remember friends and loved ones, as well as make a tax-deductible donation to ICS. An acknowledgment is sent to both donor and honoree. Thank you!

In Memory Of: Given By
Larry Amend, Nancy Amend
Lawrence B. Backus, Peter and Shirley Nelson
Phylise Bergeson, Jim and Lora Pirzyński
Tom Brock, Nancy Brock
Richard Carlson, Judy Lenzi
My husband, James Cartin, Theresa Cartin
My parents, Hal and Ruth Chadwick, Barbara Chadwick
Steve, Frank and Greg Chandler, Deborah Chandler
Harold E. Davis, Steve, Frank and Greg Chandler
Our son, Michael Kuehn
Glenn Hamstra, Ram & Mara Gnanadesikan
Anthony J. Gatto, Dr. Donald Garland
Eileen Fyfe, My father-in-law
Merwin Emerson, Alphonsine McClure
My brother Terry Farley and my brother-in-law John Widener, Patricia Durdyee
My father-in-law, Carol A. Duncan
Robert Lee Fronfetler, Rod and Suzanne Anderson
Eileen Fye, Kathleen Galvin, Chris Griffin
Don and Carol Hayden, Steve Herzog, Andy Fiori, and Brian Fitzgerald
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Grisham, Dick and Carolyn Grisham
Ben and Kim Curson - Merry Christmas!
My parents, Derald & Margie Nordbrock, Susan Kowalcek
Christine Negley
Kris Moran
Our daughter, Monika Woolsey
Bill and Mary Anne Springer, Wendell
April and Barry Schiller, Linda and Larry Schloss
Gary and Dee Dee Connel, James and Dolly Moran, Janet Joyce Lyons, Jeffrey Mahoney, Ann McGrath, Tom McKinney, Sarah Phipps
Bonnie Plant, Richard Plant
Don and Jeanine Pooley, Joseph and Suzanne Zimбардо
Tuck & Renee Renshaw, Heath Grieshaber
The Ringer Family
Jen and Shan Thorn - Merry Christmas!
Jill Taylor, Cheryl and Carl Stiers
The staff at Sonoran Terraces Apartments
Bill Sivitz, Jill and Gary Sisson - Merry Christmas!
Celena Robles, The Ringer Family
Bonnie Plant,
Paula Radmacher
Elizabeth and Dana DeBeauvoir
Memorials and Tributes Continued

John and Choon Koenig, Marie Pucker
Joanie Kroeckel, Margaret Gaines
Bruce & Judith Ann Lamond, Heather Grieshaber
Greg and Katrinia Lantz, Elizabeth Jury
Jim & Judy Lenzi, Mike Cecchi
Pastor John Lillie and his wife Cheryl Lillie, Lutheran Church of the foothills
Karen MacDonald, Ailin Colton, Paula Radmacher
Lynn Manis, Bettina Thompson
Ken McCauley & Joanne Kennedy, Elizabeth and William Feder
Denis & Barbara McCoeough, Mike Cecchi
Cass & Frank McGinty - Merry Christmas! Christine Besee
Frank McGinty, Keaton Maitland-Price
Tom McKinney, Jan Sturgess
Al and Darlene Merritt, Steven and Edina Merritt
Menno Hall Family
Mike & Dede Addington, AND Matthew and Connie, Ann Zasa
Kris Moran and Lenny Fleber, Marlene Bluestein
Doris Morris, Ruth McCoy
Chris and Nancy Myers, Julie Reichman
Christine Negley, Linda M. Staubitz
My parents, Derald & Margie Nordbrock, Nancy Miller
Mary Brien, Margaret Obrien
Edward & Landy Parfet, Heather Grieshaber
Bill and Jill Phillips, Sarah Phipps
Bonnie Plant, Richard Plant
Don and Jeanine Pooley, Joseph and Suzanne Zimбардо
Tuck & Renee Renshaw, Heath Grieshaber
Barry & Patti Robinson, Mike Cecchi
Celena Robles, June Lee
Betsy Sandlin, Edward and Betty Aiptalver
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Sette - for Christmas 2020
Chase and Thomas Sette
Jill and Gary Sisson - Merry Christmas, Brooke Woody
Bill Sivitz, Christina Schumacher
Carolyn Skinner, Susan Kowalcek
The staff at Sonoran Terraces Apartments
Andrew Dukes
Cheryl and Carl Stiers, Lorna Kraemer
Advisor Client Consultants, Stratton Advisors
Jill Taylor, Kelly and Mary Lou Steinkamp
Jen and Shan Thom - Merry Christmas, Robert and Sandra Thom
Leah Twa - Merry Christmas, Shannon Norris
Wendell and Rose Tyson, Paul and Cindy Capp
Sue and Ken West - Merry Christmas! Dana DeLeasevoir
Andrea McLennan, Brian McPherson
Janis Willkom, Ann K Mills
Diane Wilson, James W Springer

It is with deep sadness that we share that Ed Jenkins, Board Emeritus member of Interfaith Community Services (ICS) recently passed away. Ed not only embodied the notion of a servant leader, but embodied every aspect of the concept.

For 17 years, Ed has been the kind of volunteer every organization dreams of: committed to the mission, an intellectual thought-partner, contributor, ambassador and a passionate volunteer. Ed’s impact on ICS and the Tucson community cannot be measured, but what we all know is that for him it was a labor of love and we all felt it.

He not only served as Board Chair, but continued as Board Emeritus member, championing our mission and offering guidance to leaders of ICS. Ed and his wife, Kay, established the ICS Endowment Fund in 2009 and started the Jenkins Family Legacy Society. While these contributions were significant he will be best remembered for his steadfast commitment to compassionate volunteering at the front desk, answering phones every Monday morning.

We will miss Ed in so many ways, but none more than at the front desk every Monday morning, where he fielded calls from those in need for food, financial assistance, transportation, a daily well-wisher or home repairs. He was constant in treating all people with respect, dignity, and caring – a role model for all.

Ed gave freely of himself and was a tireless advocate for those less fortunate in our community. He was an inspiration to all of us at ICS and throughout the community and his legacy will be felt for generations.

Our prayers and thoughts are with the entire Jenkins family and he will be greatly missed.
Celebrating 10 Years!

Saturday, March 6
10am-11am
Virtual Program!

Friday March 5 &
Saturday, March 6
12-4
Drive Thru Bowl Pick-up

Tickets on sale now
at icstucson.org
$30 each.
520-526-9304

Rise
Sunday, January 31, 2pm-3pm
Virtual Celebration of
Empowered Women
to benefit
Interfaith Community Services
Single Mom Scholars

Featuring American Idol, Crystal Stark!

Empty Bowls
a fundraiser
to fight hunger and feed hope

Presented by Tucson Electric Power
Join us to be inspired by stories of resilience and determination

“Finding Single Mom Scholars was like finding a dream I didn’t know I was missing. Not only did I find other amazing women striving to challenge traditional stereotypes and norms, but I also found a support system which we know, is an invaluable asset to anyone trying to achieve more. I feel proud to be part of a life-long community of people that can lift you through the hard days and still encourage you to rise.” –Quanisha

Tickets on sale now!
Visit icstucson.org for more information.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS!