



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Public, Private and Non-Profit Sectors Launch “Thriving Together” to Prepare a Quarter-Million Young People for Success in School and the Workforce**

PHOENIX, Arizona (March 27, 2015) – An unprecedented initiative for Arizona is underway that aims to improve educational results for a quarter-million children in the Phoenix metropolitan area, and at the same time create a better future for our state.

More than 200 leaders from 60 local organizations – including higher education, social services, community groups, business and industry, government leaders, and parents – are coming together to help children succeed from birth to career through an initiative called Thriving Together. Resources from throughout the community will be marshaled and fused to help students improve educational results as they reach key benchmarks in their development, placing and keeping them on a path to success.

Thriving Together, which is the first initiative of its kind in Arizona, is a long-term movement that will use the resources of the private and non-profit sectors to ensure children, youth and young adults succeed within the boundaries of Thriving Together, which includes public elementary and high schools within the area of the Phoenix Union High School District. This initiative is co-chaired by Kent P. Scribner, Superintendent of PUHSD and Pam Conboy, Lead Regional President of Wells Fargo. Valley of the Sun United Way is serving as the anchor entity for the initiative.

Studies have shown that if children are prepared at several key milestones in their educational career, they can stay on a path to success. Those milestones are the focus of Thriving Together and its efforts to provide measurable results where often children and young people are most likely to lose their way, fall behind, or get frustrated, or suffer from a lack of support. Thriving Together will initially focus on four key areas:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade math
- High school graduation and college readiness
- College enrollment and attainment

**A key initial milestone for Thriving Together is the release of its Baseline Report, which outlines the initiative’s goals and strategies as well as providing data and insight on how the initiative will help young people improve their educational results and transition to a career. The report will be unveiled at a special event on Tuesday, March 31 at 1 to 2 p.m. at Valley of the Sun United Way, 3200 East Camelback Road. Members of the media are invited to attend this event.**

MORE



“The children of Phoenix represent our future—we work for them. Preparing our children for success is one of the most important responsibilities we have as a community,” said Dr. Kent P. Scribner, Superintendent of the Phoenix Union School District. “Many of our students must overcome significant obstacles in order to experience success later in life. It’s our obligation as parents and community members to work together to help the next generation believe and achieve.”

Thriving Together creates a strong educational collaboration, which starts when a child is born and concludes when that child succeeds in the workforce. Along the way, the initiative measures progress and works to make sure educational goals are being met. If they are not, it identifies opportunities to improve and resources to support students to get back on track. It uses data to identify the effectiveness of a practice. If there’s room to improve, Thriving Together draws on its resources to offer a path to success for students.

“The Thriving Together collaborative process is about determining what methods are effective and replicating innovative ideas that have proven to help students succeed,” said Pam Conboy, Lead Regional President of Wells Fargo in Arizona. “This initiative is an investment in the future of our children and our state and the birth-to-career approach is a critical step in strengthening Arizona’s future and economic security.”

Within the Thriving Together community, there are dozens of programs, initiatives and efforts to help children overcome obstacles, provided by schools and different community organizations. All want the same end result—to help students succeed. These efforts will be more effective if they are coordinated.

“These are our children and we can ensure their future is brighter if we work together,” said Merl Waschler, President & CEO of Valley of the Sun United Way. “Thriving Together will recast the relationships between the public and private sectors in ways never seen before in Arizona and will strengthen the educational pipeline and workforce in the Valley.”

In its first year, Thriving Together has already formed Community Action Teams to create improved results in each of the four key areas of focus. Each team includes subject matter experts and community members to strengthen Thriving Together. Thriving Together is funded entirely by the non-profit and private sectors — and is not part of any government-mandated effort.

For more information on Thriving Together, contact Mary Lou Valenzuela, Director, Public Relations for Valley of the Sun United Way, at [mvalenzuela@vsuw.org](mailto:mvalenzuela@vsuw.org) or at 602.631.4840.

