

TUCSON GIVING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2019 | PAGE A8

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Time remains to help out the homeless, shelter animals

By Loni Nannini

SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Christmas is almost here, but it's not too late to make Santa's nice list: Several local efforts are making it easy to score some last-minute giving points this holiday season.

If you want to help, consider a contribution to Pop-Cycle's Xmas Eve Winter Clothing & Food Drive, which begins at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24, at Pop-Cycle Shop, 422 N. Fourth Ave.

The 24th annual event will begin with a gathering to make sandwiches and assemble more than 200 sack lunches to distribute to homeless people at various parks — Santa Rita, De Anza, and Jacome Plaza at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library — and other locations around the city.

The event originated with the Koenen family, who are long-time Tucson residents.

"We used to have a Christmas Eve dinner for our family and we had so much left over one year that we started thinking about what other people didn't have and how much we did have. We decided to take the ham from Christmas Eve and make sandwiches and took them out on Christmas Day to give to people who were in need," said Deedee Koenen, co-owner of Pop-Cycle with Jennifer Radler and Shannon Riggs.

The following year the giveaway was moved to Christmas Eve; the family shopped for food and collected warm clothing from friends and extended family members to distribute along with the lunches. When Pop-Cycle — a shop dedicated to promoting the work of more than 90 local artists whose creations incorporate recycled materials, reused products and refurbished goods — opened in 2008, the Christmas Eve event expanded further.

"We decided to cast a broader net and invited anyone who was interested in coming to help. It has been that way for the last 10 years," said Koenen.

Now, each year hundreds of people contribute and about 100 friends, family members and generous



PHOTOS COURTESY POP-CYCLE SHOP

Pop-Cycle Shop's Xmas Eve Winter Clothing & Food Drive offers an opportunity to provide holiday help for those in need. Volunteers with the event will make and distribute lunches and warm clothing at parks and other locations in downtown Tucson on Christmas Eve.

individuals come together on Christmas Eve to caravan and distribute lunches along with jackets, beanies, hats, gloves and other warm clothing and blankets.

Over the years, Koenen said the gifts have gone to a wide variety of people, ranging from those who live on the streets consistently to those who have fallen on hard times and are between homes due to loss of employment, illness or other reasons. She said that they have also helped families who live in their cars, many of whom have children.

"It isn't consistent. It ebbs and flows. You never know who will need help. A lot of people know, though, that we are coming and they are ready to tell us what it is they need this year," she said. Koenen is gratified that while theirs was among the first grassroots effort to provide help for the homeless during the holidays, many others have developed over the years.

"I think Tucson is pret-



Volunteers are also needed to help make sandwiches and assist with delivery of lunches and clothing.

ty kind and, as Tucsonans, we are conscientious about collaboration. There is a sense of personal responsibility that doesn't necessarily happen in other cities, so I think we are pretty lucky," she said.

Overall, Koenen said the tradition has become a cornerstone of the holidays for many who participate; it also exemplifies the personal philosophy that guides her life and business year-round.

"We are very blessed and I think it is important that you always give back to

community that you are in ... really, as citizens, it is our responsibly to give back. I couldn't really see not doing this," she said.

HOPE ANIMAL SHELTER

If your heart turns toward homeless animals during the holidays, Hope Animal Shelter offers an ideal opportunity to assist those most in need.

The shelter, which was founded 14 years ago by Susan Scherl, has evolved into an animal sanctuary that houses 75 special needs and senior cats and dogs.

HOW TO HELP

Pop-Cycle's Xmas Eve Winter Clothing & Food Drive

- **When:** 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24
- **Where:** Pop-Cycle Shop of Tucson, 422 N. Fourth Ave.
- Pop-Cycle Shop is accepting donations of new and gently used jackets, scarves, gloves, socks, backpacks, toiletries, blankets and sleeping bags to gift to those in need at various parks and other locations citywide. Volunteers are also welcome to help make sandwiches, pack lunches and assist with delivery of lunches and clothing donations for those living on the streets. For more information, visit the Pop-Cycle Facebook page at www.facebook.com/PopCycle1/ or call Pop-Cycle Shop at 622-3297.

Hope Animal Shelter Holiday Appeal for In-Kind Donations and Funding

- **When:** Ongoing through January

- **Where:** 8950 N. Joplin Lane, Marana.
- Hope Animal Shelter is in need of in-kind donations of blankets, towels and bath mats; dog treats and bully sticks; Kongs and other food dispensing toys; litter pans and Feline Pine or equivalent cat litter; carpeted cat condos and other cat furniture; cat and dog carriers; Authority brand dog food; Fancy Feast dry and canned cat food; Kirkland cat and dog food; and dog and cat brushes and toys. A complete wish list is available at www.hopeanimalshelter.net and donations can be dropped at the shelter, which is also in need of volunteers. For information, call 792-9200.
- If you would like to contribute to the Hope Animal Shelter Holiday Appeal, visit the website www.hopeanimalshelter.net or send a donation to: Hope Animal Shelter, P.O. Box 1996, Cortaro, AZ 85652

"We are definitely much more of a sanctuary than a shelter. That is what makes us different and why we need constant funding. We can't turn our animals around and adopt them; at least half of the animals we have will spend the rest of their lives living here since most people don't want the responsibility of animals with behavioral or medical issues," said Scherl.

Hope offers other differences as well: The cage-free shelter, which was once a house, dedicates bedrooms to dogs and communal living spaces to cats. The rooms are furnished with donated furniture, and the cat "community rooms" include built-in shelves where cats can explore and sleep.

The faculty sustained more than \$30,000 worth of damage during a monsoon flood in July 2018 and since then, Scherl said that Hope has struggled financially. Repairs are ongoing: Several walls are still in need of repair and the "cat shelves" still need to be replaced.

"The flood caused more long-term problems than we realized. We thought we

could just put fresh paint on the walls and it hasn't worked out that way," said Scherl.

Scherl, who has funded the shelter for years with her retirement account and is no longer able to do so on her own, is actively seeking corporate and business sponsorships in hopes of creating additional revenue.

Hope is also in the midst of its holiday appeal, through which donors can make one-time or monthly contributions. Scherl said she hopes the public will consider the animals that will benefit.

"These animals have no where else to go. We house dogs that people can't handle and cats that other shelters would deem feral but they are not: They are just scared ... but suddenly one day they let us start touching them and that is what makes us keep going. It fills your heart with joy when an animal that was not able to be handled can all of a sudden take our affection and be OK with it," Scherl said.

Contact freelance writer Loni Nannini at ninch2@comcast.net

Public invited to see film focusing on police and mental-health calls

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

The public is invited to a free screening of the award-winning film "Ernie & Joe — Crisis Cops," a documentary about police responses to mental-health calls.

The event, which will take place Jan. 16 at 3 p.m. at The Loft Cinema, will also feature a panel discussion. Tickets will be available the day of the event at the theater, 3233 E. Speedway.

Participants include Jenifer McShane, producer and director of the film, and Joe Marro, one of the subjects. Local panelists are Judy Kowalick of NAMI Southern Arizona; Richard Rhoads of the Banner-UMC Crisis Re-

sponse Center; Sabrina Taylor of the Phoenix Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team, and Jason Winsky of the Tucson Police Department. Christina Rossetti will moderate.

"Ernie & Joe" is described as "a portrait of two Texas police officers who are helping change the way police respond to mental-health calls." The film weaves together their experiences during their daily encounters with people in crisis as members of the San Antonio Police Department's 10-person mental-health unit.

McShane produced and directed this documenta-



Jenifer McShane

ry. Her previous films have won awards and been broadcast on PBS. "Ernie & Joe" debuted at the DOC New York City Film Festival, America's largest documentary festi-

val, in November. The Tucson-based David and Lura Lovell Foundation helped underwrite production of the documentary and is sponsoring the local screening.

The Lovell Foundation was established in 1994. Since that time, the foundation has awarded over \$14 million to support more than 80 nonprofit organizations nationwide.

Angel Charity for Children surpasses its fundraising goal; tally is \$1.04M

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Angel Charity for Children Inc. said it wrapped up one of its most successful fundraising campaigns in the nonprofit's 37-year history by raising \$1.04 million to benefit programs and services for children in Pima County.

The final total eclipsed Angel Charity's initial goal of raising about \$805,000 to fund projects requested by the organization's two major 2019 beneficiaries, Children's Clinics for Rehabilitative Services and Therapeutic Ranch for Animals & Kids.

In addition, Angel Charity earlier this year awarded \$159,000 in grants to 10 nonprofits serving children. Angel Charity will use the



PHOTO COURTESY OF DOMINIC ORTEGA

Angel Charity members announce the 2019 fundraising total of \$1,038,207 during the annual Angel Ball.

extra funds raised this year to increase the amount and quantity of funding for smaller grants next year.

All the money raised goes directly to the beneficiaries,

Angel Charity said.

The deadline for grant applications for Angel Charity funding in 2020 is Jan. 6. For more information, go to angelcharity.org

POWERING HOLIDAY SPIRIT



From hanging Christmas lights in Winterhaven to delivering meals and donating bicycles for foster children, TEP employees embrace many opportunities to give back during the holidays. While we volunteer all year, December is a special time for our employees to hold food drives, collect toys, and support other efforts to spread goodwill across Southern Arizona. It's a great way to cap off another year spent improving the quality of life in the communities we serve.



ARIZONA TAX CREDITS

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Editor: Debbie Kornmiller | 520-573-4127 | dkornmiller@tucson.com

Beacon Group helping people with disabilities push forward

By Beacon Group

To say that Erika Kahn likes to move is an understatement. She expertly transitions from task to task as a courtesy clerk at Safeway. "I like to move around and move all over the place. I just can't be in one spot. My family, we are all hard workers. It runs in my family," she says.

Erika's journey has had many turns. She has learning disabilities as well as anxiety, depression, insomnia and is hearing impaired. Coming originally to Beacon in 2007, Erika worked part-time at a local restaurant chain, but after changes in management structures, Erika needed to find another employment option.

It had been over a decade since Erika had looked for a job, so her Beacon employment support team suggested that she start job searching with Sarah Hogan, Beacon's lead job coach.

Erika also enrolled in Beacon's Transition to Employment program to further develop her job searching and working skills. The program, a seven-week curriculum with hands-on learning components such as job shadowing and volunteering, provides meaningful and individualized job training.

Taking multiple approaches paid off, and Erika has been on the job for nine months. Her manager Amanda Clark compli-

IF YOU GO

- **What:** Beacon Group
- **Where:** 308 W. Glenn St., Tucson, 85705
- **Phone:** 520-622-4874
- **Website:** beacongroup.org

ments, "She is very determined for sure. She always gets the job done great. I never have anything to worry about when Erika is here."

As a tax credit donor, you can make a gift, empowering people with disabilities like Erika on their employment journey, and receive dollar-for-dollar credit back on your state tax return.

With a wide variety of programs focusing on employment for people with disabilities, specific impact varies by program.

Last year, tax credit donations provided student pre-employment education for 100 youth with disabilities and job search assistance for 50 people with disabilities like Erika for one month.

With a 65-year history of serving Southern Arizona, Beacon Group ensures your dollars are stewarded in the most effective way to help as many people with disabilities like Erika achieve employment.

Like Erika says: "It's a great opportunity for people with disabilities to be out in the community and work like everyone else."



Erika says Beacon Group's classes helped her be better prepared for the interview that landed her a job at Safeway.

Delivering dignity, love with Mobile Meals on Wheels

By Jennifer M. Tersigni,

INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MOBILE MEALS OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

Catherine, a Vietnam veteran and a registered nurse, suffered a ruptured gallbladder, a fractured leg, and the death of a child – all within six months.

An administrative error stopped her Social Security benefits and she could not afford her house payments.

Catherine lost her health, her child and then her home.

Fortunately, Veterans Affairs helped Catherine secure housing and referred her to Mobile Meals of Southern Arizona for the support she needs to continue living in her own home with health and dignity.

Because of your generous support, Catherine now receives two medicaly tailored meals each day to help manage her Type 1 diabetes.

Because of your compassion, Catherine is no longer alone. A kind word, a quick smile and a short conversation with a caring volunteer – these mean so much to the isolated, homebound adults served by Mobile Meals.

Because of you, Catherine is regaining her confidence, health and dignity.

Each day, our volunteers are on the front lines,

IF YOU GO

- **What:** Mobile Meals of Southern Arizona
- **Where:** 4803 E Fifth St. #209, Tucson, 85711
- **Phone:** 520-622-1600
- **Website:** MobileMeals-SoAz.org

helping our community's most vulnerable adults with medically tailored, special-diet meals, safety checks, pet food and incontinence supplies. Together, we deliver so much more than a meal.

- \$400 helps a frail adult stay nourished with medically tailored meals for four months.
- \$800 feeds someone battling a life-threatening disease for eight months.

Ninety percent of our revenue comes from private sources, from donations from people like you.

Our goal is to serve everyone who makes the call for help, eliminate our waiting list and add two meal service providers who can cook special diet meals daily for those in need.

Your tax-credit dollars will help us do that as we promote the health, dignity and independence of homebound adults.

Specialized meals delivered daily, with love. That's Mobile Meals on Wheels.

HOW IT WORKS

Arizona provides two separate nonrefundable tax credits for individuals who make contributions to charitable organizations: qualifying charitable organizations and qualifying foster care charitable organizations. Tax credits are also available for donations to schools.

These tax credits are a way for Arizona taxpayers to direct their taxes to organizations and causes that are important

to them.

Individuals making cash donations may claim donations as tax credits up to the allowable amount on their Arizona personal income tax returns.

Tax credits provide a dollar-for-dollar reduction of your Arizona income tax liability. This means that a \$400 tax credit saves you \$400 in taxes. On the other hand, tax deductions lower your taxable

income and are equal to the percentage of your marginal tax bracket.

The allowable 2019 credit for contributions to qualifying charitable organizations is \$400 for single and head of household taxpayers and \$800 for married taxpayers filing a joint return.

The allowable 2019 credit for contributions to qualifying foster care organizations is \$500 for single and head

of household taxpayers and \$1,000 for married taxpayers filing a joint return.

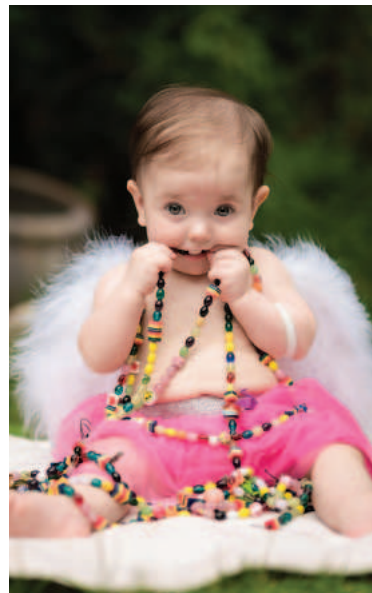
For a list of qualifying organizations and more information on these or school tax credits, see [tucne.ws/taxcredits](https://www.tucne.ws/taxcredits) at the Arizona Department of Revenue website.

You can donate and claim the credit for 2019 up until April 15, 2020. For more details, consult your tax professional.



Mobile Meals helps homebound adults like Catherine, a Vietnam veteran and a registered nurse, live with dignity.

Tax credit donors saved one Ronald McDonald House family \$14,000+



LAUREN BAILEY, LOVELIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY
Leilani Armenta has more than 500 Beads of Courage, one each for important medical milestones and procedures, including four for the times when her parents were told she might not make it.

By Kate Maguire Jensen

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

No parent plans for their child to be critically ill. It's not something any of us want to think about. Until you have to.

When Briquel Armenta had her first daughter, Evelyn, four years ago, she left the El Rio Birth & Women's Center four hours later. She was expecting a similar routine last October when she and her husband drove from Rio Rico to deliver daughter No. 2.

Then Briquel's completely healthy pregnancy took an unexpected and life-threatening turn. Five minutes after delivery, baby Leilani and her dad, German, were in an ambulance to the hospital.

Immediately Leilani was surrounded by a team of pediatric specialists. Leilani's large and small intestine were in her chest cavity. Her lung was collapsed. Her heart was out of position. The medical team told Briquel and

German to prepare for the worst.

Nothing in their lives prepared them for this.

Where would they stay while Leilani was in the hospital? Who would watch big sister Evelyn while all of this was happening?

This is where donors became their heroes. Because of the support of Tucsonans who took advantage of Arizona's Charitable Tax Credit, Briquel's family could take refuge at the Tucson Ronald McDonald House. Although families stay at no cost to them, every \$100 donated allows the charity to care for one family for one night.

"Being able to stay at the Ronald McDonald House made all the difference," Briquel said. "All the day-to-day things were taken care of for me, which made it easier to get through the emotional stuff. It was a nice place to stay and someone cooked lunch and dinner for us every day. Oh my gosh, there's no way I could have figured out what to eat for dinner. I could

barely parent."

When donors use their charitable tax credit (\$400 for individuals and \$800 for married couples), they help keep the Ronald McDonald House free for guests. These gifts helped save the Armenta family an estimated \$14,000 for lodging, meals, transportation, laundry and more over the 65 nights away from home.

"It really helped being around other parents going through similar things," Briquel said. "Staying at the Ronald McDonald House gave me some consistency with Evelyn. I can't imagine driving back and forth from Rio Rico every day or having to choose which daughter to spend time with."

Leilani left the hospital with a feeding tube, multiple medications and strict guidelines about germ exposure. She will require close care and will need to travel to Tucson for additional surgeries throughout her life. And every time they need the Ronald Mc-

SHARE YOUR STORY

The Star is asking organizations in Southern Arizona that are certified as Qualifying Charitable Organizations or as Qualifying Foster Care Charitable Organizations or qualifying schools or programs to share their stories with Star readers. If your organization would like to participate, please email Debbie Kornmiller at dkornmiller@tucson.com for details.

IF YOU GO

- **What:** Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Arizona
- **Where:** 2155 E. Allen Road, Tucson, 85719
- **Phone:** 520-326-0060
- **Website:** rmhctucson.org

Donald House, it will be here for them – thanks to generous donors and Arizona's Charitable Tax Credit.



Yes, It's True - You can pay less taxes and help your favorite charity!

In Arizona, you can choose where your money goes!

For more information or to donate now, visit



GiveLocal KeepLocal.org

Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Coalition