

TUCSON GIVING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2019 | PAGE A8

Editor: James Martinez | 520-573-4103 | jmartinez@tucson.com

Group getting word out about tax credits

By Loni Nannini

SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

As the year — and the decade — draw to a close, a grassroots coalition wants to encourage Arizona residents to remember that monetary donations to select local charities may qualify for dollar-for-dollar credits on 2019 state income taxes.

The Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Coalition is comprised of a group of nearly 50 nonprofit organizations that have come together to promote the Arizona Charitable Tax Credits for Qualifying Charitable Organizations and Qualifying Foster Care Organizations.

The charitable tax credit allows a dollar-for-dollar credit of up to \$400 for single or head-of-households or \$800 for married taxpayers filing jointly on 2019 Arizona income taxes; the foster-care tax credit allows an additional \$500 credit for single or head-of-households or \$1,000 for married taxpayers filing jointly.

The coalition uses the tagline and website of GiveLocalKeepLocal.org to promote its message about the benefits of supporting local qualifying nonprofits, according to Chairman Scott Matlick.

“The line ‘Give Local. Keep Local.’ helps to remind people that they have the option to keep their state tax dollars working in the local community. ... You have the opportunity to choose a particular cause that is special to you and keep that money right here in Tucson,” said Matlick, who is also the director of business development for Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Arizona, which is among the charitable organizations represented on the coalition.

Matlick emphasized that a diverse group of nonprofits are qualifying charities, ranging from small to large organizations that provide a multitude of services for those of all ages, from infants to seniors.

The charities address needs ranging from disabilities and education to hunger, health challenges and homelessness: A sampling includes The Haven Recovery With Respect, Literacy Connects, Mobile Meals of Southern Arizona, Parent Aid, Sister Jose Wom-



COURTESY ACT

Supporters from Chiricahua Community Health Centers checked out the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile at the Ronald McDonald House Walk for Kids earlier this month. Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Arizona is one of more than 230 local nonprofit organizations that qualify for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credits for Qualifying Charitable Organizations (QCOs) and Qualifying Foster Care Organizations (QFCOs).

en’s Center and Southern Arizona Legal Aid.

A comprehensive list and information about all Arizona tax credits can be found at azdor.gov/tax-credits/contributions-qcos-and-qfcos.

Educating the public about the details of these organizations and affiliated tax credits is a priority of the coalition, according to Matlick.

“We know from talking to people that there is still a lot of confusion about the tax credits, Matlick said. “Lots of people think that it is too good to be true that you can give \$400 or \$800 to Qualifying Charitable Organizations and \$500 or \$1,000 to Qualifying Foster Care Organizations and get potentially 100%



Give Local. Keep Local. (www.givelocalkeeplocal.org) is the tagline for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Coalition for Southern Arizona, a coalition that raises awareness about tax credits available to Arizona residents.

of that back in a benefit on your income taxes.

“The power of the coalition is that we are all chipping in to help get the word out. ... It is nonprofits collaborating for the greater good of the community,” he said.

Tax credits often take on significance at year-end, when many people are planning for charitable

giving. To that end, the coalition helps to promote details about timelines, including a reminder that monetary contributions to the qualifying organizations made through April 15, 2020, can be applied to 2019 Arizona income taxes.

However, Internal Revenue Service deadlines for federal credits

and deductions differ from state deadlines and “must be made by the end of your tax year,” necessitating that qualifying federal contributions must be made by Dec. 31.

Matlick said the year-end deadline is also important to nonprofits as they plan budgets for the coming year.

“Lots of organizations are trying to make sure they meet their year-end fundraising goals so they can keep providing the same services next year. Every donation that comes in by the end of the year helps to ensure that those who need help will receive it,” he said.

Contact freelance writer Loni Nannini at ninch2@comcast.net

Casino-themed event on New Year’s Eve a fundraiser to benefit Humane Society

By Loni Nannini

SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Rachelle Bronson is wagering a casino-themed fundraiser will provide benefits to homeless pets in Tucson.

She is the organizer of Bark It Up and Deal, a New Year’s Eve fundraiser to benefit the Humane Society of Southern Arizona. The casino event, open to those 21 and older, will begin at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 31, at La Quinta Inns & Suites, 102 N. Alvernon Way.

“I knew they had been trying to get money together to get into their new building, and then they had all of the expenses of moving last year, so I thought it would be a wonderful idea to help them raise money and kick off the new year right at the same time,” said Bronson, who describes herself as an “avid” animal lover.

A supporter of the HSSA, Pima Animal Control Center, Tucson Wildlife Center and many local rescue organizations, Bronson is also the owner of Sticky’s Smoke Shop. She uses the three locations as drop-off points for donations of pet food, blankets, towels, toys and other in-kind donations for local animal shelters and rescues.

“My mother always told me I should run a zoo, and that didn’t happen, but if you want to drop donations off with us, we will take them to the shelter you specify or to whichever one is most in need,” said Bronson.

Bronson said that while government regulations prohibit sponsorship of children’s events and sporting events by tobacco-related businesses, she is happy to leverage support through her business for animals in need in the community.

“Animals are near and dear to

HOW TO HELP

- **What:** Bark It Up and Deal to Benefit the Humane Society of Southern Arizona
- **When:** 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 31
- **Where:** La Quinta Inns and Suites, 102 N. Alvernon Way.
- **Cost:** \$35 at the door; must be 21 or older to attend.

Festivities include a poker tournament and casino games such as blackjack, craps and roulette with grand prizes including a \$1,500 patio furniture set, a \$500 electric smoker and a fire pit; a 50/50 raffle and a silent auction; and a cash bar and a champagne toast at midnight.

La Quinta Inns & Suites is offering special pricing on hotel rooms for the event. Donations of blankets, pet food, towels and other items for animals in need will also be accepted at the event.

For tickets or more information, visit the Humane Society of Southern Arizona website at hssaz.org/casino or call Sticky’s Smoke Shop at 989-0687.

To make a year-end contribution to the HSSA, visit hssaz.org

my heart. I just hate to think of poor, defenseless animals with no one to support them. If you don’t have the space and the area and the time, you can’t feasibly take home 100 of them and try to get them all rescued. If I could, I would take them all home, but I don’t want to become a hoarder, so this is a way that I can help,” said Bronson.

Inspiration for the event came from Angel Charity for Children’s Annual Big Deal Texas Hold’ Em Tournament and Casino Night, and Bronson hopes that grand



GETTY IMAGES

The casino-themed fundraiser to benefit homeless pets will have a \$1,500 patio furniture set as its grand prize and will include a midnight toast.

prizes of patio-themed gifts, a 50/50 raffle and a silent auction will be a draw for everyone who enjoys games such as poker, roulette, craps and blackjack.

Ultimately, she hopes that Bark It Up and Deal will provide a fun, philanthropic and safe way to welcome the new year while raising at least \$3,000 for the HSSA.

Randy Peterson, HSSA director of development, said that small, third-party fundraisers are vital to the nonprofit as it moves into the new decade.

“We hope to bring in \$500,000 each year through all of our events. Our annual gala brings in \$250,000, so it takes a lot of events to make up the rest, but all

of the efforts add up,” said Peterson.

Peterson said that another important aspect of fundraising is the annual holiday appeal, which collects funds for general operating expenses for the shelter. The 2019 goal is \$340,000 and as of last week, donations totaled \$235,000.

“We are at about 70% of our goal, so we still have a ways to go. About 55% of our gifts from individuals come between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day, so this is a critical time for us,” Peterson said.

Contact freelance writer Loni Nannini at ninch2@comcast.net

Bank of America gave \$765K in local nonprofit grants in 2019

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Bank of America has provided local nonprofits with more than \$765,000 worth of grants in 2019.

The bank has supported a wide variety of local charities this year. The funding has helped supplement resources for individuals and families working toward financial stability and increasing access to workforce development and education programs, the bank said in a news release.

In addition to the grants, Bank of America employees volunteered more than 2,000 hours to local nonprofits across Pima county.

A sampling of the Tucson nonprofits that received support from Bank of America this year include: Habitat for Humanity Tucson; Primavera Foundation; Family Housing Resources; Jobpath Inc.; Old Pueblo Community Services; Literacy Connects; Youth on their Own; Earn to Learn; Our Family Services Inc.; Mobile Meals of Southern Arizona; Community Food Bank Inc.; United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona Inc.; El Rio Health Center Foundation Inc.; Interfaith Community Services; Goodwill Industries of Southern Arizona; Boys and Girls Club of Tucson; Emerge; and the University of Arizona Foundation.

Also this year, Bank of America joined forces with the Tucson Police Department’s Safe Places to offer a place of refuge for the LGBTQ community and anyone else experiencing violence or harassment through 13 of its local retail financial centers.

ARIZONA TAX CREDITS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2019 | PAGE A9

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

AMY HASKELL

Isabel Osuna, with her children, was introduced to Tu Nidito in 2015, then needed Tu Nidito's services in 2018. It was "bittersweet," she said.

Tu Nidito is there for families dealing with major health issues

By Becky Slade

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

TU NIDITO CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

• **What:** Tu Nidito Children and Family Services
 • **Address:** 3922 N. Mountain Ave., Tucson 85719
 • **Phone:** 520-322-9155
 • **Website:** tunidito.org

Isabel Osuna was first introduced to Tu Nidito Children and Family Services in 2015 through her employer, Casino del Sol, a long-time philanthropic partner to the organization.

Isabel recalls, "I immediately felt connected to the families they serve because my Nana had breast cancer, so I know how it feels to love someone going through cancer." It never occurred to Isabel that she would personally need Tu Nidito's services. In February 2018, she herself was diagnosed with cancer.

Tu Nidito provides emotional support programming to children, teens, young adults and their families through one-on-one and group-based services designed for children, young adults and families impacted by the diagnosis of a serious medical condition or the death of a loved one.

According to Tu Nidito's ex-

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 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.

ecutive director, Liz McCusker, many people are unaware of Tu Nidito's services until they really need them. Approximately one in every 13 children in Arizona will experience the death of a parent or sibling before they reach adulthood — and this

number more than doubles by age 25. Annually, Tu Nidito supports more than 700 youth, plus their families.

Isabel says: "It was a bitter-sweet decision for me to reach out to Tu Nidito after I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was

so happy to have such a wonderful program to turn to yet also so sad that I had become ill."

Reflecting on her journey, Isabel attributes Tu Nidito's programs as a vital resource for her family during this difficult time in their lives.

"Being a teenager is hard enough already. Tu Nidito has really given my four children a place to process their emotions. I have gotten so much support and feel like I can really be myself since all those around me really relate to my situation — parents with serious medical conditions who have little ones, like me."

Knowing firsthand how grief can impact a family, Isabel is paying it forward, donating her Arizona Charitable Tax Credit dollars to Tu Nidito. Tax credit dollars help to ensure Tu Nidito's programs are free to children and families impacted by grief. A gift of \$400 provides nearly a full year of support for a child grieving the diagnosis of a parent's serious medical condition.

"Prior to becoming ill, I had been such a strong advocate of Tu Nidito, and being able to use the program only made me a stronger advocate. Tu Nidito is so worthy of our community's support!"

CASA Support Council supports foster kids

By Linda Koral

CASA SUPPORT COUNCIL FOR PIMA COUNTY

• **What:** CASA Support Council for Pima County
 • **Address:** P.O. Box 36017, Tucson, 85740
 • **Phone:** 520-575-5130
 • **Website:** pimacountycasa.org

The CASA Support Council for Pima County (CSCPC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and certified in Arizona as a Qualifying Foster Care Charitable Organization.

Our mission is to support the unmet needs of abused and neglected foster children in Pima County who are supported by a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate). We receive 85% of our donations as a result of the Arizona Tax Credit.

Tax credits for donations to Qualifying Foster Care Charitable Organization are \$500 for filing single or \$1,000 for filing jointly.

Due to the lack of licensed foster homes, many of our CASA children are placed in "kinship" placements with relatives or family friends.

These caretakers receive only \$71 monthly in financial support for each child in their care and receive \$150 a year for clothing from the Department of Child Safety. These amounts are insufficient to provide necessities such as cribs, beds, mattresses, highchairs, car seats, tutoring, job skills training, computers, school supplies, etc.

Two examples of support that we have provided are:

Five CASA children entered the child welfare system in June 2015 due to drug abuse by both parents and physical abuse by the father. The children ranged in age from 5 to 11 years old, three boys and two girls. They were placed with a grandparent in 2013, removed in 2016 because of allegations of physical abuse, and then placed with a relative until May 2019. Fortunately, they were then placed in another kinship placement with a family who wanted to adopt all five children.

The CSCPC supplied backpacks and school supplies. They also funded new, warm clothing for the children as they were moving to a colder climate. Also purchased were sheets, blankets, pillows, mattresses, two bunk beds, and one twin bed. By the council buying these items, it took financial pressure off the family.

The CASA children had very traumatic and difficult lives until they found a new and safe home. The CASA Support Council helped the family and the children realize that there really are people who care and are willing to provide consistent support.

Another CASA child was a delightful, kind, and thoughtful 15 year old. She studied diligently, had a part-time job and often found time to volunteer.

She had been in foster care for a few years, as a result of her parents' domestic violence, drug abuse, physical abuse and neglect. She missed three years of school, sometimes sleeping in parks or motels and often going hungry.

Through her CASA's request, CSCPC provided her with funds for new clothing, school supplies and a refurbished computer. She used the computer for schoolwork, but it also became a therapeutic tool.

She learned to work through her trauma by writing about her experience. Her self-esteem was slowly rebuilt. She finally felt loved, valued and began to trust people. There was hope on the horizon.

Devereux's tax credits fund HOPE for Kids

By Debra Howard

DEVEREUX ADVANCED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

• **What:** Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health Arizona
 • **Address:** 1011 N. Craycroft Road, #306, Tucson, 85711
 • **Phone:** 520-296-5551
 • **Website:** devereuxaz.org

Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health is a local nonprofit behavioral health agency that changes lives — by unlocking and nurturing human potential for individuals living with emotional, behavioral or cognitive differences. Devereux has been providing programs and services for some of the most underserved members of our Arizona communities since 1967.

Devereux is an Arizona qual-

ifying charitable organization, meaning donations of \$800 filing jointly and \$400 for a single, qualify for a dollar-for-dollar state tax credit. One hundred percent of the tax credits received go to Devereux's HOPE for Kids Fund.

Because the majority of Devereux clients are enrolled in Arizona's Health Cost Containment System, families sometimes struggle to make ends meet.

The HOPE for Kids Fund was created to help with emergency needs as well as the little extras to strengthen families and keep them together.

Last fall, one of our families found themselves in a crisis. Sarah, a single mother of three,

lost her job and fell behind on her household bills.

Days away from having her electricity shut off and her car insurance canceled, Sarah faced her children being placed in foster care because she could no longer provide transportation or a safe home environment.

Within hours of hearing the news, Devereux arranged to pay her bills from the HOPE fund. Sarah, overcome with emotion, called Devereux staff, "her guardian angels."

However, Devereux staff were only part of the equation. The true "angels" are the individuals and businesses who repeatedly donate money that supports the fund. Sarah's story had a hap-

py ending because of donations from the Tucson community.

Sarah's story is just one of hundreds with similar needs. Besides paying the occasional utility bills, the HOPE fund has also replaced broken windows, door locks and purchased car seats for newborns.

A \$100 donation gives one child a school uniform and supplies; \$200 provides four children with "dream days," which might include a birthday celebration; \$400 gives two children "Angel Packages" for children in our programs who arrive with no personal belongings such as clothing or hygiene and grooming items; and \$800 provides a "summer experience" for eight children.

Make Way for Books helps kids reach their potential

By Melina Englert

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

MAKE WAY FOR BOOKS

• **What:** Make Way for Books
 • **Address:** 700 N. Stone Ave., Tucson, 85705
 • **Phone:** 520-398-6451
 • **Website:** makewayforbooks.org

Families everywhere dream of giving their children a better future. The dreams begin with education.

However, for many families in our community, the path is unclear.

"We weren't connected with the community and didn't have money for preschool. I found myself getting stressed out. I looked for programs but

I couldn't find anything," Monique shared.

Only one in five children in our community has access to high-quality early education. Fewer than half of children from economically disadvantaged homes start school with the literacy skills they need to succeed. Research shows only one in 10 children reading below grade-level in first grade catch up.

With your support, Make Way for Books works to prevent a learning disparity before it appears by reaching children in the most critical age, birth to five years. We provide innovative programs that meet the diverse needs of more than 30,000 chil-

dren and families annually.

Your support helps us provide proven early literacy programming that brings children and families together to learn. We break down barriers for families by traveling into the community to meet families where they are — at neighborhood schools, the swap meet, mobile home communities.

"My girls were very shy. Week after week, I saw them growing and interacting with other kids," Monique said. "To see your impact — the way you shared stories and the way my girls fell in love with books — inspired me. Reading gave us a bond that we didn't have be-

fore. When money is tight, it doesn't cost anything."

Only 46% of children in our community passed the third-grade reading assessment last year. Generous community support helps us change the story.

Make Way for Books is working to meet hundreds of young children (ages birth to 5) and their parents just like Monique's family through our Story School program.

Donations to Make Way for Books can qualify for a dollar-for-dollar tax return through the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit and give our youngest children the chance to reach their full potential.



SHARE YOUR STORY

The Star is asking organizations in Southern Arizona that are certified as a Qualifying Charitable Organization or as a Qualifying Foster Care Charitable Organization or qualifying school or program to share their story with Star readers. If your organization would like to participate, please email Debbie.Kornmiller@tucson.com for details.