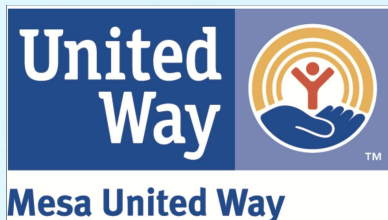




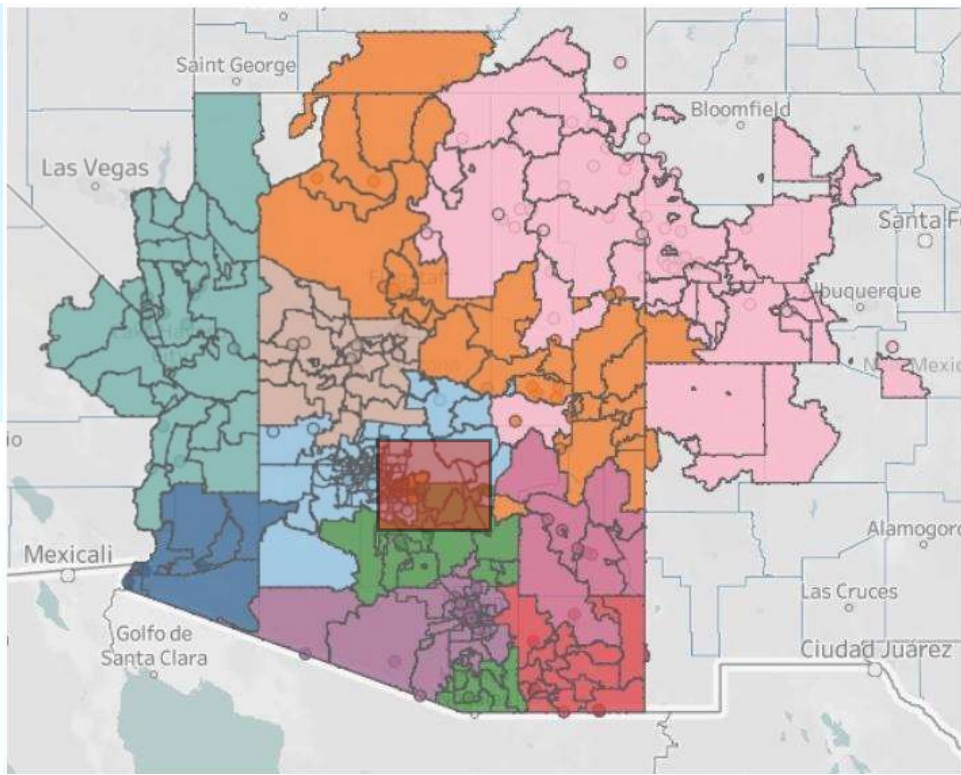
A Little Bit of History (hopefully, painless)

1. Started in 1921 by Mesa community leaders including Mesa Rotary as the Mesa Community Foundation
2. Changed to the Mesa Community Chest in the 1940's
3. Became Mesa United Way in 1964
4. Changed from an allocation group to a direct service provider in 2017
5. Created a new umbrella organization for the established initiatives 2023



Initiatives

1. Helen's Hope Chest 7,000 clients, 41,000 items, 9,500 books, 3,000 Christmas clients
2. Azura Literacy (formerly 12 Books) 19,000 books distributed, 270 volunteer hours
3. VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) 7,500 volunteer hours, 140 volunteers, 5,000 tax returns, \$5.9 mil in returns, avg refund - \$1,600
4. Azura Veterans Coalition (formerly Mesa Veterans Resource Center) 753 veterans served, 482 received benefit assistance, 253 received employment assistance
5. Foster360 100% residents currently working, 104 youth received navigation services, 5 residents enrolled in post-secondary education



AZURA®

**BLUE
SKIES
AHEAD**

Helen's Hope Chest
Foster 360
Azura Literacy
(Formerly 12 Books)
Azura Veteran's Coalition
(Formerly, Mesa Veteran's Resource Center)



Mesa United Way

Campaigns
VITA
AmeriCorps

Fiscal Agent for Azura,
Arizona Brainfood,
Fostering Heroes,
Archangels, Mesa K Ready



F³⁶⁰OSTER



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SKIES
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The problem we are solving

900 individuals age out of the foster care system annually in AZ alone.



More than half become homeless after age 18



of homeless youth are victims of sex trafficking

71% of young women become pregnant by age

21



1 in 4 will experience PTSD, they are almost twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as U.S. war veterans.

65%

of children in foster care experience seven or more school changes from elementary to high school.



will earn a college degree

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM STATS:

Age 17: 37% will be involved in the criminal justice system

Age 18: 24% will be involved in the criminal justice system

Age 19: 20% will be involved in the criminal justice system

Sources: Annie E. Casey Foundation / Jim Casey Youth; National Youth in Transition Database / Children's Bureau / NYTDinfo@acf.hhs.gov



Our mission is to prevent poverty and improve life outcomes for disadvantaged children in Arizona by providing literacy resources and support critical for 4th grade reading proficiency.

Why?

- Reading proficiency by 4th grade = 4x more likely to graduate HS
- $\frac{2}{3}$ of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of 4th grade end up in jail or on welfare.
- AZ Reading Proficiency
 - 19% of foster kids
 - 27% of kids from low-income homes

Summer 2023 Virtual Reading Program

- 90% of students improved at least one area (phonics, reading accuracy, comprehension)
- Avg. Phonics Growth: 2 levels
- Avg. Accuracy Growth: 7%
- Avg. Comprehension Growth: 8%
- 83% improved reading attitude or maintained positive (reading enjoyment, confidence)
- 83% self-reported increased leisure reading to almost every day or every day

“My son before this program, had never had any motivation to pick up a book without being asked. And now, I find him in his room by himself reading alone! Thank You!”

- Virtual Reading Program Parent

