Shelter Care...What is in the best interest of children?

Shelter...to protect from adverse conditions...or, a building serving as temporary refuge. These are just a couple of the ways to define Shelter. But, what does it really mean for a small child to “live” in a shelter?

Decades of research and practice make a strong case for a “family-centered approach” to child welfare. Family-Centered practice reflects the belief that children are best served in the context of families and families are best served in the context of communities. With this focus over the last decade there has also been ongoing analysis on the use of congregate (or shelter) care. This review of care includes the use of group homes and shelters as foster care placements. There are two different points of view:

1. Young children do better, developmentally and emotionally, in a family setting. If they can’t safely be at home, then they should be temporarily placed in another home. And, group care is the most restrictive and expensive form of care.

2. Where else can these kids go now? When the crisis occurs and a child is removed, things have to happen very quickly. There are not enough foster homes for all of these kids, so we need to continue to have shelter care.

continued on next page
CEO’s Perspective

All eyes are on the upcoming election… and for good reason. No matter the outcome or your personal views, this vote will dramatically impact Arizona and Tucson. In our work, we are seeing these changes in the political environment effecting kids and families more quickly than ever. And, it is bringing to light some of the long-term and difficult questions about kids in shelter care.

I continue to be proud and confident in the care we provide in our own shelter. It is a warm, nurturing, and caring environment. But, kids do not belong in shelters – they belong at home, or at least in a home. In this issue, I share some of the history and data that will impact the future of all congregate or shelter care.

While the future is unclear, I do know that all types of shelter care will be looked at with a careful and critical eye. What does all this mean for our crisis shelter? We have the opportunity to examine and re-think our service model, populations served, and our existing resources. If approached differently could we assist families in other ways? Can we do more to strengthen families and reduce the need for foster care? There are countless options.

As these changes unfold we know one thing - there are many families in our community that can benefit from our support to raise healthy children. This is a critical time and we value the input and thoughts of our community, staff, and volunteers.

I would love to hear your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Susie Huhn, MA
Chief Executive Officer

...Cover Story Continued Shelter Care

The quality of care in the Casa de los Niños crisis shelter is top notch. But, is it in the best interest of the child? There have been significant shifts this year both on a state and national level that will continue to support a move away from the use of congregate and shelter care. For example:

- Department of Child Safety has an approved waiver from the federal government to reduce the use of congregate care and when they do they can use those dollars to support more prevention and family support services that help to keep children in their home.

- There is also pending Federal Legislation called Family First Prevention Services which will help to refinance the child welfare system and allow more flexibility in the use of federal dollars to support families. This is positive, however it does not allow for any federal dollars to be spent on congregate care after 21 days.

What does all this mean for our crisis shelter? It provides opportunities to examine and re-think our service model and population served. Can we use our existing resources in a different way to better support families? Can we do more to strengthen families and reduce the need for foster care? Do we provide more short-term respite care to families not involved with Department of Child Safety? Perhaps we shift our focus to offering a high quality developmental pre-school program to at-risk children with wrap around family supports to help lift families out of poverty. There are countless options! As these changes unfold we know one thing - there are many families in our community that can benefit from our support in raising healthy children. Whatever direction we move we will be sure to involve our staff, volunteers, donors in this very critical conversation.
Nurse-Family Partnership – Outstanding Results! But Guess What?

The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) at Casa de los Niños, like all NFP programs around the country, can boast of impressive results. Mothers give birth to full-term, healthy babies. They find success in dealing with substance abuse challenges, they earn employment, they find housing. Babies reach important developmental milestones... the list goes on. It is truly an amazing program with real and good outcomes. So, what do you think happens next? Not what you think. Funding is being cut for this important resource.

NFP is funded by First Things First and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Bureau of Women’s and Children’s Health (BWCH) from the federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV). It is a bit complicated, but in simplest terms, MIECHV dollars were given out to states in both an allocation and a competitive bid process.

Arizona had performed well and got a large allocation. Other states did not think that was fair and got the process changed so that the money was more equalized between all states.

As a result, Arizona’s money was cut, and a difficult decision was made to put 90% of the money into this fiscal year to try to minimize cuts families would feel. The cumulative effect on Casa de los Niños was about 30% cut from the budget this year and a big question mark for next year.

We are doing everything we can to ensure families do not lose services this year, but jobs and services are on the line for next fiscal year. What can you do? Please pay attention to the role our own state representatives have in decisions that impact kids and families! Please read Advocate for Children this Election Year on page 6, and make your own voice heard!

Arizona Tax Credit Limits Have Increased. Take a Look!

With a new legislature on the horizon, already existing cuts to effective programs like Nurse-Family Partnership, and the need for more foster homes, your tax credit donations to Casa de los Niños are more important than ever!

Tax credit donations are a win-win for you and for families in our community. The money you donate reduces your tax liability with a dollar-for-dollar credit on your Arizona tax bill, and it stays right here in Tucson, allowing Casa de los Niños to continue to provide critical programs to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect.

Thanks to Governor Ducey’s support of Senate Bill 1216, the limits on the amount of tax credit you can receive has significantly increased, starting with the 2016 tax year (see the graphic below). This increase allows you to not only increase the amount of your contributions to qualified charities and foster care organizations, but also increase your impact!

Casa de los Niños is both a Qualifying Charitable Organization and a Qualifying Foster Care Organization.

But, with an uncertain political future, how long will Arizona tax payers be able to use this opportunity to direct exactly where their tax dollars are helping? Let your legislators know that you appreciate being able to say exactly where your tax dollars go to help those in need.

Please consult with a tax adviser for advice on your personal tax situation. For more information, please visit casadelosninos.org/taxcredit
We have been deeply concerned about the welfare of children in the Tucson community, and we are impressed with the work of Casa de los Niños and their long-standing commitment to families in this community.

Cole and Jeannie Davis

October 7th Groundbreaking for the Cole & Jeannie Davis Family Center

We made it! Well, actually…YOU made it happen! This community has come together in a big way to help families and children in Tucson! On October 7th, we will be breaking ground on the Cole & Jeannie Davis Family Center at Casa de los Niños. This remarkable Center will bring all of our prevention, intervention, and treatment services together on one campus. We can work quickly and more effectively to help kids and families when they most need it. This community helps to support this work in so many ways…and we need to ensure that we are working efficiently and quickly. The Family Center has been a long-held vision, going all the way back to Sister Kathleen Clark, our Founder. We are enormously grateful to the Davises for their vision and lead gift.

Gary and Lyn Fletcher

THE CAROL FLETCHER HEALING GARDEN

Gary and Lyn Fletcher and their family made this gift in honor of Carol Fletcher, after she passed away suddenly. Carol was Gary’s beloved mother, and Lyn’s “teenage mademoiselle and devoted wife of 50 years…it goes to show you can never tell”. The gift for a Healing Garden outside of the Family Center is the perfect way to honor Carol, who appreciated the natural beauty of a desert garden, and was deeply devoted to family and children. Gary says, “We hope that when families and staff sit in the Healing Garden, they will feel the healing spirit of Carol.”

There are so many people that deserve mention for their incredible support of the Cole & Jeannie Davis Family Center…here are a few of their stories.

“‘We have been deeply concerned about the welfare of children in the Tucson community, and we are impressed with the work of Casa de los Niños and their long-standing commitment to families in this community’.”

Cole and Jeannie Davis

Building to change lives for generations
Center

Drs. Jaswinder & Harinder Ghuman

THE GHUMAN THERAPY ROOM  The Ghuman’s have been involved with Casa de los Niños as doctors and as donors. Both roles have affirmed their belief and confidence that this is a place where children and families get quality care from genuinely caring staff and administration. They moved to Pittsburgh to be close to their children and grandchildren and to help provide the best care, support and love to them. They want to provide a similar opportunity for supporting those children who may not have parents or grandparents to care for them. “On hearing about the plans to build the Family Center, we got excited and wanted to support this development. As Child Psychiatrists, we have always given high priority and value to psychotherapeutic interaction in the treatment of children who have been neglected and/or traumatized,” say the Ghuman’s, “We are happy to make a gift for a Therapy Room devoted to these interactions.”

Sue Maxwell

THE SUSAN M. MAXWELL COMMUNITY EVENTS & EDUCATION ROOM  Sue Maxwell was a volunteer at Casa de los Niños when she was invited to join the Board of Directors. Early on she was part of the inspiration for Casa to embrace growth and to inspire our community to grow with us. She has given in countless ways...beyond financial gifts, she has always been first to help when the kids need new shoes, or to challenge others in the community to stretch to help. Sue says, “I have always trusted the Casa leadership and knew they were outstanding stewards of my funds. I knew that my gifts would make a difference to children and families and would improve our community. Today, I can see how Casa de los Niños is the pride of our community.” And Sue has always had a vision for the future. She truly believes that the time is right for the Cole & Jeannie Davis Family Center – it is time to build! “This is a big undertaking,” Sue continues, “but it’s also time to remember and honor our past. I like the idea of keeping our new facility on the same block as the little bungalow house that Sister Kathleen started with years ago. I’m glad that Casa de los Niños came to me and asked for a big donation and I am thrilled to make it. It’s my way of saying “thanks” for all the dedication and hard work being done for Tucson’s children and families”.

Casa de los Niños Staff

THE STAFF OF CASA DE LOS NIÑOS THERAPY ROOM  The Casa de los Niños Staff is amazing on many levels. But count GENEROUS in those attributes! They came together early this year, challenged themselves and each other, and raised over $20k of their hard earned money to support the Cole & Jeannie Davis Family Center. The Therapy room will have a plaque in their honor and will recognize in perpetuity the vision and commitment of this incredible staff!
Bill Estes III Moves Into Role as Board President

A native Tucsonan, Bill Estes III is part of the Estes family that has been building homes in Tucson since 1947, a company started by his grandfather and continued by his father, Bill Jr. He says he learned early on from his parents, “The community has been very good to us, so we need to give back, and support the community.” Bill has served on the board of Casa de los Niños since 2005, and is also active in his children’s education, 4H and Triangle Y Ranch Camp.

Bill has chosen to serve the Tucson community by helping children and families. “Kids don’t vote,” he says, “so someone needs to advocate for them.” Capitalizing on his experience in the construction industry, much of his 2 year term as board president will focus on the building of our new Cole & Jeannie Davis Family Center. He also plans to increase board membership, with a focus on electing some younger board members, a law enforcement representative, as well as adding to the already existing diversity of the board.

Advocate for Children in this Election Year

Democracy is not a spectator sport! This November we will have an election to not only choose a new President for our country, but in Arizona we will be electing a new state legislature, with all 90 State Senators and Representatives up for election.

As they do every election year, Children’s Action Alliance has sent an issues questionnaire to all Arizona legislative candidates who have qualified for the 2016 primary ballot. This year they narrowed the survey down to five brief questions, giving candidates the opportunity to comment further on their positions on issues affecting conditions for children in our state.

How did your district candidates respond? If they completed the questionnaire, you can read their full answers by going to the Children’s Action Alliance website at azchildren.org. If you are unsure of your district, you can find out easily by entering your physical address on their website.

You will notice that not all candidates took the time to complete these questions about the welfare of children in our state. Consider contacting those candidates who haven’t, and ask them if they plan to complete the questionnaire, and if not, how come? How do they plan to support children?

Most importantly…remember to vote! The last day to register to vote in the November election is October 10th.

Southwest Gas Partners with Casa de los Niños

Casa de los Niños is honored to have been selected as a recipient of Southwest Gas Corporation’s employee giving program called Fuel for Life. Fuel for Life is Southwest Gas’s unique workplace giving program designed to offer their employees the ability to provide direct financial support to select non-profit organizations in each of their service territories. During the campaign employees will learn about the mission and critical work of Casa de los Niños through agency fairs and visits to our campus.

Julie Williams, Southern Arizona Division Vice President for Southwest Gas said, “Our employees care deeply about the communities we live and work in. Through our annual Fuel for Life employee giving program, our team members in Southern Arizona contributed $253,000 to 25 worthy non-profit agencies in 2016 alone. One of the causes that so many of our employees are concerned with is child welfare. When it came to nominating agencies to support in 2017, Casa de los Ninos was a clear favorite because of the work that they are doing to reduce or eliminate child abuse and neglect. We are excited to be a part of the future of this wonderful organization, by helping to fund critical programs and operations.”

Southwest Gas has a long and proud history of being an active community partner, made possible by the overwhelming generosity of their employees.

Thank you for choosing Casa de los Niños, and we look forward to a great partnership!
Volunteer Profile

Orestes (Larry) Trush has a life long history of helping. He served in Vietnam with the U.S. Army, followed by 20 years in Law Enforcement, and then 10 years as an investigator with Child Protective Services (now DCS, Department of Child Safety). During his years with DCS, Larry worked with many families and children that bore the scars of generational abuse and neglect; families that were affected by trauma and poverty, and lacked the skills needed to provide a safe and healthy home environment.

Larry came to Casa de los Niños two years ago after officially retiring, with the desire to continue to impact his community and the lives of others, this time as a volunteer with our infant group, the Piglets. While he was new to our volunteer team, he was not new to Casa de los Niños. In his career as an Investigator, Larry had placed several children at our Shelter. “I always preferred Casa de los Niños because it had more heart than other placements” says Larry, “I always knew the children I placed here were safe and well cared for.”

Through his work as a volunteer, Larry has become an important member of our Shelter team. There are days when you can find him spending his entire shift walking around our Angel Nursery with a little baby in his arms. He has also been known to stay beyond his 3-hour shift to console a new baby that has been admitted.

Now in his retirement, Larry continues to work with children effected by neglect and abuse by offering his kindness and compassion. “The best part of my volunteer work is seeing a child that smiles, one that takes their first steps, and just seeing kids being kids,” says Larry. He has become a part of the heart that is Casa de los Niños, and one of the many reasons children in our Crisis Shelter feel safe and are nurtured.

For more information about becoming a volunteer, contact Maricela Fair, Volunteer Resources Manager at 520.624.5600 x10501, or mfair@casadelosninos.org.

Wish List

We have some unique needs in our shelter now for some specialized developmental items to help the children.

Please contact Dan Gregory, Community Relations Coordinator, if you would like to help provide any of these important items. You can email dang@casadelosninos.org or call 624-5600 x10500.

- **Infant Coordination Mirror with Balance Bar** for use with our 6 to 18 month olds to help encourage the children just learning to stand or walk, to do so by seeing themselves.

- **Starry Night Activity Mat**, a colorful padded mat that provides a soft, easily transportable and stimulating hygienic surface for small ones to explore their world, practice new skills in large muscle development, as well as visual exploration.

- **Wooden Hand Mirrors** Set of 12 mirrors help children learn to make faces which helps with cheek and tongue control, which in turn helps with feeding issues as well as speech development.


- **Stacking Shapes Pegboard** helps children learn colors, shapes, and counting, develop eye-hand coordination and develop order and prediction skills.

- **Bounce ‘n’ Roll Balls** help young children with the motor skills of rolling and throwing.

- **Soft Sensory Shapes** Soft, 3-dimensional shapes promote color and shape recognition through tactile sensory play.

- **Double Mini Sand & Water Table**, a low-profile sensory table, sized just right for little ones, and is great for tactile experiences with sand, water, rice, grains and more.

Stuff the School Bus with New Sneakers for Casa de los Niños

Help us get 1000 new pairs of sneakers and socks to provide to the kids throughout the school year.

We need socks and sneakers from size 4 (child) to 10 (adult).

**EL CON MALL PARKING LOT**
Friday, August 26  |  7am to 6pm
Saturday, August, 27  |  8am to 12 noon

Thanks to Eii (eitraining.com) for supplying the school bus.
The mission of Casa de los Niños is to promote child well-being and family stability in our community.

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