



casa de los niños

# Better Futures

A Publication of Casa de los Niños

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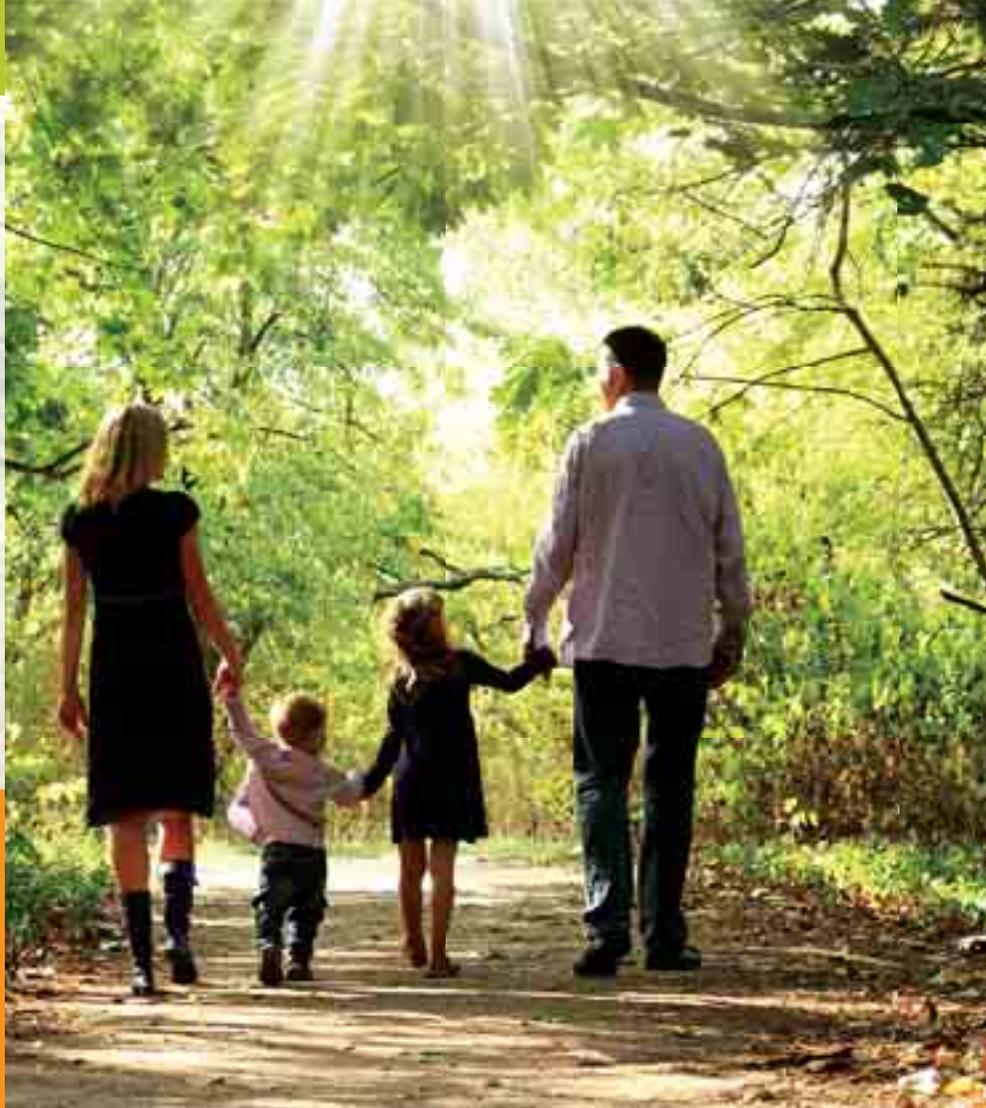
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## How Can We Best Serve Families and Kids?

The work of Casa de los Niños has always focused on child well-being and family stability. But, for many years the goal was to provide a “safety net” for children, without a comprehensive effort to help the whole family, provide parents with skills and access to resources so the child had a safe, healthy place to return home.

The Casa de los Niños crisis shelter team has always provided outstanding crisis care, but, the fact is and has always been this – children frequently do not do well in congregate or shelter care...they belong in a home. And, over the last 15 years, we have worked with a laser focus to create in-home programs that help parents and families right where they live...providing parents with resources and skills so they can keep children safe and healthy. And we have built a strong and responsive foster care network. At the same time, the Arizona Department of Child Safety has demonstrated a renewed commitment to ensure that, whenever possible, kids are placed in a kinship or foster home, rather than shelters or group homes.

And these efforts are truly changing the tide for child and family welfare.

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## CEO's Perspective

Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance abuse issues. There is large and growing evidence that Housing First is an effective solution to homelessness.

We are seeing the same focus on housing first in other social service organizations, like those that assist victims of domestic violence. They are also moving away from congregate housing and placing women and kids in hotels that allow for privacy and a sense of home.

And now, we see the trends in child welfare, of fewer kids being removed from their homes, and those that are removed are being placed in kinship homes or finding permanent homes. There is no question that kids do better in a home – whether it is a kinship home or a foster home. So, when you read our cover story about the decreasing number of kids in crisis shelters in Arizona I hope you will take moment to reflect on the meaning of home. And also, to think about how important it is for kids that we help them before they need to be removed from their home! There are still thousands of kids who need our help in Tucson—we are helping them to stay together with their families—in their homes. A place where they can dream of their future.

Every child deserves a home where they can succeed and thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susie Huhn".

Susie Huhn, MA  
Chief Executive Officer

the  
VOICE  
for change  
advocacy  
children

## ...Cover Story Continued

# How Can We...

There is good news to report! For the past year, we have seen decreasing numbers of children in our crisis shelter. Arizona is catching up with the rest of the country, and, finally after almost 10 years of escalating child removals, the number of children in out-of-home care is going down. And in only the past year that number has significantly decreased from close to 19,000 in March 2016 to 16,800 in March 2017. With this trend, we have been able to focus on improving our foster care home network, and to better support kinship families who take in their grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Our in-home program work is expanding and showing good results. We are working with whole families, keeping children at home, and preventing the trauma they experience when pulled out of their homes – trauma that would last a lifetime.

Our focus is always – what is in the best interest of children? How can we best serve families and kids in need? We have a tremendous opportunity with this positive trend of decreased need for crisis shelter, to take a step back and assess how we can best serve kids and families in need. It is with thanks to this community, for over 40 years of supporting the work of Casa de los Niños, that we may finally be able to help kids without placing them in a shelter.

## Back to School Stress

Going back to school can be a stressful time for both parents and kids. A new school year brings new teachers, new kids, fears about fitting in, and worries about being away from home, which can make kids nervous, and bring on feelings of anxiety and stress. And for teenagers, there is the pressure of homework load, grades, college admissions, jobs, and the overwhelming presence of social media.



**Here are some ways for families to deal with the worries that happen at this time of year.**

**Help your child put together a schedule.** Include things like music lessons or sports practice, and schedule down-time for relaxation.

**Give your child an organized workspace.** A little organization up front saves a lot of time and stress trying to find lost assignments!

**Set house rules for study time.** It's probably best to turn off cell phones and televisions, and the internet should be used for research, not social media!



**Sleep is a key factor when it comes to wellness.** Children (and teens) generally need about 10 hours of sleep each night. Studies have shown that teens who don't sleep enough have lower GPAs, higher rates of car accidents, and are more at risk for physical and mental illness.

**Be a healthy role model!** If you tell your child to eat well, exercise, and get enough sleep, make sure you do that too!

**Talk to your child.** Ask your child what is causing their anxiety – once you understand the source of their stress you can better support your student and help them to succeed.

Anxious feelings are normal and expected during times of stress, transition and change. Feelings of anxiety, or depression that continue on, are pervasive, or that seem out of the ordinary may be a sign of a larger problem. And, if you start to notice a rise in physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomach aches, or unusual tiredness, it might be time to seek professional help.

**Remember, you don't have to tough it out!  
Help is available.**

Check with your child's doctor or school counselor for some resources for your family. Our Behavioral Health Services are available. They can be reached at 520.881.1292, or at our 24 hour crisis line at 520.326.1365.



## Join our Team at Casa de los Niños



Argelia Haynes—Administrative Assistant for Community Outreach & Education—has been with Casa de los Niños for just over a year

We know it takes a special person to work with children and families, and we are committed to an enriching and rewarding environment for our staff. Casa de los Niños provides the resources, tools and support our employees need to serve our clients in the best way possible — so we can help families stay healthy, strong and together.

The comprehensive benefits package at Casa de los Niños includes:

- Medical, dental and vision insurance
- Life insurance
- Short term disability
- 401(k) plan
- Generous PTO, sick time and paid holidays
- Tuition reimbursement

To learn more about our open positions go to [casadelosninos.org](http://casadelosninos.org).



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Thank you to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona for their partnership and support of the Community Education & Outreach program. They continue to demonstrate their commitment to healthy families by ensuring a critical resource like parent education is available in our community.

## Parenting Classes Make a Big Difference

*Stephanie Castillo-Leon - Community Education & Outreach Coordinator*

For those of us raising children, parenting is one of the biggest, challenging, yet most rewarding jobs we will take on. Take yourself out of your parent role for a second, and think about another challenge you were tasked with – running a marathon, interviewing for that big job, attempting a home improvement project. Did you just close your eyes and hope for the best, or did you prepare? Did you train? Did you ask someone for advice or for support? Of course you did!

With most areas in our life, asking for help is a common practice. Yet, it's not the same approach for parenting. Many of us feel that parenting should be intuitive. If we love our kids enough, everything will all fall into place.

Parents often reach out to me feeling overwhelmed and isolated. They say, “I am doing the best I can to raise my daughter alone,” “I am beginning to feel overwhelmed and stressed,” “I don't know what to do anymore.” Every parent runs into challenges along the way. This is why every parent needs an effective parenting approach that works for each child at every stage of development. Parenting education, just like all learning – is a lifelong process.

Taking parenting classes now can help you prevent serious problems later on. Parenting classes can help you:

- Learn about child development for all ages and stages, from babies to teenagers
- Practice new strategies to improve communication with your children
- Identify new, positive discipline techniques
- Discover ways to help you deal with the stress and challenges of parenting
- Interact and engage with other parents



Ultimately, parenting classes make the biggest impact in increasing confidence. Parents who have taken classes have said, “all the classes that Casa de los Niños offers are empowering and helpful.” Parents feel that “it is helpful to be reminded that we are not all perfect and that the person teaching the class is not here to tell me I am doing a bad job but to encourage me to keep up the good work. I appreciate them being so understanding and not judging who I am as a parent.”

The Community Education & Outreach program at Casa de los Niños is here to offer classes that meet your family needs and help you support your children, setting them up for success in the future. To learn more about our classes go to [casadelosninos.org/parenteducation](http://casadelosninos.org/parenteducation).

# Volunteer Spotlight

The outstanding team from Amgen Pharmaceuticals, led by Caryn Kaufman spent an entire day in July making the lives of kids and families brighter! After learning about the work of Casa de los Niños and the needs of the children we serve they teamed up and went shopping for school supplies, backpacks, and hygiene items. They also came back with lunch for a special group of kids. Their generosity made back to school a little more exciting for a lot of kids, and lifted a financial burden so many families face at this time of year. Casa de los Niños appreciates your energy and giving spirit!



If you have a group, and would like to know more about ways that you can help the work of Casa de los Niños please contact Maricela Fair at 520.624.5600 x10501.

the  
**voice**  
for change  
advocacy  
children

# Supporting Families During the Holidays

We may be nearing the end of summer, but it's time for us to start planning for holiday assistance for the children and families we serve.

Opportunities are available for individuals, families, churches, businesses, clubs, neighborhoods – anyone can help! Please consider one of these ways to partner with us and make it a joyous holiday for families in need. If you would like to help, or have any questions, please contact Amada Mendoza at [amendoza@casadelosninos.org](mailto:amendoza@casadelosninos.org) or call 520.624.5600 x10507.

- Organize a collection of items from our Wish List. These types of collections works best with a group you are already connected with.
- Plan and host a holiday party for families in one of our programs or our youth groups at Behavioral Health Services
- Gather developmental toys for infants and babies
- Gather age-appropriate items and stuff stockings for toddlers, 6–8 years, 9–12 years, 12+
- Put together some hygiene bags for teenagers: Hair products, lotion, bath or shower gels, deodorant, razors, and gift cards
- Art supplies, journals: Things that help a teen develop their artistic or creative skills



## Items especially helpful for the holidays include:

- Gift cards: Target, Walmart, movie theaters, grocery stores
- Hygiene products, all ages: shampoo, conditioner, body wash, lotion, deodorant
- Towels and washcloths
- Writing journals
- Arts and crafts supplies
- Ear buds/headphones
- New clothing, especially for school-aged kids and teens, up to size XL
- New pajamas, all sizes up to XL
- New jackets or sweatshirt hoodies, up to size XL: light to medium weight
- New shoes, all sizes to adult 12: especially for teens—needed year round
- New car seats and booster seats
- Plates, bowls, silverware, cups, for infants & children
- High chairs
- Cribs, bassinets, & sheets for both
- Toys & games for children 5–12 years old
- Games for teens
- Developmental books and toys
- Bikes & tricycles
- Bike helmets, all sizes
- School supplies



casa de los niños

## Thrift Store: Shop, Volunteer & Donate



Tucson's Best Thrift Department Store™ stocks new items all day, everyday. Your donations are tax-deductible. Licensed and bonded drivers are available to pick-up donations.

1302 E. Prince Road  
(SE corner at Mountain Ave.)  
520.325.2573  
Mon-Sat 10am-6pm | Sunday, 10am-5pm

### Did you make a gift to Casa de los Niños last year using the Qualifying Foster Care Tax Credit? **If you did, THANK YOU!**



Your generosity is helping to make sure every child has a home! More and more children are returning home to safe and more stable families because of the resources made available through these tax credit gifts.

Remember, you can only utilize one kind of tax credit per organization—and Casa de los Niños qualifies as a Foster Care Organization for your \$500/individual or \$1,000/couple gift in calendar year 2017.

## Cole & Jeannie Davis Family Center Update

If you have driven past the northwest corner of Speedway and 5th Avenue, you have seen The Cole and Jeannie Davis Family Center becoming a reality!

The doors will open early in 2018 bringing programs and resources together to better serve kids and families. So many generous donors joined Cole and Jeannie Davis to bring this resource to Tucson.



Stay tuned for details about the opening and community events.



**Thank you Tucson community!**

# A Unique Volunteer Opportunity



Would you like to connect directly to families and help them on an ongoing basis? Volunteers are needed to help coordinate monthly Group Connections where the families come together to learn new skills, have fun activities for their kids, and make important connections with other families. Volunteers will plan and organize activities like game nights, movie nights, or maybe a picnic at a park. This is an opportunity to have fun and be creative!

The Parents as Teachers program helps parents become their child's first, best teacher. Families enter the program before their child is 3 years old, and a Parent Educator works with a family until the child is 5 and ready to start school. In addition to providing important health screenings for the child (hearing, vision, developmental), the parents learn about child development, parenting skills, and ways to build a strong relationship.

If you are interested in volunteering to help make a difference for these young families, please contact Maricela Fair at [mfair@casadelosninos.org](mailto:mfair@casadelosninos.org) or 520.624.5600 x10500.

## Focus on Families: A Community Conversation

### KIDS, TEENS, FAMILIES & MENTAL HEALTH

#### **PART 1** When is it time to ask for help?

- Anxiety, depression, anger – what is normal?
- What does it look like in the classroom?
- What are the signs that say it's time to seek professional help?

Depression, anxiety, anger – all feelings that are common for children and teens to experience. When these feelings go on for weeks and months; a child starts to harm him or herself; when the feelings start to interfere with daily activities; when it starts to affect your other children, it is probably time to seek professional help.

Join in a discussion with our panel of experts:

**Theresa Lindberg, MSA, LPC** Clinical Director, Casa de los Niños Behavioral Health Services

**Noshene Ranjbar, MD** University of Arizona Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Division

**Patricia Harrison-Monroe, PhD** University of Arizona College of Medicine, Clinical Associate Professor, Psychiatry

**Lisa Millerd** Amphitheater High School, Teacher and Mentor Program Coordinator



Wednesday, September 27, 2017 | 5:30-7pm  
Casa de los Niños | 1101 N. 4th Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85705

#### **PART 2** You don't have to tough it out!

- What community resources are available?
- How to ask for help.
- What are the best practices in treatment today?

It's common for children and teens to experience anxiety, depression, or even isolation. But when it's prolonged or they start to exhibit high risk behaviors, it's probably time to seek out professional help. Early intervention can prevent substance abuse, self-harm or other destructive behaviors later in life.

Join in a discussion with our panel of experts:

**Jacey Coy, PsyD** Director, Casa de los Niños Behavioral Health Services

**Sutapa Dube, MD** Psychiatrist, Casa de los Niños Behavioral Health Services

**Francisco Garcia, MD** Assistant County Administrator for Health Services

**Danna Whiting, MS** Behavioral Health Administrator, Pima County Health Dept.

**John Anglin, MADM, LSAT, CRSS** University of Arizona, Family & Community Medicine

Wednesday, October 11, 2017 | 5:30-7pm  
Casa de los Niños | 1101 N. 4th Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85705

### Register by September 20<sup>th</sup>

Contact Alyssa Munguia at 520.624.5600 x10400 or [amunguia@casadelosninos.org](mailto:amunguia@casadelosninos.org)



Casa de los Niños  
1101 N. 4th Avenue  
Tucson, AZ 85705

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(1973 - 2003)*

The mission of Casa de los Niños is to promote child well-being and family stability in our community.

### ACCREDITED BY:



The Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services



Proud Member of the Child Welfare League of America

### LICENSURE:

Arizona Department of Child Safety as a Child Welfare Agency with Satellite Facility

Arizona Department of Child Safety as a Child Placing Agency

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The Development & Community Relations Department:

**LISA WEBSTER, Director**

**DAN GREGORY, Community Relations Coordinator**

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