



2010-2020 ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors





“Some were struggling financially, some needed help with medical, legal or other resources, and they all needed other grandparents to share their stories; to cry, to vent and—more importantly—to laugh and feel good about their grandchildren.”

– AZGA Founding Member Laura Jasso

AZGA — AT A GLANCE

Members share their stories to impact public policy

Organize kinship caregivers around the state

Provide resource referrals; AZGA knows the providers, knows the resources, and also always willing to listen and welcome new members

Meet with lawmakers, Governor, Congress, local electeds

Group collectively decide their legislative priorities

Annual Summit for networking, education, and advocacy

“Day at the Capitol” for education & advocacy

“Cookies from Grandma” as a reminder for lawmakers

Testify in committee; share stories; press conferences

Host workshops on computer skills, grassroots organizing, advocacy, fundraising, leadership



AZGA — FOUNDED IN 2010

Started in 2010 by 5 grandmas in Tucson

Grandmas met at support group at KARE Center, began going to breakfast together to continue their conversations about the problems they were facing.

Benefits were cut due to recession; grandmas everywhere needed help

Decided to make a change, together! They started the AZGA!



AZGA — 2010

KARE Center connected the grandmas with Children's Action Alliance CEO/President Dana Naimark, CAA Southern Director Penelope Jacks and Kelly Griffith with SW Center for Economic Integrity

Founding Members attended CAA's "Basic Advocacy I" training at the KARE Center

SW Center for Economic Integrity provides administrative support, advocacy training, strategic planning, and advice for Tucson group.

Children's Action Alliance provided support and training to the group in Tucson, and had a vision to help take the group statewide.



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

AZGA 2011

- The Tucson grandmas began community outreach and education by having tables at events, meeting and developing relationships with local politicians at city and legislative levels
- Recruited new members in Phoenix to start chapter



AZGA 2011

- Began advocacy in January by attending a legislative breakfast sponsored by CAA; started talking to legislators about grandparents raising grandchildren
- February: First legislative meeting with Representative Peggy Judd at the Capitol; met with her again in Tucson.
- Members attended Grandparents Advocacy Training II & III, sponsored by CAA & SW Center for Economic Integrity
- Organized a group class for learning how to use computers
- KUAT Tucson presents segment on AZGA
- AZGA invited to speak at CAA annual luncheon



AZGA 2011

- In August 2011, attended the Arizona Alliance for Retired Americans' "Grandfamily Taskforce" and met Senator Leah Landrum Taylor, other grandfamilies, and kinship advocates statewide; discussed policies and advocacy
- In September 2011, contributed to and signed onto a letter from the Grandfamily Taskforce listing out issues facing grandfamilies throughout the state. Delivered letter with partner organizations to Governor Brewer's office



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

AZGA 2012

With the support of Children's Action Alliance and SW Center for Economic Integrity, AZGA planned and hosted first annual "Outreach and Advocacy Summit" in Casa Grande January 29, 2012 with 175 participants statewide, including representatives from tribal communities

Summit included legislative panel, policy priorities, informative speakers and networking amongst grandparents

Legislative guests: Senator Leah Landrum Taylor (keynote), Representative Frank Pratt, Senator Linda Lopes (panelists)

Summit became an annual event and has been held every year since 2012.



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

AZGA 2012

AZGA continues outreach and education to grandfamilies

AZGA begins voter engagement / voter registration work

AZGA becomes go-to organization for media stories on grandfamilies and kinship care

Met with Congressman Grijalva

Provided guidance to Primavera's Kinship Family Housing Project

Met with Pima County Probate Court to explore outreach for grandparents



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

AZGA — 2013

In 2013 Children's Action Alliance hired a part-time professional consultant to support the AZGA and serve as a coordinator for the newly formed Phoenix group, the group statewide & at legislature

Grandmas were organizing and recruiting new members in Tucson, Casa Grande, and Phoenix.



AZGA — 2013

AZGA worked with Senator Leah Landrum Taylor, who was already a champion for kinship care but needed help (Sen. Landrum Taylor first brought kinship stipend to the Capitol in 2007 with kinship stipend bill [SB1110](#) which did not receive a hearing)

Sen. Landrum Taylor re-introduced the Kinship Stipend \$75/Month for grandparents and great-grandparents (\$1M appropriation) in 2013 ([SB1090](#)), but the bill failed to pass the House even though it passed almost unanimous out of the Senate



AZGA — 2014

AZGA helped Senator Landrum Taylor to successfully pass the grandparent stipend in 2014 ([SB1346](#) had an income limit of 200% FPL added to it on the floor of the House, the bill did not make it to a third read but the stipend was included in the creation of the Dept of Child Safety [SB1002](#)). The stipend was \$75/month and only applied to children placed with grandparents and great-grandparents.

Landrum Taylor creates “Grandfamilies Place” – a new affordable housing community exclusively for grandfamilies located in South Phoenix

In 2014, Senator Landrum Taylor introduced the AZGA to Senator Kate Brophy to be the new champion for the group (Sen Landrum Taylor was not running for re-election.)



AZGA — 2014

Southern AZGA organized a large resource fair for Grandparent and Kinship Caregivers at El Rio Community Center in Tucson

Voter outreach and education

Computer training and computers for kinship caregivers

Fundraising training by Primavera

AZGA website is born



AZGA - 2015

Summit moves to its current home in Phoenix at the Kroc Center, moved from January to August

Outreach to cities to declare September “Kinship Month”

- AZGA sent letters out to all cities and towns and received 33 proclamations.
- AZGA scheduled press events in Surprise, Goodyear, and Tucson.
- Goal was to create more awareness about kinship amongst local leaders.

In the Fall of 2015, AZGA grandmas met with with lawmakers to talk about TANF and kinship care; searching for bill sponsor to lift the “Kid-Cap” for kinship families



county of Arizona who step forward out of love and loyalty to care for relatives when the child's biological parents are no longer able to do so; and

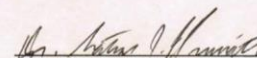
WHEREAS, the public becomes increasingly aware of the challenges faced by children, grandparents and other relatives in kinship care to work in partnership with the education, legal, social services, mental health, justice and other systems to access services that can enable kinship youth to flourish in all facets of their life; and

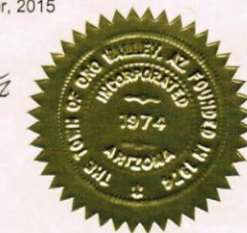
WHEREAS, nationally Grandfamilies/Kinship Caregivers save taxpayers more than 6.5 billion dollars a year; and

WHEREAS, one in eleven children will live within a kinship family sometime during their childhood, kinship care provides the best opportunity to retain the child's cultural heritage and community ties.

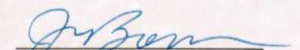
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dr. Satish I. Hiremath, Mayor of the Town of Oro Valley, Arizona, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2015, to be **Grandfamily/Kinship Care Month** in the Town of Oro Valley, Arizona.

Dated this 2nd day of September, 2015


Dr. Satish I. Hiremath, Mayor



ATTEST:


Julie K. Bower, Town Clerk



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

AZGA - 2015

AZGA Hosts first “Grandfamily Day at the Capitol” to educate and advocate for kinship. The Day at the Capitol became an annual event. Kinship caregivers began sharing their stories with lawmakers and raise awareness to the issues facing kinship caregivers statewide.

AZGA participates in national Neighborworks Conference on grassroots organizing, fundraising and advocacy

AZGA works with AZ AARP to present elder fraud workshop



AZGA - 2016

Organized AZ Grandparents to contact White House to declare September “Kinship Care Month” nationwide

First mention of kinship care in the Governor’s State of the State!

- Successfully passed their first bill to remove the TANF “Kid-Cap” for kinship families [HB2452](#)

Success a result of

- Meetings with lawmakers
- Meetings with Governor’s office
- Public education campaign

Rep. Weninger was sponsor (Republican)

- Was **NOT** the first Representative we met
 - Grandmas persistently knocked on many doors before one opened



AZGA - 2016

Southern Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors met with Congressman Raul Grijalva and Congresswoman Martha McSally to discuss grandparent raising grandchildren's issues and declaring September as Kinship Month

Sponsored an advocacy workshop on the Arizona State Budget



AZGA - 2017

Started the “Cookies from Grandma” legislative advocacy campaign

Attended the GrandFamily Rally in Washington DC, networking with national groups and other state advocacy organizations

Legislative advocacy: expand Grandparent Stipend and TANF to all DCS kinship and fictive kinship placements; goal achieved as part of budget [SB1522](#), but with an income cap



AZGA - 2017

Met with Governor's office regularly to discuss non-legislative needs for kinship care, including moving kinship families to the top of the childcare waiting list, adding kinship training to the DCS CORE training, creating a Governor Public Service Announcement for kinship families, and creating an "Office of the Grandparent Advocate"

Hosted a "Telling Your Story" workshop in Tucson

Attended GrAND Voices Network Conference in Washington DC



AZGA - 2018

Continued working with Governor's office on PSA, Advocacy for DES & DCS to help more kinship families access TANF

Strengthened kinship care for kids – requiring DCS to prioritize kinship over a licensed foster home. DCS required to make best effort to find family first. [SB1473](#)

Added fictive kin to the definition of kinship; created requirement for annual kinship report. [SB1518](#)



AZGA - 2018

New website launched with
statewide focus

AZGA developed email list
under MailChimp

Educational workshops held
throughout the year

Summit participation continued
to increase



AZGA - 2019

[SB1306](#) was introduced by Senator Kate Brophy McGee to remove bureaucratic barriers to DCS kinship families receiving TANF; bill passed Senate and House Committees but did not make it into the budget or to the Governor's desk.

[SB1391](#) was introduced by Senator Lela Alston to increase the kinship stipend. It did not make it past Senate Appropriations.

WINS: Removed the application and income requirement from the kinship stipend; kinship stipend is now automatic for all kinship families! This was done in the budget [HB2747](#)



AZGA 2020

Celebrating 10 years!

Steering Committee voted to change name to “Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors and Kinship Caregivers”

3 Legislative Priorities moving unanimously

- Increase kinship stipend [SB1315](#)
- Remove barriers to DCS kinship accessing TANF [SB1323](#)
- Restore the TANF “child only” provision for non-DCS families [SB1569](#)

Kinship is highly regarded at Capitol

Increasing stipend was included in Governor’s budget and State of the State



AZGA DAY AT CAPITOL 2020

Day at Capitol had largest attendance yet – 75 kinship families!

Day at Capitol included press conference, meeting with Governor's office, meeting with Speaker's office, meetings with individual lawmakers, and advocacy training.



Arizona Grandparent Ambassadors

AZGA LOOKING AHEAD

Continue legislative advocacy

Continue annual Summit, providing valuable information and resources to kinship families

Membership outreach statewide

Networking, growing coalition, raise awareness

Develop Leadership Academy to train next generation of AZGA leaders and empower kinship caregivers to create change



HOW TO REACH US:



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