

Arizona Blind & Deaf Children's Foundation, Inc.

investing in the future of Arizona's blind and deaf children

www.azblinddeafchildren.org

Winter, 2008-2009

Lariats & Lace Goes "Down Under" for an Upbeat End to the Year!

Amidst eucalyptus leaves, images of the Sydney Opera House, and festive nouveaux Aboriginal boomerangs, the sixth annual Lariats & Lace gala came home to Skyline Country Club on November 15.

Sundt Construction was named as the 2008 White Hat award winner. "Sundt Construction has been an incredible supporter of the Foundation," Board Chairman Joe Hayden noted, adding, "Over the past four years, they've been great corporate sponsors, participated in our events, and shepherded grant requests to the Sundt Foundation, while bringing us two strong Board members."

In one of the evening's biggest surprises, Board members Dave Allan and Stephanie Spain of Sundt Construction returned the honor by presenting a \$4,000 check to the Foundation—a result of a grant from Sundt Foundation.

Top Teacher awards went to Barbara Awerkamp and Michelle Maher of Arizona School for the Deaf and Theresa Court and Ed Waller of Arizona School for the Blind. The Golden Stirrup award, sponsored by Tucson Sunrise Rotary (see related story, page 3), was awarded to Ken Ball of Arizona School for the Blind for his dedication to "giving a leg up" to the hundreds of low-vision and blind youth he's taught over a 20+ year career.

Entertainment features of the evening ranged from the strains of Australian blues rocker Michael Charles and his band before and after the formal program to inspiring performances by musicians Jaron Dalton and Clara Bee-Deitz of Arizona School for the Blind and young dancers under the direction of Lindsey Quigley of Arizona School for the Deaf. Lucky 7, a youth Jazz combo comprised of musicians from Catalina Foothills High School, welcomed nearly 200 guests.



Foundation Board members Dave Allan and Stephanie Spain of Sundt Construction (center) accept the White Hat Award from Board Chairman Joe Hayden (far left) and Executive Director Rita Weatherholt (far right).

Key sponsors who helped the gala raise more than \$82,000 included Platinum sponsor Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, Gold Sponsors Bloody Mary's Restaurant and Blank Rome, LLC, and Silver sponsors Desert Diamond Casino, Everson Consulting, and Northern Trust.

"We are so grateful to everyone who supported this event," said event Chairwoman, Nancy Galdi. "In a challenging year, the fact we were able to raise this much in support of the Foundation speaks well of the mission, and of all who support it."

"Record" Sales for Lariats & Lace Continue

...Well, sort of.

Aussie blues-rocker Michael Charles and His Band provided more than entertainment and a copy of their CD as table gifts at Lariats & Lace. In essence, they're giving a gift that keeps on giving, as copies of their re-release, "Home Through the Streets," are available for sale with proceeds benefiting the Foundation.

Why would an Australian musician be so generous with a southern Arizona foundation serving blind and deaf children? Turns out that

Michael's assistant, Jane, has a daughter who is blind in one eye and has low vision in the other due to retinopathy. Always one to support his colleagues, Michael jumped on board to support our Foundation too! Thanks Michael, or as they say in Australia, bonza, mate!

To purchase a copy of "Home Through the Streets," visit the Foundation website at www.azblinddeafchildren.org, click on Lariats & Lace, then click on Michael Charles, or simply log on to <http://michaelcharles.us/discography/album5.htm>.

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Arizona Blind & Deaf Children's Foundation, Inc.



Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation invests in the future of Arizona's blind and deaf children by ensuring access to experiential learning in key areas that encompass, and expand upon traditional education, including:

-Art for Life - Comprehensive arts programs aimed at cultural enrichment, while providing experience in necessary life and communication skills

-Fit for Life - Sports and recreation programs to help blind and deaf youth reach their physical potential, and ensuring healthy, active lives

-Literacy for Life - Programs which provide access to adaptive communication tools, ways of accessing information, and which provide support for adult and/or peer mentorship in literacy, thereby reinforcing communication skills

-Success for Life - Independent living skills, technology & career technology programs for teens making the transition to adulthood

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What an exciting year 2008 was!

Amidst change and challenge, Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation is poised for its next phase of growth. Here's a quick run-down of our accomplishments during the second half of 2008:

In June, we welcomed Rita Weatherholt as our new Executive Director. Rita brings more than 15 years of non-profit management experience to the job, along with a prior career track in marketing and media. Thanks go out to the Executive Committee for conducting an effective search, and to Rita for hitting the ground running. In addition to garnering new funding for the Foundation in her first few months, Rita has helped the Board update our strategic goals.

Speaking of strategic goals, the Foundation Board held its third annual Board Retreat in September. Outcomes of that effort include activation of three committees: Planning and Programs; Board Development and Fund Development. All three committees have been working on their goals, with an eye to growing the Foundation and our ability to serve blind and deaf children in Arizona.

For example, the Board Development committee

From the Chair's Chair

Foundation Poised for Next Phase

has launched an active campaign to recruit eight new Board members who have the ability to contribute the 3 W's of Board service: work, wisdom, and wealth. The Fund Development committee is working on ways to make our events more profitable, so that more of the money we raise goes to services. Finally, the Planning and Program committee has identified ways to promote the Foundation to a broader audience, and is also re-tooling our grant-making process to ensure we are the best possible stewards of our donors' investments in our mission. We look forward to publishing that process, and our first new grant round, in early 2009.

The challenging economic situation makes the need for the Foundation to deliver its mission all the more critical, as other service organizations, Government agencies and families are facing exceptional budget pressures. I believe we're truly poised for growth, and that, with the help of supporters old and new, we'll continue to serve Arizona's blind and deaf children.

For additional information about the Foundation, or to make a donation, log on to www.arizonablinddeafchildren.org, e-mail info@arizonablinddeafchildren.org, or call the Foundation office at 520.577.3700.



Executive Notes

It has been such a privilege getting to know the Foundation and all of the incredible people involved in supporting our mission!

Since coming on board in June, I've had a chance to get to know our Board members in Phoenix and Tucson. Having worked with a number of Boards—both as staff and as a Board member—I can tell you that the passion and dedication of this Foundation's Board is extraordinary!

In addition, I've had the chance to meet many educators in the blind-and deaf-serving community, as well as a number of non-profits who work with us. And, together, we've already begun work on

new programs. Check out the stories about Art for Life on page 4 to give you a sense of the opportunities we have for growth and service to our young people.

Speaking of opportunity, also read the story on page 3 about the Foundation being named as beneficiary of the Tucson Sunrise Rotary's Los Vaqueros de la Tierra Trail Ride. What a great time that will be—and what a benefit this opportunity is to the Foundation and our young people! As we begin this exciting year, I look forward to continuing the great progress this Foundation has made toward investing in the future of our children.

As Trail Ride Beneficiary

Foundation "Hits the Trail" to Support *Fit for Life* Programs

What does a four-day trail ride in the southern Arizona desert have to do with making sure blind and deaf youth have what it takes to live healthy lives?

This September, Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation was named as the 2009 beneficiary of the Tucson Sunrise Rotary's Los Vaqueros de la Tierra Trail Ride. Now in its 17th year, the Trail Ride is a Tucson institution, with proceeds benefiting a designated charity annually.

"Being named the beneficiary is quite an honor," according to Sunrise Rotary Grant Chairwoman Sandy Wahl. "It's a highly competitive process, and a lot of the decision is based on who we believe will be a strong partner for the Trail Ride." Indeed, the Foundation was one of 16 organizations who applied to be the beneficiary, competing against St. Elizabeth's Health Center and Southern Arizona Children's Advocacy Center as one of three finalists.

Touting itself as "four magnificent days of riding through some of Arizona's most tranquil, awe-inspiring wilderness," the Trail Ride is scheduled for April 23-26, 2009, with a kick-off fundraising dinner, "Boots 'n Spurs Dinner-Dance," slated for Saturday, April 11 at Skyline Country Club. Cost for riders who bring their own horse is \$645 if paid by February 15, but horses are available for an additional \$350. Boots 's Spurs tickets will be available through the Foundation office.

Beneficiaries of past Trail Rides have earned anywhere between \$15,000 to \$30,000. Because of the tie to physical activity, the Foundation will earmark proceeds for competitive grant-making in the Fit for Life cadre of programs. Programs traditionally funded through the Foundation's Fit for Life funds include Camp Abilities, Winter Ski Experience, and Super Saturdays, to name a few.

"Our success really depends on the level of partnership we provide," notes Board Vice Chair Alan Myklebust who, along with Board member Cliff Rowley, was in attendance during the Rotary's finalist presentations. "The more riders, dinner attendees, volunteers, auction items, and so on that we can provide, the more successful the Trail Ride will be, and the more our kids will benefit."

For more information about the Trial Ride, call the Foundation office, or log on to www.trailride.org.



Ride the 17th annual Trail Ride free if you win the 2009 Trail Ride raffle. Contact the Foundation for your raffle tickets.

How You Can Help

If you ride, plan to schedule the Trail Ride as your springtime riding vacation. At \$645 all-inclusive (if paid by February 15), the Trail Ride is a great deal! If you're not a rider, there are hiking-only options as well!

Volunteer! Help will be needed for set-up, during the ride, and especially for tear-down on Sunday, April 26. Mark your calendar, and contact the Foundation to let us know of your intent!

Help fundraise! As a beneficiary/partner in the Trail Ride, the Foundation and its supporters need to help identify and solicit sponsors. If you know a business the Foundation hasn't been able to engage in other activities, this is a great new opportunity!

Solicit auction items! Yes, we do this for Lariats & Lace and Swing for Success....but if you're already asking, just make a double-ask.

Attend the dinner! We've set a goal of having at least ten paying guests from the Foundation attend Boots 'n Spurs. Join in the fun!

Buy a Raffle Ticket! You've heard of having a "seat at the table?" Try a "saddle on the trail!" Enter our Trail Ride Raffle to win your spot on the trail! Tickets are only \$20 each or 3 for \$50...and the horse is included! See page 6 for details or log on to www.azblinddeafchildren.org.

Looking Back...and Looking Forward—2008 in Review

Art for Life Programs Branch Out, Embrace Heritage, and Take on New “Vibe”



ASB student Alex Davis at the recent Tohono Chul Please Touch Again Exhibit supported by the Foundation.

Imagine understanding the significance of the contemporary art movement, or being able to articulate the nuances of the Hopi's choice of colors. Now imagine having that knowledge as a blind youth. Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation used its imagination, and, during the 2006-07 school year, helped launch the Art Shed program at Arizona School for the Blind.

When local artist Dawn Smiddy joined the staff of ASB as the Art Shed's part-time instructor, it was immediately apparent that

Art Shed Helps Blind Students “See” the World

she was a natural teacher, as well as being a first-class artist. In less than two years, Art Shed students have been introduced to a variety of concepts, primarily in the medium of clay. Additionally, they've learned about color, opening a completely new and exciting world, and helping to develop skills in interpersonal communication, positive self-expression, subject research, and cultural awareness.

In spring, 2008, several students' pieces were submitted to a national competition of the American Printing House for the Blind, and three students' works were chosen to be part of a national exhibit from a total of 400 entries.

The Art Shed has been a springboard for other new opportunities, as well. In August, the Foundation secured funding through Ward 1 Councilmember Regina Romero's Youth in Philanthropy program to support the Heritage Program. When fully realized this spring, the Heritage Program will culminate in a spring festival on the ASDB campus,

celebrating the diversity of the school's student body.

Beyond the artistic and cultural, Art Shed is now inspiring its high school students to think about careers as teachers through an informal peer mentoring program. Always looking for the teachable moment, Dawn has begun pairing older students with younger, helping expand horizons for both.

With all the great work that's come out of the Art Shed, it's easy to understand how these young, talented students have truly expanded their horizons through art!

Want to Help?

Due to tight budget constraints this year, the Art Shed still needs funding in order to continue through the school year. As a newly forming program, “Dance Vibe” needs support to develop partnerships. If you'd like to designate a donation to the Art Shed, or any other Art for Life program contact the Foundation today!



Hadil Al Maliky, a student of Lindsey Quigley's dance class at ASD, kicks up her heels to the beat.

“Dance Vibe” a Potential New Art for Life Program

“Amazing!” and “Unbelievable!” were the exclamations of many Lariats & Lace attendees as a dance video, produced by Arizona School for the Deaf rolled credits. What made this student performance amazing was the fact that the dancers—and their instructor—are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

The program's working name, “Dance Vibe,” describes how deaf dancers are able to keep the beat through the vibrations of the music. The Foundation first became aware of the possibilities for this program when long-time supporter Jim Click helped new Foundation Executive Director Rita Weatherholt connect to UofA School of Dance Director, Jory Hancock.

Through Jory, we learned of a talented and determined alumnae of Arizona School for the Deaf, Lindsey Quigley, who recently graduated with her Bachelor's degree in dance, despite being deaf from birth. Lindsey's goal: teach dance.

For now, that goal is being at least partially fulfilled at Arizona School for the Deaf, and, with the right support, the program could expand, involving a collaboration with the University, ASD, and others.

Looking Back...and Looking Forward—2008 in Review

Fit for Life Programs Provide Inspiration, Skills for Healthier Lives

Given that a majority of blind and deaf adults live with health problems caused by inactivity, it's no wonder one of the Foundation's program areas is Fit for Life. Fit for Life programs help blind and deaf youth reach their physical potential, ensuring healthy, active lives. If you believe—as the Foundation does—that fitness activities like these are critical to the well-being and future success of our blind and deaf youth, contact Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation today and donate to the Fit for Life program fund.

Camp Abilities Celebrates Five Years of 'Never Losing Sight of the Vision'



Sheer joy is the picture of Camp Abilities participant Zach Warner as he and fellow campers dance and play music on instruments provided by the Accordion Club of Tucson.

"A loss of sight, but never a loss of vision," the motto of Camp Abilities, is an apt description of the camp's intent and its results.

Camp Abilities celebrated its 5th year in Tucson in June, and according to the program's director, Megan O'Connell, 26 total campers participated in dozens of sports and recreation activities on the Tucson campus of Arizona Schools for the Deaf and Blind.

"The kids learn so much, and the friendships formed at the Camp are life-long, which is so important for each camper. The potential for kids who are blind to lead sedentary lifestyles are high due to lack of physical activity, socialization and added barriers. Camp Abilities provides a pathway to break barriers and provides a safe environment for kids to learn and develop friendships"

Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation helped establish Camp Abilities in 2003, largely through the efforts of founding member, Murry Everson. "There are around ten Camp Abilities in the country," says Everson, who learned about the original Camp Abilities in New York state when his daughter was young. Activities at the week-long camp range from goal ball, to bicycling, to bowling to salsa dancing, to art—a new addition in 2008.

Each year, the Foundation counts Camp Abilities as one of its top priorities for funding. Looking at all the smiling faces of this year's campers, it's easy to understand why.

"Super Saturdays"

Super Fun for Youth and Families

Recipe for fun: take a group of children and their families, add cycling, beep ball, and food, and mix with water games and swimming and what do you get? Super Saturdays, of course!

Foundation Board member Mark Sankey is the prime mover for this great family recreational opportunity open to families of all blind and deaf children in the area. Right now, the program is mostly an ad-hoc, volunteer-run affair, but the Foundation is working to find support for a more consistent program. Thanks to Sundt Foundation, that support is beginning to take hold, with new funding to be released this spring.

In 2009, the Foundation will reach out to partners with an interest in health and fitness to see if we can make "Super Saturdays" super on a regular basis throughout the year.

Gearing Up for a Winter Experience

For the past five years, students from Arizona School for the Blind have been going downhill—skiing, that is!

Thanks to efforts by one of the Foundation's founding members, Dale Lips, between 10 and 15 blind and low-vision youth have experienced a true winter wonderland, with a long-distance ski trip to either Telluride or Winter Park. The trips have also included a variety of winter activities, ranging from ice skating to snow castle building, to fireside chats. More than a recreational event, time is set aside for discussions, social experiences, and life learning.

Winter Experience organizers are hoping to provide a Winter Experience in 2009, and the Foundation is working to raise funds for this special time. Call the Foundation at 520.577-3700 to lend your support!



Thanking Our 2008 Contributors for Their Generosity...

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Looking Ahead to 2009...

Enter to Win a "Seat" at the Los Vaqueros de la Tierra Trail Ride!!!

Winner will receive an all-expense paid on the Trail Ride, including:

- All meals
- All accommodations
- All extra-curricular activities
-and the horse you'll ride in on is included too!

**Just \$20 each or
three for \$50!!!**



Call the Foundation office at 577-3700 or log on to www.azblinddeafchildren.org to purchase your tickets today!!!

Swing for Success '08 a Swinging Success...And We're All "Fore" It!

In April, Arizona Blind and Deaf Children's Foundation hosted the fifth annual Swing for Success golf tournament at the Orange Tree Resort in Scottsdale.

sponsors of the event included Xena Homes, Inc, Insight Direct, and Northern Trust.

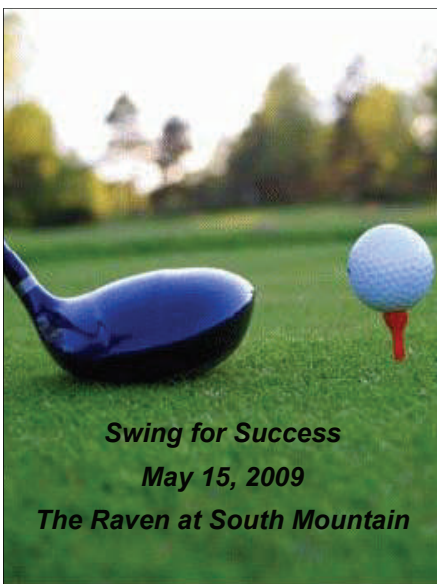
A near sell-out crowd of 130 golfers joined in the fun with contests, prizes, good food, and great companionship. In all, more than \$50,000 was raised to support the Foundation's mission—a new record! Major

Murry Everson, Chair of the 2008 event, was thrilled with the results noting, "Everyone had a great time, and most importantly, together, we're supporting the Foundation's mission and programs!"



One of many happy foursomes at Swing for Success 2008.

Save the Date—Swing for Success 2009 Already Swinging Into Action!



Excitement is building for *Swing for Success* 2009, with lots of new features in store!

The 2009 golf event is slated for May 15, 2009 at The Raven at South Mountain in Phoenix. Co-chaired by Murry Everson, Dave Allan and Stephanie Spain, the event will be "taken up a notch—or several notches," says Spain. "We really want to build on what's been done in the past, keeping the fun aspects our loyal supporters love, and adding some great new twists as we grow the event."

New highlights under discussion include a Million Dollar Hole in One contest, and an

after-party featuring the Outback Trick Golf Show, a full dinner and dancing under the stars to a local Phoenix rock band.

SRP and Xena Homes have already committed as Title and National Presenting sponsors, according to the co-chairs.

Sponsorship and foursome sales are well underway, so if you're a golfer and you haven't reserved your place yet, get into the swing right away! Contact the Foundation office for more information and to make your reservation!

Invest in the future of Arizona's Blind and Deaf Children Today!

YES! I want to invest in the future of Arizona's blind and deaf children!

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

\$25 \$250
 \$50 \$500
 \$100 Other _____

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 VISA/MC/AmEx # _____ Exp _____ Signature _____



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Start the New Year Right

“Resolve” to Support Arizona’s Blind and Deaf Children Today!

The New Year is here, so now’s the time to resolve to support Arizona’s 4,000 blind and deaf children...

If you gave to the Foundation during the Holiday Season, pat yourself on the back! Now more than ever, the Foundation is counting on your generosity to support our mission *to invest in the future of Arizona’s blind and deaf children*. If it’s been awhile since you’ve given, or you’re thinking of donating for the first time, there are plenty of ways to give:

- Log on to www.azblinddeafchildren.org and follow the steps on the “Donate” link.
- Pick up the phone and make your pledge of support on your VISA, MasterCard or American Express card. Our number is 520.577.3700, and we’re open daily from 9:00am until 5:00pm. Or, if you call outside of business hours, leave a message, and we’re happy to call you back at your convenience.
- Simply indicate your preferred level of support on the enclosed donation envelope and mail it in.

Once you’ve made your donation, reward yourself by ordering some of our beautiful note cards highlighting designs by Art Shed students. The image below is a work called “Untitled,” by Art Shed student Jaron Dalton. View this and other designs online at www.azblinddeafchildren.org. To place your order, use any of the methods noted above.

The excitement of a New Year lies in the opportunity to improve, and the Foundation is truly grateful for all the ways our donors, volunteers, and supporters have helped us to improve the lives of Arizona’s blind and deaf children....

Thank you, and Happy New Year!

Arizona Blind & Deaf
Children’s Foundation, Inc.

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