

# NETWORK



Tempe  
Community  
Council

A publication of Tempe Community Council.  
Connecting those in need with those who care.

SPRING 2005

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## Event Spotlight:

*“Tempe Mayor’s Disability Awards”  
Coming soon...*



*Mayor’s Disability Awards Committee Member Rich Nolan introducing the keynote speaker.*

*The Mayor’s Disability Awards will be presented on Thursday, May 12 to recognize outstanding employees and employers who provide opportunities for people with disabilities. read more on page 7...*

## What Does it Take to Make Ends Meet?

How much is “enough” to live on without public assistance or subsidies? And, what does it mean to be poor?

Most often, the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is used as the threshold to determine whether one is thought to be poor. If household income falls below this threshold, the family is considered poor. Conversely, if the household income is above the FPL, the family is not poor. Does not being poor as defined by this standard mean that families can make ends meet and be self-sufficient? Not necessarily. In fact, for most families, an income that simply meets the FPL is not nearly enough to meet even the most basic household needs. The FPL is useful as a statistical yard stick, but not as a determinant of self-sufficiency.

With this in mind, the Arizona Children’s Action Alliance in partnership with Wider Opportunities for Women, published a report (*The Self Sufficiency Standard for Arizona, 2002*) to establish standards for determining an income level in Arizona that allows families to meet basic needs without additional support from subsidies.

Whereas the Federal Poverty Level, developed during the early 1960s, uses outmoded assumptions about household budgets and expenditures (relying primarily on food costs), the Self-Sufficiency Standard takes into account a much greater number of factors, better reflecting household needs based on today’s reality. The Self-Sufficiency Standard includes the costs associated with housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, taxes and miscellaneous expenses. Cost-of-living differences among various geographic regions are also factored into the calculation. Currently, the Federal Poverty Level **Continued on page 2...**

## What Does it Take to Make Ends Meet?

for a three-person family is \$16,090 in annual income. That number remains the same whether this three person family is living in New York City, Sioux Falls or Tempe. We can safely assume that this same \$16,000 will stretch a lot further in Tempe than it will in New York City, and much further still if one is living in Sioux Falls.

### *The Monthly Costs Needed to Make Ends Meet*

The table below from the Children's Action Alliance Report shows the Self-Sufficiency Standard for a family of three for the Phoenix-Mesa area (the most expensive living area in Arizona). It details the estimated total monthly costs for each of the determined basic needs and the percent of each relative to the total. The total monthly income needed of \$3,338 is equivalent to an hourly wage of \$18.97.

<b>Monthly Costs Phoenix-Mesa MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area)</b>	Family of 1 Parent, 1 pre- schooler, 1 school-age	Percent
Housing	\$874	26%
Child Care	\$832	25%
Food	\$396	12%
Transportation	\$257	8%
Health Care	\$260	8%
Other (e.g., clothing)	\$262	8%
Taxes	\$637	13%
Minus Tax Credits	-\$180	-5%
<b>Total Monthly Needed</b>	<b>\$3,338</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total Annual Needed</b>	<b>\$40,055</b>	

While the Self-Sufficiency Standard is not likely to replace the Federal Poverty Guidelines for determining public assistance eligibility, it is useful for a number of purposes. Having a realistic figure of the true cost of living, working and paying taxes in the Tempe area could provide a basis for policy decisions regarding subsidies in areas such as



housing, child care and health care. Additionally, it provides a realistic goal for working families to strive toward to achieve self-sufficiency over time.

### *Comparing Annual Income Benchmarks*

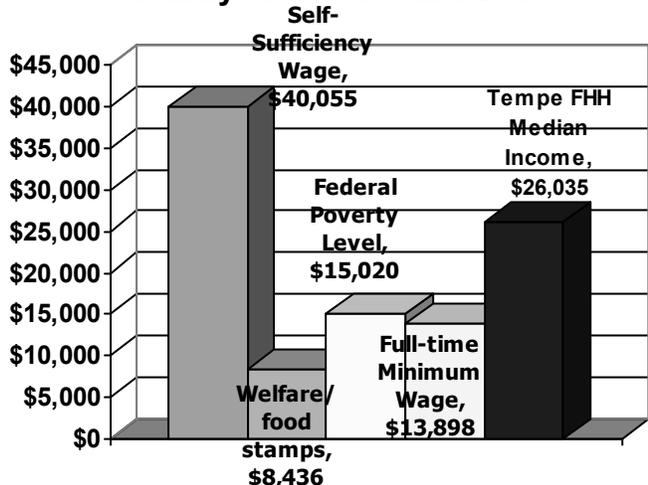
It is revealing to compare the self-sufficiency standard with other measures of income adequacy. Doing so clearly shows how *inadequate* these benchmarks are when compared with the true amount needed to make ends meet.

The chart on the next page draws from the Children's Action Alliance Report. Please note these numbers are from 2002. The maximum annual grant for a 3-person family from welfare and food stamps combined was only \$8,436. Working a full-time minimum wage job would only earn one \$13,898. Both of these numbers are well below the federal poverty level and, of course, significantly below the self-sufficiency standard for a single parent, family of three in the Phoenix-Mesa area. Even the median family household income for this family of three living in Tempe (\$26,035) is well below the self-sufficiency standard.

*For additional information about the Arizona Self Sufficiency Standard, visit the Children's Action Alliance Web Site or Wider Opportunities for Women at: [www.azchildren.org](http://www.azchildren.org) and [www.wowonline.org](http://www.wowonline.org).*

## What Does it Take to Make Ends Meet?

### Annual Income Benchmarks - Family of 3 - Phoenix Area



#### *Too Many Tempe Families are Struggling*

In 2000, there were 21,914 persons in Tempe living below the federal poverty line—the equivalent of 14.3 percent of the population.

Even more distressing, to return to our example of the three-member, single-parent family, nearly 25% of such families in Tempe lived below the FPL in 2000. At that time, The FPL for these families was only \$14,150 in gross annual wages (or a monthly income of \$1,179).

Given that so many households live below the FPL, perhaps it is not surprising to find that the number living below the Self-Sufficiency Standard of \$40,055 is exceptionally high. In fact, two-thirds (66%) of all female-headed households live

on an income that falls well below the amount needed to make ends meet.

#### *Making up the Deficit*

How do families make up the deficit between their incomes and an amount on which they can live? Clearly, there are many families in Tempe facing this challenge.

The extent of the problem in Tempe is the primary reason the bulk of City of Tempe funding for human service agencies (58%) is allocated for Basic Needs. City of Tempe funding for Basic Needs includes such services as food, clothing, shelter, rent and utility assistance and homeless prevention.

Many think that “Welfare” takes care of the poor. However, the number of families receiving that help is relatively small. In 2000, there were 1,091 households in Tempe receiving Public Assistance, only 1.72% of the total. And, as shown previously, the amount received annually, through TANF and food stamps combined (\$8,436), doesn’t come close to bringing families up to the level necessary to meet basic expenses.

For many Tempe families, just getting by financially is a daily struggle. Knowing the extent of this struggle in our community is the first step in being able to make decisions—as individuals, governments and businesses—to alleviate the pressures on many to make ends meet.

### BOTTOM LINE

The Children’s Action Alliance report concludes, “The Self-Sufficiency Standard shows that, for most families, earnings that are above the official poverty level or earnings that are high enough to disqualify them from welfare are nevertheless far below what they need to meet their families’ basic needs.” Clearly, a multi-faceted approach to addressing economic security is needed to remedy this situation. Affordable housing, child care and health care, in conjunction with improved wages and benefits, are needed to help families survive financially. Government, business, the nonprofit sector, as well as individual families, must work together in these efforts to reduce the numbers of people in Tempe who are living close to the edge, unsure of whether they will be able to pay the bills this month.

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**H**igh rent and high value housing is springing up at a rapid pace in Tempe—literally springing upward since we can no longer grow outward. Because Tempe is land-locked, our housing values, thus, the cost of living in general, is rising at an ever-increasing pace.

As this issue's Special Report on *Making Ends Meet* illustrates, just being able to take care of life's everyday needs is requiring significantly more. It's striking to note that the median household income for a single-parent, family of three in Tempe is only \$26,000, while the Children's Action Alliance's Self-Sufficiency Standard for that same family in the Phoenix-Mesa area is just over \$40,000. If the Standard were calculated specifically for Tempe, one would likely find the needed amount to be higher still.

Clearly, families are making sacrifices simply to meet their basic needs. Who is taking the brunt of those sacrifices and where they are being felt most is not always entirely clear. However, we do know that people are increasingly using hospital emergency rooms for their primary care, running up credit card bills that are all but impossible to get out from under, and pay-day loan outlets are popping up like weeds. Large numbers of people in Tempe are living beyond their means, not to purchase unnecessary luxuries, but simply to make ends meet.

As the cost of living continues to rise in Tempe, it is important to consider the future impact to our sense of community if the teachers of our children, our social workers and other service workers are unable to afford living here. We aren't quite there yet, but as Tempe grows, we must move forward with affordable housing options in place; affordable, high quality child care options, and other strategies for decreasing the living challenges facing our residents and increasing the quality of life for all.

Sincerely yours,

Katherine Hanley

### *We are now accepting nominations for the Don Carlos Humanitarian Award and the Hayden Youth and Young Adult Award*

**T**he Don Carlos Humanitarian Award is presented annually to an individual or couple who has given outstanding service to our community over an extended period of time, has benefited the less fortunate in lasting ways, and has made Tempe a better place to live. The nominee must be a current or former resident of Tempe or work in Tempe.

The Hayden Youth & Young Adult Award is presented to a Tempe resident and/or student (ages 12 through 21) who serves as a positive example to his or her peers and to the community at large. The nominee should demonstrate leadership and/or innovation in service to others; a commitment to modeling positive conduct and inspiring others to become involved in community service.

Nomination forms may be submitted online from Tempe Community Council's web site at [www.tempe.gov/tcc](http://www.tempe.gov/tcc) or a form can be mailed or faxed by calling 480-858-2300. Nominations must be received by July 25. The event will be held the first week of November at the Arizona Historical Society Museum, 1300 N. College Ave. Tempe.

## THE HOMELESS IN TEMPE — AN UPDATE

### *5-Year Progress Report on the Homeless Task Force*

The Homeless Task Force Report was accepted by the City Council in October of 2000. Nearly five years later, it seems appropriate to look back and reflect on the accomplishments achieved and the continuing efforts to fully implement the Task Force Recommendations.

Since the Task Force Report was accepted by Council, a Homeless Advisory Working Group, made up of community representatives, City staff and other stakeholders has met continuously to spearhead the implementation of the recommendations and work toward greater coordination of services. Significant progress has been made.

The Task Force Report quickly resulted in the hiring of a Homeless Coordinator for Tempe. Tempe's first Homeless Coordinator Theresa James was hired in the Fall of 2003. She has worked hard to bring together agencies serving the needs of the homeless, Tempe citizens and advocates to improve our response to homeless issues.

One of the most critical implementations was the dedication of a recurring \$100,000 appropriation for homeless services that was established by the Tempe City Council in 2003. This dedicated allocation helped attract many new services for Tempe's homeless population.

The Tumbleweed Tempe Youth Resource Center was established in Downtown Tempe in 2003 and provides case management, meal service and basic needs for homeless teens in the downtown area. The HomeBase Youth Services mobile health van offers basic health care services to these homeless youth. Along with these new services has been the creation and successful implication of the Mental Health Court by the Tempe Magistrate and the establishment of the Community Land Trust of

Tempe, which merged with NewTown in 2004 to provide more low income/transitional housing options in Tempe.

Tempe continues to work with its regional service providers, local governments and especially the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) in its homeless street count efforts, CDBG coordination and planning to systematically deal with these issues of homelessness on a regional scale.

The start of 2005 saw a surge of interest in homeless issues and services in Tempe. On February 23, Tempe City Councilmembers Ben Arredondo and Pam Goronkin held a Homeless Forum to discuss pending issues mentioned within the report – most notably the planning of a shared social services day resource center in Tempe. Members of the business, non-profit, and local government community were all there to share their thoughts and exchange ideas on the best way to continue to help this critical population in need. While there remains more to do, the on-going dialogue among stakeholders and community leaders is critical to ensure these issues stay on the forefront.

**2005 MAG Homeless Street Count**

East Valley City	Homeless	2000 Population
Tempe	193	158,625
Mesa	294	396,375
Chandler	27	176,581
Scottsdale	29	202,705
Gilbert	8	109,697
Guadalupe	13	5,228
Queen Creek	34	4,318
<b>Total (East Valley)</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>1,053,529</b>
<b>Total (Mar. Co.)</b>	<b>1,818</b>	<b>3,072,149</b>

### *Tempe Trivia*

*Did you know that among people who work in Tempe, the following represent the top three most frequently held occupations: 1.) Customer Service Representative, 2.) Retail Salesperson, and 3.) Post-secondary Teacher?*

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

### *2005 Mayor's Disability Awards*

The City of Tempe Commission on Disability Concerns will host its annual Mayor's Disability Awards Ceremony on Thursday, May 12, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. at the Pyle Adult Recreation Center, 655 E. Southern Avenue. The Awards, presented by Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman, will recognize Outstanding Student Employees, Outstanding Employers of Students and Employer of the Year.

This year's award presentation will feature a performance by The Improbable Theater Company (ITC). The Improbable Theatre Company is a group of people with disabilities who present artistic works that entertain, inform, empower and challenge audiences while breaking down barriers of ignorance and prejudice.

The Mayor's Disability Awards have been presented since 1988 to recognize both those who provide opportunities for individuals facing adverse challenges in everyday life and individuals with disabilities who have exemplified incredible examples of courage and perseverance. The employers honored at this ceremony recognize and appreciate the positive opportunities that can be experienced by hiring those with physical and developmental disabilities. The event is free and open to the public.

### *Grad Nite*

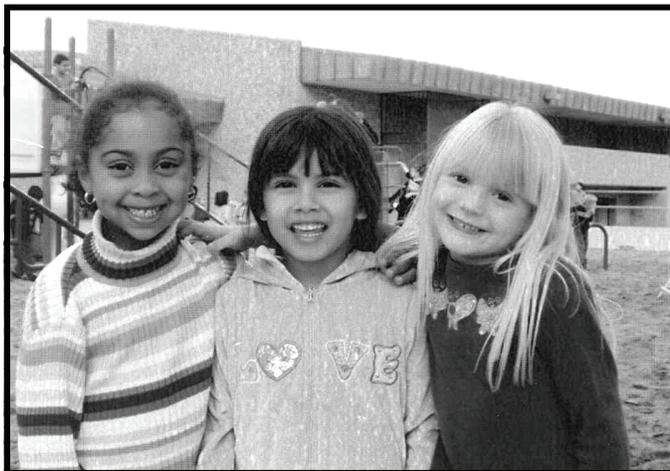
This coming May, more than 2,800 Tempe Union High School District seniors will graduate, and celebration parties in various forms will take place.

To help ensure that Tempe's new graduates are safe on graduation night, Tempe Community Council assists in coordinating fundraising efforts for all-night, supervised and substance-free celebrations, known as "Grad Nite" parties.

"Grad Nite" has been a success each year since 1990, thanks to the strong support of local businesses, community members and the Tempe Police Department. Nationally, the rate of alcohol-related traffic fatalities significantly increases around graduation, and these events offer an important, safe alternative for high school graduates to celebrate this important occasion. Our goal is to enable every young adult from the class of 2005 to participate in the festivities.

To make a tax-deductible donation to *Grad Nite*, please make your check payable to Tempe Community Council. All donations are distributed evenly among the Tempe Union High School District Schools, and donors are recognized by the Mayor during a check presentation at the May 5th Tempe City Council meeting.

## TEMPE IS FAMILY-FRIENDLY



Communities For Kids, an initiative of Tempe/Kyrene Communities in Schools (CIS), recently held its first photo "C.L.I.C.C." (Children Living in Caring Communities) photo contest.

Photos were judged on how well they capture Tempe as a "Family-Friendly" community.

The First-Place winning photo to the left was taken by Rick Walker, a computer technician at Fuller Elementary School in Tempe.

## WE THANK YOU...

Community is the essence of TCC, and we would not exist without the generous community of Tempe in which we operate. Be it a volunteer opportunity, a facility to host an event, or food for a hundred people, our generous partners help make our events and programs possible.

### *2005 Tempe Empty Bowls Event ...*

The fourth annual Tempe Empty Bowls Event (this year, expanded to two days) raised \$11,000 for United Food Bank's Kids Café programs in Tempe.

This event is truly a community-based effort. Tempe Community Council helps organize this event, along with a very dedicated group of community volunteers. Special thanks are due to the following sponsors and supporters:

*The City of Tempe  
Whole Foods Market  
SRP*

*Motorola*

*Marjon Ceramics*

*Tempe Union High School District  
Tempe Elementary School District #3*

### *The Cinderella Affair Gets a Royal Nod from Princess Diaries Author Meg Cabot*

The *Cinderella Affair* gives every high school girl the opportunity to feel like a princess, and Meg Cabot is helping to make those princess dreams come true. While touring to promote *Princess Diaries VI: Princess in Training*, Meg is asking fans of her Princess Diaries Series to bring a gently-used formal gown to the bookstores she is visiting for donation to Tempe's *The Cinderella Affair*.



Meg Cabot was in Phoenix on **Saturday, April 9 at 1:00 p.m.** at *Poisoned Pen Central* and graciously stopped in at The Cinderella Affair Boutique after the book signing.

*The Cinderella Affair* makes attending prom affordable by distributing new and gently used formal wear at an annual boutique where female junior and senior high school students may select a dress and accessories free of charge. The 3rd Annual Cinderella Affair "Boutique" took place on April 8, 2005 for students of the Tempe Union High School District and on April 9 for all Valley-area high school juniors and seniors. The event was held at the Tempe Pyle Adult Recreation Center, 655 E. Southern Ave. We would like to express our gratitude to the following organizations for their generous support of this volunteer effort:

**East Valley Women's League**  
**Arizona Customs Brokers**  
**City of Tempe**  
**Azteca Wedding Plaza**  
**Mr. Formal**  
**Einstein Bros. Bagels at Rural & Ray Roads**  
**Meg Cabot & Harper Collins Children's Books**  
**Pleissant Croissants**  
**Western States Dry Cleaners & Launderers**  
**Association, including the following cleaners:**

**Acme Laundry & Drycleaning Company**  
**Arcadia Cleaners**  
**Bell Drapery Cleaners**  
**Black Tie Cleaners**  
**Carnation 1 Hour Cleaners**  
**El Dorado Cleaners**  
**Janson Cleaners**  
**Legend Cleaners & Laundry**  
**Maroney's Cleaners & Laundry**  
**Prestige Cleaners**

## SPRING 2005 CALENDAR

April	May	June
<p><b>1-3 Tempe Festival of the Arts</b></p> <p><b>6 TCC Board Meeting</b></p> <p><b>8-9 The Cinderella Affair Prom Dress "Boutique"</b></p> <p><b>26 TCC Executive Committee Meeting</b></p> <p><b>26 CIS Board Meeting</b></p> <p><b>27 East Valley Resource Committee (EVRC) Meeting</b></p>	<p><b>6-7 TCC Board Retreat</b></p> <p><b>12 Mayor's Disability Awards</b></p> <p><b>13 CIS Breakfast</b></p> <p><b>24 TCC Executive Committee Meeting</b></p> <p><b>24 CIS Board Meeting</b></p> <p><b>25 TEAM Appreciation Meeting</b></p> <p><b>30 Memorial Day (TCC Closed)</b></p>	<p><b>1 TCC Board Meeting</b></p> <p><b>28 TCC Executive Committee Meeting</b></p> <p><b>28 CIS Board Meeting</b></p>

*For confirmation and further details of meetings and events listed above, please call (480) 858-2300*



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