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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITIES AND TOWNS SHINE SPOTLIGHT ON YOUTH
Youngsters Learning to Contribute to Communities

PHOENIX (April 5, 2012) – When Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton hired 17-year-old Caleb Laieski to serve as his part-time “Youth and Diversity Liaison” in late March, it drew a statewide spotlight to programs for young people throughout Arizona’s 91 cities and towns.

Laieski, part of Stanton’s innovative and cost-saving advocates-on-loan program, will work to raise awareness about bullying and diversity. Around Arizona, other cities and towns are also making headlines and garnering praise for efforts to engage and serve young people.

“Successful and innovate youth programs are not just a luxury for Arizona’s cities and towns, they are a necessity,” said Clarkdale Mayor Doug Von Gausig, president of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns. “Local governments play an important role in education with after-school programs, and education is the key to economic success and job creation.”

Highlights of city and town youth programs include:

- For the fifth straight year, the city of Scottsdale was named one of the “100 Best Communities for Young People” by America’s Promise Alliance. Chosen from more than 300 communities nationwide, Scottsdale was lauded for its after-school programs, prevention services and education efforts.

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- The city of Maricopa is seeing success with its Maricopa Youth Council, which is designed to encourage teens to participate in government; its Super Teens Program, an after-school recreation community service program; and its popular Friday night open-gym basketball program for youth. More than 200 kids participate in these programs.
- This week, the city of Chandler hosted its fourth annual Teen Town Hall, a forum that brought together nearly 100 teens to discuss issues and concerns, and offered practical solutions for the community to implement. Chandler also offers a fun Teen Adventure Camp in the summer, as well as its long-running Leaders In Training program, where teens shadow members of the business community to explore career opportunities and learn business skills.
- The town of Youngtown has an afterschool program for children in first through eighth grade. This program is a community partnership between the town, an HOA, and a local church. The goal of this afterschool program is to help develop a child in four areas: character, conditioning, commitment and connecting in their community. Children are developing coordination in throwing, catching, stretching and running as they play modified games that use various skills related to soccer, football, baseball, kickball and dodge ball to help them have fun and learn skills that can be used into adulthood.

About the League:

The League of Arizona Cities and Towns is a voluntary association of all the 91 incorporated cities and towns in the state of Arizona. It provides policy and legislative advocacy, information and inquiry services, along with publications and educational programs to strengthen the quality and efficiency of municipal government. It was founded in 1937 to serve the interests of cities and towns and to preserve the principles of home rule and local determination. For more information, visit www.azleague.org.

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