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CITIES AND TOWNS INVEST BIG IN YOUTH PROGRAMS
Youngsters Learn and Engage Through Wide Variety of Opportunities

PHOENIX (April 12, 2013) – Cities and towns across Arizona are supporting a wide range of programs to ensure that youth are engaged and well-served in their communities.

Whether it’s after-school, community-service or recreational programs, municipalities are making headlines and garnering praise for these investments that help children of all ages become active members of their communities.

“Youth programs are vital to Arizona’s cities and towns,” said Clarkdale Mayor Doug Von Gausig, president of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns. “Not only do they provide our youth with safe options, but many innovative programs also strengthen youngsters’ connections to their communities and positively reinforce the value of service.”

Here is a sampling of cities’ and towns’ youth programs:

- The city of Maricopa expanded its offerings this year by adding a new program called “Maricopa in Motion,” a mobile recreation center with a trained staff that visits elementary schools, providing games, arts and crafts and sports. The staff also educates kids about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. To date, the “Maricopa in Motion” program has hosted 2,187 participants during 45 separate school visits.

- Mesa has implemented its “Fun and Fitness” mobile recreational program, which ensures residents can easily access the city’s recreation centers, subsequently helping to address the youth-obesity epidemic. The city also offers the Mayor’s Youth Summer of Service program, now in its fourth year. The mayor’s program connects volunteers with at-risk youth. Its projects have included assembling medical kits, stocking shelves at the food bank, feeding the homeless and assisting at community festivals.

- The city of Somerton provides an after-school program focusing on character development, educational support and fun for youth ages 5 to 12. The program, housed at the J. Kerley Youth Center, is tailored to low-income families and single parent households and provides a positive and fun atmosphere where youth can explore leadership development, character enhancement and positive social skills in a safe environment.

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2-2-2/AZ Cities and Towns Invest Big in Youth Programs

- Phoenix continues to invest in its robust after-school and full-day supervised recreation programs. These programs have provided more than 10,000 kids a safe, supportive environment to grow, learn and thrive. The after-school programs operate in 38 elementary schools throughout Phoenix.

- Cottonwood has developed a number of programs to keep its youngsters active and engaged. It started in 2004 with the City Council creating a Youth Commission, which has been responsible for completing 8,000 hours of community service and raised more than $10,000 for charities. The city also allows the Boys & Girls Club to use a 5,000-square-foot city-owned facility. Also, in 2009, the City Council authorized the construction of a 53,000-square-foot recreation center that will be built within the community.

- Sedona offers kids ages 6 to 12 the Adventures Club, a safe environment where youth can explore their unique talents and interests. In addition, the Imagination Lab, a program for teens, provides character building activities as well as instruction on the arts, sports, science and technology, and discovery programs.

- Even the youngest of kids have options. In Clarkdale, children ages 2-5 can attend the town’s popular “Story time for preschoolers’ program,” which emphasizes a love of books and reading readiness.

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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