

Hello ACEs community and guests.

As we close out another meaningful year and step into a fresh one, we want to take a moment to express our gratitude for the dedication, compassion, and resilience within our AZ ACES community. The holiday season invites reflection, connection, and hope—values that sit at the heart of our work to create safe, supportive, and trauma-informed spaces for all Arizona children and families.

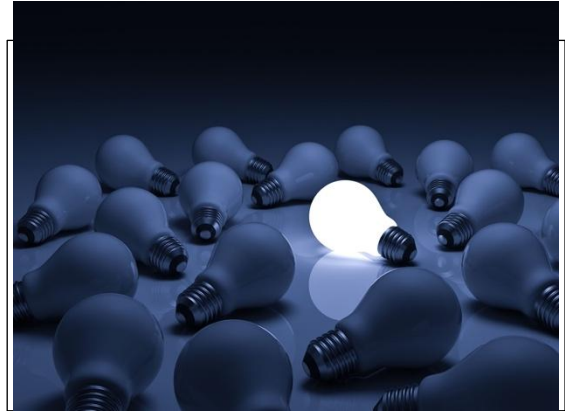
In this December/January issue, we're excited to share new resources, statistics, and our mission in motion as we continue building stronger, more resilient communities statewide.

Whether you're celebrating holidays, resting, or preparing for the year ahead, we are grateful you are part of this mission.

Here's to closing the year with intention and welcoming 2026 with renewed purpose and unity.

Warmly,

The AZ ACES Communications Committee



Awareness Observation Days/Months

December

- Anger Awareness Week, December 1-7
- National Grief Awareness Week, December 1-7
- HIV/AIDS Awareness Month
- Universal Human Rights Awareness Month

January

- National Hugging Day, January 21st
- National Stalking Awareness Month
- Self-Love Awareness Month
- Mental Wellness Month

Stalking Prevention and Awareness Stats and Resources

The term "stalking" may be defined as one person's obsessive behavior directed toward another person, behavior that causes the victim to fear for their safety.

- **80% of stalking victims** report being stalked through technology
- Approximately **1 in 3 women** and **1 in 6 men** will experience stalking in their lifetime.
- **Safety Risk:** Stalking by an intimate partner is particularly dangerous; stalking increases the risk of homicide in domestic violence situations.
- A study of ~2,900 US undergraduates found that those with **higher ACE scores are significantly more likely to experience various types of interpersonal violence**, including stalking. Students with an ACE score of **8 or more** were about **4.9 times more likely** to experience stalking in the previous 12 months than those with zero ACEs.

[National Stalking Awareness Month | SPARC](#)

[The Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center | SPARC](#)

[Legal Information for Victims of Stalking in Arizona](#)

[Stalking Safety Planning - The National Domestic Violence Hotline](#)

Hotlines

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-7233 (TTY 1-800-787-3224)

Victim Connect Hotline: 1-855-4VICTIM
(1-855-484-2846) — helps connect victims to local services.



Mission in Motion

Friends of the Children

What goals or objectives around ACEs has your committee/agency set out to achieve?

Our overarching objective is to ensure that ACEs do not define a child's future. Instead, through consistent mentorship and community partnership, we empower youth to develop resilience, confidence, and hope for brighter futures.

Our agency is deeply committed to addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) by breaking cycles of generational trauma and supporting long-term resilience for youth.

Our goals include:

Building Protective Factors: Strengthening consistent, long-term mentoring relationships that provide stability and a sense of belonging for every child.

Reducing Risk Factors: Creating safe environments that decrease exposure to additional trauma while connecting families to critical resources.

Promoting Healing & Resilience: Supporting social-emotional learning, mental health awareness, and coping strategies so that youth can thrive despite early adversity.

Increasing Awareness & Advocacy: Educating staff, families, and community partners about the impact of ACEs and how we can collectively respond with trauma-informed practices.

Measuring Impact: Tracking outcomes in education, mental health, and social well-being to ensure our approach is reducing the long-term effects of ACEs.

Visit our website at friendsphoenix.org



Friends of the Children - Phoenix

Success Stories, Highlights, and Recognitions of

Friends of the Children

Can you share a specific success story or achievement of the committee/agency that you are particularly proud of, and how did it positively impact the community or organization?

One success story we are especially proud of is seeing our long-term, relationship-based model truly change the trajectory of a young person's life. For example, one of our youth entered our program facing multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences, struggling in school, and often feeling disconnected. Through the consistent support of a dedicated professional mentor, this young person not only improved academically but has also gained confidence.

The impact didn't stop with that one child—our mentors worked closely with the family, helping to connect them to resources and reducing stressors that were affecting everyone in the household. As a result, the family has found some stability.

Can you highlight any noteworthy collaborations or projects your agency has been involved in?

Friends of the Children-Phoenix is thrilled to be a part of Future Frameworks, a committed group of community members, leaders, and partners who envision a holistic approach to addressing equity and the promotion of prosperity for South Phoenix Residents. Our people-centered development is focused on creating a neighborhood culture of success that is focused on the development of the child from birth to high school graduate and beyond, strong families, cohesive communities, and access to quality resources.

This collaboration is focused on results:

1. More high school graduates ready to pursue higher education or paths to successful lives.
2. More families with the support they need to thrive in the moment and beyond.
3. More healthy families enjoying vibrant and sustainable communities.

To learn more visit: [Future Framework](#)

Are there any notable awards, recognitions, or honors that the committee/agency or its members have received for their contributions?

Earlier this year, Friends of the Children - Phoenix received the 2024 Program Quality Award from Friends of the Children - National. This meaningful recognition highlights the exceptional dedication of our team in how we follow through on our core commitment: putting children first. Cristina Martinez, our Program Director, shared, "We were honored to receive the Program Health Award for Quality Time, which recognizes our staff for ensuring youth get meaningful time with their professional mentors, called Friends." Friends of the Children - Phoenix also received the 2024 Organizational Health Award for Board Attendance, a testament to the engagement and dedication of our board of directors.

Check us out on Social Media:



[@acesofarizona](#)



[AZ ACE Consortium](#)



[AZ-Aces-Consortium](#)

www.azaces.org



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