

connector

AWARD

A stylized lightbulb with a blue outline and a glowing pink brain inside. A blue star is positioned below the base of the lightbulb, and a blue line extends from the base of the lightbulb towards the star.

Connecting People, Ideas & Community

A Day for Seeking Solutions & Ideas
Social Isolation & Loneliness



Wednesday, October 23, 2019
Tempe Center for the Arts - Lakeside Room



10:30am Welcome - Speakers & Roundtable Discussion

10:35am Wendy Wolfersteig, Ph.D., Arizona State University

11:05am Lauren Walker and Jennifer Monninger, Community Bridges, Inc.

11:35am Roundtable Discussion: *Social Isolation and Addiction*

12:00pm Lunch

1:00pm Welcome - Connector Award Finalist Presentations

1:10pm Solution Presentation #1 Danita Applewhite, Ph.D.

1:28pm Solution Presentation #2 Lisa Cleary

1:46pm Solution Presentation #3 Major Mario Ruiz and Anya Hernandez

2:04pm Solution Presentation #4 Amy Garza

2:22pm Solution Presentation #5 David Burckhard

2:50pm Solution Presentation #6 Jennifer Linde and Rev. Linda Park-Fuller

3:08pm Solution Presentation #7 Adrien Moya

3:41pm Solution Presentation #8 Connie Perez

3:59pm Solution Presentation #9 Cindy Walsh

4:14pm Break and Deliberations

4:50pm Awards Presentation and Photos

All times are approximate and subject to change.



Connecting Ideas, People & Community

At Tempe Community Council, we work to build connections, seeking ways to create an inclusive and compassionate community, where everyone knows and feels they belong. We've listened to our community members and non-profit organizations that serve them to better understand their issues and how we can help. In roundtable sessions, surveys, coalition meetings, grant applications and informal conversations, people in Tempe share the same challenge — loneliness and social isolation.

In many parts of the world, loneliness and social isolation are being considered a public health issue, and so many municipalities already know strong resilient communities are an effective way to tackle this issue. Loneliness is one of the causes of such devastating outcomes as: substance abuse, major depression and suicide. We know that being connected to others and feeling a part of a community is essential to our overall well-being; and we believe that our community already has the creativity, knowledge and skills to address this issue in our own unique way.

Today, we will see nine community members present their ideas for addressing this issue. Through our first Connector Award, Tempe Community Council will invest up to \$50,000 to help bring some of these ideas to reality.

Finalists and Ideas



Danita Applewhite, Ph.D., White Apple Institute Differently Abled Network (DAN)

Danita Applewhite, Ph.D., CRC (aka "Professor "Apple") is the founder/director of White Apple Institute (formerly White Apple Training & Education Center in Tempe, AZ), disability advocate, talk show host, Army veteran, chair and vice chair of the Arizona State Independent Living and State Rehabilitation Councils. She is retired from Maricopa Community College District, an alumni of the University of Arizona and Chapman University and received her Ph.D. from Concordia College & University in 2012.

As an educator, counselor and disability advocate, she has invested over 40 years promoting the philosophies of independent living and vocational rehabilitation in classrooms, workplaces, rehabilitation/skilled nursing homes, homeless shelters, and more. In semi-retirement, she continues providing online talk shows, supportive mentorships, and a Differently-Abled Network© (DAN) to prevent isolation and suicidal thoughts. She remains focused on building community partnerships, inclusive of faith-based organizations, and seeking out underserved, nontraditional working students and employees with disabilities (e.g., emotional stress, chronic pain, and non-visible mental/physical), prioritizing fellow veterans and family members.

Dr. Applewhite is most effective helping others restore hope because of her own recovery from cancer and a near fatal car accident, resulting in her being wheelchair-bound, and adapting to chronic pain and depression. This journey has inspired her to help others change the perception of "DISabled to DIFFerently-abled," and recognize that everyone is capable of being a "student and teacher." She expresses gratitude to God for her family, colleagues, students, and friends that encouraged her to continue her mission even from the hospital bed.

Differently Abled Network (DAN) serves as a hub for forming partnerships between community, faith-based organizations, government, higher education institutions and business to address the needs of underserved students and employees, especially those who are veterans.



Lisa Cleary, Ken Veach, Hope Dillion and Quetzal Balcells, Best Buddies Workplace Readiness Training Project

Lisa Cleary began her career in nonprofit management over a decade ago as a volunteer for various organizations in California. Realizing she had a passion for helping others, Lisa went to work for the American Cancer Society in 2007 and spent three years as a community development manager, overseeing the Relay For Life events and developing strong community relations and a dedicated volunteer base. Upon relocating to Arizona, Lisa worked for the National MS Society for seven years, first as the senior development manager for the Walk MS and other special events in both Phoenix and Tucson, and then transitioning into the role of senior manager of corporate relations. Now in the role of state director for Best Buddies since June 2017, Lisa has overseen successful events with sustainable revenue growth, expanded corporate partners, and established a strong community presence, all of which have directly contributed to the expansion of Best Buddies programs and increased impact in communities all across Arizona.

Workplace Readiness Training Project provides self-advocacy, job exploration and workplace readiness training services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Finalists and Ideas



Major Mario Ruiz, Tempe Salvation Army Anya Hernandez **Arts Integration with Salvation Army**

Major Mario Ruiz is the corps officer of the Tempe Salvation Army. He received his degree in Social and Behavioral Studies from George Fox University. Major Ruiz has been an officer of The Salvation Army for 18 years. During his time as an officer he has had nine appointments in Idaho, Oregon, California, Colorado, Nevada and Arizona. Throughout his time as an officer he has worked in many communities and different cultures. He has worked with families, individuals, children, homeless, on the verge of homelessness, poor and middle class by providing services at their time of need.



Co-founder Anya Hernandez has directed two iterations of Grey Box Collective's *Out of Hiding*, an exploration of mental illness and the challenges of seeking and providing support. The research, development, and production of this work spanned from fall 2016 to November 2018. Driven by her own experience of depression and anxiety, the project largely focused on the power of the arts as a way of articulating difficult experiences as well as the overwhelming power of holding space for others to be known and embraced by empathy. Her passion for this creative work continues as she seeks to speak truth and hope into the darkness through the community engagement and the arts.

Arts Integration with Salvation Army provides workshops which encourage participants to verbally express physical and emotional experiences through discussion and creative art-making.



Amy Garza, Tempe Elementary School District **Pen Pals for Seniors**

Amy Garza grew up in Tempe, where she currently lives with her husband, Noel, and their two teenage children, Aran and Giana. Amy attended Tempe schools then received her bachelor's degree from Northern Arizona University. She returned to her roots to work for the Tempe Elementary School District, where she has now been for 29 years, currently serving as the visual communication specialist senior. Her passion for all things creative, for telling stories through words and photos, and for helping others, especially children, has made this her dream job.

Amy has always loved being behind the camera, where she can often be found snapping photos and videos of her two kids playing soccer, her playful pups, or any beautiful flower, sunrise, or sunset she sees. She views much of her world through the lens of a camera.

Most recently, Amy won the Joseph P. Spracale Commitment to Education Award in 2018 for making a major contribution to the education of children in the Tempe Elementary School District for more than 10 years. She was also nominated in 2018 and 2019 for the Tempe Diablos Excellence in Education Lifetime Achievement Award for her work as the visual communication specialist senior and photographer for the Tempe Elementary School District. Her photos and stories have been regularly published in the local newspaper publication Wrangler News as well as online at mylocalnews.us and azednews.com.

Pen Pals for Seniors involves Tempe students and seniors connecting through one-on-one letter communications and activities to create relationships and build lasting bonds.

Finalists and Ideas



David Burckhard, Tempe Family YMCA **Get Summer**

David Burckhard is the executive director of the Tempe Family YMCA, a branch of the Valley of The Sun YMCA for the past 17 months. The Y is for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. My job is to make sure that the Tempe “Y” is serving as a community asset to the city of Tempe and its surrounding areas. David, along with his wife and two-year old daughter, are relatively new to Arizona, after moving to the Valley from Boston in May 2018.

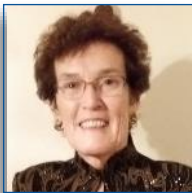
David graduated with his undergraduate and MBA degrees from Springfield College, in Springfield, Massachusetts. Springfield College was founded in 1885 as the original YMCA Training School to train young professionals to work at The Y! Springfield College is also the home of Dr. James Naismith, the creator of Basketball. After graduating from Springfield College in 2012, David started work at The Y in and the surrounding areas of Boston, holding various roles, until landing his current role in Tempe, Arizona. He appreciates the opportunity to present about the Connector grant and giving Tempe teens the opportunity to develop leadership skills in Y programs. in summer 2020.

Get Summer offers 100 Tempe teens free membership, opportunities and special programs to promote service learning, civic engagement, leadership skills-building, employment training and physical exercise.



Jennifer Linde and Rev. Linda Park-Fuller, Arizona State University **Storyscope**

Jennifer Linde, M.A., is a principal lecturer in the Hugh Downs School of Human Communication at Arizona State University, artistic director of The Empty Space (Theatre), and a founding director of the Institute for Civil Dialogue. She is co-founder of the Storyscope project, a story circle format that promotes community connections through storytelling and art and has participated in the design and development of Civil Dialogue®. She is co-author of *Hot Topics, Cool Heads: A Handbook for Civil Dialogue*.



Rev. Linda M. Park-Fuller, Ph.D., holds degrees from the University of North Dakota, Missouri-Columbia, and Texas at Austin. She taught and directed performance for personal and social development at St. Cloud State University, Missouri State, and Arizona State, totaling over 36 years. She has worked especially in narrative performance forms featuring audience members' stories for inclusion and social change. An ordained interfaith minister, she is also a writer, actor and storyteller.

Storyscope generates public-shared autobiographical stories and conversations through a storytelling format that fosters inclusiveness and cultivates connections and compassion.

Finalists and Ideas

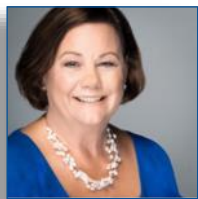


Adrien Moya, A New Leaf

Dance Studio

Adrien Moya is a child and youth family stability case manager with A New Leaf's Siemer Family Stability Program. Adrien has been working in the non-profit sector for three years and has always wanted to combine her passion for dance and experience with social work. At an early age, dance has been her passion. Though never formally trained as a child, she never shied away from dancing in school talent shows and community events. During high school, she created her own dance team where she showcased her choreographies in schools' talent shows and events throughout her community. She has won medals in collegiate competitions. Her training is mainly focused on Salsa and Samba dancing, and has earned the title of The National Samba Queen after being crowned winner from her performance at Brazil's Rio de Janeiro Carnival. Today, Adrien travels the country to perform and train dancers. Her dream is to start her own dance team again with at-risk youth so they can train and perform throughout the community

Dance Studio offers opportunities for at-risk youth to train and learn for free, various forms of Latin dance to perform at local events throughout the community.



Connie Perez, Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley

eSports League

Connie Perez is the CEO and president of Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley (BGCEV). She has been in service to the organization over a year. She has been instrumental in establishing and renewing key relationships with partners and leaders within the communities BGCEV serves.

With a background in healthcare and business management, Connie is best known as an inclusive values-driven leader with the demonstrated ability to integrate strategic thinking and visionary leadership with effective operations. Connie most recently served as a consultant with Hospice of the Valley after spending a year as a senior vice president at nThrive following its acquisition of Adreima, where she had served in the roles of CEO or president for over 10 years. Prior to that, Connie had served as vice president of clinical operations of Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Connie is also a leader in the community, having served on the board and as chair of the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, Ryan House and the Arizona Chapter of the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA). She has also served on the board of Hospice of the Valley and chaired HFMA's National Women Lead Here initiative. Connie has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Loyola University and a Master's of Management from the Executive Management program at Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management.

eSports League engages at-risk youth to participate in weekly team-based sports-related videogaming activities.

Finalists and Ideas



Cindy Walsh, Valley Center for the Deaf

Caregiver Services & ASL Training

Cindy Walsh has been working for Catholic Community Services (CCS) in its Deaf service agencies for over 30 years. She has been agency director of its Valley Center of the Deaf in Maricopa County since 2002, and is also the director of Sign Language Interpreting Services across CCS' agencies in Arizona and New Mexico. Ms. Walsh is a state licensed and nationally certified sign language interpreter.

She has worked as a partner with Tempe Community Council during her time as director, in services to Deaf senior Tempeans. The partnership has provided case management and transportation and technology assistance to hundreds of Deaf seniors in Tempe. Most current senior projects focus on providing transportation and shopping assistance to seniors who not only rely upon sign language communication from their driver/shopping assistant, but also rely upon physical assistance in the store with reading labels and signage for those whose vision is declining, as a second disability. In addition, Ms. Walsh has spearheaded a project to increase awareness and access for Deaf seniors

Caregiver Services & ASL Training offers free American Sign Language classes and specialized training for those assisting and caring for seniors who are deaf.

and Deaf Blind individuals to additional public services to provide them with food and other care for which they might be eligible and be unaware of the programs.

*Thank you to all our finalists
for your support and innovative ideas in helping
address social isolation and loneliness in Tempe.*



TEMPE
Community
Council

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