



Personal Story

The Reverend Jackson — “A Gentle Giant with a True Heart for the People”

By Hong Chartrand

In 12 years, how many things can people do for their communities? How much impact can people make in their communities? These are easy questions to ask but not easy actions to take. The Tanner Community Development Corporation (TCDC), a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, faith-based organization, has provided a wide range of social and health resources and services to serve primarily African Americans and low- to moderate-income individuals or families in need within the Phoenix area. During 12 years, the TCDC has grown from a one-man shop to 18 staff members, from \$5,000 in seed money to more than a \$1.5 million annual budget, from serving 10 churches to connecting over 35 churches with 60 community collaborations, and from serving less than a hundred to over 25,000 people on an annual basis. One key player that keeps the TCDC growing strongly is the Rev. Arnold Jackson, the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the organization. In 2001, working closely with the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Thomas, Chairman & CEO, the TCDC board and supporters, the Rev. Jackson helped establish the TCDC after having worked in a private corporation for 27 years. As the organization's first employee, he worked without a salary during the formative years.

Robert Young, Program Director of the TCDC says, “in addition to the corporate and business acumen Rev. Jackson brings to the organization, he also possesses a genuine commitment and passion for addressing health disparities and promoting economic self-sufficiency for the underserved communities in our city”.

The Rev. Jackson was born in Ohio and lived and worked most of his life in the mid-west. After he moved to the Phoenix area, his life underwent a big change. The TCDC became his second career and his baby. “It was a high calling from God to serve the community where my roots are from,” says the Rev. Jackson. “Life, for me, is some thing more. It is more than personal goals, or money. It is about making a difference in the community and in the world. (Continued on page 4)



Rev. Jackson (left) participated in one of the Heart & Soul events, organized by TCDC.

Grassroots Efforts to Improve Food Environment in a Rural Food Desert

By Elizabeth Kizer

Every Thursday, Bingo players at the Dorothy Nolan Senior Center in Florence, Arizona, encounter a long table filled with colorful fruits and vegetables as Bingo prizes. Bingo winners take turns choosing one large or two small produce items until all of the items are gone, a fun process that takes the better part of an afternoon.

Florence is a rural community located 61 miles south-east of Phoenix. Its median household income is \$41,642 slightly lower than the Arizona median household income. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines much of Florence as a “food desert.” In the food desert parts of town, the population is characterized as low income and has limited access to a supermarket. Moreover, 56% of all the restaurants in Pinal County (where Florence is located) are fast food restaurants. Pinal County ranks 14th out of the 15 Arizona counties in terms of fast food concentration.

In Florence, local residents and a variety of groups and non-profit organizations have formed a community coalition to improve the food environment and increase access to fresh, healthy foods. Led by Elizabeth Kizer, a

local resident and a doctoral student from the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, the coalition completed a community assessment of the

local food environment in August of 2013. While they found that stores and restaurants were lacking in their offering of healthy foods, their assessment revealed many grassroots efforts that were providing healthy foods to Florence residents. Healthy fruits and vegetables as Bingo prizes is one of those efforts.



(From left to right) Annaliese Hagemann, Barbara Meis, & Tom Meis choose a Bingo prize from a table filled with fresh produce and some groceries at the Dorothy Nolan Senior Center in Florence, AZ.

Arizona Health Disparities Center

Mission:

To promote and protect the health and well being of the minority and vulnerable populations of Arizona by enhancing the capacity of the public health system to effectively serve minority populations and reduce health disparities.

Vision:

Health equity for all

We envision a state where each person has equal opportunity to prevent and overcome disease and live a longer, healthier life.

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Arizona Health Disparities Center

Promoting Health Equity

Shannon Receives Kris Bell Service Award for Outstanding Prevention Services

RJ Shannon (center), health disparities manager of the Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease, Arizona Department of Health Services received the Kris Bell Service Award from the Arizonans for Prevention at its annual meeting on December 4, 2013. Ms. Shannon was selected for this annual award in honor of “outstanding prevention services and contributions to the State of Arizona.”

For the past twelve years Ms. Shannon has dedicated her time and talent to the prevention of HIV and chronic disease and has displayed unending commitment to advancing the cause of closing the gap of health disparities throughout Arizona. In her tireless promotion of health education and equitable healthcare for Arizona’s minority populations, she has been a model advocate and educator

on the issues related to higher rates of infant mortality, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and cancer. Ms. Shannon has increased the awareness and responsiveness of both consumers and providers of healthcare in addressing the unjust correlation between poverty, disease, and early death. In addition to her work at ADHS, she has served as a volunteer for more than thirty years with numerous organizations and has received many awards for her community work. ♦



New Language Access Materials

The Arizona Health Alliance for Language Access Rights (AHALAR) has developed several new materials to increase awareness of Language Access rights and improve access to interpretation services. AHALAR is a group of professionals led by the Arizona Health Disparities Center devoted to creating and sustaining a welcoming environment for limited English proficient individuals in Arizona. The new materials include ‘I Speak’ Cards in 11 languages, a Language Identification List for service providers (26 languages), and ‘Know Your Language Access Rights’ Fact Sheets for patients/clients (10 languages) and providers.

Electronic versions of the materials are available and printed copies can be ordered free of charge at <http://azdhs.gov/hsd/health-disparities/campaign-initiatives/language-access/index.php?pg=resources>.

For additional information and resources, visit the Arizona Health Disparities Center website at www.azminorityhealth.gov. ♦

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People have different skill sets and my skill sets lie in identifying needs, pulling resources together and leading teams to make a difference.”

In addition, the Rev. Jackson is the pastor of Mt. Moriah Community African Methodist Episcopal Church in Maricopa, AZ. He is active with several community coalitions and collaborations and participates on several boards, including serving as the Chair of the Mountain Park Health Center board. He brings a unique blend of faith-based services and corporate business experience to non-profit community development which helps the TCDC accomplish its mission of “connecting the church with the community to improve lives spiritually, economically, educationally, and through health and housing.”

Under the leadership of the Rev. Jackson, services have continually expanded. Currently the TCDC offers programs and initiatives to address Anti-Tobacco & Chronic Disease, Substance Abuse, Cardiovascular & Lung Disease, Early Childhood Development, Independent Senior Living and Human Services Emergency Assistance for Families in Crisis.

Over the past 12 years, the Rev. Jackson has met many ups & downs and has overcome several personal and professional challenges. His previous wife passed away due to cancer several years ago but his faith in God and the support from his family, staff, and community sustained him. The Rev. Jackson has since remarried and has a blended family of five children and five grand children.

“Rev Jackson to me is a gentle giant with a true heart for the people within the surrounding communities,” says Dr. James Davis, case manager of the TCDC-Paideia Family Resource Center.

“Strength Based or Asset Based Community Develop-



ment and Sustainability are keys to capturing opportunities and overcoming barriers. Community Development requires the buy-in, strengths, assets and gifts of the community itself as well as organizations that can sustain themselves. Sustainability within the TCDC means connecting with the community to develop the right strategies, retaining talented people, and maintaining a strong track record of performance,” says the Rev. Jackson. He plans to keep expanding the TCDC’s territory with not only a focus on health and education disparities but also tackling economic and housing disparities within the community. ♦

Grassroots Efforts to Improve Food Environment in a Rural Food Desert

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“We’d like to produce enough fresh produce for all those in need in the area,” said Tchida, Chairman of the Board. In August of 2013, 3F received a donation of two refrigerated vans. “Now we know that we can distribute what is grown while it’s still fresh,” Tchida said. In October 2013, 3F received a donation of a 1/3 acre parcel centrally located in historic Florence. The organization submitted grants applications in December of 2013 to start the Feed Florence First Farm (4F), which would include a community garden as well as dedicated space for major food production. If the vision becomes a reality, the 4F will, ultimately, produce over 100,000 lbs of fresh produce each year.

Early in 2013, a local woman, Denise Kollert, collected over 50 signatures on a petition to persuade a food cooperative, called Bountiful Baskets, to start a site in downtown Florence. Bountiful Baskets is a national cooperative that operates through contributions and volunteer efforts to provide participants with healthy food at low cost. The population in Florence is separated into two communities roughly 12 miles apart. The more affluent part of town (Anthem) currently has a Bountiful Baskets site, but the food desert part of town does not. Every Monday, participants go online to purchase a basket of vegetables or fruits for \$15 plus handling/fuel surcharge fees, and the produce is delivered on Saturdays. “There are many seniors and people without transportation who would benefit from having a site in [downtown] Florence,” Kollert said, “I would like to help them have this option.” Bountiful Baskets has responded to the request

stating the Anthem site must increase their participation before a second site in Florence is established. Volunteers at the Anthem site have been working to increase the number of participants by distributing flyers and encouraging participants to spread the word.



Left: “Bountiful Baskets” like these now available in more affluent areas, may soon be on their ways to food desert areas of Florence.

Upper: In April, 2013, Lina Austin (in red) hosted a tour of “Seed the Future” backyard gardens in Florence.

More local organizations are joining the efforts to provide the healthy food choices in Florence. Here is a wish list created by Florence residents: establishment of a farmers’ market, expansion of healthy menu items at existing restaurants, locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables sold in existing stores, and establishment of a student-supported eatery & community supported agriculture (CSA). The list keeps growing. Public health experts have been encouraging Americans to increase their consumption of fresh foods for many years. In food deserts, where fresh foods are not sold in restaurants and stores, residents face barriers to improving their health. Improving the food environment will reduce disparities faced by rural residents, increase healthy choices, and, ultimately, result in improved health. ♦

Publications of Interest:

Report: Leveraging Culture to Address Health Inequalities: Examples from Native Communities—Workshop Summary

It summarizes the presentations and discussion of the workshop and includes case studies that examine programs aimed at diabetes prevention and management and cancer prevention and treatment programs.

http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18496

Brief: Culturally Competent Services

It lists major resources for information on cultural and linguistic competence and sources of non-English-language health education materials.

<http://mchlibrary.org/guides/culturalcompetence.html> ♦

Events of Interest:

17th Annual Health Education Advocacy Summit

Sponsored by: the Coalition of National Health Education Organizations

Dates: February 22 – 24, 2014

Location: Hyatt Regency Washington, Washington, DC

<http://healtheducationadvocate.org/>

2014 National Leadership and Education Conference: Equity Moving Beyond Diversity

Dates: June 12 – 13, 2014

Location: Chicago, IL

Contact: Jetaun Mallett at jmallett@aha.org

<http://www.ache.org/ifd/reg/welcome.cfm>

The Healthcare Quality and Equity Action Forum 2014

Hosted by: the Disparities Solutions Center at Massachusetts General Hospital

Dates: June 19 – 20, 2014

Location: Seaport Boston Hotel, Boston, MA

<http://www2.massgeneral.org/disparitiessolutions/hcqeaforum.html> ♦

Funding Opportunities:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health: Mobilization for Health: National Prevention Partnership Awards – Deadline: March 3, 2014

Purpose: to establish integrated, collaborative local, state, regional, and tribal partnerships to increase community awareness and action on preventive health services, particularly those provided through prevention programs.

Eligible Applicants: Any public or private entity, American Indian/Alaska Native/Native American tribes and organizations, local and state governments

Amount: Category A - \$50,000-\$75,000 (one year); Category B - up to \$500,000 (up to three years)

<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/nppa-awards.html>

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation Grants – Deadline: Rolling

Purpose: to support projects that directly serve the needs of children living in urban poverty.

Eligible Applicants: Local and state governments, academic institutions, non profits, schools/school districts

Contact: info@msdf.org

<http://www.msdf.org/grants/> ♦

For more information about funding opportunities, publications of interest and events of interest, please visit www.azminorityhealth.gov. ♦

Editor's Note:

The *AHDConnection* is published quarterly on January 31, April 30, July 31 and October 31. We are looking for community stories and other leads that are related to efforts to reduce health disparities in Arizona. Because of space limitation, each submitted community story should not be more than 500 words. Ideas for community stories are also welcome. Our deadline is the 15th of month prior to the publication date. Please email articles or ideas to the editor at

hong.chartrand@azdhs.gov. ♦

