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**2019 ANNUAL REPORT  
ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

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**In partnership with**

**The AZCAAC Collaborative: Capacity and Effectiveness  
through Collaboration**

**KITABU: A Community Based Literacy Program**

**2019 African American Conference on Disabilities  
Ability360 and the Arizona Center for Disability Law**

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## **PART 1. 2019 SUMMARY**

On behalf of the AZCAAR Board of Directors and the members of the AZCAAC Collaborative, we are pleased to share our accomplishments and transformative outcomes from working together with our partners and community activists in 2019.

2019 was a productive and fruitful year for the Arizona Center for African American Resources. We witnessed many of the outcomes that we predicted would result if kept persistent constancy of purpose and boldness in our commitment to give voice and visibility to African Americans in Arizona. The 2019 report is intended to give you enough information to understand many of the detail needs and requirements that fuel the quadrisectional crisis affecting African American children in Arizona. We hope you will take the time to read it and contact us with your thoughts and ideas.

## **PART 2. COLLABORATIONS**

African Americans in Arizona are challenged at all age levels and on all fronts. The scope of their challenge, though well documented, goes mostly unaddressed unless raised in some form of social advocacy. The breadth and depth of their challenges are too large and complex for any one organization working alone. For this reason, we have worked to identify and build collaborative and partnering relationships .

### **• PARTNERSHIPS**

- **FIRSTBANK:** agreed to become an AZCAAR/AZCAAC partner. Their financial contribution of \$500 was used to support various AZCAAC activities. 2020 plans include: employee involvement and increased funding and sponsorships.
- **ARIZONA TOWN HALL:** Participation in the 112<sup>th</sup> Arizona Town Hall, in November 2019, exposed AZCAAR to a new organization and groups with influence on social policy and political thought. The major outcome was a follow-up meeting requested by the Town Hall leadership which led to a possible 2020 African American Focus Town Hall in the West Valley.
- **CITY OF GOODYEAR, AZ:** An introductory meeting was held with City Councilwoman Laura Kaino about race and ethnicity issues in Goodyear, Arizona. As a result of the productive meeting, we were invited to participate in a public input survey to give an African American perspective on the growth and transition of the city.
- **MICROSOFT DATA CENTER, GOODYEAR, AZ:** The Microsoft Corporation established a new Data Center in Goodyear and requested that AZCAAR serve as a member of its Community Advisory Council which advises and decides Community Grant Awards.

- **ACEs CONSORTIUM:** In 2017, AZCAAR and the AZCAAC Collaborative were introduced to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) by the Phoenix Children's Hospital and to the Neurosequential Caregiving Model by the Arizona Council of Human Service Provider resulting in members of AZCAAR becoming consortium members and certified in ACEs and the Neurosequential Caregiving Models; thereby, equipping and authorizing us to provide culturally relevant training and guidance within the African American community.



## PART 3. AZCAAC

The Arizona Center for African American Children, is the only child advocacy organization focused on the needs of African American children in Arizona. All of the child well-being data about children in Arizona have identified African American children as the most crisis burdened of all children in the state. Address these burdens effectively requires teamwork and collective effort; therefore, we developed and received outstanding support for the AZCAAC Advisory Council and the AZCAAC Collaborative

### AZCAAC ADVISORY COUNCIL

The AZCAAC Advisory Council met three times in 2019. No meeting was held over the third quarter due to time and other administrative conflicts. On average, twenty-five or more members attended each meeting to hear updates and outcome reports facing the literacy gap.

**THE LITERACY GAP** between African American children and other children in Arizona is at a crisis level with no known state plan to narrow this gap. Public schools in neighborhoods with largest populations of African American students are either “poor performing;” or, competing with charter schools for students and revenue. **KITABU** was created by the AZCAAC Collaborative to help narrow this gap by creating opportunities for children to improve their read skills: By training adult readers to help them read in safe places to learn. By informing our community about childhood trauma and its affects on teaching and learning.

## PART 4. KITABU



**KITABU** is the Swahili word for “book,” but in a broader context, it means a bound collection of words and or pictures to represent knowledge. **KITABU**, has become a big demand and has the capacity to make significant gain in African American children literacy rates statewide due to its on-target design and educator appeal. Because of the effectiveness of the AZCAAC Collaborative in 2019 **KITABU** donated over 50,000 books and achieved the following outcomes:

- I. **“My Kids Read”** was rolled out at Maxine O. Bush elementary school (M.O. Bush) on March 1, 2019 and on March 10, 2019 at First Institutional Baptist Church. The goal of “My Kids Read” is to help students read on grade level by the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. This project led by a partnership between AZCAAC, ASU, Collins Aerospace, and M.O. Bush.
- II. **Collins Aerospace**, an AZCAAC Collaborator, and “My Kids Read” partner at M.O. Bush, sponsored former NASA Astronaut, Joan Higginbotham, to speak to M.O. Bush students about the importance of reading, science and self-esteem. Ms. Higginbotham was an exciting and engaging guest for the morning. She told the student, “The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.”



- III. **KITABU BOOKBANK** was established in 2016, to be the supplier of books and other learning tools needed to improve literacy among African American Children in Arizona Schools. Since 2016, KITABU and its collaborating partner, Pi Beta Phi Fraternity, has donated over **50,000** children books to participating KITABU schools, early learning Centers, Native American Reservations, barbershops, laundry mats, and churches through Arizona.



- IV. **The Zion Early Learning Academy (ZELA)** is both an AZCAAC Collaborator and a KITABU participant. The **KITABU BOOKBANK** donated more than 1,000 new and gently used books to help fill the library and most class rooms.



- V. Staff and students of **The George Gervin Preparatory Academy**, located in South phoenix, are shown shopping the **KITABU BOOKBANK** for books needed to fill their near empty library shelves. When shopping and deliveries were all done in 2019, approximately **2,500** books were donated to Gervin and its 200 plus student population. Both ZELA and Gervin Prep along with M.O. Bush are now **KITABU** collaborators with ASU and the AZCAAC Collaborative. Collective efforts are now underway to acquire funds to sustain the literacy gains made over the past two years.



## PART 5. COOKIE DAY



**COOKIE DAY 2019:** Of all the **KITABU** projects and activities, **Cookie Day**, is by far the most fun for the children and parents. What started out as one mother and her daughters baking cookies for Christmas led to the daughter's cousins and friends coming



with their own parents the next year and so on until now nearly fifteen families participate in **Cookie Day** every year. This easy, fun and low cost to replicate activity strengthens

Parent and child bonds, models diversity and encourages friendships and learning. After baking and decorating cookies, children met with our certified reading coach and child Development expert, where they received a certificate of assessment and participation and permission to visit the **BOOK BANK** and select a bag of books to take home at the end of **Cookie Day**.

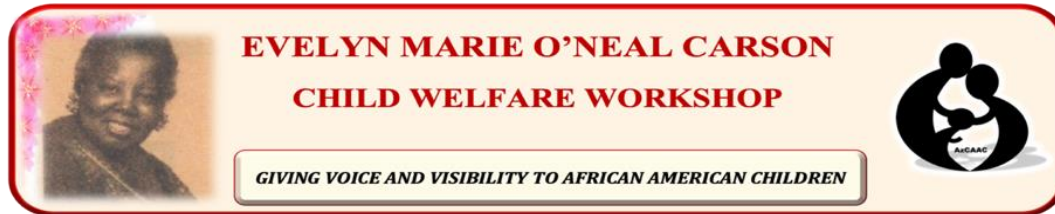


## PART 6. BOOKSNBARBERSHOPS

**BOOKSNBARBERSHOPS** was rolled out in 2018, and won its first site sponsorship from the Titus and Angel Butcher Family Fund in 2019. Shown on the right are Octavius Thompson and Shawn Pride, Senior Barbers of Beverage Barbers in Goodyear, Arizona, who are holding some of the new supply of children's books delivered by **KITABU** representatives and barbershop customers, Jeremiah Jordan and Roy Dawson. Parents are encouraged to read with their child while waiting for their turn. If they don't finish the book, they are allowed to take it home with them. A site sponsorship cost only \$100.00 per year and we encourage others to sponsor a site in their barber shop.



## **PART 7. 2019 AFRICAN AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON DISABILITIES**



### **2019 AFRICAN AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON DISABILITIES EVELYN MARIE O'NEAL CHILD WELFARE WORKSHOP**

In just its second year of existence, the Evelyn Marie O'Neal Carson (EMOC) Child Welfare Workshop has become the best attended and most sought after assembly on African American Children in Arizona. More importantly, it has done this through an “organic” approach of community development and collaboration which builds on the shared resources of individuals and organizations called the AZCAAC Collaborative.

In 2019, EMOC Child Welfare Workshops were overflowing with participants interested in a credible perspective on African American children in Arizona. The workshop recaps below on Education, Infant Mortality, Justice, and Child Well-being reflect their growing popularity.

#### **EDUCATION**

The mis-education of African American Children in Arizona is one of the oldest and least talked about crisis confronting African American children in the state. The public record is full of legislation, regulations and Superintendent statements to suggest that the State and the community is “indifferent” toward this known and documented crisis. In this 2019 workshop on the historical effects of trauma and the implications for educating African American children and teachers, Dr. Carlian Dawson, discussed the neuroscience behind ACEs, historical trauma, brain development and the learning implications for African American children.



#### **INFANT MORTALITY**

The challenges around maternal health and infant mortality continues to haunt our community. Because of the abundance of problems needing attention, work in this area of need will require a more consolidated and collaborative effort in 2020. While the infant deaths have declined in Arizona overall, it is still a little-known fact that the rate is still significantly disproportionate for African Americans. Dr. Monica Ennis, in the picture to the right, is shown in our 2019 workshop, discussing the health challenges that affect the African American community. African American Children in Arizona have





an average of 6 ACE points; which in our opinion, places them in the category of children with special health care needs and eligible for special health care services

In 2019, we contributed to the success of the first Statewide conference on Sickle Cell Anemia by recruiting members of our collaborative to serve as workshop leaders and topic presenters. The Sickle Cell education and information gap is a challenge that the State Department of Health Services will need lots of help with in 2020 and beyond.

### **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

African American children represent approximately 20% of all children in the “deep end” of the juvenile justice system. This statistic is similar to the disproportionate rate in child removals by DCS and school suspensions. In 2019 the EMOC Child Welfare Workshop hosted “A Black Mother’s Forum” presented by Ms. Janelle Wood, President of **A Black Mothers Forum**.



Ms. Wood explained how suspensions and expulsions of Black children strengthens the school to prison pipeline and stressed the need for more consistent and effective community involvement.

### **CHILD WELL BEING**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual African American Conference on Disabilities was very successful and attended by 330 participants. The conference and its workshops have reached the “excellence tipping point” and will require a conference committee of board members and collaborators to reach the next level. In 2020 we will inaugurate the “Village Well Summit” as our AZCAAC community development model.



## **PART 8. 2020 PLANS and GOALS**

- **AZCAAR:** Conduct a workshop at the April 2020 ASU Center for Child Well-being national conference on children of incarcerated parents (pending COVID-19).
- **AZCAAC COLLABORATIVE:** Will continue forward to further conversation with the NAACP State President about a project designed to create NAACP chapters in Arizona prisons.
- **CHILD ADVOCACY:** Establish a broader and more aggressive intervention tactic to increase community involvement and effectiveness.
- **LITERACY:** Increase awareness and accountability at the state level through more aggressive and more inclusive collaborations. Create more Church School and barbershop locations.
- **WEST VALLEY CITIES:** Target issues in the areas of child advocacy, education and foster care.
- **FUNDING:** Raise \$10,000 to \$20,000 in funding through grants, partner organizations, corporate and private donations, and other sources.