

PHOENIX THUNDERBIRD CLUB

Arizona Chapter #66

* MAY 2021 NEWSLETTER *



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT

It's hard to believe it has been over a year since we have been able together with our Pioneer family and friends. Even with the pandemic, as Pioneers we have continued to care and support each other and our communities. While things are not back to normal yet, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Please stay safe and we will come through this together. That's the Pioneer spirit.

Laura Warren and Caron Personke

2020 HONOREE * WANDA COTHRAN *



The year 2020 caused considerable upheaval in our lives, but Pioneers tried to continue with our volunteer efforts. Phoenix Thunderbird Club Board voted to highlight a member who was undaunted by the Covid-19 isolation and worked many hours (More than **1500** hours) making Hug-A-Bears. With certain criteria considered, the Board selected **WANDA COTHRAN** as the 2020 honoree to receive commendation for her volunteer work with HAB.

Wanda, as a Partner, became involved in Hug-A-Bears several years ago and enjoys making them to this day. Trips to a fabric store to purchase Hug-A-Bear material are one of her favorite outings. Many years ago, her husband was stationed in Hawaii and while there she became familiar with the various beautiful flowers of our 50th state. A bouquet of Anthurium, which is her favorite Hawaiian flower, was presented to Wanda in appreciation for her continued support of Pioneers and her many, many volunteer hours. Thank you, Wanda! (Photos may be seen at <https://aztelecompioneers.org>)



520 HUG-A-BEARS DELIVERED

The Hug-A-Bear group recently sent **220** bears to Valleywise Health and **300** bears to Navajo Nation.

A wide range of services in family care is offered at Valleywise Health (commonly still referred to as County Hospital) including Pediatric Neurosurgery, PICU, and Arizona's only pediatric burn center. Experts in child behavior agree that a hospital setting may be overwhelming for a child. The Hug-A-Bears donated by our Pioneers club are often used to comfort children in the unfamiliar and frightening hospital setting. A soft, cuddly little Hug-A-Bear to hang onto can hearten a bewildered child.

The Navajo Nation is a territory occupying portions of northeastern Arizona, southeastern Utah, and northwestern New Mexico. The Navajo women veterans of various US Military branches are instrumental in helping as the Navajo Nation grapples with a serious Covid-19 outbreak. (In Navajo, it's translated as *Dikos Ntsaaigii-19*). In partnership with the VA, 300 Hug-A-Bears from Phoenix Thunderbird Club were recently delivered to the Navajo Nation. *Did you know:* Navajo Nation is 27,413 sq miles.

Thank you Hug-A-Bears group for your amazing efforts and positivity!

GET A 110th ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR!

Founded in 1911, Pioneers focus their efforts in five major areas: helping military families, protecting the environment, education, life enrichment and health and human services.

Items from coffee cups to t-shirts, magnets to tote bags, even a jigsaw puzzle, to commemorate the 110th Anniversary of Pioneers are available to purchase at

<https://pioneers-a-volunteer-organization.myshopify.com/>

PIONEER WEBSITE – easy access to Pioneer information

<https://aztelecompioneers.org>

GRANT AWARDED FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLIES

GRANT GRANTED !

Two years in a row, Phoenix Thunderbird Club applied for and received a grant. This year's grant is for purchasing Back-to-School supplies for children at Acacia Elementary School. Every year for the past many years, our Back-to-School Supplies Drive has been a huge success, thanks to the generosity of our members.

We are not able to collect the supplies as our usual monthly luncheons are suspended (thanks to Covid-19 concerns) so the grant money is a \$300. welcome benefit. The Club will match the grant amount, therefore, we anticipate buying \$600. worth of school items for the students. Acacia Elementary School has a high concentration of children who are behind or at risk of falling behind, and often are at or below poverty level. The supplies donated by Pioneers are very much appreciated.

The Grants were previously awarded under the name Telecom Pioneers Charitable Foundation Fund. This year the Grant program was renamed to Don Mackenzie Charitable Foundation Fund in honor of the former President of Telephone Pioneers of America and Pioneers advocate, Donald Mackenzie.

For further information about Back-To-School Supply purchases, please contact Senior Vice-President Caron Personke.

"CARON'S CHALLENGE" Newsletters will feature "Caron's Challenge"

We are getting closer with vaccinations to being able to get together soon. Keep safe and stay healthy so we can. Have a great summer!

IN MEMORIAM



We send prayers for strength and comfort to the loved ones of those who have passed away.

DELIA Q. GUTIERREZ 06-29-38/02-05-21

"Delia was an operator for AT&T for 25 years."

JOHN LEROY MILLER 05-04-40 / 02-03-21

"He worked and retired from Ma Bell from 1958 to 1963 and 1965 to 1985."

GIFFORD D. "Skip" HUGHES 09-19-33 / 01-22-21

"Skip started as a lineman for Northwestern Bell and worked various positions working his way up until becoming an engineer. He accepted an inter-company transfer to Mountain Bell, Phoenix, Arizona in 1981. He retired with thirty-five years of service and then did consulting work. He was a member of the Milford (Iowa) American Legion and Telephone Pioneers."

WALTER "Rusty" LONG 04-09-50 / 01-21-21

"Rusty graduated from Coolidge High School, AZ, in 1968 and began working in telecommunications. He worked for Mountain Bell, AT&T, USWest and Qwest for 37 years."

ROSELLA LYNN NELSON HUTCHISON 01-07-50 / 03-06-21

"She spent her career in Phoenix working in the telecommunications field or at "the telephone company" as she used to say. At the conclusion of her professional career, she was a Training Manager at Qwest Communications."

FRANK LUJAN, JR. 03-09-21 81 years of age.

"He retired from AT&T as a Machinist Welder and was a member of the Centaurs Car Club."

HUGH "ED" HUGHES 08-30-23 / 03-12-21

"He joined the Western Electric/AT&T company and had an impressive career of 33 years working in the US, Canada, Greenland, Denmark, Norway, Nigeria and Vietnam. His last years with AT&T were in California. Ed retired in 1983."

BETTY J. YONKO 03-04-21 91 years of age

"Betty started a successful 30-year career at Mountain Bell in Tucson and ended her career as a manager with Lucent/AT&T in Phoenix."

RICHARD SMITH 02-12-25 / 03-18-21

"Dick was an AT&T technician from 1953-1987."

GEORGE WILLIAM LEE 04-11-21 90 years of age.

"George retired from Mountain Bell in 1983."

JANET STONE STEARNS 05-26-53 / 04-10-21

"She had a long and amazing career in sales for the telecommunications industry, eventually retiring from Verizon."

PAUL WILLIAM ELVERS 08-16-31 / 04-01-21

"Paul was employed by the Union Pacific Railroad as an Electrician Apprentice and later employed by Western Electric/AT&T retiring in Phoenix, AZ as a Supervisor after 33 years."

ESSENTIAL OIL DONATED TO CLC

Community Living Center (CLC) on the VA medical center campus currently has 25 residents. The veterans here are in hospice care or in need of general round-the-clock skilled nursing care. In discussions with the Volunteer Services Director, it was learned that aromatherapy is often used to provide relief to more than half of the residents. Some receive aromatherapy three times a week, some five days, some even seven days a week.

The therapists using diffusers provide any one of six essential oils, depending on the need of the resident. The aroma wafting through the air helps in many areas including pain and stress reduction, memory care, and all areas of emotional health. Lavender, which crosses over all health categories, is the most often used for the residents at CLC.

In Pioneers ongoing interest in helping veterans, **two 16-oz bottles of lavender essential oil for diffusers** were donated to CLC, much to the delight of the therapists.

BASEBALL CAPS DONATED TO CLC

Many of the CLC residents enjoy being taken outside to enjoy nature, the fresh air, and warmth of the sunshine. It's common knowledge that a baseball cap just goes with being outside! Pioneers donated a **box of 12** high quality, adjustable, maroon baseball caps to CLC. It is anticipated more boxes of baseball caps from Pioneers are in the future for CLC residents.

SMALL BAND OF VOLUNTEERS ALLOWED

Although most volunteers, including most Pioneer volunteers, are still "locked out" of being able to contribute their time with veterans who are homeless, in hospital, or in the CLC (skilled nursing center), a very small group of volunteers (the elite Military Order of the Cooties of the United States) have been intensely screened and cleared to help with the Work Studies Program and Vocational Rehab which are open again for veterans.

Follow your heart but take your brain with you.

Pioneers Mission Statement: Pioneers is a network of volunteers who effect immediate, tangible change in local communities.

SAVE THE DATE: WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA 12-18-21

Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, a day specifically set at the holiday season honoring those who sacrificed so much, this organization's mission to "Remember, Honor and Teach" is carried out by wreath-laying ceremonies at National Cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery, and additional locations in all 50 states, at sea and abroad.

Volunteers are needed to place the wreaths at each headstone, December 18, 2021. The main Ceremonies are at National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona, 23029 N. Cave Creek Rd (Just north of Loop 101) and Prescott National Cemetery, 500 Hwy 89 North. Arizona has also established state veterans' cemeteries. The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) National Cemetery Administration maintains 155 national cemeteries in 42 states and Puerto Rico as well as 34 soldier's lots and monument sites.

Remember to report volunteer hours to Laura Warren 602-574-0437



So long, Partner!

Just the **title** "Partner" is leaving Pioneers! The membership titles have been condensed into three categories: Regular (Working), Life (retirees), and Family and Friends. The "Partner" designation has been merged with the "Family and Friends" membership. Basically, we all seem like family and are friends! The designations are merely for record keeping and dues processing. Regular category are members still working who pay monthly dues; Life Members are retirees who have met certain criteria so they do not pay dues; Family and Friend members pay dues if they wish to be on an Executive Committee or take advantage of the many benefits offered by the Pioneer organization.



No luncheon reservation form attached ... No luncheon in May ...

Although Covid-19 restrictions have eased considerably, no luncheon is scheduled in May. The Board hopes to be able to schedule a luncheon in **DECEMBER 2021**. If it is considered safe for a gathering, a luncheon may be scheduled earlier. Our Club is dark June, July and August. Any notification will be in the September/October 2021 Newsletter.

Chapter 66 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The Chapter 66 Scholarship Committee reviewed applications submitted by seven outstanding students enrolled in college, university, or specialized training school. Each of the recipients of the two scholarships receive \$1000. to help further their education. The recipients, both from Tucson and attending University of Arizona Honors College, are **HANNAH LEHRFELD** and **CARSON DI MARIA**.

Both Hannah and Carson started volunteering at young ages; Hannah, as an elected member to 3rd grade Student Council, helped plant a school garden, served food to the homeless, and adopted a family for the holidays, and Carson as a 1st grade Cub Scout helping put together hygiene kits. He was in charge of the toothbrushes! Those experiences sparked their enthusiasm to volunteer throughout their lives.

Both students have lists of volunteer acts way too numerous to list here! One of Carson's most memorable volunteer activities was serving lunch to veterans on Veteran's Day and visiting with the veterans. He has helped with activities ranging from tutoring at-risk elementary school children to holding a contactless food drive. Hannah has been involved with serving the needs of the aging, refugees, animals, homeless, grieving families, and children with disabilities.

Just as important is their desire to continue to contribute to their communities. Thank you, Hannah and Carson, for volunteering!

Have a safe, healthy, and happy Summer!