

PHOENIX THUNDERBIRD CLUB

Arizona Chapter #66

* SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER *



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT

SAVE THE DATE: December 08, 2021. We're hopeful that the Covid-19 (and its variants Delta, Lambda, Mu, etc.) will have run its course by December and most concerns will be negated as we want to have a Club Luncheon! It's been so long since our dear Pioneers have been together and we all miss the warm comradery. December 8 is our target date! More information will be coming in the November/December Newsletter – anticipate good news! We certainly hope everyone is doing well and hope to see everyone soon!

Laura Warren and Caron Personke

VETERANS NEWS

Phoenix VA Medical Campus is in lockdown again as the Covid-19 variant cases are running high so no volunteers are allowed to help with the veterans' needs. They are also still not able to accept donations of any goods. The Club donations of the baseball caps and essential oils made it to the veterans in between crises. Sadly, what the veterans miss the most are books – which cannot be donated. Volunteer Services misses the Pioneers who volunteered and our much-appreciated donations.



PIONEER WEBSITE – easy access to Pioneer information

<https://aztelecompioneers.org> Chapter 66 website

WALKING TOUR OF ST. MARY'S FOOD BANK

April 30, 2021, was the final 2-hour walking tour of the 2021 Spring season of St. Mary's Food Bank facility at W. Thomas Road and N. 31st Avenue. The tour season begins again in October. The Food Bank is an amazing beehive of activity. Any Pioneer and volunteers who went on the tour received a wonderful education!

You might buy a can of beans to donate and you pay \$1.99 a can. SMFB would pay \$.18 per can because they buy in bulk – we're talking at least 100 cases at a time brought in by truck loads! Those cases are labeled, stacked from floor to ceiling on steel shelving in a huge warehouse, ready for distribution. Every weekday, volunteers arrive to pack boxes to ready the food for distribution to a homebound individual, senior citizen, children's program, family in need, etc.

SMFB strives for zero waste. Grocery stores donate produce that is just not so pretty *i.e.* that odd shaped apple. Those fruits and vegetables are quickly distributed by St. Mary's through various programs. If items become beyond what is considered prime-time, the fruits and veggies are sent to local farms and ranches to feed to the livestock. The animals love the treat!

Many companies (*i.e.* Kellogg's and bottled water companies) will donate what they produce on a specific day to the "umbrella" organization, American Food Alliance and that donation is then immediately distributed to the network of food banks throughout America. Perhaps Kellogg's Wheaties box features a photo of an athlete who has "fallen out of favor" or has become "unpopular" with the public – all of those boxes of cereal are donated. Many companies also encourage volunteering by allowing each employee x-number of hours off work to participate in volunteer work and many come to help at SMFB.

SMFB occasionally even receives large donations of dog food! As individuals or families come to pick up food, they are asked if they have a dog, and are given a bag of dog food for that family member. After most distribution is accomplished at SMFB, the dog food is donated to local animal shelters.

During the tour, you can step into the huge freezer kept at super cold temperature. You can also see the fleet of trucks partnered with Knight Transportation which picks up food and/or transports truckloads to one of

the 816 partner food distribution programs, and perhaps see National Guard volunteers wheeling shopping carts of goods out to families in the drive-by area.

It's a fun and interesting and eye-opening tour. The tour consists of apx. 30 minutes of introduction to SMFB and then an hour and a half of walking and standing and observing. The time goes by fast. Our past practice of donating money to St. Mary's Food Bank to purchase food is no longer acceptable through Pioneers. St. Mary's can always use **volunteers** though, and that hands-on activity is the goal of Pioneers. There are many locations throughout the Valley that are partnered with SMFB so you may find one very close to you. **Volunteers** may come in on a regular basis or may go in for one day – it helps both you and them!

To inquire about taking the tour and/or volunteering, please call 602-242-3663 or go to their website www.StMarysFoodBank.org.

Board members are also inquiring into assisting and volunteering at other local food banks and shelters who may need Pioneers' help.

HUG-A-BEARS DELIGHT PRE-SCHOOLERS

Pre-schoolers were thrilled to pick out one of the forty Hug-A-Bears, donated to the Palm Christian School, in Surprise, to call their very own. Many of these little ones were experiencing their first day ever away from home and were comforted to hold onto their bear – most of them clutched their bear all day! At the end of their school day, they were excited to take their bears home. No updates yet on if they are still bringing their bears to school!

FORTY HUG-A-BEARS were also donated to Acacia School. Principal Christine Hollingsworth noted the bears are very helpful and comforting to the little children who may be overwhelmed by the whole school experience.

Contact Caron Personke for Hug-A-Bear information. 602-670-1743

BIKES PRESENTED at ACACIA SCHOOL

Bicycles donated by Phoenix Thunderbird Club for the Read-to-Ride project, in coordination with the school's Accelerated Reader program, were presented to the winning students upon the reopening of the Acacia school. Accelerated Reader is a supplemental reading program to help students with their reading success.

A THANK YOU letter to Phoenix Thunderbird Club from the Acacia Principal, Christine Hollingsworth, was received and is copied below.

"We are so lucky to have such an amazing partnership with Telephone Pioneers. They have supported our staff and students for years and we appreciate it so much! We could not do all of the incentives and programs that we do without your support. The last year has been challenging for everyone including staff, students and families. However, Telephone Pioneers were still there to support the kids! We are sad that we couldn't hold our annual assembly with the TP representatives to pass out the bikes. Since we can't hold assemblies right now, we adapted (as we've been doing for over a year) and tried something a bit different. We can only have one grade level in the cafeteria at a time, so we drew the winners of the bikes during each lunch period. We kept the same requirements for students; they needed to read through the Accelerated Reader program and pass the tests on each book. We wanted to keep some consistency so the students knew the expectations. We were also lucky enough to have another reading program this year, my "On Reading" which had books on-line for students to read. It kept their minds active and still helped them keep up their comprehension and vocabulary even when school was virtual. So, THANK YOU and we missed you! We appreciate all that you do for us!"

The PTC Board, has voted to continue with the Read-to-Ride project for the 2021/2022 school year. We have a Pioneer member who was the Postal Service bicycle maintenance expert who anticipates volunteering his time to assemble the bikes. Thank you Rich Hernandez! Hopefully, all systems will be go and we can attend the school Spring Awards Assembly to see the winners' excitement as their names are announced.

900 SPIRAL NOTEBOOKS DONATED

The \$300. MacKenzie Charitable Grant which was awarded to Phoenix Thunderbird Club was used to purchase 900 spiral notebooks which Acacia School noted were very much needed. After back-to-school bedlun settles, the school administration will survey student supplies and notify our treasurer Caron Personke what other supplies are most needed by the students. Per the Grant contract, a matching amount of \$300. Club funds will then be used to purchase those supplies.

STUDENT WITH "PIONEER" SPIRIT

One student who was awarded a bicycle for her achievements in reading had recently received a bicycle as a gift from Santa Claus. She very sincerely thanked the Pioneers for the award. Having a practical and kind heart, this young girl knew she could not use 2 bicycles so she in turn gifted her bicycle to another student who had wanted a bicycle for a long time but her wish had not been granted. The winner of the bicycle understands that Pioneers are about "Answering the Call of Those in Need" and she chose to pass on the good Pioneer vibes. Thanks to this young future Pioneer for her good deed!

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

Have a safe and happy Halloween! Please consider Phoenix Thunderbird Club in your Trick-or-Treat plans! Treat the club with a donation! Mail checks, made out to Phoenix Thunderbird Club, to Caron Personke, Treasurer. 13034 N. 100th Ave. Sun City 85351 ***Thank you!***

Take care of yourselves and each other

IN MEMORIAM

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

KEVIN CHRISTOPHER O'NEILL 05-18-58 / 04-29-21

“Kevin was a long-time employee of Mountain Bell (Qwest).”

STEVE C. ZARAGOZA 02-24-46 / 01-27-21

“Steve attended Tolleson High School. After high school, he joined the Marines 1965-68. Upon returning home from the service, he worked at AT&T until retirement.”

ROBERT A. “Bob” DANIELS 05-21-21 Age 90

“Following his early retirement from a long and distinguished career with the Bell Telephone companies, he devoted his time to caring for his treasured wife of 43 years, Marge. Bob also leveraged his engineering and handyman skills as a volunteer for the Telephone Pioneers of America.”

SHELBY JEAN BARCUS 09-30-38 / 07-06-21

“Shelby started work with Mountain Bell Telephone in 1960 and retired in 1999 with 39 years of service.”

CLAIRE GRESKO 10-11-47 / 06-23-21

LLOYD ACOSTA LOPEZ

“In November 1960, Lloyd joined Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph company beginning his 36-year career with the business. During this time, Lloyd achieved multiple promotions as he assumed various roles and responsibilities with the company: Plant Frame man, Installation and Repair, Commercial Salesman, Director of Sales, Director of Advertising Representatives, and Yellow Pages Directory Sales Manager. He retired from the business, then known as USWest Direct and now known as Century Link, in October 1996.”

MARY SCHINN Limited information has come to PTC that one of our regular luncheon members has recently passed because of complications of Covid. Mary was 99 years of age. Mary not only worked many years for “the telephone company”, but she had also served during WWII.



***No luncheon reservation forms attached
... No luncheons in September or October ...
Hoping for a luncheon in December !***

ANNUAL AWARD and SCHOLARSHIP NIGHT

Apache Junction High School

The annual Senior Awards Night was held this spring at Apache Junction High School on May 10. Principal Dr. Chris Lineberry looked at the students seated on the stage and stated, "I couldn't be more proud of you." Among other awards and scholarships, ten Madalyn Rollins Scholarships of \$1000. each were presented. Recipients were Katelyn Beazley, Brianna Bogart, SeAnna Brennan, Chloe Collins, Chloe Krueger, Hannah Molino, Savana Orrantia, Ainsley Pape, Jorja Schuster, MacKenzie Vandekrol. Ms. Rollins was a Pioneer who bequeathed funds to be used for ten scholarships each year to deserving seniors at Apache Junction High School. The high school staff and administration review the applications and select the awardees.

Valleywise Health Medical Center Receives 800 Hug-A-Bears

For many, many years, Phoenix Thunderbird Club Pioneers have donated Hug-A-Bears to "Maricopa County Hospital", now known as Valleywise Health. Of course, pandemic temporarily put the kibosh on that project. Recently, the volunteer services manager very excitedly gave the go-ahead for Pioneers to bring bears. EIGHT HUNDRED Hug-A-Bears were promptly delivered. The manager explained that not only will the bears go to children in the hospital but also to the children arriving at the new dental program office. Sitting in a dentist office waiting room can be very stressful for these children, especially for their first time ever being to a dentist, and they will now have a bear to squeeze.