

Fueling Forever Families in Support of National Foster Care Month

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Local businesses are stepping up to show support for organizations in need.

There are more 17,000-plus children in the care of the Arizona Department of Child Safety. The high number of children searching for their forever home is astounding and the drive to have reliable foster families is a constant ongoing battle.

May is National Foster Care Month, a time set aside to celebrate and honor those who have opened their homes and hearts to children in need and also for those dedicated to serving the country's foster youth. We are blessed to have an amazing program here in the Grand Canyon state to help these kids - Arizona Helping Hands. According to Dan Shufelt, CEO of the organization, their services are needed now more than ever. "We are the largest provider of basic needs for Arizona's foster families, and we rely on volunteers, generous donors and local businesses to help us make a difference in their lives every day. Even the smallest support can go a long way to helping these families and especially the children thrive."

Local business support is one of the keys to the success of Arizona Helping Hands. Businesses such as Kid to Kid are perfect examples of companies who play a supportive role for the organization. Chris Fay, owner of the Tatum and Thunderbird Kid to Kid location says it is simply about giving back to those who need it the most. "Our customers typically sell their goods to us for resale, however, if there are items we are unable to purchase, we are happy to take them for donation purposes for foster families and organizations such as Arizona Helping Hands. From great baby and kids' clothes, quality baby equipment and toys, it's passing love from kid to kid." Fortunately, that isn't all. All Kid to Kid locations offer year-round discounts for foster parents, making it easier for them to provide for the children they are caring for in their homes.

Shufelt agrees that it is the support of such amazing local businesses that allow Arizona Helping Hands to help so many children (1,300-plus already this year). "Everyone in the community can do something. Support stores such as Kid to Kid who support us, donate your time to volunteer or simply spread the word of our work through social media. A little can go a long way to help our boys and girls."

Becoming a foster family or parents takes a lot of dedication and support. If you would like information on how to become a foster family, visit dcs.az.gov/foster-care. If you own or manage a local business or you're an individual who can give support organizations such as Arizona Helping Hands, reach out to them at www.azhelpinghands.org. If you would like to learn more about a unique foster care discount program, log onto to [Kid to Kid](#) for store locations and contact information.