

AZ Giving: Having a "Why" Makes All the Difference

Written by Dan Shufelt, President & CEO of Arizona Helping Hands
Thursday, 16 April 2020 13:03 -



I feel so blessed by the work I do as president and CEO of [Arizona Helping Hands](#) (AHH). Providing basic needs to make lives better for children in foster care, giving young boys a bed to sleep on after they've experienced abuse and neglect, providing a crib to a baby born addicted to meth, or celebrating a birthday of a teen who has never had a birthday celebration – the list is plentiful for WHY I choose to put my all into my daily job.

In these challenging days, I've asked my staff and our volunteers to share their WHYs. During periods like this, I think it helps to dig deeper and ask what gives us fulfillment in our lives. The responses have been heartfelt and emotional.

Jodie's reason is in her life 24/7. Adopting her son out of the foster care system, she's lived the life and understands directly the impact that caring adults can have on the lives of children who have been maltreated. As our COO, she is helping others who are now walking the path that she has, and she is deeply devoted to our work because of her WHY.

Sonora told us that she is proud to work at AHH. She says, "The work I do here means that a little girl in foster care will sleep in a bed, have her basic needs provided for and receive a present on her birthday – I think that's pretty amazing!" She remembers the first time she held a substance-exposed newborn and how heartbreaking it was feeling that little body tremble. Her WHY is knowing that she makes a difference every day.

We utilize volunteers extensively in our service to Arizona children in foster care. They are the reason we can impact so many lives, and we are intensely grateful for their hard work and dedication. Dorothy tells us that her work creating personalized birthday packages every Friday is a blessing to her. She is "touching lives one birthday bag at a time" and is "thankful for being part of the AHH family."

Mike told us that in retirement he has always supported the underdog and been generous with his pocketbook. He chose AHH after reviewing our financials and chose to donate to us. He now volunteers his time in our warehouse – a job he did 50 years ago - because he has a soft spot for children in need and has found a charity that is efficient. His intent is to keep volunteering as long as he is healthy.

With 14,000-plus kids in foster care in Arizona, filling their essential needs takes an army. We are deemed an essential service in this time of crisis and we will continue our work making a difference for boys and girls in need of a safe place to sleep and much more. The fact that each and every one of us has a meaningful reason to come to work and to make good things happen every day will keep us going through this time of stress.

The COVID-19 crisis will have an impact on every charity. Our donations are down and we will need to reassess every aspect of our operations. We will have to modify HOW we do our work. I am fearful that we may have to take a serious look at WHAT we do, and potentially cut back on our support of families. Through it all though, I know unequivocally that we will persevere because we have a WHY – and ultimately that makes all the difference.

Arizona Helping Hands is a Qualifying Foster Care Charitable Organization (QFCO#10003) and, as such, donations from Arizona taxpayers qualify for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit on your state tax return.