

Are you 20-30? Join The Cause

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For those of you, AZFoothills.com readers who aren't familiar with Phoenix 20-30, it's about time! The Active 20-30 Club of Phoenix is Arizona's most active fundraising men's clubs. Raising millions of dollars since over seventy years ago, the men of Active 20-30 have dedicated thousands of hours to children's charities around the valley. The club continues to dedicate its fundraising to one of the fastest growing groups: underprivileged children.

Phoenix #99 began on April 23rd, 1932 by a group of local businessmen including Senator Barry Goldwater, Dr. Carlos Craig, Earnest Suggs, Bob Goldwater, and Harry Rosenzweig, Sr. The majority of the service groups in the valley such as: Boy's & Girl's Club, Thunderbirds, Rotary, etc., have had past 20-30 members on their team.

Today, the Active 20-30 Club of Phoenix #99 provides a roster of the top young, professional men living in the valley. Members form a very close bond and friendships with others in the community by meeting twice a month, discussing and planning fundraisers – such as the annual Noche de Gourmet and the Phoenix Suitcase Party events.

AFM had the privilege to speak with the President of Phoenix 20-30 himself. After living in Washington, D.C. serving on the legislative staff of members of the U.S. Senate and House, Todd Sommers returned to Arizona, assisting a variety of companies, campaigns, and non-profits. He now runs a public affair firm and serves on the Children in Need Foundation Board for Director. Todd living with his wife, Kim, and their children, Nathan and Elizabeth, helps children around the valley and charitable organizations.

Q: When did the club originate?

A: In 1932 there were few businesses. Berry Goldwater Sr. and more businessmen met to make fundraisers for underprivileged children. The members were from ages 20-40 with about 50 people.

Q: What does the club do?

A: We do events to fund-raise money to feed the children and give fun prizes. For example, the Phoenix Suitcase Party is where you buy and enter a ticket into the raffle and the winner leaves with an exclusive weekend in a Sonoma jet.

Q: Who can join the club?

A: It's open to the community, but we normally choose people out in the community and rely on members to bring in. We steer away from people that just want to grow their business... we want people to be dedicated and to specifically serve children.

Q: How often does the club meet, and what happens at these meetings?

A: Once a month, there's one mandatory volunteer activity per quarter. Sometimes the members will help children shop for school supplies. The members will even sometimes take their family and children to the events that the underprivileged kids are at. All of them enjoy going to events like the Diamondbacks game or even bowling and eating pizza, where they all interact with others. We mentor once a month for Phoenix Youth at Risk.

Q: What happens to the members when they are no longer in the age of 20-30?

A: When a member turns thirty-nine, they get a parting gift and are sent on their way. The members have established relationships for twenty years or so working with a bunch of organizations. Attendees go on their own and normally attend events and work solely with one organization or specific charity, for example a man just turned 40 and he went to serve on the board for the Special Olympics.

Q: What's an experience that moved you?

A: You form a valued partnership with the children. It is fundamental; after we took them shopping for school supplies, on the bus ride home we had a conversation of why the club would want to spend time with kids. Some of these kids don't understand and have never had a responsible male role model in their lives because of unstable environments. These children don't understand why the members spend time with someone they never met but being able to do that makes the experience worthwhile.