



**Empowering individuals, families and communities to be free from abuse through collaboration, prevention, awareness and support.**

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—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE AGAINST FAMILY ABUSE RECEIVES GRANT FROM THUNDERBIRDS CHARITIES FOR CHILDREN IMPACTED BY DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

Apache Junction, Arizona (Jan. 23, 2019) –Community Alliance Against Family Abuse (CAAFA) has received a \$7,500 grant from Thunderbirds Charities, the charitable giving arm of the Thunderbirds – hosts of the Waste Management Phoenix Open presented by Ak-Chin Indian Community. The grant will be used to provide equine therapy for children impacted by domestic and sexual violence.

In 2019, CAAFA expects to serve approximately 25 children from Maricopa County in the organization’s domestic violence crisis shelter. Funding from Thunderbirds Charities will support equine-assisted therapy facilitated by a licensed professional counselor, on-site at the CAAFA shelter.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010), 1 in 9 children in the U.S. may experience domestic violence each year. In CAAFA’s service area of Pinal and eastern Maricopa Counties, this means more than 34,000 children may experience domestic violence this year alone.

“We serve children of all ages who come to our Safe House with their mom or dad. We have up to 120 days to ensure the children feel safe, begin to heal from their trauma, and learn about healthy social relationships and interactions,” CAAFA Executive Director, Ray Villa said. “One of the most impactful ways that we do this is through equine therapy.”

Children often come to CAAFA not trusting others or isolating themselves, due to the domestic and/or sexual violence they have experienced. Over time, through interacting with the equine therapy horses, they become more communicative and trusting, and they begin to talk about how they are feeling. Further, when parents and children interact together with the horses, it creates a safe place to build a bridge and strengthen their bond, which may have been strained due to their trauma. Equine therapy is a unique way to help each child harness their innate mental, emotional, and physical strengths in order to counteract their exposure to abuse and position them for positive, healthy futures.

“CAAFA is providing tools to these traumatized children to help heal and thrive,” said Carlos Sugich, President of Thunderbirds Charities. “We are happy to support their efforts in our community.”

**Thunderbirds Charities**

Thunderbirds Charities is a non-profit organization formed in 1986 to distribute monies raised through the Waste Management Phoenix Open golf tournament. The mission of Thunderbirds Charities is to assist children and families, help people in need and improve the quality of life in our communities. The organization’s giving is directed toward organizations based or with a significant presence in Arizona. The Thunderbirds were founded in 1937 with the mission of promoting the Valley of the Sun through sports. For more information on The Thunderbirds or the 2019 Waste Management Phoenix Open, visit



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www.wmphenixopen.com. For more information on Thunderbirds Charities, visit [www.thunderbirdscharities.org](http://www.thunderbirdscharities.org).

**About Community Alliance Against Family Abuse**

CAAFA's mission is to empower individuals, families, and communities to be free from abuse through collaboration, prevention, awareness, and support. Our agency was founded in 1998 by community members who were confronted by the tragic reality that local victims of domestic violence and their children were living in their cars and out in the desert because they had nowhere to go. CAAFA has grown substantially since then, now serving victims of domestic abuse from Pinal and eastern Maricopa counties. We provide a 16-bed emergency shelter, support groups, legal advocacy, case management, sexual violence victim advocacy, nutritional support through food boxes, community outreach services, and more. In the last fiscal year, CAAFA served 472 individuals. For additional information, please visit [www.caafaaz.org](http://www.caafaaz.org).

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