

PRESS RELEASE

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PEACELINKS: Summit to Address Community Impact of Free Health Care, “Village” Efforts

Phoenix’s Murphy School District to be Used as Model

Tempe, Ariz. (Sept. 6, 2007) – Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine (SCNM) and the Arizona Department of Peace (AZDOP) Campaign have teamed up to host an inaugural summit to address peace manifestation in neighborhoods such as Phoenix’s Murphy School District (No. 21) in South Phoenix.

The event, called *PEACELINKS: Families + Education + Health = Peace*, will be held Saturday, Sept. 15 from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. at Arthur M. Hamilton Elementary School. It will feature community, education, health, law enforcement and government leaders to discuss how coordinated community efforts and free health care can promote peace in neighborhoods facing challenges. The public is welcome to attend.

“This is an opportunity to relay the clinic’s message and showcase the fruits of our labors to the members of the community and donors who made it possible. We are providing free and accessible health care to those who truly need it most, and the experience has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career,” said Dr. Matt Baral, assistant professor at Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine and medical director of the Hamilton Elementary School Clinic.

Origins of free health care in Murphy School District

In 2001, the Murphy School District integrated a district-wide, free health care system, staffed by SCNM doctors. The clinic, housed at Hamilton Elementary, provides free health care to the 2,600 student in the district, as well as many of the parents.

Prior to the creation of the free health clinic, there was one family practitioner per 10,000 residents in the Murphy School District. The nearest hospital, Maricopa Integrated Health Systems, is seven miles away, and many families in this area have single-parent households and no automobiles, which prevented them from easy medical access. The majority of students in this district are uninsured, and some had never seen a doctor before receiving care at the clinic.

Based upon morbidity data from the Maricopa County Health Department, health status in the South Phoenix region is one of the lowest in the county (Source: 2007 MC DPH Health Status Report).

Murphy Superintendent Paul Mohr, Ph.D., says the free health care program has helped encourage stability in the district.

“The families in the Murphy School District are highly migratory,” said Mohr. “In order for us to stem the continual exodus of families so that their children can receive an academic foundation, it is necessary to establish essential services that will benefit the entire family. We want to create a stable, quality living environment.”

Baral adds that the health care provided by the free health clinic is quick, convenient and sincere.

“Families know they won’t be scrutinized for not having enough money, or if they aren’t able to speak English,” he said. “Plus, the free clinic takes the burden off of nearby emergency rooms, where many of these residents would previously go for their primary medical care.”

The successes experienced in the Murphy School District are to be used as models for similar neighborhoods throughout the Valley, state and nationwide.

Unprecedented need for free health care

This summit comes on the heels of a new report from the U.S. Census Bureau, which states a record 47 million Americans lack health insurance (<http://www.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=607734>). This lack of insurance has consequences that extend beyond medical care. According to a March 2007 report from the Campaign for Children’s Health Care:

- Children without health insurance are less likely to get care for such things as ear infections, which can lead to lifelong consequences like loss of hearing.
- Children with health insurance are more likely to be healthy, and healthy kids do better in school.
- Children with health insurance miss fewer days from school, and their parents subsequently miss less time from work.
- Healthy children still need check-ups, shots and regular dental care so they can stay healthy.
- Insuring children will help close the racial disparities gap.

(Source: <http://www.childrenshealthcampaign.org/assets/pdf/School-Kids-Need-Insurance.PDF>)

Promoting peace in our neighborhoods

SCNM partnered with the AZDOP Campaign to tell the story of the Murphy School District in a public forum, positioning the community-wide accomplishments as a state and national model for peace manifestation.

“This summit allows us to showcase what is currently working to foster peace in our community, and take a look at what can be done in the future,” said Terri Mansfield, executive director of the AZDOP Campaign. “Peace begins within and uplifts every member of society. It’s our opportunity to present the tenants of peace to policy decision makers.”

The AZDOP Campaign is a grassroots, non-partisan, inclusive organization that supports the creation of a U.S. Department of Peace and Nonviolence, which will research, articulate and

facilitate non-violent solutions to domestic and international conflicts. The AZDOP Campaign is a part of The Peace Alliance, a national effort to establish the cabinet-level department, which was first suggested in 1792 by Founding Father Dr. Benjamin Rush.

"I hope the summit instills the value of establishing a U.S. Department of Peace," said Mohr. "Domestic violence, gang violence and violent crimes happen much too often in the Murphy School District community. It is my hope that options of peace will permeate this community to the point it will reduce violence at every level."

Event details:

WHERE: Arthur M. Hamilton Elementary School, Murphy School District
2020 W. Durango St.
Phoenix

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 15
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

WHO: The panel includes:

- Paul Mohr, Ph.D., Murphy School District superintendent
- Dr. Christine Girard, chief medical officer and executive vice president of SCNM. She oversees clinical operations at all SCNM medical sites throughout the Valley.
- Sherry Lund, philanthropist. She has been the largest contributor to the Murphy School district health clinic since it was founded in 2001.
- Terri Mansfield, Phoenix human relations commissioner and executive director of the Arizona Dept. of Peace (AZDOP) Campaign
- Dr. Matt Baral, naturopathic physician specializing in pediatrics. He is a faculty member at SCNM and oversees the Murphy School District free health care clinic.
- Joan Baron, internationally-known environmental artist. She has created outdoor art for the City of Scottsdale, the Piestewa Freeway and the Murphy School District.
- Jannah Scott, policy advisor for Faith & Community Initiatives, Office of Gov. Janet Napolitano
- Lt. Judy Lorch and Akoswa (Pamela) McRae, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, the ALPHA program
- Dr. Gladys McGarey, The Gladys McGarey Foundation and "Living Medicine" co-founder of the American Medical Holistic Association
- Members of Phoenix Rotary 100, including Barry Peretz, Gail Peretz and Dick Eisenach
- Trish McCarty, chief executive officer and founder of Starshine Academy Charter School in Phoenix
- Renee Morgan Brooks, international singer and motivational speaker

For more information, visit:

www.scnm.edu

www.azdopcampaign.org

www.thepeacealliance.org

www.msdez.org

www.msdez.org/boundaries.htm (School district boundaries)

About Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences

Founded in 1992, Tempe-based Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences provides high-quality, student-oriented medical education to advance the art and science of naturopathic medicine. The school houses the Southwest College Research Institute and the Southwest Naturopathic Medical Center:

- The Institute conducts and promotes research on natural therapies and natural medicines, and it works to advance the knowledge of issues surrounding research in natural medicine.
- The Medical Center offers multi-disciplinary primary medical care for common, serious and chronic health conditions. The staff consists of naturopathic physicians, allopathic physicians, chiropractors and acupuncturists that treat patients of all ages using a variety of healing methods.

For more information, visit www.scnm.edu or call (480) 858-9100.

About Arizona Department of Peace Campaign

Founded in 2003 as a partner to the national non-profit movement, the Arizona Department of Peace (AZDOP) Campaign is a grassroots, non-partisan organization that supports the creation of a U.S. Department of Peace and Nonviolence, which will research, articulate and facilitate non-violent solutions to domestic and international conflicts. The AZDOP Campaign is a part of The Peace Alliance, a national effort to establish the cabinet-level department. In addition, there are 24 other countries working to create Departments of Peace.

The AZDOP Campaign supports a bill that is currently active in the U.S. House of Representatives (HR808), which would establish the U.S. Department of Peace and Nonviolence.

For more information, visit www.azdopcampaign.org or call (602) 885-9058.

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