

Bios of 2009 Awards of Excellence

Outstanding Afterschool Professional—Earnestine “Earnie” Hohl, Teen Program Director for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Phoenix, Peoria Branch is well known for her outreach and partnership that keeps teens off the street and out of trouble. She treats the teens like adults, setting boundaries and teaching them respect and responsibility. She leads by example sharing her passion with her Keystone Club who plan and implement community volunteer projects throughout the year. Through her guidance and caring, troubled teens find the hope, support and safe environment they need to graduate from high school, “say no” to drugs, learn job and life skills and imagine the possibilities of a brighter future.

Outstanding Afterschool Program—ICAN is a free high-quality, out-of-school-time program that empowers youth to be accountable. Founded to serve Chandler youth, ages 5 – 18, ICAN offers after-school and summer/intersession programs which foster positive attitudes while discouraging destructive behavior. Their research based, prevention programs focus on education, healthy lifestyles, youth development, and job skills programming. ICAN participants achieve significant, positive lifestyle changes including gains in leadership, social competency, and self-confidence. These new found skills enable ICAN youth to resist the pressure to use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs as well as provide a positive alternative to violence and gang-related activities. In addition to working directly with youth, ICAN is also committed to involving families through their Strengthening Families Program, Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families Program, and their Me and My Family nights program.

Jane Romatzke Leadership Award—Jen Ward, Recreation Coordinator for the Town of Marana Parks & Recreation Department is a leader who advocates for the afterschool field, whose work exemplifies afterschool best practices and whose heart is committed to youth. She oversees afterschool programs that serve more than 300 children in the school year and an additional 300 children during summer programming. She manages the Town of Marana’s Inclusion Program ensuring that youth and families with special rights have every opportunity to participate in not only her programs but all Marana Parks & Recreation programs. Jen has a degree in Physical Education from the University of Ohio and has worked with and on behalf of children for the past 20 years.

Afterschool Champions Award—Eddie & Nadine Basha

Eddie Basha is a man with deep roots in Arizona and a big heart for the needs of Arizona’s children. Born and raised in Chandler, Eddie has dedicated his life to making Arizona a better place to live. His advocacy for children and education is legendary which is why he was an unquestionable choice to receive this year’s Afterschool Champions Award.

Few community leaders have the breadth and depth of hands on experience working to improve the lives and education of Arizona’s children. Locally, Eddie served on the Chandler Unified School District Board for thirteen years before becoming a member of the State Board of Education for eight years which then led to his appointment to the Board of Regents by Governor Rose Mofford.

Supporting, his wife, Nadine’s passion and commitment to early childhood education, Eddie has literally fought for the educational needs and success of children from birth through college.

Nadine Mathis Basha is a force in her own right advocating tirelessly for Arizona’s children. Teaching in the public school as well as directing a private school program led Nadine to found Summa Associates, one of the first consulting and management firms specializing in corporate child care. She is responsible for the passage of Proposition 203 creating a funding source for and system of early childhood education which literally positioned Arizona as a national leader in early childhood education.

Nadine served as the chair of the Arizona State School Readiness Board and was appointed to the Arizona State Board of Education by Governor Jane Dee Hull. She currently serves on the Boards of WestEd, a regional educational research and development organization, the Ellis Center for Educational Excellence as well as being the newly elected chair of the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board. Nadine Mathis Basha is another unquestionable choice to receive this year’s Afterschool Champions Award.