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**Boys Hope Girls Hope of Arizona Launches Strategic Growth Initiative and Expansion of Academy Program**

Goal to double number of youth served by 2030

The mission of Boys Hope Girls Hope of Arizona (BHGH AZ) is to nurture and guide motivated young people in need to become well-educated, career-ready men and women for others. Since 1989, we have been successfully fulfilling that mission in Arizona by helping low-income, first-generation youth achieve their goal of a college education.

In order to reach more scholars and families, BHGH AZ is launching a Strategic Growth Initiative focused on scaling the program for effectiveness in programming, accessibility, community engagement and financial stability with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of career-ready college graduates in our community.

The BHGH AZ growth path includes transitioning away from residential services in June 2023, increasing the learning center-based Academy Program, and continuing to provide long-term, comprehensive support through the College Program.

BHGH AZ services and programs have been extremely effective. We boast a 74% college graduation rate for scholars compared to 11% for youth from similar backgrounds. Notably, over 85% of BHGH AZ scholars graduate with zero student debt and those who have it average less than \$4,000. We are taking what we have learned over the past 30 years regarding youth development, cultural fluency, and college access, and making changes to provide services in an even more family-responsive manner. We will focus our programmatic interventions in ways that achieve the same high-quality outcomes, in a more financially sustainable way, and without removing a youth from their family environment.

**How we got here**

In 2021, the BHGH AZ Board began a long-term strategic planning initiative with the goal of broadening the organization’s reach. A Strategic Task Force was formed, made up of volunteer board members and BHGH AZ leadership and youth-serving staff, to ensure the approach was thoughtful, sustainable and would best serve the BHGH AZ mission. In-depth program analysis was conducted, which showed the following:

Scholars served from 1989-2003: 39

(Boys Hope residential home opened in 1989; Girls Hope opened in 1998)

Scholars served from 2004-2022: 210

(Academy/non-residential Program launched 2004)

Current Residential Capacity: 16; Academy Capacity: 42; Current Collegian Cohort: 35

	<u>Academy</u>	<u>Residential</u>
Program persistence	92%	81%
College graduation	77%	67%
Cost per scholar*	\$12,423	\$33,988

\*excludes in-kind value of tuition at private/college preparatory school

### **Changes to the Residential Program**

The Task Force and BHGH AZ Board determined that reducing the responsibility of the residential properties allows the organization to increase the robustness of scholar services and increase the number of youth served overall. It allows us to sharpen our focus on holistic youth development, academic support, career readiness and college persistence – our core purpose – which is sometimes diluted by management of properties, repairs & maintenance, rising costs of living, and 24-hour staffing and operations.

Importantly, out-of-home placement for youth is a declining trend with emphasis put on the value of helping a family address their obstacles or needs (see Family First Act). Greater family engagement, understanding of their needs, and support to help them address those needs are in line with BHGH AZ's Cultural Fluency goals established in 2019 (link to this).

The residential model, upon which BHGH was founded by Fr. Paul Sheridan, SJ, has been a significant and life-changing intervention for the youth who have called the BHGH residences home. These youth and families are a permanent part of the BHGH family, and so much history, love, joy, and activity have been enjoyed in the homes. While it is hard to transition from a program that's been so impactful for those who have been part of it, we know it's the right thing to do for the long-term efficacy of the program. This change puts BHGH AZ on a long-term sustainable path to help more youth in need.

Current residential scholars will have the opportunity to join the Academy Program. Ensuring a positive and responsible shift for the scholars is a paramount priority and we are committed to ensuring BHGH AZ scholars are set up for success and achieve their potential. Additionally, BHGH AZ will work with our community to find alternatives for youth we identify in the future, who are in need of housing support.

### **Increased Focus on Academy, College Programs**

The Academy Program, now in its 18th year of operation, has proven to be an incredibly effective approach to helping low-income, first-generation students achieve their goal of a college education. Profiles, family size, income and needs of Academy and Residential families are very similar. The Academy Program has attracted more applicants as it does not require the child to live away from home. It is BHGH AZ's most long-term intervention serving youth for up to 11 years and allowing for earlier intervention, which studies show is critical for a youth's successful academic journey. It produces excellent outcomes for a fraction of the cost and keeps the family unit intact. The Academy Program scholar census will incrementally increase beginning in 2024.

### **The Academy program effectively executes the hallmarks of BHGH AZ program, including:**

- Early intervention beginning as young as 6th grade – a key transition time for youth to establish fundamental academic achievement skills and attitudes
- Holistic programming standards focusing on content essential for positive youth development including Personal Development, Empowered Learning, College & Career Readiness, Life Preparedness, and Leadership & Service
- Tutors, mentors, summer programming and social-emotional supports
- Scholarships to private and/or college preparatory middle and high schools including tuition, books, uniforms, supplies and access to enrichment and extracurricular activities
- Support through college completion – case management and needs-based, gap scholarship support to ensure scholars not only enter, but persist and complete college as career-ready, community-minded young adults
- Inclusion in a national network of like-minded scholars and alumni providing personal, educational and career focused development and engagement opportunities



### **The Path for Growth for BHGH AZ in 2023**

We are excited to announce the Arizona Academy Launch 2.0! Together we will achieve the following for hard-working students and families in our community:

- Increase the annual number of BHGHAZ scholars served with a trajectory to double in size by 2030
- Maintain high academic outcomes and success rates in all areas
- Increase early interventions for Career development, readiness and exploration of alternate post-secondary pathways
- Increase holistic leadership, social-emotional, life-skill and cultural training
- Increase interventions that help the whole family improve their social-determinants of health by providing targeted resources and help in navigating community resources
- Establish a new and expanded Learning Center
- Establish an endowment fund for educational support of first-generation college-goers

BHGH AZ is grateful for our community of supporters who have made this life-changing opportunity available to youth and families in Arizona. Our donors and volunteers are essential to achieving our mission. We look forward to engaging the community in meaningful and impactful activities to support our growing number of scholars. (Academy overview and volunteer doc links)

We invite the community to learn more about BHGH AZ's Strategic Growth Initiative as we prepare to impactfully serve Arizona's determined, first-generation youth in becoming well-educated, career-ready men and women for others.

Please do not hesitate to contact us to learn more about this transformational initiative.

Gratefully yours,

*Amy Pfeifer*

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