

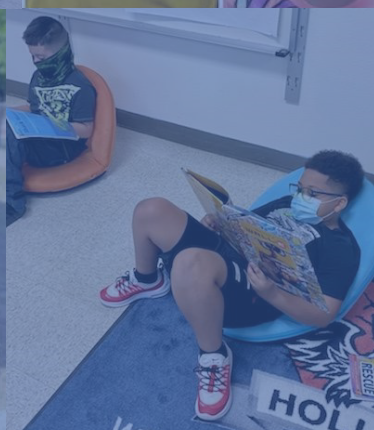
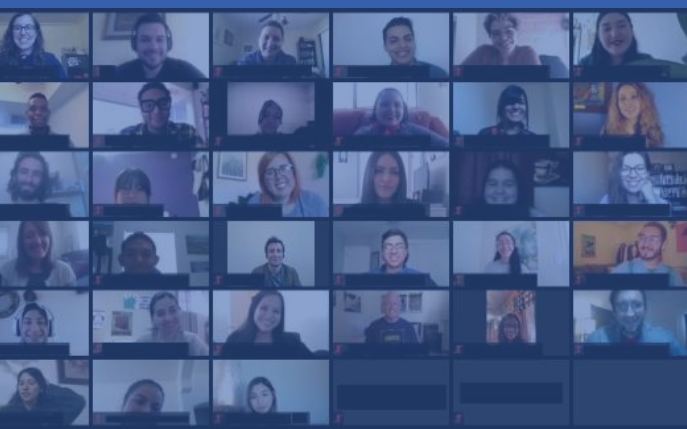


southern arizona microgrants

SOLUTIONS THAT RETHINK LEARNING

FINALIST SNAPSHOT

September 2021



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

HOLLADAY FINE ARTS MAGNET

Tucson | Pima County | Public District | Community Faith Partners | Urban

TUCSON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Holladay Fine Arts Magnet (“Holladay”) is reimagining where, when and how learning takes place by partnering with local churches and faith leaders in the community to address reading deficits with their learners. The majority of Holladay’s Latino and African American youth attend church or places of worship so collaborative partnerships with churches and faith leaders gives families direct access to a safe environment and relationships that children and families of color trust. This innovative collaboration creates new reading hubs in partnership with local church and faith leaders to better collectively tackle reading deficits through one-on-one and small group tutoring and reading intervention experiences – ensuring learning happens both at school and at partner local churches and places of worship. Holladay’s approach honors parents as “first” teachers, brings in the community, and creates wrap-around services and support for learners with the greatest academic needs as a result of COVID-19. This collaboration will create a collective circle of support focused on facilitating a shared commitment to academic success, bringing together school staff, families, learners, and faith communities as partners. The Holladay team will upskill the church volunteers on best reading approaches and how to monitor students’ growth. Phase One will be made possible with seeding reading hubs at five local churches with the intent of expanding to 15 other churches and places of worship of diverse denominations who have shown interest in participating, recognizing learners are all better if we work together. Holladay aims to facilitate a shared and inclusive commitment to academic success among learners, families, and local faith leaders.

Grant Impact

K-5
Grade Levels Served

300
Total Learners Served Year 1

DEMOGRAPHICS

Title I – 82% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch

5% White; 66% Hispanic; 25 % African American, 4% American Indian

Grant Award

\$25,000

We are excited to partner with A for Arizona to respond to the academic and social needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This time calls for the community to come together and think outside the box. Our innovative program, in collaboration with local churches, will improve reading literacy of more than 300 K-5 students while also providing home libraries.

Tonya Strozier, Principal



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

NOGALES UNIFIED + BOYS & GIRLS CLUB-NOGALES

Nogales | Santa Cruz County | Public District & Nonprofit | Remote/Rural

Nogales Unified School District ("NUSD") is responding to an emerging need in their community for families by launching a collaborative partnership with the Boys & Girls Club – Nogales ("Club") to provide an extended-day learning hub for students to have access to tutoring while also obtaining necessary child supervision. This innovative hub will be available to learners throughout Nogales in the evenings to benefit from academic support as well as meaningful enrichment activities. NUSD will provide training, effective techniques and materials to enable the Club staff to be fully prepared as well as include Club staff in NUSD professional development, co-hosted parent nights and data-sharing to track student success to deliver strong tutoring support and skills support in reading and math for learners and to better serve families. This partnership to provide greater family support and non-traditional learning options for the 2021-2022 school year with the goal to expand the collaborative effort to off-site locations to serve more learners and families in the future. This innovative partnership is multi-faceted, providing family support and options in non-traditional learning environments for learners to receive academic support enrichment activities and child supervision to more families in and outside of school. In addition, the Nogales team has added in STEM home kits for learners to take home to engineer and build projects and provides hands-on activities in collaboration between learners and their families. This empowers families to actively engage in lessons with their learners and is a great demonstration of what reimagining where, when, and how public school learning can take place.

Grant Impact

K-12
Grade Levels Served

1,200
Total Learners Served Year 1

DEMOGRAPHICS

Title I – 82% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch

96% Hispanic; serve community along international border and major border crossing point

Grant Award **\$25,000**

These funds will enable us to jumpstart a collaborative partnership to better serve the academic needs of our shared students by engaging in staff training and purchasing instructional materials for use in tutoring and jointly hosted parent nights. This pilot will then enable us to expand by applying for a 21st Century Grant to bring our program from the pilot site to other schools in our district.

Dr. Angelina Canto

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction



OUTDOOR LEARNING

AGUA CALIENTE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Tanque Verde | Pima County | Outdoor Learning | Rural

TANQUE VERDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Agua Caliente Elementary (“ACE”) is revitalizing their 32-year-old Nature Trail and creating a stimulating, safe outdoor learning zone with two classroom-like areas and small collaboration stations to experience curriculum integration and space to learn in a motivating outdoor setting. The focus is on environmental education and stewardship to “Live Gently with the Land” as the school is located right near a large mountain reserve with lots of regional vegetation and opportunities to study wildlife. Utilizing technology powered by solar energy will enable learners and guides to share learning in creative ways, like virtual field trips for other youth in the community. In addition to the school stakeholders, ACE has developed a parentship with Tanque Verde High School, Site Council, PTG, local partners like the Southern Arizona BSA Eagle Scouts and a local church, and is encouraging community use. All educators will be trained in best practices for this new outdoor learning zone to inspire and incorporate nature into learners’ daily life for authentic learning opportunities while also meeting critical academic and fine arts skills and increasing social/emotional growth. Tanque Verde High School learners will provide hands-on building projects like building and welding the shade structures and create the greenspace for the rural community to utilize. The Nature Trail and zone will be utilized for new environmental courses, hands-on labs, opportunities to learn about plants and animals in the desert, as well as space for learners to explore music, art, and quiet places to read and write. ACE is balancing new innovative spaces for students to learn while preserving the Nature Trail that is rich in history to meet the current needs of the community and learners.

Grant Impact

K-6

Grade Levels Served

500

Total Learners Served Year 1

DEMOGRAPHICS

Title I – 13.9% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch

21% Hispanic; 75% White; 3% Other

Grant Award

\$25,000

This project will provide a foundation for a K-12 district science program and opportunities to integrate subjects across the curriculum, engaging and attracting not only students, but the community. Having the Nature Trail as an outdoor science learning lab, gains interest as well as promotes high academic success.

Chris Rietz, Principal



stimulating, safe outdoor
LEARNING ZONE



SOUTHERN ARIZONA
EXPANSIONS
INNOVATION FUND
MICROGRANTS

LEARNING HUBS

AJO HIGH SCHOOL & AJO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ajo | Pima County | Teacher Entrepreneur | Rural

AJO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ajo High School and Ajo Elementary School (“Ajo”) are in a remote former mining community in the Sonoran Desert. Ajo has developed a STEM learning hub accessible for any youth in the community afterhours to expose them to STEM topics to inspire youth into pathways in math, engineering or technology – areas Ajo learners typically have not pursued. The learning hub will provide hands-on science, robotics, and technology opportunities that will give learners over 100 additional hours of learning time. Learners will engage with materials and experiences that differ from traditional academic offerings, including electricity labs, motor design, and electronic programming. Elementary learners will be able to work alongside high school learners in a self-paced, engaging environment that matches interests, aptitudes, and experience levels. The Ajo team is also working with Microsoft Philanthropies’ TEAL program to offer self-paced computer programming for high school students. This learning hub will be one of its kind for the Ajo community by bringing innovation to this small town where there is a need to increase the new learning approaches in real-world fields that are growing exponentially.

Grant Impact

PREK-12
Grade Levels
Served

40
Total Learners
Served Year 1

DEMOGRAPHICS

Title I – 80% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch

50% Hispanic; 25% White; 20% American Indian.

Grant Award
\$16,000

I’m grateful to A for Arizona, and excited for the Ajo community for this opportunity. Through this grant I hope to inspire my students to dream big and work towards making those dreams come true.

Babu Koothunkal-Cheriyana, Teacher & Hub Director



EXPANDING ACCESS

SCHOLARSHIPS A-Z

Tucson | Pima County | Entrepreneur | Urban

Scholarships A-Z is the only organization in Southern Arizona that works with immigrant youth in high school, specifically in grades 11 and 12. This immigrant youth-led entrepreneurial organization is breaking barriers to learning and disrupting the current education system to create a pathway to college for undocumented learners through their Immigrant Scholarship Hustle (“ISH”) which provides resources, networks and curriculum by, led, and for immigrant youth. With the Southern Arizona microgrant, Scholarships A-Z will increase their enrollment capacity from 30 learners to 200 learners and expand their existing community-based curriculum and mentorship program year-round by adding one full time staff member to facilitate the ISH program that is catered to the educational needs of immigrant youth and provide guidance and support for learners. All learning experiences are centered on immigrant youth as decision-makers, experts, and educators, disrupting the usual educator-learner power dynamic used in traditional schools. With 2,000 immigrant learners graduating from Arizona high schools every year, these youth entrepreneurs aim to ensure more immigrant youth learners to be equipped with tools to attain postsecondary education and clear pathway and opportunity to reach their career goals.

Grant Impact

11-12
Grade Levels
Served

200
Total Learners
Served Year 1

DEMOGRAPHICS

Immigrant youth in Pima County

50%+ are English Language Learners and 80%+ come from low socioeconomic homes

Majority are part of the Latino community

Grant Award **\$25,000**

This grant will allow us to expand our current programming into year-round support for Undocumented youth across Southern Arizona. We look forward to continuing to change the narrative about what is possible for Undocumented youth in our state!

Carolina Silva, Executive Director



**SOUTHERN ARIZONA
MICROGRANTS**

GOWAN SCIENCE ACADEMY

Yuma | Yuma County | Public District | Rural/Remote

CRANE ELEMENTARY DISTRICT

Gowan Science Academy ("Gowan") deeply believes that every inch of a school should be utilized for learning opportunities and aims to have no wasted space. Prior to this grant opportunity, Gowan transformed their hallways into their physical library so learners have full access every day to rows of books they can grab anytime they want to read. To continue to build upon this learner agency-based model and as a result of parent listening sessions, Gowan is implementing another learner-centered method "Calming Corners" that will create new learning spaces for youth in grades third through eighth to regroup and build upon their Social-Emotional Learning skills. Each Calming Corner will recreate remaining empty hallway space into sensory zones equipped with learning materials, furniture and supplies appropriately sized for every grade band. The Calming Corners serve as dedicated spaces where learners are empowered to access as they choose to reflect, intentionally regroup, and have a space to engage in a nontraditional learning space with materials to enhance knowledge and skills in order to be more successful in their classrooms. In addition, Gowan will purchase giant foam building blocks through the Imagination Playground to expand learning spaces outdoors and provide opportunities for cooperative play by all ages of students. Teamwork, problem solving, give and take, communication – all of these crucial durable skills will be enhanced through the outdoor block spaces. All staff members will receive training on the concept of Zone of Regulations to help learners recognize their emotions, triggers and strategies for recovery until learners can take action to handle their feelings, focus, and increase attention.

Grant Impact

K-12
Grade Levels
Served

700
Total Learners
Served Year 1

DEMOGRAPHICS

Title I - 97% at/below poverty level

52% Hispanic; 38% White; 5% African American, 5% Asian

Grant Award
\$25,000

Through A for Arizona's Innovation Fund grants we have been able to look at every area of our campus through the lens of innovation to optimize new areas for learning.

Jamie Haines, Principal

