



DRAFT FOR REVIEW

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First Place AZ to Host Global Leadership Institute Symposium October 13–15

The Power of Storytelling through Supportive Communities & Housing

PHOENIX (Date, 2021) — [First Place® AZ](#), a local and global nonprofit working to ensure that housing and community options are as bountiful for people with autism and other neurodiversities as they are for everyone else, is hosting its 10th semi-annual [Global Leadership Institute Symposium](#) October 13–15. Service providers, developers, educators and families have registered to attend the in-person and via webinar event titled “The Power of Storytelling through Supportive Communities & Housing.”

Today, one in 54 children is diagnosed with autism. Unprecedented numbers are transitioning to adulthood—approximately 60,000 annually.

“Like people, communities need continuous nurturing to be strong and resilient,” says Denise D. Resnik, First Place AZ founder, president and CEO. “Pioneers leading the charge in their local markets need to be fortified to go the distance, which is why we’ve designed our symposium to help them navigate opportunities and challenges inherent in real estate and community development.” Resnik says that throughout the three-day event, participants will learn from “decades of experience, successes, pain points and lessons learned that can jumpstart and build momentum for local supportive housing and community development plans.”

Keynote speaker Joan Fallon’s session will address how to “Expand Your Peripheral Vision.” Fallon, Curemark founder and CEO, visionary scientist and leading entrepreneur, will discuss her new book, *Goodbye, Status Quo: Reimagining the Landscape of Innovation* that helps equip readers with the tools to overcome obstacles and become agents of change as entrepreneurs, leaders and individuals.

In A Different Key: The Movie, a documentary on autism, is slated for a multi-city tour starting this fall. During an additional keynote presentation, learn more about the award-winning film from co-producers John Donvan and Caren Zucker, who share how to get involved and cover critical areas ranging from education, research and

employment to relationships, housing and healthcare—and, perhaps most important, the definition of home and community.

BrieAnna J. Frank, Arizona Republic breaking news reporter and woman with autism, will be joined by national journalists Donvan and Zucker for the session titled “Elements That Capture Media Interest & Make for Powerful Stories.” They plan to address what influences final content and placement across various platforms to represent all voices.

The symposium will also feature a panel discussion titled “Defining Affordable Housing 2.0” focusing on what’s needed and how it gets funded, built and supported through tri-sector leadership and collaboration. Scheduled panelists: Tom Simplot, director, Arizona Department of Housing; David Brown, co-founder, Home Matters®; Michael Traylor, chief strategy officer, Native American Connections; and James R. Stringham, vice president & CEO, Banner University Health Plans.

The “Advancing Policy Priorities and Pioneering Change” panel will discuss how to express what is needed now in terms that local, state and federal governments understand to fuel a new marketplace of housing and community options everywhere. Scheduled panelists: Christopher Banks, president and CEO, Autism Society of America; Desiree Kameka Galloway, director, Autism Housing Network; and Andrea Whitsett, director, ASU Morrison Institute for Public Policy.

The Fortify Your Community panel will cover tools and trainings that help police officers bridge the communication gap and interact more effectively and positively with individuals with autism spectrum disorder. Scheduled panelists: Daniel Openden, president & CEO, Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC); Lon Bartel, director of training and curriculum, VirTra, Inc.; and Nancy Martinez, investigative specialist, Chandler Police Department.

The “Reimagining Complex and Disconnected Systems” panel will cover building a healthcare equity model where no one goes untreated or is medically misunderstood because of autism and other related disorders. Scheduled panelists Maureen Casey, Director, First Place Global Leadership Institute Center for Applied Research & Public Policy; Caroline Kim Kupfer, MD, MPH, Dignity Health; and Randy Richardson, MD, Regional Dean of Creighton University School of Medicine—Phoenix Regional Campus.

Symposium sponsors are Dominion, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan and Salt River Project.

First Place—Phoenix, First Place AZ’s first 81,000-square-foot, \$15.4 million property, is a residential community with a suite of supports and amenities for individuals with autism, Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury and other neurodiversities. Ushering in a new era of housing and community options for special populations, First Place combines apartments, the Transition Academy residential life skills program and the

Global Leadership Institute to advance public policy and more independent, community-integrated living options.

To learn more or to get involved, email info@firstplaceaz.org or visit firstplaceaz.org.

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About First Place® AZ

First Place AZ, a charitable 501(c)(3), is advancing innovative residential and community options for adults with autism and other neurodiversities through its vision for fueling a new wave of real estate and community development. First Place–Phoenix, the nonprofit’s flagship property, is an 81,000-square-foot apartment community set in the heart of the urban area and recognized by PBS NewsHour as “[the most autism-friendly city in the world](#).” The First Place Global Leadership Institute leverages this award-winning property to serve as an R&D site, support the replication of residential and post-secondary education models and foster collaboration among the public, private, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. Read First Place’s groundbreaking 2020 report, [A Place in the World: Fueling Housing and Community Options for Adults with Autism and Other Neurodiversities](#).