



**For Immediate Release**

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**First Place® AZ Elects Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Executive Greg Wells  
to Board of Directors**

PHOENIX (April 7, 2022) — [First Place® AZ](#), an Arizona nonprofit with the vision of ensuring housing, healthcare and community options are as bountiful for people with autism and other neurodiversities as they are for everyone else, has elected Greg Wells to its board of directors.

Wells is senior vice president and chief people officer for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona (BCBSAZ), responsible for leading the organization’s human resources programs. His team oversees the benefits, compensation, employee relations, change management, talent acquisition and development, succession planning and employment of over 2,500 BCBSAZ staff members across the state.

Since joining BCBSAZ in 2005, Wells has helped lead the company’s initiative to be recognized as a premier Arizona-based employer. He is also committed to increasing employee awareness of and alignment with the company’s mission, vision and values.

“Greg has extensive experience in managing large numbers of staff and providing expert leadership related to human resources,” says Howard Sobelman, First Place AZ board chair. “As First Place continues to grow, and as we pursue more accessibility for people with autism and other neurodiversities, his advice will be invaluable. We are grateful he has joined our board.”

Prior to joining BCBSAZ, Wells served as the director of human resources for WorldatWork, a global not-for-profit educational association focused on compensation, benefits and total rewards. He is also the former director of human resources for Blood Systems (Vitalant since

2018)—a national healthcare provider—where he oversaw employment, affirmative action, employee and labor relations, safety and loss-control initiatives.

Wells is an active volunteer in his community. He is the past board chairman and board member of the Children’s Action Alliance and Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center. He received a bachelor’s degree in human resources from the University of Arizona and served more than eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

First Place—Phoenix, First Place AZ’s \$15.4 million, 81,000-square-foot, 55-apartment 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 expand more independent, community-integrated living options.

For more information or to get involved, email [info@firstplaceaz.org](mailto:info@firstplaceaz.org) or visit [firstplaceaz.org](http://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.](#)