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**First Place® AZ Elects Board Officers, New Board Member**

PHOENIX (January 10, 2020) — [First Place® AZ](#), a local nonprofit working to ensure housing options for people with autism and other special abilities are as bountiful as they are for anyone else, has elected its new board officers and a new board member.

First Place AZ board of directors' new officers include:

- Sara Dial, Board Chair; President and CEO, Sara Dial & Associates
- Joyce Millard-Hoie, Vice Chair; Former Executive Director, Raising Special Kids
- Tess Burleson, Secretary; Chief Operating Officer of the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) and President of TGen Health Ventures
- Jack Henry, Treasurer; Founder and Managing Director of Sierra Blanca Ventures, LLC

Susan Smith, Director of IT Frontline Services at Salt River Project, has also been elected to serve on First Place AZ's board of directors.

The nonprofit's 81,000-square-foot, \$15.4 million property, First Place–Phoenix, is a residential community for individuals with autism and other neurodiversities. Ushering in a new era of housing options for special populations, First Place is combining apartments, the Transition Academy residential life skills program and the Global Leadership Institute to advance more independent and community-integrated living options. In addition to 55 apartments, First Place–Phoenix has a sports pool, culinary teaching kitchen, community center and health and wellness center, and offers a suite of supports to residents.

Smith leads a customer-facing IT organization that includes Workspace Technologies; the IT Solution Center; IT Service Management; and Unified Messaging and Voice teams. Smith and her teams are focused on providing IT services that keep people productive and connected. She has more than 25 years of experience providing leadership in both technology and business areas of the utility industry.

Prior to joining SRP in 1998, Smith held professional, managerial and executive positions with Computer Language Research, Inc., Price Waterhouse Tax Technology Group and Central Maine Power.

Smith has served as both board chair and vice chair for the Arizona Foundation for Women. Smith is passionate about the challenges facing women and children in Arizona and around the world. Prior to moving to Arizona, she was actively involved with various groups serving people with developmental disabilities and their families. Smith's passion for helping change lives in Maine led to her gubernatorial appointment as the vice chair of the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council. She also served on committees and boards for the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion, Autism Society of Maine and others. Smith holds a B.S. in Business Administration/Accounting from the University of Maine.

Other board members include Nancy White, partner at Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie; Doug Eaton, former Vantage Mobility International CEO; Howard Sobelman, partner at Snell & Wilmer; and Denise D. Resnik, founder and president/CEO of First Place AZ.

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 is a nonprofit organization advancing innovative residential options for adults with autism and other special abilities. First Place is creating replicable residential and post-secondary education models that promote collaboration among the public, private, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors, serving as a catalyst for advancing public policy focused on housing solutions for special populations. First Place celebrates neuro-diversity, independent living and the belief that housing options for people with autism and other special abilities should be as bountiful as they are for everyone else. First Place—Phoenix, the nonprofit's first new property, opened in 2018. Leasing is underway. View PBS NewsHour's two-part series about First Place at "[Giving Adults with Autism the Skills to Build Independent Lives](#)" and "[How Phoenix Became the Most Autism-Friendly City in the World.](#)" Learn more at [firstplaceaz.org](http://firstplaceaz.org).