



For Immediate Release

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First Place to Host Global Leadership Institute Symposium Oct. 25-27

PHOENIX (October 19, 2017) — First Place AZ is hosting a [Global Leadership Institute Symposium Oct. 25-27](#) to provide service providers, developers, educators and families with information on building a supportive community, to include fundraising and collaborative strategies with public, private, philanthropic and nonprofit interests.

First Place AZ, a nonprofit charitable organization focused on ensuring that housing options for adults with autism and other neuro-diversities are bountiful, broke ground on First Place–Phoenix in December 2016. Residents are moving into the \$15 million, 81,000-square-foot property, located at 3001 N. Third Street in Phoenix, in early summer 2018.

Participants from 12 states have signed up to attend the symposium. Participants will experience the First Place Transition Academy, which teaches independent living skills to adults with autism; the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center; GateWay Community College; and other locations within Phoenix’s supportive community, dubbed “[the most autism-friendly city in the world](#)” by PBS NewsHour.

“The Global Leadership Institute Symposium will help participants learn from many great examples in Greater Phoenix aimed at better life course outcomes through lifelong learning and skill development, job and home options, health care, friends and a supportive community,” said Denise D. Resnik, First Place founder, president and CEO.

The two-day symposium features a workshop on health and wellness led by Javier Cardenas, M.D., Adult Autism & Developmental Disability Multi-Specialty Clinic at Barrow Neurological Institute; life skills development and independent living by Paige Raetz, Ph.D., BCBA-D, SARRC Residential Transition Director; and leveraging community assets by George Braddock, president of Creative Housing Solutions and faculty member of the First Place Global Leadership Institute.

John Donovan and Caren Zucker, award-winning journalists and authors of Pulitzer Prize finalist, *In a Different Key – The Story of Autism*, will moderate a workshop on safety and security. Buckeye Police Chief Larry Hall will participate in the discussion with Emily Iland, producer of *Be Safe the Movie*, along with First Place Transition Academy participants.

For more information or to become involved, email info@firstplaceaz.org or visit firstplaceaz.org.

About First Place AZ

First Place® AZ is a nonprofit organization advancing innovative residential options for adults with autism and other neuro-diversities. Led by market principles, First Place is creating replicable, residential and post-secondary education models that promote collaboration among the private/public/philanthropic/nonprofit sectors, serving as a catalyst for advancing public policy focused on housing solutions for special populations. Recipient of the 2016 HeroX [Autism Speaks House to Home Prize](#) for its “belief-busting breakthrough” idea in housing and residential supports, First Place celebrates neuro-diversity, independent living and its belief that housing options for people with autism and other special abilities should be as bountiful as they are for everyone else. To learn more, visit firstplaceaz.org and view these 2016 PBS NewsHour segments: [“Giving Adults with Autism the Skills to Build Independent Lives”](#) and [“How Phoenix Became the Most Autism-Friendly City in the World.”](#)