

# Volunteers Make a World of Difference

DCSD Volunteer Conference 2025

We-Ko-Pa Conference Center

June 24, 2025



**8:30 – 8:45**      **Welcome**

**8:45 – 10:00**      **Parent Panel: Stories of Resilience and Transformation**

**Moderator: Honorable Peter Hochuli, Pima County Juvenile Court**

**Panel: Krista, Kristy, Marcel, Mariana, and Vanessa**

Join us for an inspiring panel discussion featuring parents who have successfully graduated from the foster care system. These courageous individuals will share their personal journeys, offering unique insights into their experiences with the system, the challenges they faced, and the triumphs that shaped their lives. Gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives and explore the invaluable lessons they've learned along the way. This session aims to foster empathy, encourage open dialogue, and celebrate stories of hope and perseverance.

**10:00 – 10:15**      **Break**

**10:15 – 11:30**      **Breakout Sessions A**

**A1/B1: Walk in Their Shoes – Dependency Simulation**

**Honorable Lori Bustamante, Maricopa County Presiding Juvenile Court Judge**

This interactive simulation will encourage participants to better understand the unique issues children and families face while concurrently navigating the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. With the focus on the child, this activity will enhance empathy and highlight the importance of implementing and ensuring best practices to improve outcomes for children and families. By fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges they face, it encourages professionals to adopt approaches that are compassionate, effective and aligned with the best interests of those they serve.

**A2/B2: FCRB: Findings and Elements**

**FCRB Program Leadership and Training Specialist**

The new *Foster Care Review Board Findings and Elements Guidebook* and *FCRB Findings and Recommendations Report* are about to roll out. Attendees will be the first to see the new report and get an overview of the new findings and elements before we go live. If you are a FCRB member, you will not want to miss this!

**A3/B3: Planting Seeds of Hope: Volunteering with Purpose and Cultural Understanding**

**Elisia Manuel, Founder and President, Three Precious Miracles**

What started as a simple desire to help one child has grown into Three Precious Miracles, an organization that has touched thousands of lives by providing cultural connection, essential resources, and hope to Native foster children and families. In this session, Founder Elisia will share her personal journey of turning compassion into action, and how the kindness of volunteers continues to shape futures. You'll discover that it doesn't take grand gestures to change a life. A backpack, a handmade craft, a few hours of your time can leave an imprint that lasts forever. Join us to learn how your small, good deeds can ripple into lifelong impact, and how volunteering with Three Precious Miracles allows you to be part of something bigger than yourself.

#### **A4/B4: Transition Youth Plan**

**Honorable Anna Young, Maricopa County Presiding Juvenile Court Judge**

**Barbara Guillen, Permanency and Youth Administrator, Arizona Department of Child Safety**

The Transition Youth Plan is designed to help ensure that valuable questions are asked, and information is shared that will benefit a child as they approach the transition out of care and into young adulthood. While the DCS case manager will “track” the items from the Transition Youth Plan, it’s important that other involved professionals and court volunteers (CASA, FCRB) have access to this tool so they can help to ensure that the questions are being asked and answered. The Transition Youth Plan addresses key areas like vital records, education (college and vocational career exploration), juvenile delinquency court involvement, physical and mental well-being, social security, community connections, and placement.

#### **A5/B5: Fatherhood Engagement**

**Sleepy Vildosola, Manager, Dad Together Program, Family Involvement Center**

Why is engaging fathers in their dependency case important and how do we do that? Join Sleepy Vildosola as he addresses these questions and more in this presentation that will certainly emphasize that children do better with fathers in their lives.

#### **A6/B6: The Uncoupling of Poverty and Neglect**

**Erica Quintana, Senior Research Analyst, ASU Morrison Institute for Public Policy**

Poverty can lead to material hardships, such as lack of food, housing, or clothing, that can be mistaken for neglect. A parent's inability to provide due to poverty is not the same as an unwillingness to provide – this distinction is critical. Mistaking poverty for neglect can lead to unnecessary child welfare involvement, including removal of children and even eventual termination of parental rights.

#### **A7/B7: Fentanyl & Opioid Awareness, Overdose Prevention**

**Michael White, Director of Community Programs, Community Medical Services**

Fentanyl is flooding our communities. Some teens are purchasing through social media pills that they think are Adderall, Percocet, Oxycodone or Xanax; what they’re getting are fakes made from the cheap, deadly and more potent synthetic drug called fentanyl. Fentanyl is up to 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine. The number of fatal and non-fatal overdoses has grown significantly. Prevention is critical to reducing overdoses and overdose deaths.

**11:30 – 12:30 Lunch Break**

**12:45 – 2:00 Breakout Sessions B (Repeated from morning)**

**2:00 – 2:15 Break (Afternoon Snacks)**

**2:15 – 3:45 Keynote: Everest-Level Resilience: How to Maintain Passion, Presence, and Perseverance During Your Climb. - John Beede**

In this closing keynote, Mount Everest summit climber John Beede will take you on a journey to the top of three of the world’s tallest mountains. You will experience gripping stories and gorgeous media, but more importantly, you will discover techniques to maintain passion in the face of life's most demoralizing storms, how to generate energy while staying laser-focused on your end-goal, and how you, and your team, can adapt, collaborate, and persevere your way to the top. This wildly inspirational keynote will give you tools to maintain course with decisiveness and calm, even as unforeseen obstacles and new challenges appear in your path.

**3:45 – 4:00 Closing Wrap-up**