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**COVER PAGE**

Innovation Study Title Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative

Category Community Relationships

Jurisdiction Name City of Avondale

City/County Manager Charles McClendon

Population 75,000 – 80,000

**Submit Innovation Study for an Alliance Innovation Award      Yes X      No [ ]**

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## 2012 Transforming Local Government Conference Innovation Study Application

### City of Avondale

Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative

INNOVATION STUDY CATEGORY - COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

#### *SYNOPSIS*

#### **Intent of the idea/program/project/service and length of time it has been enacted**

Kids at Hope is a cultural framework and holistic youth development strategy designed to create an environment where all children experience success. The intent of the program is to make Avondale a community in which children and youth experience positive outcomes in school and at home. Beginning in July 2008, the City of Avondale began efforts to promote Kids at Hope as a foundation for serving children in Avondale by providing training to school districts, City staff and community leaders. In September 2009, the City Council approved a resolution declaring the City of Avondale a Kids at Hope City and committed to making the belief principles and practices a foundation for serving all children in Avondale. The City Council has embraced the philosophy and played a leadership role in promoting Kids at Hope. The Neighborhood and Family Services Department coordinates a training program to enable school districts and community organizations to adopt the belief system and practices.

#### **Anticipated and actual outcomes**

At the start of the initiative, Avondale had projected that it would provide direct training to 40 adults each year. Over the past three years, Avondale has far exceeded this goal and has provided training to over 250 adults to date. These figures reflect a fragment of what has been accomplished in the last few years. Avondale's Kids at Hope City Initiative is designed to build community wide capacity. City sponsored Kids at Hope trainings inspire, empower and transform. The technical support and training provide by the City of Avondale and Kids at Hope have empowered and prepared both the Avondale Elementary School District and the Littleton Elementary School District to adopt Kids at Hope initiative district wide. Both directly and indirectly, the Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative provided evidence based Kid at Hope training has reached over 1,000 caring adults and approximately 10,500 new children have are experiencing the Kids at Hope culture every day at school.

#### **Costs and/or savings**

In support of the Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative, the City of Avondale has committed to provide the community with one half day Kids at Hope Module I introduction to Kids at Hope Training and a two day Kids at Hope - Train the Trainer training at a total cost of \$4,500 per year.

#### **Innovative characteristics**

The Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative is an extremely innovative response to the needs of families in our community and an effective approach to improving the lives of children and youth. This initiative demonstrates that cities and towns have a greater responsibility than simply providing recreational or youth development programming. The Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative is an

example of how a community can rally around a common belief and support all children without exceptions. The City of Avondale invites all interested parties to learn how an entire community can create a culture that views all its children as "at hope" vs. "at risk" by adopting a paradigm supported by evidence based practices used by schools, recreation departments, police departments, faith based groups, community based organizations and families. Each group suspends self-interest, shares resources and agrees to engage in an effort larger than anyone group can achieve alone.

### **Obstacles and results achieved**

The greatest obstacle experienced in launching the Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative has been convincing organizations to temporarily suspend self-interest and attend an introductory Kids at Hope training with other stakeholders from the community. Leadership provided by Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers has been instrumental in asking groups to participate in something larger than anyone of them can achieve alone, which is supporting the success of all children, no exceptions. No single group can achieve that, but a community can.

### **New issues/problems, or unintended consequences**

No new issues or unintended consequences that have been identified to date.

**CITY OF AVONDALE**  
**AVONDALE KIDS AT HOPE CITY INITIATIVE**

**INNOVATION STUDY COMPONENTS**

**1. Innovation/Creativity**

- a. How did the idea/program/project/service improve the organization?

The City of Avondale invites all interested parties to learn how an entire community can create a culture that views all its children as "at hope" vs. "at risk" by adopting a paradigm supported by evidence based practices used by schools, recreation departments, police departments, faith based groups, community based organizations and families. Each group suspends self-interest, shares resources and agrees to engage in an effort larger than anyone group can achieve alone.

- b. Were new technologies used? No

- If yes, what methods and/or applications were implemented?

- b. Was a consultant used? Yes

- If yes, describe their involvement; and

Kids at Hope is an initiative piloted and modeled in Avondale and now being replicated in cities and communities across the country. The City of Avondale has provided technical assistance to many communities interested in adopting the Kids at Hope model. The City of Avondale partners with the National Kids at Hope organization to offer training, program enhancement, consultations, research and evaluation. The city relies on Kids at Hope to provide ongoing consultation to develop refine and implement and evaluate the initiative.

The City of Avondale sponsors and hosts a series of training opportunities presented by Kids at Hope trainers that are designed to build capacity, launch and sustain the Kids at Hope initiative throughout the community.

**Module I (Half-day Training)** - An introductory training module is offered to partner organizations and institutions to familiarize all parties with the history, research, strategies, practices and techniques that demonstrate how all children can succeed without exception

**Train the Trainer (2-day Training)** - A Training of the Trainer module is offered to empower a team of individuals from each participating partner organization, institution and/or program, to have the capacity to launch, sustain and expand the strategies within their agencies.

- Identify the consultant and/or firm, including contact information

**Kids at Hope**

Rick Miller

Founder, President and Chief Treasure Hunter

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## 2. Outcomes Achieved

- a. What customer/community needs and expectations were identified and fulfilled?

The City of Avondale recognizes that children do not grow up in one organization or institution but are the sum total of all their experiences. Therefore, a community can be more successful, efficient and effective if it adopts a holistic child and youth development strategy rather than operating from disconnected silos of well-meaning programs and projects. The enhanced quality of life is achieved by children recognizing that more adults believe in them; children feel more connected to caring adults; and children have a sense of their future at four destinations including: home and family; education and career; community and service and hobbies and recreation.

- b. Has service delivery been enhanced?

Perhaps the most immediate impact of the Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative has been seen in area of intergovernmental relations. Almost immediately following the first delivery of city sponsored Kids at Hope trainings; city personnel noted a significant improvement in lines of communication between municipal staff and school district administration. To further enhance the synergy being created the City of Avondale began work to create the Avondale Hope Square “Avondale Treasure Hunter Council”. Recognizing this opportunity for enhanced relations, city staff worked closely with Kids at Hope to establish the Avondale Hope Square Treasure Hunter Council. The overall objective of the council has been to engage stakeholders including parents, school personnel, business owners, city staff, faith based representatives, non-profit leaders and youth to create an action agenda, leverage resources and support a community wide Kids at Hope initiative. Ideas and effort from the council have resulted in parent training opportunities, the creation of promotional media and the formation of a Kids at Hope youth council.

- c. Did the initiative improve access to your government?

Not only have municipal personnel noticed the benefits of this community wide initiative but school administrators and other members of the Avondale Treasure Hunter Council have shared their appreciation for the improved communication and connectivity to city departments and leaders.

- d. Has the health of the community improved as a result?

Immediate anecdotal results suggest that children are experiencing an enhanced quality of life. This improvement in community health is achieved by children recognizing that more adults believe in them; children feel more connected to caring adults; and children have a sense of their future at four destinations including: home and family; education and career; community and service and hobbies and recreation.

## 3. Applicable Results and Real World Practicality

- a. What practical applications will be shared?

As a model city, Avondale is pleased to share the process by which the Kids at Hope Cultural Framework was introduced to its citizen advisory groups, community partners and elected officials. In addition, The City of Avondale and Kids at Hope have worked to define what it means to be a Kids at Hope community and develop language that articulates such a commitment in the form a formal resolution.

- b. How applicable is the idea/program/project/service to other local governments?

Nearly every city across the county has a vested interest in helping children reach their fullest potential as caring and productive citizens. Kids at Hope is an initiative piloted and modeled in Avondale in already being replicated in cities and communities across the country and abroad. The City of Avondale has provided technical assistance to many communities interested in adopting the Kids at Hope model. The City partners with the National Kids at Hope organization to offer training, program enhancement, consultations, research and evaluation.

c. What results/outcomes will you share?

If selected, the City of Avondale will share data regarding the number of adults that have been provided Kids at Hope training and then the estimated number of children that have begun to experience the cultural shift from a “youth at-risk” to a “Kids at Hope” paradigm. Additional anecdotal result and testimonials from adults and children will be shared.

d. Include any applicable performance measures, if any.

Outcome 1 – The City of Avondale has directly provided Kids at Hope training to over 250 caring adults since adopting its resolution in 2009. As a result of this capacity building Train the Trainer strategy, the initiative has provided evidence based Kid at Hope training to over 1,000 adults.

Outcome 2 – 14 new schools in two school districts have adopted Kids at Hope and have begun to implement the Kids at Hope strategic culture model during the 2010-11 school year. Approximately 10,500 new students have been affected as a result of the City of Avondale’s effort to promote Kids at Hope.

Outcome 4 - 100% of the students in schools that are already identified as a Kids at Hope schools have received Kids at Hope Report Cards, that identify a student’s strengths and Kids at Hope Passports that help children identify goals for the future.

#### **4. Innovation Study Presentation**

a. Describe your innovation study presentation. For example:

The Innovation Study Presentation for the Avondale Kids at Hope City Initiative will consist of a live interactive presentation. The presentation will be provided by City of Avondale Neighborhood and Family Services staff and Kids at Hope Executive Leadership. The session will include an introduction to Kids at Hope-High Five Practices and Avondale “It Take a Village” presentation. The overall presentation will include PowerPoint, video and handout materials.