

**West Valley foster children benefit from Drum Project**

**Drums**

**DRUMS**

**Sun City volunteers instrumental in good cause**

**By Dr. Lydia A. Woods**

**SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA**

Sun City residents just gave away the last from one charitable project, and are gearing up for another.

In 2017-18, Sun City residents participated in the 300Drum Project, in which residents volunteered to make and paint Native American style 10-inch hoop drums for children

living in the 30 Maricopa County group foster homes. There are 10 children living in each home.

Every month on the fourth Friday, two houses with 20 children participated in a one-hour facilitated drum circle at Lakeview United Methodist Church, 10298 W. Thunderbird Blvd., Sun City. Afterward the children were presented with their own African Djembe or Native American-style drum along with a drum beater and carrying bag. Residents were instructed in making

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Sunshine Kids and adult van drivers with faces covered by drums, along with Dr. Lydia Woods, Drum Arizona founder, center. For safety and privacy reasons the children’s faces cannot be shown. They posed for the photo with the drums they received held in front of their faces. [Submitted photo]

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and painting the drums by members of Drum Arizona, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed to provide communities with the experience of African Djembe and Native American-style drumming.

Drum Arizona gave away 100 Native American-style drums in 2016 to children who were homeless or hospitalized, and Sun City residents living in several senior living communities helped to accomplish that goal. After the success of the 100-Drum Project, Drum Arizona partnered with the Sunshine Angels, a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization that supports and enriches the lives of foster children in the care of the Sunshine Residential Homes in Maricopa County. The Sunshine Angels volunteered and helped foster children since 1999.

Sandra Hurst is the current president of the Sunshine Angels and made a presentation to the United Methodist

Women’s group at Lakeview UMC in October 2016, which inspired and envisioned Drum Arizona to undertake the 300-Drum Project.

This month, the last of the 300 drums were given to the children.

Giving drums to children is the major objective of Drum Arizona. The organization is supported by donations and uses the funds to purchase materials to make/paint the drums.

The group received \$16,000 in donations in 2017. The organization’s vision was to help alleviate some of the symptoms children experience during traumatic times, such as homelessness, hospitalization or foster care. Therapeutic effects of drumming range from relieving stress and tension, encouraging socialization, self-expression and to connecting with others, just to name a few.

Drum Arizona also uses African Djembe drums during the drum circle experience. African drums were also purchased and given to children alternately with the Native drums each month. Partial proceeds from

the purchase of drums handmade in Africa went to feed hungry children in Africa.

A new project is now formulating. The 1,000-Drum Project will begin in 2019 and continue through 2020. Drum Arizona will facilitate a one-hour drum circle with foster families and their children. Then drums will be given to children living in foster families.

There are about 500 certified foster families in Peoria, Glendale, Surprise, El Mirage and Sun City.

Volunteers are always needed and welcomed. Call Drum Arizona, 623-219-9143.

**Editor’s Note: Dr. Woods is the founder of Drum Arizona.**



Sun City Residents Dr. Dean Landis, Harriet Cohen, Regina Everett, Fran Ryan are pictured with the kids of the 300-Drum Project. [Submitted photo]