

United Way Inclusion Council

The Story Behind the 2010 United Way Inclusion Conference

The news ticker flashed across the TV screen with a simple statement ... “United Way says financial crisis has passed.” Such a complex story summed up in one phrase...



As many Tucsonans know, several nonprofit organizations - including United Way - have struggled to manage the repercussions of the financial storm that has swept our country. The crisis has significantly impacted American spending and giving habits, as well as the viability of thousands of businesses. In spite of the challenges it faced, United Way of Tucson proactively engaged its community, partners and stakeholders as well as painstakingly reorganized its own operations to address this financial crisis. They say, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” However, in this particular situation, the “tough” were able to count on “a little help from their friends,” to borrow from the popular Beatles song. Many of United Way’s partners and supporters are continuing to provide donations and sponsorships that enable United Way to maintain its commitments to educate, enrich, and enable those who depend on United Way’s support.

This dedication is perhaps best illustrated by the effort to execute the 27th Annual United Way Inclusion Conference (formerly the Multi-Cultural Leadership Development Program). Community leaders like Richard Miranda (Deputy City Manager), Daisy Jenkins (Sr. VP for HR at Carondelet Health Services), and Clarence Boykins (President of the Tucson Black Chamber of Commerce), along with more than 600 other alumni, have participated in this event over the years. Through this curriculum, these leaders have developed inclusive and diverse community leadership skills.

This year’s event was faced with the prospect of postponement due to funding challenges. When members of United Way and the United Way Inclusion Council learned of this situation, they decided to take action. They reached out to dedicated sponsors like La Frontera, Raytheon and the Debe Campos-Fleener Allstate Insurance Agency for a renewal of their financial support. They also asked for in-kind donations from Country Inn & Suites, El Charro, Pizza Hut and the Tucson Urban League to sustain the momentum of this community leadership development conference. These partners, along with volunteer instructors and event coordinators, all have willingly provided their support to enable the continuance of this annual conference. Because of their generosity, 20 or more Tucsonans will receive an opportunity to further develop their

diversity and community leadership skills at this year's event, which will be held May 19 – 21.

The United Way Inclusion Council consists of individuals who represent the broad tapestry of the community where we all live and work. UWIC believes there is tremendous strength in our collective differences and that diversity is a business imperative and an ethical and social responsibility. Their objective to expand inclusive leadership capabilities and to promote inherent feelings of appreciation, fairness, value, respect, accountability and engagement.

Through their signature event, the United Way Inclusion Conference, as well as other social events and volunteer opportunities, UWIC members enjoy the following benefits:

- Instruction on board governance and operations,
- Professional and social networking,
- Awareness of the great value of diversity and inclusion,
- Opportunities to be contributing board members on community organizations.

The UWIC is working at infusing the community with diverse leaders in the hopes of creating a community in southern Arizona where each human gift will find a fitting place. The effort of the UWIC and its community partners to not let this conference fade away is a lesson on how to navigate through these difficult times ... a lighthouse to guide us through the financial difficulties that challenge our ability to forge out new frontiers for our communities. The simple phrase delivered by news ticker could use a little more detail to describe the wonder of it all ... it could have been better said as... "United Way says financial crisis is passed ... and together we are smarter, stronger, and still UNITED."

Best,

Raul Almazan

**Manager, HR Learning & Talent Management at Raytheon Missile Systems
United Way Inclusion Council Communications Advocate**