

First Place–Phoenix Opening July 2018



First Place AZ® Top 10 Highlights

1) On the national stage: raising the bar on housing for special populations

On May 22, First Place hosted 25 members of the Washington, D.C.-based [U.S. Access Board](#), *the only federal agency whose mission is accessibility for people with disabilities*. The board is responsible for developing guidelines under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Architectural Barriers Act and the Communications Act for ensuring that buildings and facilities, transportation vehicles and telecommunications equipment covered by these laws are readily accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. Twelve of the board members are representatives (assistant secretaries) from most of the federal departments; 13 others are members of the public appointed by the president.

National and local publicity continues. See page 5 for a summary of recent news stories. Our bold vision and on-the-ground activities have captured major media attention—including National Geographic, PBS NewsHour and autism documentarians and Pulitzer Prize finalists, John Donovan and Caren Zucker—that plans to focus on First Place in the months ahead.

2) Global Leadership Institute Spring Symposium: attracts leaders from 10 states

Participants in fields ranging from research and academia to housing and government gathered in Phoenix April 24-26 for the third semiannual First Place Global Leadership symposium. Workshops and panels—plus informal, productive discussions in between—provided opportunities to share successes and challenges, as well as to learn more about First Place and its many progressive initiatives. We continue to engage thought leaders from across the country and beyond as we work together to address pressing issues for special populations and advance more

housing and community options—everywhere! Our symposia are also an excellent opportunity to promote the licensing of our First Place Transition Academy Learn4Independence™ Curriculum. [The fall symposium is scheduled for October 24-26.](#)

3) UBS Global Summit in Phoenix: exposing a new audience to “the most autism-friendly city in the world”

The April 30-May 1 Global Autism Innovation Roundtable hosted by UBS in Phoenix was a timely opportunity to showcase the progress of First Place–Phoenix through Denise’s participation in several presentations. Denise also led attendees on tours of the First Place Transition Academy at the 29 Palms beta site and of the nearly complete First Place–Phoenix property. The roundtable was attended by 20 families from across the U.S., representing UBS wealth management clients with a total net worth of \$13 billion, all with a connection to autism. More than 50 people, including UBS leaders and noted leaders in the autism community, gave their experience here high marks. Several new relationships were established and repeat visits by a few UBS clients are in the planning stages.

Since 2015, UBS has involved philanthropic families across the globe in these annual roundtables with a focus on bringing about change—from research to employment programs—through a collaborative network of like-minded entrepreneurs, experts and organizations connected to autism.

4) Transition Academy graduation: start of a new chapter

We’re thrilled to congratulate the 2018 graduating class of the First Place Transition Academy. Each graduate’s certificate represents two years of hard work, applying what they have learned through the 32-course Learn4Independence curriculum, taught by the amazing, dedicated instructors at Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC). A busy graduation week included a convocation hosted by our ever-supportive partners at GateWay Community College in Phoenix, along with a family and community brunch hosted by local supporters First Watch Café. We wish our 10 grads all the best and are eager to stay connected through our First Place Alumni Group, now underway. The next incoming freshmen class, totaling 16, start the program July 11.

5) Property update: about one month to completion!

The transformation taking place at Third Street and Catalina Avenue in the heart of Phoenix is nothing short of extraordinary. The dust has settled as each of the four floors and the apartments change from unfinished workspaces into welcoming common areas and “homes” with flooring, carpeting, cabinetry, kitchen and bath fixtures, ceiling fans and appliances. Leasing goals for July are on track and include 28 new residents, representing 16 Transition Academy participants and 12 apartment residents. Units are being strategically released for leasing on a phased approach each month, with a goal of achieving 90% by year-end.

6) First Place–Phoenix opening: “Firsties” and planned housewarming events

In collaboration with the newly formed First Place Resident Advisory Council, several welcoming events are scheduled in the upcoming months, engaging future residents and their families in the creation of our community charter and community life plan. These early adopters will be among our “Firsties” at First Place!

Doors open to residents of the First Place Apartments on July 2. Detailed schedules and move-in time slots have been established to efficiently facilitate the exciting process. Light refreshments will be available during the hustle and bustle of activity throughout the day. An official, community-oriented housewarming is scheduled for September 21 and 22.

7) First Place leadership: two new board members elected

Two new board members bring their experience and expertise to the First Place AZ board. Doug Eaton, former CEO of Vantage Mobility International, and his family are active in a variety of disability causes, including SARRC. His daughter Lindsey just graduated from the First Place Transition Academy and is among the Firsties at First Place–Phoenix. Doug will be focusing on the board’s community and job development initiatives.

Howard Sobelman, partner at Snell & Willmer, has been a SARRC board member since 2005 and served as board chair from 2008 to 2015. Howard is the father of adult triplets. His son Tyler is impacted by autism. Howard has been helping us protect First Place intellectual property and position us well for future replication and licensing agreements through the First Place Global Leadership Institute.

8) First Place staff grows: now at 17

Steady progress continues for the staffing of First Place–Phoenix. To-date hires include: director of community life & support services; Global Leadership Institute education, training & employment director; office manager, property manager, support services coordinator, community life coordinator and health & wellness coordinator. Hires in process include: benefits & employment coordinator, program assistant, support specialists (6), day/night concierge (2), and maintenance and housekeeping staff.

9) First fellowship granted: additional philanthropic support needed

The First Place Doctoral Fellowship Program welcomes its first fellow, Marisol Marroquin of Los Angeles, who is relocating from California to the Valley. She will work closely with Kristina Lopez, Ph.D., ASU strategic coordinator for the fellowship program. Kristina is an assistant professor at the ASU’s School of Social Work. Dr. Lopez was previously an assistant professor at California State University, Long Beach in the School of Social Work. Her professional background includes work in special education.

In partnership with ASU’s College of Public Service and Community Solutions and Teach For America, the First Place Doctoral Fellowship program focuses on an applied approach to research, assessment and intervention, family support, service coordination, community integration and development, and the advancement of public policy. This approach is designed to develop future leaders in the areas of education, training, services, healthcare and research for adults age 18 and older with autism and other special abilities.

Contingent on fundraising, our goal is to have 10 First Place fellows by the 2019 fall semester. They will receive training from First Place AZ and Global Leadership Institute staff while working closely with residents—much like a resident assistant—on a day-to-day basis, exposing them to a living, learning “laboratory.” Fellows provide support that ranges from functional life skills, wellness coaching and career exploration to successful community

navigation, safety supports/assistance and social integration. Other areas include goal-setting and career exploration.

10) Community and economic development: collaborating with thought-leaders

Ernie Dianastasis, founder and CEO of [The Precisionists, Inc.](#) (TPI), has made more than a dozen visits to Greater Phoenix since October 2017 with the aim of creating 10,000 jobs in the high-tech field for people with autism and other special abilities by 2025. A successful entrepreneur who built his former IT firm to 1,500 people, Ernie is now expanding Delaware-based TPI, a benefit corporation, to two new markets during 2018. Other TPI offices and training centers are successfully operating in Nashville, TN and Wilmington, DE.

The Precisionists has successfully developed programs for [Pepco Holdings](#) and other employers and was recently featured in the [Wilmington News Journal](#). TPI empowers individuals with autism to take on high-tech jobs, from scanning and data entry to software program development, bugging and debugging. (Read this enlightening, prescient New York Times article titled [“The Autism Advantage”](#) and this [positive piece](#) from Crazy Good Turns, a website dedicated to inspiring stories.)

TPI is looking to expand in the Phoenix market with plans for a 5,000-square-foot center, with the potential to expand to 20,000 square feet; training and employing up to 500 people within four to five years; and helping companies transition trained TPI employees to become part of their permanent workforce. Our cultivation of TPI is part of a job-creation initiative [First Place AZ](#) is pursuing in collaboration with the Affordable Care Act, the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the Greater Phoenix Economic Council, the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, [SARCC](#) and others. Our goal is to employ 1,000 individuals with autism and other special abilities by 2025.

First Place also hosted a Jeffersonian-style roundtable led by Micaela Connery, a New World Social Enterprise Fellow at Harvard’s Center for Public Leadership, focused on choice, care and access, connecting 10 state leaders involved with autism, public policy, real estate and education.

First Place recently welcomed Shelly Dival, a Churchill Fellow based in Perth, Australia, who is traveling the world researching design and preparing to publish a book on her [findings](#) regarding autism-friendly spaces and places; we also hosted an orientation for ASU Master of Real Estate Development students for their capstone project advancing plans to redevelop a section of land located at the Thunderbird School of Global Management. ASU Enterprise and University Realty are heavily vested in this initiative for the Thunderbird Campus.

2018 fundraising goal of \$2.25 million: support being sought, including fellowship funding

Of the \$21.3 million total Phase I campaign, approximately \$15.4 million is for development, \$2 million for the creation of First Place/ASU/TFA fellowships (funding is underway) and \$3.9 million for operations. Nearly \$11 million has been raised through philanthropic contributions, which are being leveraged to demonstrate public/private/nonprofit/philanthropic collaboration. These philanthropic funds are being applied to property development, start-up operations and First Place fellowships.

Major naming opportunities for the property and the Global Leadership Institute remain. Plans for an endowment are also in development. All leads, referrals and introductions are greatly appreciated!

Our current list of major charitable investors includes:

Marley Foundation - \$1,500,000; Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust - \$1,430,000; Anonymous - \$1,000,000; Stardust Foundation - \$1,000,000; Dreiseszun Family Foundation - \$375,000; Anonymous - \$350,000 (in addition to \$100,000 last year); Arizona Community Foundation - \$300,000; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona - \$250,000; Breslow Family Foundation - \$200,000; Colonel Harland Sanders Foundation - \$200,000; Cox Communications - \$175,000; Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community - \$171,000; Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust - \$150,000; Thunderbirds Charities - \$150,000; Ingebritson Foundation - \$110,000; David & Carol Eaton - \$100,000; Doug & Kelly Eaton (National Philanthropic Trust) - \$100,000; Evans Family Foundation - \$100,000; Jaburg Wilk - \$100,000; Roberta Lowenstein, for "Joey's Grille" - \$100,000; Salt River Project - \$100,000; Steve & Ardie Evans Family Foundation - \$100,000; Susan Drescher-Mulzet & Mark Mulzet - \$100,000; Wealthpoint - \$100,000.

Budget considerations: expenses and operational revenue on track

Management anticipates property stabilization and cash flow break-even from operations in the second half of 2019, following the completion of facility construction and resultant occupancy. Operating costs for 2016 and 2017 include finance and administrative expenses necessary to support construction in 2016 and 2017, as well as pre-startup costs for the First Place Apartments in 2017 and expansion of the First Place Transition Academy from 16 to 32 participants by 2019.

What's ahead

Following nearly two decades of research, innovation, plans and more plans, First Place AZ is on track and focused on our vision *to ensure that housing and community options are as bountiful for people with autism and other special abilities as they are for everyone else.*

Media Clips

- [AZ Giving: Come Together](#), May issue – AZ Foothills
- [5 Things Autism Advocates Want You to Know](#), 05/02/18 – Arizona Republic
- [Phoenix Apartment Project Gives Adults with Autism Independence](#), 04/17/18 – KJZZ
- [Developer to Break Ground on \\$11.2M Residential Community for Adults with Special Needs](#), 04/17/18 – Phoenix Business Journal
- [Sprouts Foundation Gives First Place AZ a Boost](#), 04/06/18 – AZ Business Magazine
- [Raising the Spectrum](#), 04/01/18 – Phoenix Magazine
- [Metro Phoenix is a Growing Hub for New Housing for Adults with Specialized Needs](#), 03/24/18 – AZ Central
- [First Place AZ Will Help Develop More Housing for Adults with Autism](#), 02/23/18 – Rose Law Group
- [FSL, First Place AZ Will Develop More Housing for Adults with Autism](#), 02/22/18 – AZ Business Magazine
- [Phoenix Nonprofit Builds Apartments to Help Adults Living with Autism Live More Independently](#), 01/23/18 – 3TV/CBS5