Wanted

Qualified Teachers

ASU and its partners tackle an urgent need.

She’s Got Game Natalie Diaz played point guard for four years in college. Today, she channels her energy into writing and teaching poetry at ASU, earning a MacArthur Fellowship along the way. Private support provides resources for her exceptional work.

Trust is Earned Arizona State University and Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust share a vision to improve lives in our Valley communities.

Prepped Early-stage food business incubator helps caterers, food trucks scale up.
Melissa Cody, artist in residence at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, weaves an intricate rug in a photo taken by Nicole Neri, a junior in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The photo is part of a collection for which Neri received the Greg Crowder Memorial Photojournalism Award, part of an endowment established by Troy and Betsy Crowder, of Arizona, to honor their son, Greg, a Cronkite alumnus and photojournalist who died in 2005.
“I look back at what I have been given and all that I have achieved, and quite frankly, it is impressive how much the professional and financial support from one family can make a difference in a student’s life.”

Hillary Polk’s journey to higher education wasn’t always easy. Today he is a T.W. Lewis Scholar studying neurobiology, physiology, and behavior at ASU. Find out how he is preparing for life after graduation on page 18.

Student-teachers Wendy Wyatt, left, and Claire Metcalf team up to teach third grade.

Good grades don’t guarantee success in the workforce. Here’s what helps.

Solving Arizona’s dire teacher shortage, one district at a time.
When Kristin Antkoviak moved into a neighborhood of “tiny houses” in downtown Phoenix, she noticed there were no trees along the streets. 1 She also noticed air quality was poor, and neighbors didn’t appear to be building a sense of community. 1 At the time, Antkoviak was earning a master’s degree in landscape architecture at ASU’s Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, where she was developing the idea that landscape design is one way to address social inequities found in poor neighborhoods. 1

So Antkoviak set out to connect her neighbors with nature by organizing a day to plant trees. 1 The event was so successful that they held a second one. Antkoviak went door to door asking residents what they would like to see in their community; they ultimately planted a pollinator garden and 10 kinds of native trees. 1 Antkoviak believes these events foster neighborhood pride. “I think these native plants can give a healing aspect to the community,” she told ASU Now, the university’s online news publication. 1 However, her neighborhood isn’t all she hopes to change. 1 Antkoviak envisions a new type of landscape architect, one who works directly with people in neighborhoods to help them understand native trees, water use and how natural spaces can help rectify environmental injustices. 1 With the aid of scholarships from the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Antkoviak focuses on social outreach, serving as president of Active Minds at ASU, which advocates for student mental health awareness. She also founded a mentoring program for underprivileged middle-school students.

Curwick created an account for positive, affirming tweets. Ugly comments dwindled, and a new thread, “Nice it Forward,” trended worldwide. Curwick’s capacity to lead earned him the John B. Metzger Uncommon Leader Scholarship, established by the family of Metzger, (’02), who lost his life in a traffic accident. The scholarship supports future leaders in the health care profession. Curwick earned a master’s in the science of health care delivery. Now a business intelligence analyst, he returns to the College of Health Solutions to share his knowledge of health care policy.
JAMES ADAMS
Reducing Risk
After James Adams’ daughter was diagnosed with autism, this President’s Professor in the School for Engineering of Matter, Transport and Energy dedicated his career to helping individuals with autism and their families. Through research funded by Women and Philanthropy, donors who annually pool their gifts to benefit ASU, he developed a prenatal supplement that reduces the risk of pregnancy and birth complications, and of physical and neurological problems, including autism, in unborn children.

ASU poet Natalie Diaz grew up in the Fort Mojave Indian Village near Needles, California, where she experienced an “incredible culture and communal love” that informs her work, which earned her a 2018 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, informally known as the “genius grant.” ¶ “The way I see everything, the way I see all of my art, was formed there on the reservation, listening to my great-grandmother’s stories, hearing the language, talking with my elders . . .” Diaz says in a MacArthur Fellow video. ¶ In the video, she speaks of a second influence that informs her poetry: the physically and athleticism of being a collegiate basketball player at Old Dominion University, where she played point guard. “Where we come from, we say language has an energy, and I feel that it is a very physical energy, I believe in that exchange, and to me it’s similar to what I did on a basketball court.” ¶ Her ability and talent earned Diaz the Maxine and Jonathan Marshall Chair in Modern and Contemporary Poetry at ASU. Named for Maxine Besser Marshall and Jonathan Marshall, former newspaper publishers and Valley philanthropists, the endowment provides funds to support exceptional contemporary poets’ research, travel and teaching.

Rising Voice

“Where we come from, we say language has an energy, and I feel that it is a very physical energy.”

Natalie Diaz

¶ Diaz, an associate professor in the Department of English, creates poetry that draws on her experiences as a Mojave American and a Latina woman to explore personal, cultural and political issues affecting indigenous Americans. The New York Times called her first collection, “When My Brother Was an Aztec,” an “ambitious . . . beautiful work.”
In 2002, Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust awarded its first grant to Arizona State University, a gift to ASU’s Infant Child Research Programs to support at-risk preschoolers.

The impact of that gift was “dramatic,” says Mary Jane Rynd, president and CEO of Piper Trust. The grant equipped educators to teach at-risk children in low-income schools.

The outcome would have delighted Virginia Piper, a Valley resident known for her quiet, steady generosity and a deep concern for people’s welfare.

Piper died in 1996, but left her trust to carry on her legacy.

That first gift to ASU from the Trust did more than yield results, Rynd says. It fueled a long, fruitful partnership between two organizations that share many core values.

Since 2002, Piper Trust has funded 19 projects at ASU for a total of nearly $56 million. Projects include research in personalized medicine, programs that improve health care delivery, initiatives that increase engagement in the arts and more.

To honor the relationship, ASU named the Trust “ASU Philanthropist of the Year” in 2019.

Even before she established her trust, Virginia G. Piper directed her generosity to ASU. One example: the Paul V. Galvin Playhouse.

Valley attorney and banker Jim Bruner remembers serving on ASU’s presidential search committee in 2002 and interviewing a candidate named Michael M. Crow. Crow was recuperating from an illness, but still managed to wow Bruner with his energy and vision. “We knew he would position ASU to be a real leader in the state in terms of getting things done,” he says. Crow, who is also a trustee of Piper Trust, recognized a partnership in the making. Crow’s vision of a New American University—one that takes responsibility for the economic, cultural and social well-being of its community—aligned perfectly with Virginia Piper’s powerful sense of stewardship to the people of Arizona.

Piper Trust focuses on causes to which Virginia Piper devoted her life’s generosity: education, the arts, healthcare and medical research, the diverse needs of children and older adults, and religious institutions.

ASU is creating community-based programs that improve welfare in most of those areas, trustees say. “That fundamental responsibility for the economic and social welfare of the communities we serve really binds our two organizations,” says Sharon Harper, a trustee of both Piper Trust and ASU. “ASU shares other important qualities, she says, including a commitment to strategic partnerships, agility and flexibility when solving problems, and the vision to embrace projects with long-term, transformational potential.”

The written word

One of Piper Trust’s first gifts to ASU elevated the profile and social impact of creative writing in the Southwest. Its gift to create the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing established a vibrant hub for writers. Since 2003, the center’s Distinguished Writers Series has brought writers of renown to work with faculty, students and aspiring authors throughout the community. Enrichment funds enable faculty and students to write, do research and share their talents in schools and community settings. Exchange programs and international partnerships extend their global reach.

Personal Diagnostics

The Piper Center for Personalized Diagnostics is at the forefront of studying biomarkers, which indicate disease in the human body. Researchers are developing new innovations as low-cost procedures that will allow clinicians to diagnose diseases like Type 1 diabetes and breast, ovarian and HPV-related cancers in as little as 10 minutes.

Health Care Delivery

A 2013 gift enabled ASU to begin a university-wide effort to improve all aspects of health care delivery. One project equipped researchers to develop robotic devices that help people with motor impairments. Another funded ASU’s Obesity Solutions Initiative, which leverages community-based programs—such as FitPHX Energy Zones, a free after-school fitness and nutrition program for middle school children. The award even established a school identifiable to improving public health models, the School for the Science of Health Care Delivery.

Resiliency

All communities experience stresses. Some are sudden, like floods or earthquakes. Some are long-term, like the housing collapse of the Great Recession. Piper Trust’s latest grant to ASU funded an initiative to make Maricopa County communities more resilient, so people can survive setbacks and resume their lives as quickly as possible. The Knowledge Exchange brings together ASU researchers and community partners to collect data, identify vulnerabilities in a community, foster dialogue among decision-makers, and equip communities to prepare for and weather difficulties.
In Sunnyslope, Arizona, families fleeing domestic violence find solace at Chrysalis, a nonprofit shelter. They live in transitional housing redesigned by Courtney Davis, an interior architecture student at ASU. Elsewhere in the Valley, students from ASU’s School of Music teach middle school musicians to perform and interact with adults in senior care facilities. Design and arts students are able to collaborate in these community-based projects, thanks in part to the Dean’s Creativity Council – civic leaders and arts advocates who support the vision of Steven Tepper, dean of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts. That vision, says Tepper, is to liberate artists and designers from the restricted roles society has carved for them. “For 150 years, we have thought of art and design as ‘extras,’” Tepper says. “They have the capacity to be much more.” “The goal is to place students in fields outside of the traditional design and arts areas so they can leverage their creative skills,” says Molly DeFilips, who, as a Dean’s Creativity Council member, provides feedback, recommendations and support. “Many design and arts graduates from all universities end up working outside of the arts at some point during their career. HIDA wants to ensure that it prepares these students for their future as much as possible,” she says.
In 1891, Karl Elsener invented a folding pocket knife for soldiers. His client, the Swiss army, had stipulated that their new knife should enable troops in the field to disassemble their rifles and open cans of food. And also cut things.

In the century and a quarter Elsener’s company, Victorinox, has been producing the “Swiss Army Knife,” deluxe models grew to include wood saws, fish scalers, magnifying lenses, hoof cleaners, chisels, toothpicks, pens and digital clocks. Not yet available is a built-in sewing kit to repair overloaded pants pockets.

But what works for tools doesn’t work for schools. And by packing too many functions into too small a package, schools, too, are coming apart at the seams.

The education equivalent of the Swiss Army Knife is today’s teacher, enlisted to be not only an expert in content and in classroom management, but also assessment, individualized instructional strategies and learner differences, developmental psychology and cultural context.

Carole Basile calls this model the “widget teacher.” As dean of Arizona State University’s Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, one of the most prolific producers of teachers in the U.S., Basile says, “The job of a teacher who is asked to be all things to all people at all times is untenable.” The results, she says, are not in the best interest of kids, of teachers and of the education profession — already under stress from a nationwide teacher shortage.

Basile and her workforce development team have some ideas for managing the widgets; research-based, innovative ideas. And they’ve teamed up with some equally innovative partners in an initiative to reinvent the education workforce.
Christy Burton
… is one of those innovative partners. She chairs the Burton Family Foundation. And she found a kindred spirit in Basile.

“Our foundation, first and foremost, invests in leaders,” Burton says. “I met Carole at an ASU Foundation event and was impressed with her vision for rethink[ing] the way the teachers college delivers education. She was willing to work with the community. I emphasize the community part, because I think sometimes that gets lost in the discussion about schools and what really makes a school rich.”

Burton says a deep appreciation for community means, “We’re a bit different from other foundations.” She and her husband, Daryl, created the foundation with profits from their family business. Presson Companies has a mix of industrial and office real estate holdings. “What formed the foundation was our decision to sell off quite a few of our office properties and focus predominantly on industrial properties,” she says. “But we have properties in the Avondale area we plan to hold on to, and that gave me a look into the community and let me be familiar with what’s going on there.”

In Avondale, Burton had a passion. Basile identified an opportunity, and both found another innovative partner.

Avondale Elementary School District … is one of two such districts serving the city of Avondale, a bedroom suburb of Phoenix that’s home to about 80,000. Avondale Elementary School District comprises one middle school, grades 6 – 8; four K – 8 schools; one K – 1; one 2 – 5; and an alternative placement school for students with emotional disabilities.

Observing them all is Betsy Hargrove (Ed.D., 06), Avondale ESD superintendent since 2012. In 2017, Hargrove approached Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College for help with a challenge that confronts nearly every pre-school superintendent: how to encourage families to enroll their children in their districts. Hargrove had heard that MLFTC offers a design thinking initiative that would enlist the district’s faculty and staff, as well as community members, to act as thought partners in addressing the challenge.

The college describes its design labs as “intentional, collaborative, open-ended design processes that value local context, diverse perspectives and iterative testing of solutions.” MLFTC facilitators guide teams of stakeholders in a process that identifies complex challenges in education and develops prototype solutions.

That’s what Betsy Hargrove wanted. And that’s what Christy Burton could get behind. She had heard about the design labs from Carole Basile and saw the potential. “It wasn’t happening just at the university level,” Burton says. The design labs engage with people throughout a school district and beyond, “going right into the community.”

The Burton Family Foundation funded the Avondale Community Design Lab with $50,000. From October 2017 to February 2018, MLFTC personnel facilitated a series of workshops in Avondale ESD. Each of the district’s 10 schools and the district office sent teams comprising administrators and principals, teachers and staff, students, parents and community members. Their challenge: “How might each of the district’s schools design a unique identity for themselves?”

Using design thinking, the teams arrived at some ideas for retooling the schools. Hargrove says, “As each session went by, you could see how people engaged differently and left with an idea.” Christy Burton took part in the process, and she and her son were present at the district-wide final presentation. “As Christy said, we didn’t know what the end result would be,” says Hargrove, “but the ability to engage over an entire year with a large group of people from all of our sites was really the gift behind all of this.”

In the end, the workshops also identified a larger challenge: The district’s schools should perhaps be focusing on delivering a different, better experience to their students. Their most pressing problem might not be marketing, but product.

Betsy Hargrove
… already knew one way to improve her schools: better teachers and more of them.

“In Arizona over the past several years we’ve had great difficulty being able to find a certified teacher to be in each of our classrooms,” Hargrove says, but that doesn’t mean there aren’t people who want the spots. An August 2018 investigative report by The Arizona Republic stated, “Since the 2015–16 school year, nearly 7,000 teaching certificates have been issued to teachers who aren’t fully trained to lead a classroom” — an increase of 400 percent in only three years.

Robert Morse, MLFTC’s co-director of professional experiences, explains: “In Arizona, if you have a high school diploma or GED, you can go to the Department of Education and get your emergency substitute certificate. And some districts are in such high need to fill positions that they will have that person as the teacher of record in the classroom.” Morse says, “so someone with a high school diploma is doing the job of a certified professional teacher.” In Avondale ESD last year, 12 percent of the classroom teachers had only emergency certification. Another 25 percent were certified, but not for the subject areas they were teaching.

Based on the design lab experience, Hargrove decided to enlist the teachers college in addressing another challenge she and her principals deal with every year: how to fully staff their classrooms with qualified teachers when there aren’t enough in the state to go around.

Robert Morse
… is confronted with that challenge every day. He works the supply side to try to meet schools’ demand. As executive director of professional experiences, Morse manages everything related to internship and student teaching programs to ensure that MLFTC graduates are fully prepared to enter the education workforce. By the time a newly minted teacher graduates, they’ve been through a junior year, part-time internship, and a senior year residency of full-time teaching under the wing of a highly qualified mentor teacher. With more than 3,000 educators graduating from MLFTC every year, that’s a lot of experience and education. And experienced educators are what Avondale ESD desperately wants.

Morse is part of MLFTC’s division of teacher preparation, which is putting into action Carole Basile’s vision for developing and deploying a 21st-century education workforce. The college’s mission statement, adopted when
Basilé took the reins in 2016, says MLFTC will “work with schools and community partners to design and deploy teams of professional educators that will provide the full range of expertise and personalized learning support that students need and deserve.” So if the workforce should be made of teams, not widgets, why not start deploying the teams before they’ve graduated?

Hargrove was ready. Morse says, “We reached out to several districts with the idea of placing students in our student-teaching experience in a collaborative team model, and Betsy was the first to respond.”

The new model moves away from assigning student teachers — what the college calls teacher candidates — to a one-mentor, one-TC placement. “In Avondale,” Morse says, “we have three teacher candidates placed with a lead mentor teacher who is one of the district’s certified teachers.”

Let’s say that lead teacher teaches second grade,” Morse says, “and that grade level consists of four classrooms, but one of those classrooms needs a certified teacher. Morse says, “we have three teacher candidates placed with a lead mentor teacher, and they are responsible for two classrooms, so you have four adults working with 50 to 60 students.”

Morse says the idea is that the lead mentor teacher is constantly planning with and co-teaching with the TCs, looking at ways to regroup the 60 students to optimally use the expertise in the room. “Those three teacher candidates and the lead teacher are free to move between the two rooms!” Morse says, “to maximize the time each student gets with the four adults.”

Stacy Ellis ... sees the results of this new approach, and the challenges, firsthand. She’s in her sixth year as principal of Copper Trails School, the Avondale K – 8 piloting the team-teaching model. And she admits, the challenges have been many.

“It was definitely a pilot program being built and re-designed as we were going forward,” Ellis says. “We had to balance the needs of the candidates who are here to finish their education with student learning. For example, we needed to provide the teacher candidates with more planning time for them to observe their lead teacher or actually teaching, because the first day of school was their first day, too.”

A huge advantage of the new model was that Ellis wasn’t just accepting student-teacher placements. “We interviewed all of these candidates,” she says, “so we were able to place them in a way that would have a positive impact on student learning.”

The candidates had to be interviewed because they had to apply. And they had to apply because they were going to be employees of Avondale ESD, working with certificates as long-term substitutes. That’s the second trailblazing aspect of the model: These student teachers are being paid to teach.

It’s not much, everyone admits; more of a stipend than a salary. But the team of three teacher candidates is filling the role of a certified teacher, so the district divides the salary set aside for that spot among the three teacher candidates on the team.

Betsy Hargrove says that was always part of her plan. She tells a story of stopping at The Home Depot after work a few years ago and being recognized by the young man at the register. “He said, ‘Aren’t you Dr. Hargrove?’ ‘Yes, I am. Arent you one of our student teachers?’ ‘Yes,’ he said. ‘I’m over at Wildflower School. Can I tell you what I’m going to be teaching tomorrow? I’m working here till 10 tonight, but then I’m going home and studying my lesson plan because I really want to be prepared!’”

“I thought, hold on a second,” Hargrove says. “We have this young man who’s student teaching all day long, who’s working incredibly hard with our children, who has to work after school from four until 10 o’clock at night, and then go home and do his lesson plans so he’s ready to be his absolute best for our kids.”

“That’s when I wondered, how can we provide an opportunity for our student teachers to be compensated for the work they’re doing so they can focus all of their efforts on what happens in our classrooms, rather than having to go out and support their families in a different way.”

Carole Basilé ... has been outspoken about the need — particularly in Arizona — for a 21st-century education workforce. “Too often, schools have to focus only on addressing immediate, palliative needs,” Basile says. “With the support of the Burton Family Foundation, we’ve been able to partner with the Avondale district in a way that addresses long-term systemic issues. This work represents a significant step toward designing learning environments in which we surround learners with teams of professional educators who can deliver personalized learning.”

And Basile emphasizes that the concept being explored in Avondale is team teaching, not team teacher training. “No teacher — whether a student teacher or a 10-year veteran — should be on an island,” Basile says. “Our pilot work in Avondale has drawn attention from a number of other districts because it has the potential to be better for both students and teachers. Ultimately, this is about developing a more sustainable educator workforce that can deliver better outcomes to learners and more rewarding careers to educators.”

Christy Burton ... says she’s excited to follow the success of the Avondale pilot, but she expects other, long-lasting benefits from the design lab’s foundation made possible.

“There is a much deeper and richer experience that grew out of the vision of having these workshops of collected educators,” Burton says, “and when I say educators, I mean everyone who is involved in the education of students. That can be a coach, that can be somebody from a community organization that provides after-school tutoring groups; all those folks that are impacting the growth and development of students. I see the potential to take this model into other areas, and that’s something philanthropy can help with.

“These proof-of-concept projects, if they work, become the model for other schools or districts that are willing to think differently.”
In a home split asunder by divorce, faucets run dry and the lights go dark because of unpaid bills. This was Hillary Polk’s reality growing up. When he was 11 years old, Polk’s family lived in a Phoenix homeless shelter for four months while his parents litigated the divorce. Polk recalls sitting in that shelter, his thoughts obsessively returning to one thing: “I hope this doesn’t interfere with school.”

“I imagine a boy who went to school every day and absolutely loved learning but was worried one day he would have to stop learning,” he says.

Polk left the shelter to live with his mother in Tempe. His drive to learn carried him through high school, ultimately earning him scholarships to Arizona State University’s Barrett, The Honors College for studies in neurobiology, physiology and behavior.

For Polk, succeeding at academics was never an issue. He’d been doing that for as long as he could remember, even as turmoil roiled his family.

What he didn’t have, and what he knew he needed, were skills to succeed in the workforce. Self-awareness. Direction. Career planning. Leadership.

“There were no doctors in my life,” Polk says. “There were no engineers. I didn’t have a lot of examples of successful people to show me how to begin a career.”

Yet today he is unwavering in his desire to be a cardiothoracic surgeon and is excited to apply to medical school after he graduates in 2020, aspirations he attributes in part to his T.W. Lewis Scholarship.

The scholarship was established by Jan and Tom Lewis. Tom is founder, owner and CEO of the T.W. Lewis Company, an Arizona-based luxury homebuilder and diversified real estate investment company. They created the scholarship in 2001 to provide students from Maricopa County not only financial support, but also personal development offered by the scholarship, as well as courses on finding success and happiness. The Lewises also contributed to the construction of the Barrett Honors College Student Success Center, which will provide services like career counseling, alumni networking, national scholarship advisement and other programming.

“He realized what I truly value,” Lewis says. “There’s a lot of current knowledge about career planning, personal strengths, success and happiness.”

As he looks toward graduation, Polk sometimes thinks of his 11-year-old self and the months he spent in a homeless shelter. He regularly goes to the very same shelter to volunteer, reading to children.

“Look back at what I have been given and all that I have achieved,” Polk says, “and quite frankly, it is impressive how much the professional and financial support from one family can make a difference in a student’s life.”

Tom Lewis says Polk’s story is a testament to the vital importance of understanding and developing individual strengths to prepare students for professional careers.

“It’s not about finding ‘passion,’” Lewis says. “My passion was basketball, but I couldn’t dribble with my left hand, so I had to switch gears.” As a young man, he pursued engineering but later discovered an aptitude for business. “Awake” and “excited,” Lewis followed his strengths to success as a homebuilder, entrepreneur and philanthropist.

This year, the Lewises decided to go beyond their scholarship and expand the opportunities it provides to all students in Barrett.

They gave a gift to establish the T.W. Lewis Center for Personal Development on ASU’s Tempe campus, a one-stop shop where students can go for assistance with the kind of personal development offered by the scholarship, as well as courses on finding success and happiness. The Lewises also contributed to the construction of the Barrett Honors College Student Success Center, which will provide services like career counseling, alumni networking, national scholarship advisement and other programming.

“There’s a lot of current knowledge about career planning, personal strengths, success and happiness,” Lewis says. “There’s the idea that you follow your passion and everything will be fine. I think you need to find your strengths, and your passion will follow. Every student is unique, and we can help each one realize their strengths and better understand how to find success and happiness.”

As he looks toward graduation, Polk sometimes thinks of his 11-year-old self and the months he spent in a homeless shelter. He regularly goes to the very same shelter to volunteer, reading to children.

“I look back at what I have been given and all that I have achieved,” Polk says, “and quite frankly, it is impressive how much the professional and financial support from one family can make a difference in a student’s life.”
Steve Adams has a 3-year-old daughter and a 2-year-old son, who “watch everything that I do.” After a former collegiate soccer player who trained on the Olympic development team, Adams earned an ASU MBA in 2005 and now develops real estate for Adams Craig Acquisitions. Combining his two talents — soccer and finance — allowed him to teach his children a valuable life lesson: “I want to show my kids that individuals can make a difference if they use their gifts in life to help others who are less fortunate,” Adams says. After he sprained an ankle playing in a recreational league tournament, he used the downtime to volunteer-coach for North Phoenix Christian Soccer Club and ultimately form Valley-based God Loves Soccer FC, a program for refugee children whose families can’t afford club soccer. The organization’s mission is to teach responsibility and perseverance through sports and faith. Adams and his wife, Cynthia, who also earned an ASU MBA, realized they wanted to continue helping refugee children. The family established a scholarship in the W. P. Carey School of Business that gives first preference to an undergraduate of refugee status, with second preference to a first-generation student. “Phoenix is one of the largest refugee outlets in the United States, and we can’t think of a better way to support ASU, Phoenix and our nation than giving children and families from war-torn countries the gift of the American dream through education,” Adams says.
Filling a Void
More than 62,000 refugees from 109 countries have made Arizona their home, roughly 80 percent of whom resettled in Maricopa County. Many do not have the resources for, or have never received, proper health care. ¶ Two student-led programs in ASU’s Office of Global Social Work — the Refugee Education and Clinic Team (R.E.A.C.T.) and Smiling Eyes — are providing services to remedy this lack of health care and improve the well-being of refugees in Maricopa County. ¶ “The communities and the resettlement agencies have struggled to address the health care gap,” says Smiling Eyes team member Clinton Reiswig. ¶ But community partners and ASU students, working through the Office of Global Social Work, accepted the challenge. ¶ Smiling Eyes, a dental clinic, runs solely on the generosity of community leaders, resettlement agencies, dentists, dental hygienists and students donating time and expertise to provide oral care for 100 refugee clients monthly. ¶ In collaboration with Refugees and Immigrants Community for Empowerment, a support network, and Arizona Healthcare Outreach, Smiling Eyes creates a sense of community among refugees in Maricopa County while improving their overall health. ¶ With Smiling Eyes addressing oral health care, R.E.A.C.T. bridges the health care education gap. ¶ Gathering Humanity, a refugee resettlement agency in the Phoenix area, along with other nonprofits and medical providers, lends its expertise and resources to facilitate R.E.A.C.T.’s workshops and books informing refugees of basic hygiene practices, including handwashing and exercise. R.E.A.C.T. is strengthening bonds with the local refugee community and nonprofits in the hopes of opening a free, student-run clinic.
Prepped and Ready

Prepped — a free, early-stage food business incubator at ASU designed for ventures owned by women and underrepresented minorities — has helped dozens of local businesses scale up their food ventures in the community. Thanks to donors who wish to remain anonymous, it has the funding and staffing it needs, and accepted its sixth cohort this year.

Impact
Prepped works to support small businesses owned and operated by women and underrepresented people. Since 2016, the fifth cohort has served

19 entrepreneur, representing
12 businesses, bringing total Prepped impact to
63 businesses served.

Mentor Night
The capstone of the cohort allowed each participant to test his or her pitch and provide samples of food to a curated list of more than 25 experts from the greater Phoenix community.

Annual Showcase
Members of the fifth cohort display their menu items at the annual Prepped Showcase, where they meet industry stakeholders and have a chance to win up to $5,000.

Spotlight

Maria Parra Cano
Age: 37

I am a mother of four and the owner and manager of Sana Sana, a food truck that caters to community events. At Sana Sana, we focus on creating 100 percent plant-based Mexican food such as red chili bowls, posole and tamales. We use ancestral foods that are low glycemic, gluten free and vegan to begin healing our community from diseases like diabetes and hypertension. Community co-ops and sovereign nations provide our indigenous ingredients, which helps us ensure they are locally and ethically sourced.

In the future, I hope to have a brick-and-mortar store and to spend more time focusing on the education piece of Sana Sana. We are learning the dynamics of having a mobile food business, and the Prepped team made the experience unique. They obviously wanted to see participants succeed. I enjoyed knowing that my colleagues in Prepped had similar struggles and were looking for a support base.

My biggest takeaway from Prepped is having a food tribe to connect to, as well as using my skills to help others. I would advise all participants to work on building relationships with others.