

# Chandler nonprofits reeling from pandemic's impact

BY KEVIN REAGAN  
Arizona Staff Writer

George Macedon noticed something different when he went out shopping for diapers in Chandler a couple weeks ago.

His nonprofit, Fans Across America, hands out supplies to victims of domestic violence and their diaper bank had been running low.

Macedon drove around to various stores, hoping to stock up his inventory. But all the shelves were empty. The COVID-19 pandemic had predictably caused local stores to suddenly run out of essential items.

But even after the shelves got restocked, Macedon noticed the prices for diapers and baby wipes had quickly escalated.

"I was just astounded by the pricing," he recalled. "It's just sad."

The uncertainty surrounding whether supplies will continue to be available and affordable has been one of the most



Maria Cruz Trotter and George Macedon take a break at Fans Across America's "locker room" of supplies for needy families. (Tatlo Robles/Arizona Staff Photographer)

challenging aspects of this pandemic, Macedon said.

His organization has managed to stock up on its inventory of cleaning supplies,

clothes and toiletries for the time being.

But there's a looming concern that the supplies won't be sustainable as more clients contact Fans Across America seeking help.

Before the pandemic, the organization would typically receive about 25 referrals per month for new clients seeking supplies in order to avoid homelessness or leave an abusive partner.

That monthly number jumped to more than 60 in April.

Chandler Police has noticed its calls for domestic fights and disturbances have been increasing since the pandemic began in early March.

The demand for services will likely grow in the coming weeks, Macedon said, since it will take a considerable amount of time for the economy to restabilize.

It's not like flipping on a switch, he added, so Fans Across America is expecting to stay busy throughout the summer.

"We're preparing for it," he said. "We

SEE **NONPROFITS** PAGE 8

## NONPROFITS FROM PAGE 6

just have to stay ahead of the curve."

The Chandler nonprofit faces a dilemma that confronts others in the Valley: they must accommodate a growing demand for services with an uncertain supply of resources.

Mandatory closures forced many nonprofits to cancel fundraiser events that would have generated some much-needed revenue.

Some foundations and companies have additionally delayed handing out grant funding until further notice, Macedon added, creating another fiscal challenge for nonprofits.

A survey by the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits two weeks ago said 306 organizations reported a loss of nearly \$40 million, with three-quarters of the groups saying their services to clients have been disrupted. They also projected a total loss of 10 times that number by the end of their fiscal years.

"This may only represent the tip of the iceberg," said Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits CEO Kristen Merrifield.

Regardless of the current economic climate, Macedon said his nonprofit will find a way to continue servicing the

Chandler community.

"We're going to get through this," said Macedon. "We're gonna take good care of our clients."

Fans Across America is a subsidiary of Chandler Compadres, which raises money for East Valley charities.

Food banks, after-school programs and health clinics all receive funding that the Chandler Compadres raise throughout the year.

But the pandemic has cost the Compadres about 20 percent of its expected revenue this fiscal year, according to former president Matt Marshall.

Its charity golf tournament was canceled last month, costing the organization a good chunk of money that would have been distributed among its beneficiaries.

"We won't be able to give as much out," Marshall said.

The Compadres has some cash saved in its reserves, he said, but it's not much since the organization traditionally disperses almost everything it raises each year.

Even though some fundraisers have been postponed to the fall, Marshall said the Compadres are looking for alternative ways to quickly raise some cash for its beneficiaries.

"These groups and families need

support right now but obviously we're not able to do events to raise money for them," Marshall added. "So I think we'll have to look at some virtual fundraisers."

Despite the troubles surrounding fundraisers, the subsidiaries of Chandler Compadres have found ways to still support each other.

ICAN, a nonprofit that provides after-school programs for Chandler students, is part of the Compadres network and has been partnering with other beneficiaries to share resources.

Shelby Pedersen, CEO of ICAN, said they've gotten supplies from Fans Across America that have helped her organization compile take-home activity kits for children stuck at home during the pandemic.

"It's been really cool to see how much interconnectedness there is between the partners," Pedersen said.

Pedersen said the nonprofit is being forced to find innovative ways to keep servicing families without meeting them face-to-face.

As schools around Chandler started closing in late March, ICAN quickly started assembling take-home kits with constructive activities that children could do with their family.

The idea has turned out to be a popular one, Pedersen said, with their weekly kit numbers climbing from 100 to 500 in a short period of time.

ICAN would normally be in the process of planning for its summer activities that cater to 200 low-income students living around Chandler but the pandemic has cast uncertainty over the next couple months.

As Arizona starts reopening, Pedersen expects more parents will get back to work and depend on ICAN for programming to keep their children occupied throughout the summer.

ICAN hopes to reopen its in-person programming sometime this summer yet it will have to be rolled out at a gradual pace. The organization can't immediately go back to servicing 200 kids, Pedersen said.

"It will take us a little while to get back up to that number," she said.

Each subsidiary of Chandler Compadres will likely be in need of more resources in the near future, Matt Marshall added, so the organization's members will be doing everything possible to make the community aware of the needs that continue to persist during this pandemic.

More information on Chandler Compadres and its subsidiaries can be found at [chandlercompadres.org](http://chandlercompadres.org). ■