

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Aid to Adoption of Special Kids – AASK

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Thunderbirds Charities grant supports kinship foster families

Phoenix, AZ – Thunderbird Charities, the charitable giving arm of the Thunderbirds, hosts of the Waste Management Phoenix Open presented by Ak-Chin Indian Community, recently awarded \$25,000 to Aid to Adoption of Special Kids (AASK) to provide immediate support for families who open their homes to a child in foster care.

More than 8,000 of the nearly 18,000 children in Arizona’s foster care system are placed with relatives – grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings. These kinship foster families take immediate placement of children, but don’t get full state support until they become licensed foster parents – a process that can take six months or longer.

This grant makes it possible for AASK to provide support to families before they become licensed. AASK has a unit dedicated to the unique needs of kinship foster families. Each family is assigned a family support specialist who serves as a guide for dealing with the Arizona Department of Child Safety, the courts, the schools and other organizations involved in the life of a child in foster care. The family support specialist also helps kinship foster families connect to a variety of free or low-cost child and family resources. The state DCS does not cover agency services to unlicensed families.

“Because of the generosity of Thunderbirds Charities, AASK is able to help kinship foster parents when a child first comes into their home, the time when they need help most,” said Ron Adelson, CEO of AASK.

“AASK has such a tremendous impact on the welfare of kinship foster families in our community, helping them navigate our foster care system and providing the support that is critical for this vulnerable population,” said Andy Markham, President of Thunderbirds Charities. “We’re happy to assist in their efforts.”

Aid to Adoption of Special Kids (AASK), licensed by the Arizona Department of Economic Security since 1988, recruits, trains and provides ongoing support to the families that open their hearts and their homes to children in the child welfare system.

AASK, a 501(c) (3) non-profit charity, has helped facilitate thousands of adoptions and guided hundreds of kinship caregivers through the state licensing process.

ABOUT THE THUNDERBIRDS/THUNDERBIRDS CHARITIES

Thunderbirds Charities is a non-profit organization formed in 1986 to distribute monies raised through the Waste Management Phoenix Open golf tournament. The Thunderbirds Charities Board consists of 15 board members from varying professional backgrounds. The mission of Thunderbirds Charities is to assist children and families, help people in need and improve the quality of life in our communities. The organization's giving is directed toward organizations based or with a significant presence in Arizona. The Thunderbirds were founded in 1937 with the mission of promoting the Valley of the Sun through sports. The Thunderbirds consist of 55 "active" members and more than 250 "life" members. For more information on the Thunderbirds or the 2018 Waste Management Phoenix Open, visit www.wmphoenixopen.com. For more information on Thunderbirds Charities, visit www.thunderbirdscharities.org.