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Aid to Adoption of Special Kids – AASK

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AASK Sibling Connection program strengthens family bonds

It's smiles and hugs and squeals of delight as three dozen or so children gather for an afternoon of horseback riding. Or skating. Or bowling.

Once a month, children in foster care have the chance to reconnect with their siblings through the AASK Sibling Connection program.

“Sibling relationships are usually our longest lasting relationships and one of the most important relationships we have,” says JoAnne Chiariello, who started the Sibling Connection program five years ago.

“But children in foster care are often placed in foster homes or group homes apart from their brothers and sisters,” says Chiariello, director of family support services at AASK.

Research shows that strong, positive sibling relationships are associated with less loneliness, fewer behavior problems and higher self-worth.

“Maintaining those sibling relationships with regular visits gives a child the base to develop relationships when they get older,” says Chiariello.

The AASK Sibling Connection program helps siblings maintain a family relationship and strengthen the bonds between brothers and sisters.

Volunteers transport children to AASK-sponsored activities and events throughout the year.

“The kids are always happy to see their brothers and sisters,” says Bill Puckett, a long-time volunteer at the monthly events. “They get to see each other grow up.”

The Sibling Connection program depends on donations that qualify for the Arizona Foster Care Tax Credit.

“AASK uses tax credit gifts to provide services not funded by the state and those gifts may provide a dollar-for-dollar reduction of your state income tax,” says AASK CEO Ron Adelson.

You can learn how to volunteer for the Sibling Connection program at www.aask-az.org and learn more about the Arizona Foster Care Tax Credit at www.creditsforkids.org.