About Us
Since 1998, ACF of the Gila Valley has awarded more than $1.4 million in grants and scholarships to nonprofits and students in Graham and Greenlee counties.

We are a family of charitable funds created for the community, by the community. Some funds have a broad grantmaking focus while others target a specific organization or field of interest. Our endowed funds will make grants in the Gila Valley in perpetuity—which is forever! That is the power of endowment.

Grants are awarded year-round either by the advice of donors or through a competitive process overseen by our local Board of Advisors.

Creating a Legacy
You have the option to give now or leave a legacy after your lifetime by establishing a new fund or giving to an existing ACF fund in your will or estate plan. Gifts that are planned today and realized after your lifetime ensure a healthy future for your favorite nonprofit organizations in Graham and Greenlee counties.

There are several ways to give that vary in simplicity, flexibility, and permanency. Can’t decide whether to give to your family or community? You don’t have to choose. Explore all the options and find the right fit for you. Contact Senior Regional Director Angie Laskarides at 520.505.3676 or visit our Legacy Giving webpage.

Board of Advisors
Individuals with varying expertise and life experiences serve as our Board of Advisors. They help us with our grantmaking process and community relationship building efforts:

Ted Prina, Chair, Central
Neil Karnes, Vice-Chair, Safford
Don Smith, Safford
Laurie Smith, Safford
Stephen Ahmann, Clifton
Julie Rodriguez, Safford
Eva Harper, Safford
Brad Hemphill, Safford
Jace Nelson, Safford
Jennifer Cochran, Safford

BOARD OF ADVISORS MEMBERS VISIT OUR NEIGHBORS FARM AND PANTRY, A 2021 GRANTEE.
Thanks to the support of our community, ACF of the Gila Valley was able to award **more than $327,000 in grants and scholarships** in the past year.

**Competitive Grant Cycle**
Each year, a competitive grant cycle awards funding to projects and programs that enhance the quality of life throughout Graham and Greenlee counties. In 2022, $37,588 was awarded through the annual grant cycle to seven nonprofit organizations serving the region:

- **American Heart Association** received a grant to support their Next Generation of Heartsavers project, funding the purchase of CPR in Schools kits in Graham County. These kits provide high school students with Hands-Only CPR training required for graduation in Arizona. Training students to perform CPR instills confidence and a positive attitude and builds the next generation of Heartsavers.

- **Aravaipa Watershed Conservation Alliance** received a grant to purchase a business printer with the capability to print large maps and handouts for meetings and educational materials that serve visitors and local stakeholders.

- **Boys and Girls Club of the Gila Valley** received a grant for their 2023 Torch Club Youth Summer Program that encourages both healthy lifestyles and youth development and education. The grant provides transportation and supplies to ensure the success of the program.

- **Families Fighting Cancer Together** received a grant for their Assisting Families with Cancer and Other Illnesses project. The grant will help families struggling to balance the care of a child with their daily lives by providing food, transportation, and childcare support.

- **First Southern Baptist Church/Clifton and Duncan Food Banks** received a grant to support the Perishable Food Fund which helps meet specific food needs for low-income residents in Greenlee County.

- **Gila Watershed Partnership** received a grant to develop the capacity of the organization to meet the increasing regional demand for native plants. The grant will help expand their nursery with a new shade house and related costs, allowing Gila Watershed Partnership to increase plant sale revenue by 25% each year.

- **Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition** received a grant to support its Sober Wilderness Project. The grant helped purchase camping gear and rent vans to transport House of Hope participants to their 12-step recovery roundups that promote sobriety fellowship with individuals in recovery. This program also promotes physical, mental, and spiritual health.
Other Funding Sources

In addition to funding made available through the competitive grant cycle, $289,412 was granted through ACF’s discretionary dollars, donor advised funds, and scholarship awards. We are excited to highlight four organizations that supported health, education, and environmental programs, totaling $110,000:

Kindergarten Summer Camp

Under the leadership of Paulette LeBlanc and Graham County School Superintendent Donna McGaughey and modeled after a rural Hawaii program, Kindergarten Summer Camp was born. With grant funding from the Arizona Community Foundation of the Gila Valley and First Things First, three schools offered the new program for the first time in 2017.

For two weeks during the summer, soon-to-be kindergartners spend a few hours each day in their future classroom learning basic skills like recognizing their name, lining up for recess, taking turns with each other, and acclimating to class schedules. The goal of the camp is to ensure all children will enter school ready to succeed. The program helps children become familiar with their teachers, meet new friends, and get acquainted with their school environment.

Parent involvement is also a key component. Parents receive a kit of educational materials for use with their children during the summer and are asked to participate during the program to help support their child’s education.

Since inception, local kindergarten summer camps have served in the communities of Duncan, Pima, Solomon, and Bylas. The Arizona Community Foundation of the Gila Valley is proud to have helped sustain Kindergarten Summer Camps, ensuring local youth have access to programs that support their early learning success.

Read the full story in ACF’s 2022 Annual Report, page 37
Tooth B.U.D.D.S., Inc.

**A story from founder, MiQuel McRae:**

One year after completing the Community Dental Health Coordinator Program, I founded Tooth B.U.D.D.S. (Bringing Understanding of Dental Disease to Schools) a 501(c)(3) nonprofit staffed by dental hygienists to provide preventive dental care to children in Graham and Greenlee counties. Today, seven years later, we regularly visit all fourteen elementary schools in Graham and Greenlee counties and are recognized by children wherever we go. I have learned that the community has so much to offer as we come together united in a cause to improve the lives of those around us through service.

After receiving my very first grant from the Arizona Community Foundation of the Gila Valley, I was approached by Mark Smith who works with minors in juvenile detention. He thanked me for what I was doing and went on to explain that so many of the young kids he works with got there because of a toothache. It took me a minute to fully comprehend what he was saying. Two years in hygiene school and another 20 years in private practice, I never once thought or was taught that a child with a toothache will turn to the medicine cabinet to make the pain go away. And when it doesn’t, they go back. Today, with modern advancements in dental health, we have the tools to prevent dental decay from advancing and Tooth B.U.D.D.S. has made it our mission to ensure no child turns to drugs because of a toothache.
Gila Watershed Partnership

The Gila Watershed Partnership works to protect and improve the overall health of Arizona’s Upper Gila Watershed. Both the quality and quantity of our water plays an important part in our lives. Gila Watershed Partnership is shaping a new vision for our watershed; one that includes improvements to our environment, economy, and quality of life for all members of the community.

Last year, they were awarded an unrestricted two-year grant totaling $45,000 to support their work in the Upper Gila Watershed addressing challenges of polluted rivers, soil erosion, invasive weeds, loss of habitat, drought, fire, and flooding.

Gila Watershed Partnership hosts numerous events inviting the public to take part in their work, including periodic meetings, yearly forums, and public plant sales. Topics and discussions focus on watershed issues, collaboration, and education. They provide opportunities for youth to explore career opportunities by offering internships and educational activities to learn about natural resource management and restoration. Volunteer opportunities are open to the public—you can join them on the first Friday of each month.

To learn more, visit the Gila Watershed Partnership website
Nalwoodi Denzhone Community helps the San Carlos Apache and surrounding communities achieve access to healthy food and healthier lifestyles by producing and delivering food and providing educational workshops about healthy eating and agriculture. Thanks to a generous, two-year grant totaling $45,000 from the Arizona Community Foundation, Nalwoodi Denzhone Community is developing a market garden system to support local restaurants, stores, distribution sites, and hospitals and make healthy and nutritious foods available to the local community.

This year, Nalwoodi Denzhone Community serviced more than 1,400 people through educational trainings and workshops and distributed more than 14,400 pounds of food. In collaboration with the Schoolhouse Cooperative and the San Carlos Youth Home, they built a raised bed garden and small chicken coop to teach the youth home staff and children about caring for plants and animals.

The children engaged with daily chores like collecting eggs and feeding the chickens, and the eggs and produce harvested from the garden will feed the children. In the future, the program will expand to offer a small market at the San Carlos Youth Home property to spread awareness and raise funds.

To learn more, visit the Nalwoodi Denzhone Community website
To learn more, contact:

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