



CHILD CRISIS ARIZONA, LLC®

## A Meaningful Partnership Supports Families in Need

Four years ago, after leaving her abusive relationship, Melissa found herself in a tough situation. With no partner to depend on, she knew she would have to go back to school and start working to provide for her two children.

To accomplish her goals, she had to find reliable childcare, which she could not afford. After researching options throughout Phoenix, Melissa finally found the level of care she needed from a local organization called Child Crisis Arizona.

“Without Child Crisis, I wouldn't have had the mental capacity to pull through,” says Melissa. “I knew that when I dropped my kids off in the morning, they were in a safe place.”

Child Crisis Arizona helped Melissa feel supported in caring for her children. If she didn't have the time to take her kids out to the park in the afternoon, she knew they were getting plenty of exercise at school. If she was going through a difficult time and couldn't be playful with them, she knew they were still having joyful memories with friends and teachers.



*Child Crisis Arizona gave me the perseverance I needed to keep going, and continue to do what I needed to do to get to the place where I am now. They helped me build the foundation I will be able to stand on for a lifetime — the foundation of providing a safe and loving home for my boys.*



Melissa, mother of two

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*A lot of times in our culture we're not encouraged to ask for help.*

*But reaching out takes bravery.* ”

Melissa, mother of two







## Strengthening Families Through Crisis Prevention

Child Crisis Arizona serves Phoenix's vulnerable children and families and is committed to ending child abuse and neglect through prevention, education and intervention programs.

Child Crisis Arizona offers emergency shelters for children, teen moms and their babies, group homes for teens in the foster care system, foster care and adoption services, as well as community-wide parenting classes, workshops, support groups and early education programs for low-income families. Since 1977, Child Crisis Arizona has served more than 60,000 children and families.

"We take a stand and advocate for the children in the welfare system, because children don't always have a voice," says Torrie Taj, CEO of Child Crisis Arizona.

During the COVID pandemic, Child Crisis Arizona has continued serving vulnerable children and families with weekly meal distribution nights for foster care and early education families. Low-income families are able to pick up breakfast and lunch for their children daily, along with educational activities to do at home. Family education courses were transitioned online as well as Agency Meet and Greet for families interested in becoming licensed foster parents.

"These families need us more than ever right now, we've provided more than 30,000 meals during the pandemic," Taj says. "We have families that come and have tears in their eyes because they are so grateful that we deliver food every day for their children. We're also delivering playdough, books, crayons and chalk."

"At the end of the day, if community members are just dealing with crisis after crisis, they are going to struggle to move forward," explains Krehmeyer. "We believe we can use the home as a beginning point for individual stability that will lead to family stability, which will lead to community stability."



## Giving Back to Make Lasting Change

Melissa graduated in 2018 with a communications degree and now has a full-time job. She recently started her own business, M.K.O. Champions, offering life coaching and public speaking services. Wanting to give back to CCA, Melissa joined the Parent Policy Committee. Eventually she became the President of the committee — something that, in hindsight, she says she never saw for herself in the years leading up to today.

The Parent Policy Committee has a seat on the organization's Board of Directors. The committee is made up of a diverse group of parents focused on improving the internal functions of Child Crisis Arizona's Early Education Program. Parents assist in creating new procedures and policies surrounding children's services.

"I did it to serve, but it was an opportunity to see what it was like to be part of a Board of Directors. I gained insights that helped me with opening my own business," she said.

Melissa admires Child Crisis Arizona because of the organization's commitment to caring for the entire family unit. It is that same commitment that helped connect Child Crisis Arizona to Enterprise Bank & Trust.

"We decided to enter a relationship with Enterprise because we connected with their people and they connected with our mission," said Taj. "They go above and beyond to support our business and the families we serve."

Child Crisis Arizona has been partnering with Enterprise for the last several years. Enterprise contacted Child Crisis Arizona and asked if the local Phoenix employees could donate teddy bears they had made, and a partnership was born. The relationship cemented after Jeff Friesen, President of Enterprise's Arizona region, joined their Board of Directors.

"It's always great to have a volunteer who is familiar with big numbers and business transactions. Having top-level executives like Jeff on the board, representing a large bank and trust, is really benefiting our board," Taj says.

Friesen took a tour and was impressed with the level of work Child Crisis Arizona was achieving. He knew from that point on he wanted to play a role in this organization.

"Witnessing the impact Child Crisis Arizona has on the Phoenix community inspired me to get involved," said Friesen. "I know how much they value Enterprise's financial expertise and guidance, and the volunteer experience really inspires our team."

Enterprise partnered with Child Crisis Arizona on a smaller sponsorship in 2019, an increase in 2020, and continues to provide supportive financial contributions. This year Enterprise sponsored the agency's annual gala along with other community involvement efforts.

Child Crisis Arizona offers online parenting classes and is always looking for participants. Examples of courses include anger management for children, adverse childhood experiences, and managing stress. Child Crisis Arizona is also always looking for more foster homes, as there are more children in the foster care system than there are foster care families. Visit <https://childcrisisaz.org/> to learn how you can make a difference.



*It's always been our*

*mission to be diverse. Our*

*organization is very open and*

*inclusive of the people that*

*we're recruiting as employees*

*or foster parents.*



**CEO of Child Crisis Arizona**

Torrie Taj

## ABOUT CHILD CRISIS ARIZONA

Child Crisis Arizona cares for Phoenix's vulnerable children. CCA provides youth in Arizona a safe environment, free from abuse and neglect. Emphasizing diversity, CCA is fully inclusive of all individuals regardless of race, color, religious beliefs, ancestry, sexual orientation or gender identity. From offering emergency shelters to community parenting classes, CCA has served and helped more than 60,000 families.

