

# FR1ENDS of the CH1LDREN

Phoenix

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Friends of the Children – Phoenix Welcomes Nicole Szymkowski as Director of Development and Strategic Communications**

*Program pairs youth with paid, professional mentors for 12+ years*

**[October 2, 2025 (PHOENIX, AZ)]** – Friends of the Children – Phoenix is pleased to announce it is growing its senior leadership team and welcoming Nicole Szymkowski as Director of Development and Strategic Communications.

The Director of Development and Strategic Communications plays a pivotal role in leading the organization's strategy, philanthropic efforts, brand recognition, and communications work. Nicole brings years of experience leading philanthropic efforts for youth-serving organizations to this leadership role at Friends – Phoenix. She is passionate about equipping young people with the tools, relationships, and support they need, and is excited about joining an organization whose mission deeply resonates with her.

"I have seen firsthand the profound impact mentoring can have, both through my own personal experience and professionally. I believe every child deserves consistent, caring relationships that help them realize their full potential. In my new role, I hope to expand our reach and impact, ensuring more young people have the mentors and support they need to thrive," says Nicole.

Youth enrolled in our Friends – Phoenix program are paired with a Friend whose full-time job is to spend four hours a week one on one with a number of youth at school, at home and in the community. These Friends will support youth—and by extension, their families—for 12+ years, building trusting relationships through a trauma-informed lens that provides critical social, emotional, and academic support.

As Director of Development and Strategic Communications, Nicole will constructively and proactively engage community stakeholders as Friends – Phoenix works to expand our reach and impact.

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### **About Friends of the Children – Phoenix**

*Friends of the Children – Phoenix is part of a national nonprofit with the mission of impacting generational change by empowering youth who face the greatest obstacles, including foster*

care, housing insecurity, poverty, and mental health challenges, through relationships with professional mentors – 12+ years, no matter what. The successful model is now in [more than 40 locations](#) around the country, including Phoenix. Our work has been featured nationally in [The New York Times](#), [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#) and [CBS News](#). Visit [friendsphoenix.org](http://friendsphoenix.org) to learn more and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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