

ROUND-UP

MARICOPA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 50, NUMBER 9, SEPTEMBER 2004

PRESIDENT'S PAGE
– IT'S STILL HOT
IN ARIZONA!

SPECIAL REPORT:
Is Our Healthcare System Broken?

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT – *BEST PRACTICES SERIES!*

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT –

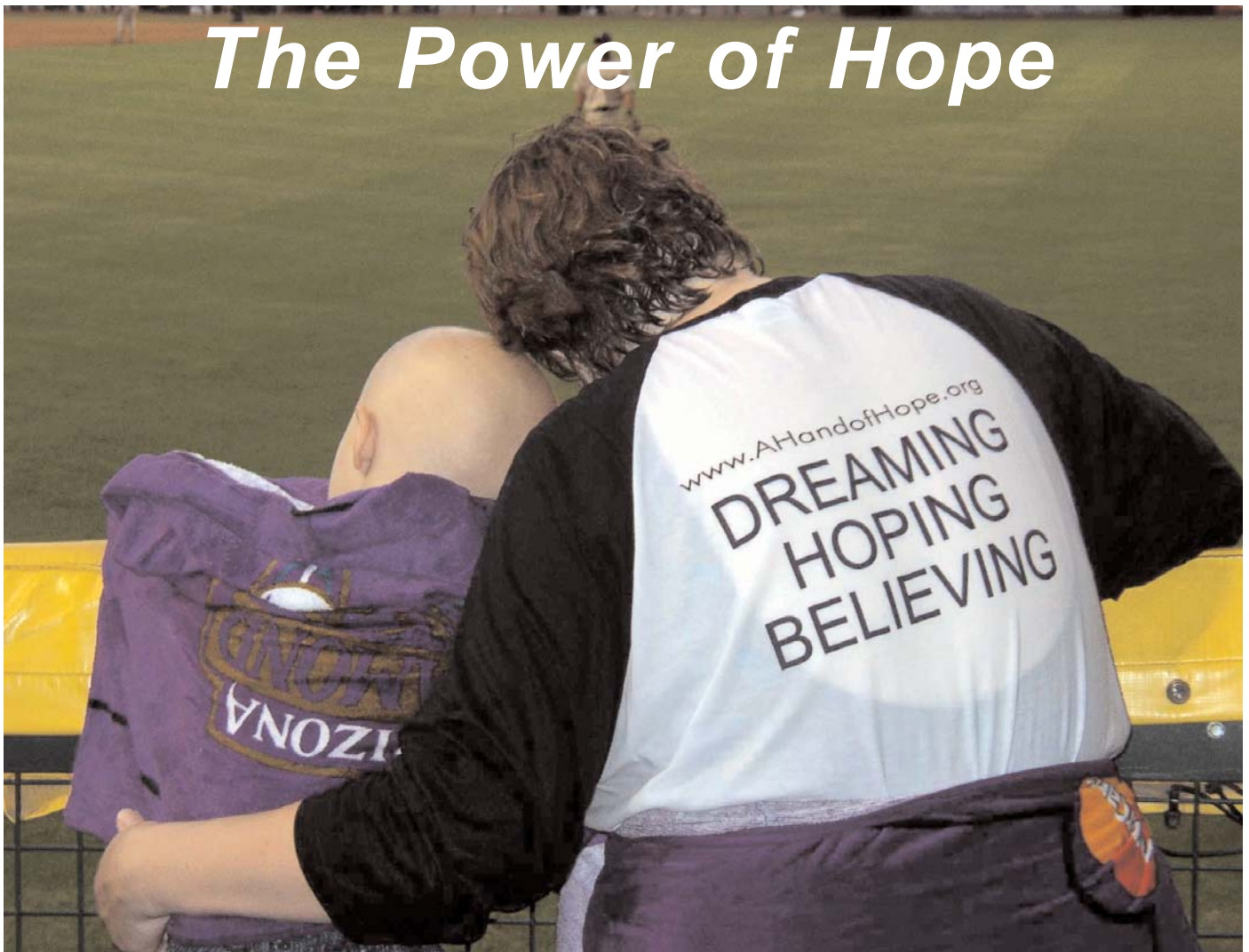
FIVE TIPS TO IMPROVE STAFF PRODUCTIVITY

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS – *HANDS OF HOPE*

IN MEMORIUM: GLORIA HOLDEN



The Power of Hope



A Hand of Hope's "never-ending wishes" for children with life-threatening illnesses.

W

hat a moment! Serena's dad rolls her wheelchair up to the rock-climbing wall. He helps her out of her chair and onto the wall. Gently, one foothold and handhold at a time, he helps her up the wall, all the way to the top. Serena, her dad, and everyone watching is in tears.

It would be a special moment for any child, but it is uniquely so for Serena, who has cancer. She has been told that the odds are against her. Just like today on the wall, the odds were against her, but she made it! What a lesson for a child with a life-threatening illness: you can make it!

This is the power of hope, and this is what *A Hand of Hope* is all about.

For children facing serious illnesses, rare are the days when they can laugh and play like other kids. Messages often conveyed to them are that there is no hope and that the future is not bright.

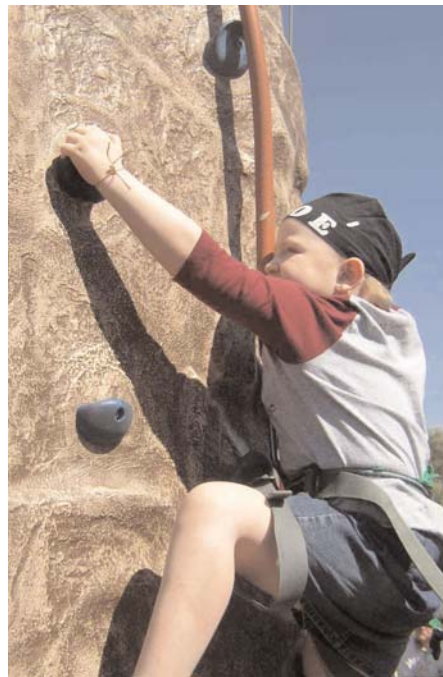
The mom of a critically ill child said, "What 'A Hand of Hope' does for our special kids is wonderful! It's so nice to have the future to look forward to! The stress, doctors, hospitals, meds, and treatments can make 'one more day' a scary place to be."



A Hand of Hope comes alongside these remarkable children and their families and they believe, hope and dream in a long and healthy future.

A Hand of Hope is a unique wish granting program for kids here in the Valley, unique because they do not believe in "final" wishes. To the contrary, they believe that giving kids with serious illnesses something to look forward to – "never-ending wishes" of continuous events and activities – builds strength and the willingness to fight.

Parents have shared they experience a tremendous emotional buildup before a standard wish, such as a trip to Disneyworld. The future looks bright and the child is hopeful. They have also shared that they experience a very difficult emotional downturn when the trip is over and the child returns home. They



Kloe on rock climbing wall

struggle to maintain a bright, hopeful outlook on the weeks and months ahead.

After watching her daughter Kloe spend an hour on the rock climbing wall at a *Hand of Hope* "Day of Hope" event, a mother said, "As the parent of a sick child, it brought me great joy that she now knows she can do things that are against the odds."

Kloe along with ninety-five percent of the children served by *A Hand of Hope* have already had their one big wish from a wish-granting organization. The good news is that they are still alive. The bad news is that they only get one wish. The wish is over, but the fight continues.

From concerts and backstage meetings to days of horseback riding and hot air balloon rides to private screenings of movies and circus performances, A

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Hand of Hope provides children in the Valley wish activities that make them feel special, provide ongoing support to the children and family members, and give them something to look forward to each month.

With the promise of a new event always ahead, hope for the future is a constant state of mind.

A Hand of Hope believes that by bringing joy to these remarkable children via an ongoing schedule of wish events and activities, they can help cultivate hope, acceptance, and most importantly the will to live. And it is working.

A Hand of Hope was founded in 2001 and has been working with 75 children in the Valley for nearly three years, all of whom are suffering from cancer or other life-threatening illnesses. Of those 75, 72 children are alive and doing well.

"He's off chemo now without a relapse and according to his doctor he is out of the woods. He is excited about the



Mason enjoys the pool at a Diamondback's game.

future again! Thanks for everything. A Hand of Hope is the best!" comments a parent of a child with Leukemia.

Another says, "*A Hand of Hope* has brought fun back into our lives."

A Hand of Hope invites all the children in their program to a special wish event

each month. These range from events in the pool suite and luxury suites at Diamondbacks games to private screenings of movies to their signature "Day of Hope" events. These all-day gatherings are filled with horseback riding, Hummer rides in the mountains, rock-climbing walls, inflatable bouncers, and

lots of other fun team and confidence-building activities for the kids and their families.

At the same "Day of Hope" event, a parent who has two boys with Cystic Fibrosis said, "It really hit home with our boys that if they try hard enough,

The Art of Negotiation


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Bobbie Paulson is a Graduate of the Realtors Institute (GRI), an Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR), and a member of the Council of Residential Specialists (CRS). She has been an active Realtor in Phoenix for over 20 years.


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they can accomplish anything. What a lesson to teach a child with a life-threatening illness."

Terri Wambach, a Child Life Specialist at St. Joseph's Hospital said, "I can't tell you how magical the Day of Hope events are for these kids. It is a time for them to be normal with the new friends they make at every *Hand of Hope* event. Each family gets to have an opportunity just to be a family, not a family with a child who has a life-threatening illness. I love going to these events because I get to see these kids as kids and not patients. It really enhances my relationships with them that helps when they are in the hospital." She continues, "It's a pleasure to be associated with such a powerful and magical group!"

In addition, *A Hand of Hope* does "care-mapping" for each individual child and



Adam Sandler has also gotten involved in the life of Jose, a boy also suffering from cancer, and he has agreed to work with other children.

plans special wish events specifically for that child.

An example of this is the involvement of actor Adam Sandler and the cartoon character Roger Rabbit.

About a year ago a child named Michael was about to have a bone-marrow transplant. *A Hand of Hope* learned that Adam Sander was Michael's favorite actor and that Roger Rabbit was his favorite cartoon character.

They got in touch with Mr. Sandler and Charles Fleischer, the actor who does the voice of Roger Rabbit. *A Hand of Hope's* request was a bit unusual.

They asked both actors to become part of Michael's life. They conveyed that Michael did not need another "mountaintop" experience or memory. Instead,

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Serena on rock climbing wall



Susan Cotrell and Serena in pool at Diamondback's game

he needed something to look forward to. He needed another reason to fight and desire to stay healthy. Instead of a one-time meeting or phone call, or sending an autographed item, *A Hand of Hope* asked the two actors to get involved in Michael's life long-term. Both agreed.

While Michael was in the hospital awaiting his transplant, "Roger Rabbit" called. He and Michael talked for some time and Roger told Michael that he would call him after the surgery and see how things went. He has called faithfully every few weeks for the past year.

Adam Sandler made a similar phone call to Michael before the surgery and told Michael that when he recovers and is able, Michael can come out to Los Angeles to meet him and they will hang out for the day. Michael's recovery has been a slow and difficult one and Adam has talked to Michael several times. Michael said, "I am so excited about meeting Adam and giving him a high-five!"

That will soon happen as plans are being made to have Michael visit Adam on the set of a movie he is currently filming.

This is a perfect example of the work of *A Hand of Hope* and the impact they are having on the life of children like Michael.

This is what *A Hand of Hope* is all about.

Theirs is an ongoing wish; one that says we can raise the spirits of children in their greatest time of need... one that says we can come alongside these children and believe, dream and hope in a long and healthy future.

A Hand of Hope is a local nonprofit charitable organization serving children in the Phoenix area. Their programs are growing and they could use your help.

Please consider partnering with this powerful, magical organization as they help restore hope to the futures of Valley children.

For more information visit their website: www.AHandofHope.org or call (602) 494-HOPE. ■

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