



THE PIPER TRUST AND VALLEY OF THE SUN UNITED WAY EVALUATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust (Piper Trust) and Valley of the Sun United Way are collaborating on an evaluative learning project with a group of seven non-profit agencies providing afterschool care in Maricopa County, Arizona. All participating organizations are grantees of both the Piper Trust and Valley of the Sun United Way.

The Evaluative Learning: Afterschool Provider Pilot engages the agencies in joint learning and capacity building by collecting data to improve outcomes of afterschool programs and services. Evaluative learning provides feedback loops to help these organizations measure their performance on a common set of measurements developed by the group. Periodic updates allow them to see where they stand and then improve existing services or add new programs.



Technology is a critical component of the project. nFocus Software's KidTrax® youth and membership tracking system was selected as the software for the pilot. "The goal is to create stronger impact in our afterschool programs with pertinent and timely feedback," says Marilee Dal Pra, Piper Trust Program Director. "As we moved into the evaluation part of the pilot, it was clear how important using an appropriate technology component was for tracking and managing the data."

One of the participating agencies and users of the program software is the Golden Gate Community Center in Phoenix. "Assembling counts and demographic information is easy with KidTrax," says Daniel Zapata, Golden Gate Director of Family Education. "We were actually looking for a new database system to replace our old Access database and Excel spreadsheets, so the timing of the project was perfect," notes Zapata.

Zapata says his agency uses KidTrax to track enrollment in a number of programs including adult education computer classes, childcare, senior programs, secondary language classes, and aerobic sessions among others. "All the fields and drop downs we need are in the program," notes Zapata. "When we do need to make adjustments based on what the United Way and other funders are asking for, it is very helpful that we are able to customize the fields ourselves."

"KidTrax provides our partners with an efficient and effective tool to gather a wealth of data to determine direct correlations between afterschool programming components that result in positive youth outcomes," says Michelle Gayles, Community Investment Manager at the Valley of the Sun United Way. "We look forward to the learning that will occur as a result of this partnership as it will help to inform our Community Impact work."