



*Notes from the*  
Washington Elementary School District  
**Business Advisory Team**  
April 23, 2014 Meeting

Washington Elementary School District Superintendent Dr. Susie Cook welcomed attendees to the Business Advisory Team (BAT meeting), thanking all for their support and asking everyone to stand and be acknowledged for being so important to the WESD.

Dr. Cook introduced the keynote speaker, Jason Schechterle, retired Phoenix Police Officer and founder of Beyond the Flames Foundation. (Dr. Cook shared that she was Jason's first grade teacher.) Over the course of the last eight years, Jason and three authors collaborated to write *Burning Shield*, an autobiography of his life. Jason's message is that everyone faces adversity; we all have a story and something we're going through. "When something bad happens to you," he says, "You have three choices: (1.) let it define you; (2.) let it destroy you; (3.) let it strengthen you." Jason's story proves that he has chosen #3.

Growing up, Jason had one dream – to serve as a Phoenix Police Officer. Inspired by his brother and the tragic loss of a local law enforcement hero, Jason worked persistently towards his dream. After serving four years in the Air Force, at the age 26, Jason achieved his goal to work on the streets of Phoenix as a rookie police officer. Then, only 14 months into what was supposed to be a life-long illustrious career, Jason's life took an unexpected, dramatic and, at the time, tragic turn.

At 11:01 p.m., on March 26, 2001, Jason was respond to a dispatcher's call of a possible homicide nearby. Even though he typically traveled with a partner, that night, he was alone. As Jason waited for a traffic light to turn green, suddenly and unexpectedly, his Crown Victoria was struck from behind by a taxi cab driver whose car was travelling 115 miles per hour. Jason's car instantly burst into flames, and he sat strapped and trapped in his vehicle, burning alive in raging flames that exceeded over 1000 degrees.

Phoenix Fire crews worked feverishly to save his life, putting their own lives and risk, and after nine minutes, Jason was freed, but almost 50 percent of his body had been severely burned.

Taken by ambulance to Maricopa Medical Center, Doctors worked for over 7 hours to save Jason's life. He was covered in 3rd and 4th degree burns throughout his face and torso to the point that his own wife and best friend found him unrecognizable. He survived the night, and lay in a coma for 2 ½ months. When Jason awoke from the coma on June 12, he was told he would be in the hospital until after Christmas. He was never expected to talk, walk, regain his sight and function as he once had. Through determination and perseverance, less than two months later he was released to a rehab center. He endured 53 surgeries and a long and painful recovery.

Over the past 10 years, Jason has beaten the odds – 18 months after the accident, he returned to the Phoenix Police Force (he has since retired). He also carried the Olympic torch prior to the 2002 Olympics.

Ten years later, through a series of big and small miracles, Jason now travels the country serving as a motivational speaker, sharing his story of hope and optimism.

Jason said that no matter what a person may be facing, "don't let the pain of today blind you from the promise of tomorrow. The human spirit can shine so brightly if you give it a chance."

Jill Hicks, Community Outreach Specialist, thanked Jason and shared that he has met with students and worked with several WESD schools and that his wife student taught at Orangewood School.

The following celebrations and recognitions were acknowledged.

- **Rob Kelly** and Nothing Bundt Cakes for the delicious buntinis he has brought to several BAT meetings.
- **Troy Williams** from Gardner’s Book Service for their partnership with the Richard and Barbara Park Memorial Literacy Grant Program that award (50) \$400 grants to teachers from around the state (11 to WESD teachers!).
- **Teri Carnicelli** for her amazing reporting with the North Central News and receiving the ASPRA Award – Award of Excellence for Consistent and Accurate Reporting on Education.
- **Sam Hill** and **Shannon McBride**(Open Door Fellowship), **Debra Boehlke** and **Jorge Llamas** (and the whole Valley Metro team) for the incredible event on February 9 at Open Door Fellowship to support businesses along 19<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- **Valley Metro, Sundt Stacy & Witbeck and City of Phoenix** for receiving the Lamp of Learning Award – this is the highest honor given by our school district.
- **Bob Hake** from Orangewood Church for receiving the Lamp of Learning Award.
- **Goodwill** for sponsoring the Lamp of Learning Award dinner. How appropriate – Good Stuff. Good Work. Goodwill!
- **Adolfson & Peterson Construction, Orcutt Winslow and The H2 Group LLC** for their incredible work designing and building the new Lookout Mountain School, which recently received a sustainability award because of their combined efforts.
- Jill introduced **Tracy Beal** from Pure Heart Christian Fellowship, who spoke about the 27 service projects (involving over 1050 volunteers) Pure Heart just completed during their PH Service Day on March 29. This effort helps transform our community...and 9 WESD schools were recipients of these efforts.
- **Ellen Dean** from BookPALS, **Tyler Hincy** from Discover Books and **Pam Giannonatti** from Fry’s Food Stores were thanked for the donation of more than 10,000 books that were sorted by (184) students, (15) high school students, (27) teachers , (12) Kiwanians and (1) ASU intern. The books were distributed to students throughout WESD.
- Jill gave kudos to schools and 17 BAT members that participated in the We Can End Hunger Food Drive. The drive raised 57,584 pounds of nonperishable food items. Shaw Butte Elementary School collected 13,382 pounds of food (12.48 pounds per student) – the most of any school in the District!
  - **BNI Arizona**
  - **Valley Metro**
  - **Epic Thrift**
  - **Shadow Rock Church of Christ**
  - **Sylvan Phoenix**
  - **Sylvan Arrowhead**
  - **CCS Presentation Systems – collected over 300 pounds!**
  - **North Phoenix Chamber of Commerce**
  - **Metrocenter**
  - **Liberty Mutual insurance**
  - **DES Office of Faith & Community**
  - **Let it Roll Bowl & Entertainment**
  - **Sundt Stacy & Witbeck**
  - **Danson Construction**
  - **Peter Piper Pizza**
  - **Nothing Bundt Cakes**
  - **Mission Shadows Apartments**

“Shining a Light on You” featured two BAT members. **Jazmyn Harold of Liberty Mutual Insurance** encouraged networking among BAT members and invited them to share their business information. **Dean Sheppard from Intelligent Irrigation Systems** piloted an irrigation system regulated by ground moisture to conserve water at Washington Elementary. The system proved so successful, it will be installed at other schools in the WESD.

Before the meeting adjourned, Jill reviewed the items in the folders that members received upon arrival. Included in them were information/interest cards for Continuous Improvement Review Teams (CIRT) and the After-school Challenge, and March4Schools in September.

The next WESD Business Advisory Team meeting will be held on **Wednesday, October 29, 2014**.