

### Mayor's Monthly Message: April 2018

At our first council meeting in April, our council accepted a donation from the Michelle Gallagher Youth Scholarship. On March 3, 2018, the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Michelle Gallagher Co-Ed Softball Tournament was held at Heritage Park. The tournament honors the memory of Michelle Gallagher and proceeds from the tournament benefit the Michelle Gallagher Youth Scholarship Fund. Prior to the tournament this year, Denise Smith, Michelle's sister approached the Town about donating funds to be used for recreation scholarships for the youth. From the Michelle Gallagher Softball Tournament Facebook Page:

"Michelle was an 18-year employee of the Pinal County Sheriff's Office before passing away in January 2014. She had a great passion for youth, investing countless hours coaching for over a decade. Help us carry on Michelle's tradition of engaging youth people in sports who would not otherwise have the financial means to participate in organized sports. All tournament process support youth scholarships."

As a result of this donation, disadvantaged youth will now have an opportunity to participate in youth sports or other programs. From my heart, I would like to sincerely thank Denise Smith and everyone who supported the Michelle Gallagher Youth Scholarship, whether thru donations and/or participating in sponsored activities.

As you know, our council and staff are passionate about creating and facilitating partnerships and relationships that are mutually beneficial. This month, we recognized Brian Smith, who served as a Parks and Recreation Intern for eleven weeks. He came to us as a senior from Illinois State University. During his time with us, he helped with our parent-child dances, spring break camp for kids, special events, park maintenance, seasonal aquatic staff interviews, attended a spring training game with the senior center and much more. We continue to look forward to these collaborations as we invest in the youth, as well as learn from them.

The week of April 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> was proclaimed as National Library Week in the Town of Florence, encouraging all residents to visit the library and explore library collections, services, and programs. For the past 20 years, the Florence Community Library has celebrated National Library Week through its annual bookmark contest, which draws participation from K-8 students. This year's Bookmark Awards Ceremony, recognizing the winners of the competition for each grade level, will be held on April 13, 2018.

Also, this month is proclaimed as Fair Housing Month. All recipients of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds must certify they affirmatively further fair housing. Declaration of this proclamation is required each year for the Town to continue to receive CDBG funds. The Town of Florence plans to use \$278,483 in CDBG funds to complete water line improvements.

We have been actively planning for our annual 'Road to Country Thunder', which is a pre-festival event for Country Thunder which is held the following week. Great up and coming country artists will be featured playing live music. In addition, food and vendors, activities for the kids and more! Country Thunder will be held April 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and is expected to be bigger and better than ever in 2018 with an incredible line up of superstars including: Jason Aldean, Luke Bryan, Toby Keith, Cole Swindell, Big & Rich, Brett Young, Tracey Lawrence, Neal McCoy, Bryan White, Michael Ray, Lindsay Ell, Michael Tyler, Cody Johnson, Lukas Nelson, and more! As always, the Town of Florence hosted our annual Road to Country Thunder, which is free and presented by the Town of Florence, Country Thunder, and KMLE.

In other upcoming events this month, the Florence Teen Council and Community Services Department are excited to announce the second annual Teen Leadership Symposium on Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Florence Library and Community Center. Also, register now for the 2018 Florence Sharks swim team and compete in swim meets in various Pinal County locations. This recreational swim team is for children ages five to 17 years old. Come on down and enjoy a free family flick at the Florence Community Library! At 2:00 pm on Wednesday, April 25, the library will host a free showing of a recent animated movie. Lastly, in the event Florence schools are closed on Thursday and Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, the Florence Community Services Department is offering a recreation day camp for children in kindergarten through the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The day camps are from 7:30 to 5:00.

I hope to see you out and about at the activities and events. As always, stay safe and enjoy. 😊

Sincerely,

Tara Walter  
Mayor of Florence, AZ  
tara.walter@florenceaz.gov