

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senator McCain, Rep. Adams, and Mayor Smith to Officially open Helen's Hope Chest

MESA, Arizona, February 5, 2010—This brutal recession is forcing every level of government to make difficult decisions to cut important programs and it's hard to find a bright spot. But Helen's Hope Chest, a project of Mesa United Way that will benefit foster children, is a shining example of how a community can step up and at least partially fill the void left as public funding for an important service is reduced.

U.S. Sen. John McCain, Arizona House Speaker Kirk Adams and Mesa Mayor Scott Smith will officially open Helen's Hope Chest at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 13, at 415 N. Pasadena, just off University Drive between Center Street and Mesa Drive near downtown Mesa.

Helen's Hope Chest will provide local foster children with new and gently used clothing, backpacks and other school supplies, books and toys at no cost to their foster parents. That's welcome help for foster families as state assistance is reduced.

Helen's Hope Chest also memorializes a remarkable woman, the late Helen Paula Simmons, who spent her entire childhood in foster care and was determined to love and provide for her own two daughters despite a lifetime of hardships. Daughters Debbie Jacobus, who has served as Sen. McCain's East Valley office manager for the past 16 years, and Regena Field, a successful certified public accountant in Jackson, Wyo., will join us for the Grand Opening on Feb. 13 to honor Helen's memory and launch this vital new community service.

Helen's Hope Chest is made possible by a corps of dedicated volunteers who remodeled and are stocking a formerly vacant municipal building, and by countless residents and businesses that have been donating thousands of articles for the facility, which will be organized like a store - only with no price tags.

Helen's Hope Chest not only helps fill a pressing need in our community as we're forced to downsize government, it's also a model for how caring individuals and community organizations like Mesa United Way can and must step up to the challenge of helping people in need.

Please join us at 11:30 a.m. on Feb. 13 to honor the memory of Helen Paula Simmons with the opening of Helen's Hope Chest, and to tour the facility, meet Helen's daughters, as well as the volunteers who have made it possible.

Helen's Hope Chest, opening in Mesa on Feb. 13, is an inspiring story of how one community is stepping up to help those in need as government steps back. This story has several layers that are uniquely suited for television news coverage.

If you would like to arrange interviews and a tour before the event, please contact Juls Davis, Director of Public Relations for Mesa United Way: 480-834-2102

About Mesa United Way

Mesa United Way addresses our community's most critical issues through our Community Care Fund. We partner with businesses, government, and nonprofit organizations to advance the common good and carry out our call-to-action to LIVE UNITED by encouraging everyone to Give, Advocate, and Volunteer. Mesa United Way is an independent organization serving the City of Mesa in Maricopa County, Arizona. Join the movement. LIVE UNITED. For information about the Community Care Fund, visit www.mesaunitedway.org or call (480) 969-8601.