MESA, ARIZ. (April 20, 2021) A cozy campfire, live music and s’mores made for an unforgettable evening for guests at Child Crisis Arizona’s Great Outdoors Gala on Saturday, April 17 as the organization raised nearly $2.8 million to support its intervention, prevention and education programs. This year the event was hybrid, held outdoors on the patio at the JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort and Spa, with very limited in-person seating, and also streamed online to a virtual audience. Despite the change, the event managed to bring in a record-breaking amount of donations for the organization.

During the evening’s program, Calum and Tricia DeSouza announced a match of up to $200,000 to help fund safe nights of sleep for children in crisis situations, parent education courses, early education, and behavioral health services for children who have experienced trauma during the evening’s paddle raise, which ultimately raised more than $500,000. At the conclusion of the paddle raise, long-time supporter Janis Merrill joined us on stage and brought the audience to their feet (and tears to our eyes) with her announcement of a $2 million gift toward Child Crisis Arizona’s capital expansion. Tracy and Louis Basile also made a $100,000 gift toward the capital expansion.

“The generosity of our donors and sponsors is truly inspiring,” said Torrie Taj, CEO of Child Crisis Arizona. “The success of this event is a testament to their belief in and importance of our mission.”

Child Crisis Arizona presented their annual Legacy of Love Award to Thunderbirds Charities, honoring their many years of support to the organization. “We’ve really been a proud partner of Child Crisis since the inception,” said Scott Jenkins, “If you look at the mission statement of this organization... if you can’t get behind that I don’t know what you can get behind. We are proud supporters and will continue to be proud supporters.”

This evening was made possible by more than 30 returning sponsors. Special thanks to first year presenting sponsors, Calum and Tricia DeSouza and Willscot Mobile Mini for creating the opportunity to impact so many lives through their generosity. “Tonight we gathered as one big family, coming together to help strengthen other families and to help support children in crisis,” said Tricia DeSouza. “A strong united family can accomplish more together than alone. Let us continue this wonderful journey and make it our duty to help those in our community less fortunate than ourselves.”

“WillScot | Mobile Mini is proud to support Child Crisis AZ and the incredible impact they make in our local community,” said Davida Redmond, Director, Inclusion & Diversity and Community for Willscot Mobile Mini. “We’re committed to making a difference for children and families across the Valley and in the 275 plus communities where we live and work.”

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About Child Crisis Arizona
For more than 44 years, Child Crisis Arizona (CCA) has served vulnerable children, youth and families and is committed to ending child abuse and neglect through prevention, education and intervention programs. The agency offers emergency shelters for children, teen moms and their babies; a group home for boys in the foster care system; foster care and adoption services; as well community-wide parenting classes, workshops,