



Portable Practical Educational Preparation, Inc.

Multi Service Center
802 E. 46th Street
Tucson, Arizona 85713
(520) 622-3553
Webpage: www.ppep.org

Toll Free: (800) 376-3553 FAX: (520) 622-1480
E-Mail Address: jamold@ppep.org



John Bordenave
President

John David Arnold, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer & Founder

Hector Sanchez
President

“Si Se Pudo”

PPEP and Affiliates
NARRATIVE August 24th 1967 – August 24th 2007

“The forty year journey of La Tortuga and the ‘dreams’ of its first Bracero farmworker students”

On August 24, 1967 La Tortuga starts its 40 year journey with adult education to Bracero migrant workers from the dusty roads of Sahuarita to the bright lights of the Los Angeles basin with virtual education for home schooler’s leading the way to “choice” in education for students and parents.

Along the way PPEP, Inc. has maintained its mission to carry out the “dreams” of its first students aboard the “La Tortuga” internet school bus. Those dreams have become PPEP’s mission to “improve the quality of rural life” with the motto of “Si Se Pudo” (yes it was accomplished).

From its humble beginnings aboard La Tortuga with one full time and 5 part timers, PPEP’s family has grown to over 600 personnel in Arizona and California serving the social economic, educational, and human services needs of rural and urban poor.

Over this remarkable journey rural people including, Native American, Latinos, Afro Americans have been empowered with programs that have produced results and given hope to higher horizons. The region most impacted by PPEP, Inc., and Affiliates has been rural Arizona and the U.S. border region that according to the 1990 census had the highest rate of poverty and sub-standard of living, comparable to a Third World country.

Housing and Micro business Development

In response to this dream of its early students aboard La Tortuga PPEP has responded with thousands of affordable housing units built and over 20 million in micro business loans to hundreds of tiny businesses with working capital and technical assistance.

In 1990, PPEP formed the Rocky Mountain High Coalition to serve as a pass through of federal funds and technical assistance for farm workers housing extending from Oklahoma to Hawaii. In 1999, PPEP micro business program was recognized at the White House with the “Outstanding Micro Program of the Year.” One of our micro

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clients, Maria Jesus Gaxiola, farmworker, and widow was recognized on stage at the White House by President Clinton, Hillary , and Secretary of the Treasury Robert Ruben.

Education Adult and Youth

Over the years PPEP's educational dream has been kept alive as it continues to provide adult educational services to migrant and seasonal farm workers known as the GED (High School Equivalency Program). Over 1000 adults have received their GED diplomas in Yuma County over the past 5 years .

During the 1996-1997 school year, PPEP replaced its post secondary program to reach down to a generation earlier. PPEP TEC opened 7 public charter high schools statewide in rural and inner cities giving hundreds of students choice in education. Furthermore, PPEP offered in its 9-12 grades an individualized, self-paced curriculum. More than 2400 at -risk students have graduated with official state issued diplomas. Over the years 12 PPEP TEC Charter High Schools have been formed throughout the State of Arizona.

Virtual Learning

PPEP Inc was one of the first pioneers in virtual learning (home schooling) for students kindergarten to 12th grade. Later, formed the Arizona Virtual Academy (www.AZVA.org) that now has over 4,500 students k-12. This virtual academy is in cooperation with K-12, Inc. Mary Gifford is the Director.

The second partnership is between PPEP Inc of California and Insight Schools owned by Apollo and University of Phoenix. This year some 300 students in the four L.A. basin counties started their virtual classes. Next fall in Idaho a similar partnership is putting in place the same type of virtual learning as a public charter school. Another program to assist drop outs is known as Youth Build. Several dozen drop out students have been rescued by this program and put in to housing construction training and skills program coupled with completion of their G.E.D. high school diploma program. Many of these students have been able to travel to national workshops and conventions such as LULAC and Youth Build.

Developmentally Disabled Day Programs

In 1975, PPEP's Board Chairman, Gilberto Mungaray, also handicapped ,asked what we were going to do as an organization to address the needs of the developmentally disabled. The answer has been to establish through the Encompass program 20 group homes, day programs, work experience, and transportation to hundreds of DDD clients many from reservation and rural towns. Over 360 Encompass workers staff the group homes and day program. This response has been to create one of PPEP's largest division of service.

Job Training, Job Placement, and Work Experience

In 1980, PPEP, Inc., was awarded grantee status to provide job training services to Arizona farmworkers under the USDOL CETA program. Since then thousands of migrant and seasonal farm workers have received on the job training, work experience, commercial driver license, nursing home training, and many other cutting edge

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partnerships with the private and public sectors. PPEP also is completing the first state wide survey of migrants. In 1986, PPEP, Inc. was the largest sub contract of the Navajo Nation in education, job training, and housing relocation. In 1990, the Rocky Mountain Hawaii Regional Coalition was formed among the farm worker job training program as a peer group exchange and pass through of the aforementioned technical assistance and federal funds to farmworker housing organizations . PPEP Inc assisted in the formation of NAFO and AFOP which have been the national clearing houses for Farmworker organizations over the past three decades.

Behavioral Health Counseling

In 1976 PPEP became a licensed rural behavioral health counseling provider under ADAPT this program pioneered mental health services to minority and immigrant populations and made services readily affordable with bi-lingual and bi-cultural staff. Today PPEP operates under the CPSA umbrella in Southern Arizona. Some of it key components have been DUI, court referred services, counselors visiting students in small rural schools on an itinerant basis. Partnerships with universities and colleges have also been made, such as with the University of New York in establishing the “circle counseling” program in Nogales, Arizona.”

Congressional Record

This program and the other PPEP, Inc., Affiliate programs have been cited over a dozen times in the U.S. Congressional Record in the Senate and House of Representatives on a bi-partisan basis (see recognition section of this report).

Human Services

Part of the dreams of the first Bracero farm workers students aboard La Tortuga was to have supportive services to help them make the transition from rural poverty to self sufficiency. PPEP has developed a number of social services that are family oriented that include community, food, nutrition, hot-lunch in schools, senior nutrition programs such as the one at the Yoem Yaqui Pueblo in Marana and the New Pascua Yaqui village. Furthermore, PPEP has several rural offices statewide from which these services are made accessible. One of the off shoots of the social services program was forming the Arivaca Community Garden and 5 rural medical clinics. In 1990, PPEP organized the Arizona Rural Services Coalition among 35 agencies to coordinate their resources, efforts, and advocacy for rural needs.

Arivaca Community Garden

The Arivaca Community Garden was established to provide access to sustainable organic farming. This in turn would produce organically grown vegetables that are donated to food kitchens and those individuals whom require a diet without chemicals. This 4 acre farm has two large green houses for year around production as well as outdoors abundance is grown on the rich earth. This plot has been farmed for centuries along the Arivaca Creek by Native populations. Interns are welcome along with the summer youth workers.

Bi-National Efforts

For 12,000 years people traveling from the interior of Mexico traded with Native people in the Northern Rockies and Canada. PPEP has sought to perpetrate that tradition by

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establishing micro loan programs in Arizona, Sonora border towns as well as the interior. FAI of Sonora one of the largest micro funds in Mexico was started with a \$5,000 seed fund by PPEP in 1990. Recently part of PPEP's 40th Anniversary we put on our own version of mini NAFTA by inviting 100 micro businesses from both sides of the border. Over 1700 persons came to the Tucson Community Center to see the products and network. A bi-national committee has been formed and PPEP has had several cooperative agreements with FONAES, Conasupo, and Mexico Legislators, UNIMOS and several Mexican Universities have helped enhance these efforts.

Recently, Dr. Arnold was re-appointed as LULAC International Relations Chair. He also has personally met former President Vicente Fox and Mexico current President Felipe Calderon and a number of his cabinet. PPEP works closely with the Sonora Legislative, Governor and senators on a number of trade issues including establishing a micro-business law similar to the US CDFI law PPEP assisted the Clinton Administration to introduce to the Congress in 1993. PPEP works very closely with the Mexican Consulates in Arizona and the Instituto del Mexicano en el Exterior (IME).and the LULAC Associate Council #1 it helps establish in Hermosillo, Mexico.

Advocacy

Over the years PPEP, Inc. has tried to promote understanding in such areas of immigration, cross border migrations, understanding the issues of the cross border family, and economic ties to keep them from becoming fragmented. Dr. Arnold has used the story from the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament as a corner stone to solving the complex problems of these migrations whether legal or otherwise. The story of Ruth the foreigner and Boaz from the receiving country set the example. Ruth took care of Boaz relative in her county of Moab. Then when she was a stranger in Bethlehem Boaz country he took Ruth in as part of his family. The No Child Left Behind ,Amnesty Act ,Dream Act and many other social issues emanating out of the Civil Rights Movement where PPEP got its start have been cornerstones to its advocacy. PPEP on a non-partisan basis has sought not to influence legislation, but to provide valuable insights to decision makers when consulted.

Civilian Emergency Relief Efforts

Over the years PPEP has found time to meaningfully impact the victims of a number of natural disasters such as the tropical storm that hit Tucson in 1984, Hurricane Nora in Yuma, Chiapas, Katrina, Rita, and most recently Hurricane Henriette in Sonora among the Mayo and Yaqui Indian people. During the aftermath of the Hurricane Katrina and Rita, PPEP forged a strong partnership between the PPEP TEC Charter High Schools, LULAC, and World Care. For example, to date over 80 semi trucks of supplies have been delivered to Clarksdale, Mississippi to emergency relief site which is a 55,000 square foot facility on 10 acres, with rail head. This facility was recently purchased by the Mississippi Delta Council (MDC)with a \$700,000 loan from PMHDC. NBC called this relief effort "the largest civilian ,interstate relief effort in the history of the United States." Furthermore, United States Senator Mike Enzi published Dr. Arnold's 5 day diary of his visit to the devastated Gulf States regions of Mississippi and Alabama just after the devastation occurred . MDC continues to operate the Clarksdale Emergency Relief Center with technical support from PPEP and World Care that serves the entire Southeastern states region.

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Recognitions

During PPEP's 40th Anniversary Celebration on August 24, 2007, PPEP received numerous congratulatory letters and proclamations, and citations in the US Congressional Record, Senators and House members on a bi-partisan basis. Included, the President of the United States George Bush, Former United States President Bill Clinton, Congressman, Senators, cities and counties proclaimed PPEP Day around the state (see section on recognitions).

Each expressed gratitude for what has been accomplished along with wishes for continued success. Clear Channel has donated 6 billboard signs with congratulations of PPEP's 40 years of service with photo of Dr. Arnold, Founder and CEO in front of the La Tortuga bus. All the news media also carried stories about PPEP contributions to improving the quality of rural life during the Anniversary week.

Over the long 40 year journey of PPEP Inc there has been so much that has been accomplished that is recorded in PPEP's Archives and on its web site. But just consider there are over 25,000 entries on the internet, Congressional Record citations, and other repositories and archives of the dreams coming true. In PPEP's archives section over 10,000 new article and news clips and documents are stored. A photo album of 20,000 digital photos are also stored that tell first hand the remarkable journey of La Tortuga and its precious cargo the mission to improve the quality of rural life and fulfill the dreams of its first students. These archives are available for research and for more immediate details see the annual reports section by department from past years on our webpage www.ppep.org.

Si Se Pudo!

John David Arnold, PhD
CEO/Founder