



“Managing the stewardship of charitable giving is a moment-to-moment dignified responsibility.”

VIRGINIA G. PIPER

## #PiperTrustMoments

Celebrating 20 Years of Moments

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**#PiperTrustMoments, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition**

As the end of the year approaches and seasonal thoughts turn to gratitude and giving, all of us at Piper Trust want to pause to offer thanks for the abundant giving in our community. In that light, we think this [#PiperTrustMoments](#) shows the collective care of our community and the spirit of giving without expectation. In fact, this story caused me to truly reflect on Virginia Piper’s message about the “moment-to-moment dignified responsibility” of charitable giving.

The plight of asylum-seeking families is a complicated mix of social, economic, and environmental matters—but, at the heart of it all, it comes down to the lives and well-being of people. While immigration and asylum are complex issues, Piper Trust felt a call to join other community partners and respond to this crisis.

Every day, asylum-seeking families are processed at federal agencies in Arizona and released into communities across the state. These are people escaping violence, poverty, and persecution. They have sacrificed everything for the hope of a better future. Their journeys are arduous, and they frequently arrive disoriented and dehydrated, with just days to join the U.S.-based sponsors they will stay with while asylum is considered. While this process is legal and not new, the number of asylum-seekers dramatically escalated last year, and numerous nonprofits that already serve others stepped up and found ways to welcome and assist more families and children.

This unprecedented moment in our community’s history led to a coalition of nonprofits, faith organizations, passionate volunteers, city and education leaders, and philanthropies coming together in a real-time response to establish a Welcome Center dedicated to asylum-seeking families.



The Welcome Center provides great hope for asylum-seeking parents who are driven to create a safe and healthy future for their children.

This special place supports and augments the tireless efforts of congregations throughout the community that have felt the call to welcome families in crisis. Working together, this coalition supports migrant families with holistic services and provides refuge, safety, and dignity.

We want to express our deep gratitude to all for this united effort and share this story, which both illustrates our community’s abundant will to give and embodies the moment-to-moment action Virginia Piper saw as everyone’s responsibility.

Wishing you warmth and peace this holiday season,

Mary Jane Rynd  
President and CEO

### GRANTMAKING SPOTLIGHT

## PHOENIX WELCOME CENTER FOR ASYLUM-SEEKING FAMILIES

On July 27, the Phoenix Welcome Center for Asylum-Seeking Families opened its doors. Located in a former elementary school, the building was converted into a shelter for migrant families released by federal authorities. “We’ve served about 1,000 adults and children since then,” said Aaron Rippenkroeger, executive director of the [International Rescue Committee \(IRC\) in Arizona](#). Arizona IRC is coordinating and managing the daily work of the Welcome Center on behalf of the coalition partners.

The IRC works with dozens of local community groups and an extensive network of faith organizations to offer asylum-seeking families a safe and nurturing welcome after being released from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention. At the Welcome Center, families receive hot meals, medical screening, clothing, shoes, children’s programming, and overnight accommodations if needed. A typical stay for families is a day or two as they prepare to connect with their U.S. sponsors. Though their stay is short, it can be transformational.

*(continued)*



Upon arrival at the Welcome Center, the first thing people see is a colorful wall filled with art and stories by the children who are served there.

“The reception migrants get when they reach the border can be harsh. We want to ease the stress of their situations as quickly as possible,” Rippenkroeger said.

Families appreciate the care and support. “I felt very happy when we got here. I felt joy and happiness because everyone here welcomed us very kindly,” said a recent Welcome Center guest. “We could feel the love and the concern.” For some children, even teens, it is the first time in their lives that they experience playing with a toy.

The Welcome Center is a collaborative effort, with assistance coming from [St. Vincent de Paul](#), [100 Angels](#), [the Phoenix Restoration Project](#), [American Red Cross](#), and [Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest](#) as well as many churches, community organizations, and foundations. “This is a real-time humanitarian situation that is happening in our city and our state. Families continue to arrive daily. We are so grateful for being able to scale supporting these families due to how the community stepped in and stepped up,” Rippenkroeger said.

Rippenkroeger stressed that community ties and collaboration are critical to keep momentum and strengthen capacity for future preparedness. For example, if a forest fire or other natural disaster causes internal displacement, Phoenix now has a strong and organized hosting network in place that could be tapped in response.

But for now, the Welcome Center is focused on providing care and dignity to the asylum-seekers in its care. “These are families, just like ours, who are coming out of situations that are hard for us even to fathom,” Rippenkroeger said. “We feel like the Welcome Center is a physical manifestation of the generous and compassionate humanity of Phoenix. IRC is just one part of it. This is the Phoenix response.”



The IRC and volunteers help families regain control of their future during the early, critical stages of resettlement.

Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust is proud to help build a community that is equipped to respond to neighbors in need. To learn more about this effort, [click here](#). To learn more about Phoenix Welcome Center, [click here](#).

## A SPECIAL VIRGINIA PIPER MOMENT



Virginia (standing), the philanthropist, at work in the community.

Virginia was always attentive to interpersonal and personal relationships. Friends, associates, and grantees saw her philanthropy as the epitome of humanistic expression. “People give to people,” Virginia said.

THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF MOMENTS IN GIVING

SHARE YOURS

#PiperTrustMoments

### ABOUT

Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust supports organizations that enrich health, well-being, and opportunity for the people of Maricopa County, Arizona.

### CONTACT

**Karen Leland**  
Chief Communications Officer  
480-556-7125 | [kleland@pipertrust.org](mailto:kleland@pipertrust.org)

