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GRANT AWARDED FOR SAFE AND DRUG FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Touchstone Behavioral Health of Phoenix has been awarded a \$78,000 grant from the Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families to implement a drug intervention program in the Phoenix Union High School District.

The program will equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to remain safe and drug free. Risk factors to be addressed include favorable attitudes towards drugs, violence and other problem behaviors, and friends who engage in problem behaviors.

The program will enhance protective factors by providing opportunities for pro-social involvement including bonding to pro-social peers, establishing positive norms including healthy beliefs and clear standards and increasing social skills associated with positive behaviors and student success. The goal of the program is to effectively reduce risk factors and build protective factors related to youth substance abuse and violence and provide the basis for a safe, supportive and respectful learning environment.

From two to eight schools within Phoenix Union High School District and more than 500 students will participate in the program. The targeted audience will be youth ages 14 to 18 identified as high need due to first or second time juvenile offenders for substance abuse and violence related infractions, students at-risk of educational failure, suspension/expulsion or dropping out of school; refugee students from war-torn Africa and Iraq and others.

Touchstone's prevention staff has more than six years of experience implementing this type of program and will be offering educational training workshops for parents and caregivers whose children participate in the program.

Touchstone Behavioral Health is a non-profit 501(C)(3) organization providing evidence-based prevention and early intervention programs and behavioral health services to youth and families in Maricopa County. Touchstone Behavioral Health has three offices in Phoenix and Mesa. www.touchstone.bh.org