

METRO: IT TAKES A VILLAGE...

by Lance Meeks, Metro Youth Coordinator

We are excited to announce a unique partnership that is intended to have a positive impact on the Tucson community. Goodwill of Southern Arizona's METRO Program is partnering with Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church to bring an innovative approach to reaching and engaging Tucson youth. To support this program, Goodwill of Southern was awarded a grant by the **African American Initiative**, a program of the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona.

According to an African proverb, *it takes a village to raise a child*. With this proverb in mind, the African American Youth Village Initiative (The Village) was born. The program will focus on building upon METRO's efforts to connect or reconnect youth with the community, increase academic skills and improve educational outcomes, and provide employability training and job placement services. Additionally, the special twist to the program is that it will lean on the knowledge and experience of members of Mount Calvary Baptist Church, which is the oldest, most established African American church in the state of Arizona at 116 years strong.



Top: Goodwill staff and members of the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona and Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church. Picture source: Community Foundation of Southern Arizona

The program will intentionally incorporate heritage and cultural awareness activities that focus on the rich history of African Americans in Tucson. Lance Meeks will be the Goodwill METRO representative, working with Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church Executive Pastor, Joan Wiggins.

The Village will be an opportunity to explore new strategies for community partnerships. We look forward to reaching Tucson youth and providing resources that will increase knowledge about local African American heritage and offer additional support that youth may need personally.



Right: Church Executive Pastor, Joan Wiggins heads the oldest African American church in Arizona, bringing to the program cultural history and support.