



## **Arizona Character Education Foundation Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer Friday, November 13, 2009**

Thank you, Tammy.

And, good afternoon to all of you.

First, let me thank the Foundation -- and Senator Linda Gray -- for the opportunity to spend some time with you today.

And, what an honor it is for Arizona to have Mr. Michael Josephson himself here with us -- the man behind "*Character Counts*"-- and the concept of the Six Pillars. Thank you, Mr. Josephson, so much for all you've done.

Anniversaries of wonderful events are worth celebrating, and this is certainly a special one.

Ten years ago, Governor Hull established the Arizona Character Education Commission -- and ten years ago the Arizona Character Education Foundation was established.

And, just about ten years ago, the voters passed Proposition 301 which helped to support it.

Since then, great champions at the Legislature -- people like Senator Gray and Rep. Mark Anderson -- helped find other ways to support character education -- with tax credits and license plate revenue.

I would also like to offer a special thanks to Superintendent Tom Horne for supporting and promoting the program at the Department over these years during which time 1,500 schools have been trained in character education.

The “Six Pillars of Character” – Trustworthiness – Respect – Responsibility – Fairness -- Caring -- and Citizenship -- provide a wonderful cornerstone to build effective partnerships between youth and adults.

The “Character Counts” training provided through the Arizona Character Education Foundation is immensely valuable to parents and other adults who seek to make a positive difference in the lives of young people.

The latest study from Mr. Josephson’s Institute tells us something that is really no surprise to parents. Behavior and attitude about lying and cheating today will affect young peoples’ behavior and attitude about lying and cheating as adults.

Mr. Josephson’s research tells us that 74% of students admitted to cheating on an exam and -- what was worse -- data shows students’ choices are deteriorating.

I strongly believe that government can NEVER replace parents.

And, government should never ATTEMPT to.

But, our schools can certainly do everything they can to support and promote the values that not only help at home but help our teachers.

Really, how can we expect our teachers to continue to raise academic standards if behavioral issues are simultaneously worsening?

This is why I issued a proclamation declaring the week of Oct 18th as Character Counts Week.

The Proclamation acknowledges not only the Six pillars of character but – and let me quote from the Proclamation -- “that people do not automatically develop good character and, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by youth-influencing institutions and individuals to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character.” (End quote)

I cannot thank the Foundation enough for its work, and I’d also like to underscore the importance of anyone who spends time mentoring Arizona’s young people: parents, coaches, teachers and others.

Helping youth become successful adults will initiate a positive cycle that benefits the community as a whole.

Because of that, the Governor’s Office for Children, Youth and Families strongly promotes Arizona’s Mentoring Initiative which allows State of Arizona employees the opportunity to use one hour of flex time, per week, to volunteer to mentor a young person at school.

When young people are nurtured by caring adults – when they are given opportunities to become involved in education or work that builds their skills – when they are supported and protected during challenging times – and when they are actively engaged in community activities -- they become valuable contributors to the quality of community life.

Simply put, young people benefit from interactions and relationships with caring adults as mentors and as sources of advice and guidance. They benefit with higher grades, better attendance, and are less likely to begin using alcohol or other illegal drugs.

Every parent, every school wants the same outcome.

But, in Arizona, we have an advantage.

We have the leadership of the Character Education Foundation, we have people like Linda Gray, Mark Anderson, and Tom Horne showing us the way.

So, congratulations to the Foundation on 10 years of clear accomplishment – Happy Anniversary -- and thank you all for giving me a chance to speak with you today.