
NEWS

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DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT CENTER OF ARIZONA TO CELEBRATE OPENING

The Disability Empowerment Center of Arizona (DEC) is the new home of the Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL) and nine other non-profit organizations that serve people with disabilities. The 65,000 square-foot center, located at 5025 E. Washington St. in Phoenix, broke ground in early 2007 and will hold an open house on Friday, February 20, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In addition to ABIL, the DEC will house the Arizona Center for Disability Law, Raising Special Kids, the Arizona Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Joni & Friends, the Statewide Independent Living Council, Arizona Autism United, Valley Center of the Deaf, PMN Medical Services, Inc. and the Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association.

The campus is a universally designed, accessible and transit-oriented non-profit resources center to serve the disability community. Its tenants are provided with fully accessible administrative office space, meeting rooms, event space, a cafeteria and kitchen, computer lab and resource center, and a state-of-the art video conferencing center funded by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust.

“The DEC offers individuals with disabilities and their families empowering

programs and integrated services and will create synergistic partnerships and collaborations that promote and enhance the choice, dignity, rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities and their families,” said Phil Pangrazio, executive director of ABIL

The DEC will serve as a national model for accessible design. Future plans for the center also include a universally accessible sports and fitness center for persons with disabilities that is being funded through the City of Phoenix 2006 Bond program and private foundations that include: The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, the David Reese Family Foundation, Thunderbirds Charities, the Rhett Butler Family Foundation and others that are currently being pursued. Groundbreaking for the sports and fitness center is anticipated for Spring 2009.

Arizona Bridge to Independent Living programs are designed to empower people with disabilities to take personal responsibility so that they may achieve or continue independent lifestyles within the community. The independent living philosophy states that people with disabilities should have the same civil rights, options, and control over choices in their own lives as do people without disabilities.

