



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

June 14, 2017

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ACCEL RECEIVES GRANT FROM THUNDERBIRDS CHARITIES

Phoenix, AZ – Thunderbird Charities, the charitable giving arm of the Thunderbirds – hosts of the Waste Management Phoenix Open presented by Ak-Chin Indian Community awarded \$25,000 to ACCEL, for the 2017-18 fiscal year. This support will allow the ACCEL to upgrade its Tempe Campus facility which includes resurfacing the sports court and creating an outdoor therapy area that will serve kindergarten through grade 12 students with developmental disabilities.

The project will include resurfacing a worn concrete basketball court that is a hard and slippery surface with a sports court surface that will provide traction and is a softer surface if students with disabilities fall. The outdoor therapy area will provide ACCEL students a different type of environment and scale of equipment for the development of motor planning skills. They will benefit from the added physical activity and learn to use targeted motor skills in a natural outdoor environment that is similar to a playground. Therapists will be able to work with more than one student at a time, giving students the opportunity to work together, building social skills and developing friendships, which is often difficult for children with developmental disabilities.

“The Thunderbirds Charities grant allows ACCEL students with developmental disabilities enhanced opportunities.” says Rob Gilmore, ACCEL’s Tempe Campus Principal. “Resurfacing the basketball court will allow us to start a basketball team and participate in Special Olympics. Students will continue to improve skills, learn and work toward greater independence while having fun.”

“ACCEL gives hope and joy to students with special needs, and their compassion is second to none,” said Andy Markham, President of Thunderbirds Charities. “We’re honored and privileged to help with the upgrades to the Tempe Campus facility.”

ABOUT THE THUNDERBIRDS/THUNDERBIRDS CHARITIES

Thunderbirds Charities is a non-profit organization formed in 1986 to distribute monies raised through the Waste Management Phoenix Open golf tournament. The Thunderbirds Charities Board consists of 15 board members from varying professional backgrounds. The mission of Thunderbirds Charities is to assist children and families, help people in need and improve the quality of life in our communities. The organization’s giving is directed toward organizations based or with a significant presence in Arizona. The Thunderbirds were founded in 1937 with the mission of promoting the Valley of the Sun through sports. The Thunderbirds consist of 55 “active” members and more than 250 “life” members. For more information on the Thunderbirds or the 2018 Waste Management Phoenix Open, visit www.wmphoenixopen.com. For more information on Thunderbirds Charities, visit www.thunderbirdscharities.org.

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ACCEL is recognized as a leader in the field of Special Education and provides innovative, individualized and comprehensive educational, therapeutic, vocational, behavioral, life skills and transitional services for individuals with a wide range of abilities and challenges including autism, intellectual impairments, emotional disabilities, physical disabilities and health impairments. For more information, please visit www.accel.org or call (602) 995-7366.