

# State of the Studio

**Design Studio for Community Solutions**

**2018 - 2020**



**Watts College  
of Public Service  
and Community  
Solutions**

**Arizona State  
University**







# Overview

In 2018, Mike and Cindy Watts announced a historic gift to name the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions, providing resources to embed students, faculty and staff in communities to tackle local challenges. Their \$30 million investment — one of the largest in ASU's history — is committed to furthering collaborative community solutions, increasing academic excellence and broadening student access and success.

From the generous gift, the following are supported:

- Five endowed professorships to attract established scholars focused on community development, public policy, criminal justice and child well-being
- Support of student-driven programs, including:
  - Community Solutions Co-op
  - Undergraduate Research Program
- Flexible funding for tuition and transformative experiences such as study abroad and internships, prioritized for first-generation students
- Innovative new programs, including the One Square Mile Initiative in the Maryvale village of Phoenix

## Design Studio for Community Solutions and the Maryvale One Square Mile Initiative

- The Design Studio for Community Solutions (DSCS) at Arizona State University's Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions partners with local stakeholders to co-create solutions to complex issues. Drawing upon ASU and community resources — and bringing research, student engagement and leadership to bear — DSCS serves as a vehicle to stimulate and activate collaboratively generated solutions in communities.
- We believe communities thrive when solutions to their challenges are generated from the ground up; that by working together, encouraging and augmenting local efforts and resources, we can produce lasting change.
- The flagship project of the Design Studio for Community Solutions is The Maryvale One Square Mile Initiative. This project asks, and will answer, "what if all elements of a specific neighborhood worked together on not just one aspect of that area, but on the interconnected web of education, health, employment, transport, environment, civic engagement, local leadership and more?"
- By matching the talent and ingenuity of faculty and students across ASU with neighborhood stakeholders, we think comprehensive community change is possible.
- Maryvale is located several miles northwest of downtown Phoenix and is the most populous of the city's 13 "villages" with over 200,000 residents. This economically and culturally diverse community emerged from beginnings as the first planned community in Arizona — made up of 25,000 affordable family homes.
- Today Maryvale is a young, diverse, affordable community with many positive attributes and has the lowest median age of any village in the city of Phoenix. It also has the second highest percentage of residents living below the poverty line and lower test scores and education levels than much of Phoenix.



# Projects and Partners

- Community Conversations: DSCS has hosted a series of community conversations — in English and Spanish — including the Strong Families, Thriving Children Community Conversation with Mountain Park Health and Arizona Town Hall.
  - Develop and refine Maryvale OSM Initiative priority areas and aspirations.
- Maryvale Teaching English as a Foreign Language program: Responding directly to community requests, DSCS collaborates with ASU's Global Launch to offer a remote Teaching English as a Foreign Language Certificate Program in Maryvale. The program is funding 25 people in the first year to earn a TEFL certificate, giving them the credentials to teach ESL community courses, with ASU support.
  - Increase certified ESL instructors and course offerings for ESL in Maryvale.
- Maryvale Community Roadmap: DSCS, with a 3rd-party partner, arranged over 70 ethnographic interviews w/key community stakeholders. Once safe to meet in-person again, the community will be involved in turning data into a roadmap for community success.
  - Develop and refine Maryvale OSM Initiative priority areas and aspirations.
- ASU/City of Phoenix Pedestrian Safety Research Working Group: with multiple ASU units, Phoenix Police Department and City of Phoenix Streets Department. Based on concerns of residents and data showing that Maryvale has several hotspots for pedestrian deaths, DSCS pulled together a broad ASU partnership to analyze the causes of pedestrian fatalities and injuries in the city of Phoenix. The research assists the city in understanding, evaluating and testing solutions to this serious issue. The report was delivered to the City of Phoenix in early October, 2021.
  - Decrease pedestrian/vehicular traffic accidents.
  - Decrease pedestrian fatalities in Maryvale.
- Community Champions: In 2021, we brought on two local Maryvale residents as paid consultants to inform our work with lived community experience and in-depth knowledge of their neighborhoods. They drive our community engagement strategy and are helping us build trust with community members. They also ID and connect to the social, cultural and educational assets in each area.
- AmeriCorps VISTA support: Capacity building is a key to long-term success, so we have made possible three full time AmeriCorps VISTA positions working on Maryvale initiatives. We partner with the ASU Office of Gender-based Violence to provide VISTAs to Chicanos Por La Causa, the ASU Thrive Lab/Maryvale High School and the Design Studio.
  - Increase ASU internships and student involvement in Maryvale initiatives.
- Maryvale ASU Students and Community Outreach: DSCS employs four Maryvale High School graduates (Class of 2020) who are now ASU freshmen to work on community outreach and advise on the initiative.

## Key partners:



MOUNTAIN PARK  
HEALTH CENTER  
[mountainparkhealth.org](http://mountainparkhealth.org)



**City of Phoenix**

**FIRST THINGS FIRST**



**Valleywise  
Health**



# Projects and Partners

- Maryvale Youth Provider Network: Working with other youth providers in Maryvale, we convene a monthly networking meeting (currently virtual) of leaders and staff who support young people in and out of school. This was a need that our community partners asked us to fill in collaboration with Maryvale youth service providers.
- Financial Empowerment Program with Chicanos Por La Causa: DSCS-sponsored Americorps VISTA is working with CPLC to revise, based on community focus groups, a financial empowerment program to be more culturally responsive.
- Community Capital Lab created Sustainable Maryvale Storymap: Generated in collaboration with DSCS and Community Champions. Find it at [sustainabilityconnect.asu.edu/news/archive/asu-launches-sustainable-maryvale-storymap](https://sustainabilityconnect.asu.edu/news/archive/asu-launches-sustainable-maryvale-storymap).
- Maryvale Workforce Initiative with Office of Economic Opportunity and AZ @ Work: The Design Studio for Community Solutions team participates on the leadership committee and promotes job fairs/workforce events.
  - Increase job opportunities and lower unemployment and under-employment rates.
- Social Media Engagement: Our Facebook group page, Twitter account, and YouTube channel are used to engage on-campus and off-campus audiences. With Twitter, DSCS has 143 followers and has seen a 19% growth in audience in last 90 days. There are currently 178 Facebook members with a reach of 1,400 in the past 90 days.



**CHICANOS  
POR LA CAUSA**

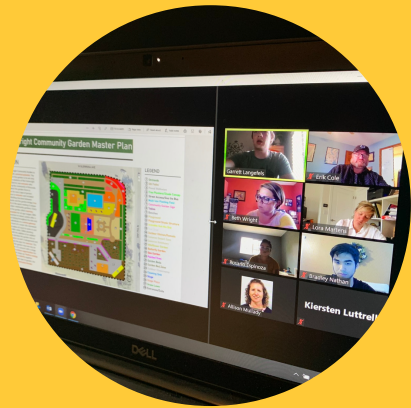




# Grants

The Design Studio has facilitated a grant program awarding over \$200,000 to Watts College teams working with Maryvale Community Partners. The grants are focused on community-identified priorities.

- **Community Solutions Design Grants – Round One, 3 awards made**
  - "We Want This to be Student Led: Maryvale High School Students form a Social Justice Club" – Dr. Lauren Reed, Dr. Megan Lindsay Brown and students of Maryvale High School
  - "Youth Engagement through Sport" – Dr. Eric Legg, Dr. Adam Fine and the Boys and Girls Club-Jerry Colangelo Branch
  - "Your Family, Your Neighborhood" – Dr. Stephanie Lechuga-Peña, Dr. Felicia Mitchell and Cartwright Elementary School District
- **Community Solutions Design Grants – Round Two, emphasis on COVID-19 response in Maryvale, 2 awards made**
  - "Team Kids Challenge in the Cartwright School District: A Youth Development Program that Empowers Youth Voice and Promotes Positive Mental Health" – Dr. Adam Fine and Cartwright Elementary School District
  - "The Maryvale Family-Wellbeing Project with Valleywise Health" – Dr. Micaela Mercado, Dr. Rebeca Birr, Dr. Cady Berkel and Dr. Paige Safyer with Valleywise Health



# ASU Academics and Student Involvement

- Learning by Giving course (SWU 411) with Dr. Melanie Reyes, thanks to a grant from the Learning by Giving Foundation, gave students the opportunity to create a philanthropic organization, develop an RFP, review applications from Maryvale non-profit organizations and award \$10,000 to the Arizona Youth Partnership to support pregnant and parenting teens in Maryvale.
- Community Impact Lab students partnered with the Cartwright Elementary School District Food Services department to address unique challenges through a design thinking process.
- Sports, Parks and Recreation Club (SPARC) selected Maryvale as the community of focus for their 2020 conference case studies. Students from the club are developing a partnership with a local school to promote wellness through sports and recreation with K-8 students in Maryvale.
- Maryvale Community History (HON 394, Barrett Honors Course) students learned historical and current information about the Maryvale community. They interviewed community members to create a "community history" based on the lived experiences of the interviewees.
- Watts College internship with BGC saw 16 Watts College students become volunteers at the Boys and Girls Club due to the partnership between DSCS and the Boys and Girls Club-Jerry Colangelo Branch in Maryvale.
- Slices with Sun Devils event held at Boys and Girls Club-Jerry Colangelo Branch brought ASU colleges and units together with Maryvale middle and high school students to share information and activities.



# COVID Response

- COVID-19 Updates: Since the pandemic closure occurred, we have distributed regular email updates covering a range of community resources — from free COVID-19 testing locations, to jobs, to housing and rent supports, to distance learning and home education resources (such as ASU for You). Our community email mailing list has grown from 400 members to over 700. We have sent over 19,500 emails to individuals and have a 29% open rate, which is 14% above industry average.
- ASU COVID-19 Testing in Maryvale: As Maryvale became a major infection hotspot in the Summer 2020, DSCS promoted free testing opportunities in the Maryvale area. Once ASU was contracted by the State of Arizona to provide community saliva-based tests, Maryvale became the first community engaged. We supported ASU Biodesign and the State with initial logistic advice, community outreach, broadcasting the availability of testing in English and Spanish, and on-site Spanish-language interpreters. We also provided registration and sign-up support to Maryvale residents and school district personnel who relied on the ASU testing as their primary source of testing.
- PPE Donations: Watts College and DSCS distributed 2,500 PPE to community agencies in Maryvale.
- Isaac School District Technology Accessibility Initiative: DSCS collaborated with Isaac ESD, ASU Health Solutions and Dr. Karen Mossberger to increase internet accessibility for families and students in the Isaac Elementary School district
- Immunization and Flu Shot Clinics: DSCS co-sponsored two Fall 2020 free immunization clinics hosted at Cartwright ESD in partnership with Greater Phoenix Urban League, Maricopa County Health Department, Mountain Park Health and First Things First. This increased the number of children with up to date immunization records.

## What's Next?

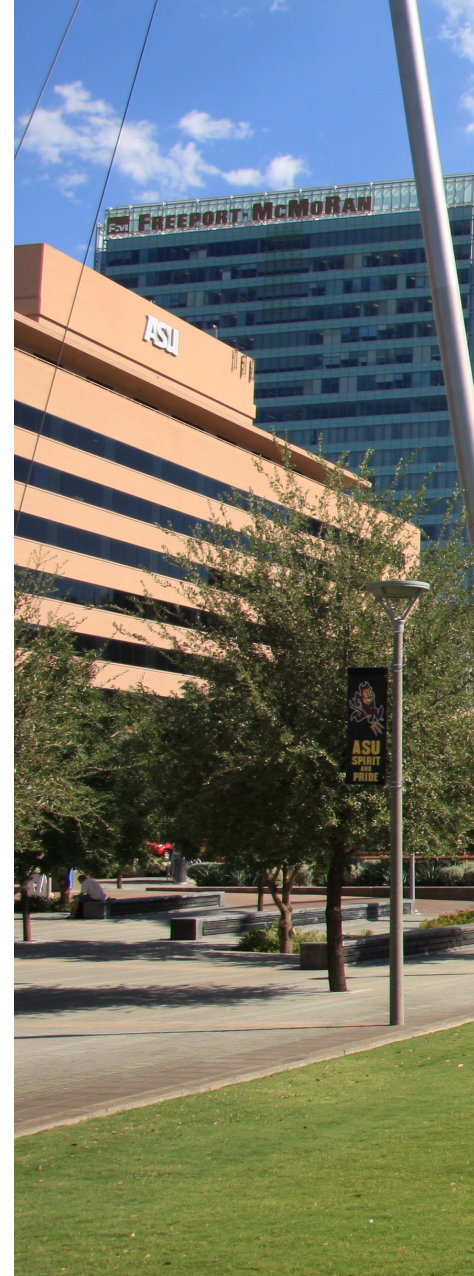
- Supporting residents and local organizations with COVID-19 recovery, from promoting testing and vaccines to networking
- Our trained ESL teachers will begin teaching classes to the broader community
- Engaging in safe and socially-distanced community conversations in both of the One Square Miles (OSMs)
- Community Council Advisory Groups – Neighborhood Level Needs Assessment and Project Plan
- A pedestrian safety grassroots education campaign with the Estrella SuperMoms
- Pedestrian Safety Summit – in planning stages with Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law, Amazon Web Services Cloud Innovation Center, Phoenix Children's Hospital and other key partners
- Additional focus and resources on eviction prevention and legal aid/advice





# How to get involved

- Follow us on:  
Facebook [@ASUDSCS](#)  
Instagram [@ASU\\_DSCS](#)  
Twitter [@ASU\\_DSCS](#)
- Youth providers, please join our Maryvale Youth Provider Network by emailing [DSCS@asu.edu](mailto:DSCS@asu.edu).
- Tell us how ASU resources can help your agency by emailing DSCS at [DSCS@asu.edu](mailto:DSCS@asu.edu).
- Send upcoming events to share in the DSCS newsletter and social media outreach to [DSCS@asu.edu](mailto:DSCS@asu.edu).



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