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# OPINION

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

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## VALLEY VOICE

# HARC provides critical data for nonprofits

Nonprofits are the lifeline for the most vulnerable in our valley. And HARC (Health Assessment and Research for Communities) is the lifeblood of the nonprofits.

Without the data that HARC supplies, most of the nonprofits in this valley could not substantiate the need for services, which is a standard requirement of most grants. Without grants we don't serve the poor and vulnerable. It's a very direct connection: Data to Grants to Service.

HARC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides reliable, objective data and research for our Coachella Valley community on a wide variety of health and wellness topics, including health care access, utilization, hunger, mental health, major diseases, and much more. HARC provides this data free of charge.

Jewish Family Service (JFS) has used HARC data for many years to explain the need for our programs and obtain funds to provide critically needed services.

For example, HARC's data demonstrated that 33.5 percent of Coachella Valley children ages 3 to 17 have behavioral issues. Most of these children (79 percent) did not receive mental health treatment. Having this data helped us to demonstrate the urgent need for mental health services in our community, and to obtain the funds from Desert Healthcare District, Regional Access Project Foundation, and Southern California Edison to provide a



**Maureen Forman**

counseling program called "Kids First." This program provides on-site counseling in 16 area schools.

Similarly, HARC's data on seniors has helped JFS to demonstrate the need for our senior services, and obtain the funds to conduct these important programs. HARC's data on food insecurity and poverty helps JFS to obtain funding to serve those who are hungry and struggling to make ends meet in the Coachella Valley.

The data HARC provide are living numbers. These numbers save lives. These numbers provide shelter, medications, counseling and hope. These numbers allow non-profits to speak boldly about what really needs to be done to help our valley.

Please consider donating to HARC to allow them to continue to provide this critically needed data at no charge to our Valley nonprofits.

Call HARC at (760) 404-1945 or visit [www.HARC-data.org](http://www.HARC-data.org) today.

*Maureen Forman, LCSW, is CEO of Jewish Family Service of the Desert. Email her at [info@jfsdesert.org](mailto:info@jfsdesert.org).*