

HARK! You're going to want to hear what HARC says The latest Coachella Valley Community Survey data will be available January 31

By Barry Dayton

If you've read a little Shakespeare or sung a favorite Christmas carol, you probably know that "hark" means "listen" because something worthwhile is about to be said. And in the Coachella Valley, when HARC – Health Assessment and Research for Communities – has new results from their valley-wide health survey, the community is all ears.

Now, HARC is revealing the latest data in their triennial "Coachella Valley Community Survey." The extensive survey is one-of-a-kind, providing local information about our community that is not available anywhere else. The survey focuses on topics of

health, wellness, and quality-of-life for Coachella Valley residents.

The data it provides is used by regional nonprofits, hospitals, schools, government agencies, and media organizations, among others. The information is used to identify needs, design programs and services to address those needs, and secure funding to support those programs.

In just the last five years, dozens of nonprofit organizations have received over \$12.8 million in funding by using HARC's data to justify their needs. That money has funded many safety-net services in our Valley, like food for the hungry, transportation for people with disabilities, free HIV testing, access to substance abuse treatment programs, and much more.

"HARC's survey data is priceless for developing our grant proposals. Funders want accurate information dealing with the population we serve," said Rob Ballew, CEO of YMCA of the Desert. "HARC provides a valuable tool to address those needs, which has helped us secure several important grants for our health and wellness programs."

Just a quick visit to the HARC website or their YouTube channel and you'll see many compelling testimonials from organizations that use their data, including: Jewish Family Service, Hidden Harvest, The LGBT Community Center of the Desert, The JFK Foundation, and Desert AIDS Project, among others.

HARC's essential information is FREE for all to use.

On January 31, HARC's latest treasure trove of information will be released to the public in an event held at UC Riverside, Palm Desert Center. The presentation will highlight new and exciting information, as well as significant changes that have happened since the last survey was released. Attendees will receive a copy of the information-packed report, which will also be made available online later that same day.

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Dr. Jenna LeComte-Hinely, CEO and Bruce Purdy, board chair of HARC

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■ TWO CAPITAL CAMPAIGNS

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mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles from around the world. It's also a showcase of diversity of the more than 1,400 species of plants found growing in the harsh conditions of the world's deserts. Whether you're a dyed-in-the-wool conservationist or just want to take a hike through a great desert landscape, The Living Desert has a special appeal. You can even get married there!

For more than 45 years, The Living Desert has been leading the Coachella Valley in environmental education, conservation of desert plants, and preservation of desert animals. But, of course, none of that "just happens." There must always be a plan in place, not only for sustainability but for ongoing improvement and expansion of facilities.

Jan Hawkins, director of development at the Living Desert, said "We knew we needed to invest in our facilities, not only to continue to provide the highest level of care for our animals, but also to maintain the highest quality of our guest experience. The more children we can accommodate on a field trip, the more budding conservationists we can inspire. That's why we created our 'Mission 2020: Building the Future of Conservation' capital campaign with the goal of raising \$30 million."

The capital campaign will fund the first phase of the zoo's 25-year master plan, called Crossroads of Conservation. The three phases of the project will include a new visitor entrance and endowment garden, new meeting and event spaces, and state-of-the-art animal exhibits featuring African lions, rhinoceroses, and hyenas.

To find out how you can be a part of the future of this gem in our desert and build on their legacy of impacting conservation both locally and globally, please contact Hawkins at (760) 346-5694, ext. 2161 or JHawkins@LivingDesert.org.

Plan a bit of 2017 fun now ... support either or both of these great nonprofit organizations.

Put on your running shoes for the Cheetah Run on Saturday, February 25 for an invigorating 5K dash through The Living Desert.

Get red-dy for the RedDress/DressRed Dance Party on Saturday, March 12 at Snapshot Palm Springs, benefiting the LGBT Community Center of the Desert.

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Covering a wide variety of health and well-being topics impacting children, adults, veterans, seniors, and other population segments, HARC's survey offers a wealth of data about healthcare access and utilization, disease prevention, health behaviors, detailed demographics, and much more.

HARC believes data can make the case for improving our world

The board of directors guiding HARC is headed by Bruce Purdy, an international development economist with more than 35 years of experience in planning, designing, and developing infrastructure projects in emerging market economies.

"Bruce brings a wealth of experience in exactly what HARC does—using data to improve lives," said Dr. Jenna LeComte-Hinely, CEO of HARC. "With his leadership, we are exploring innovative new ways to use data and information to elevate the entire community."

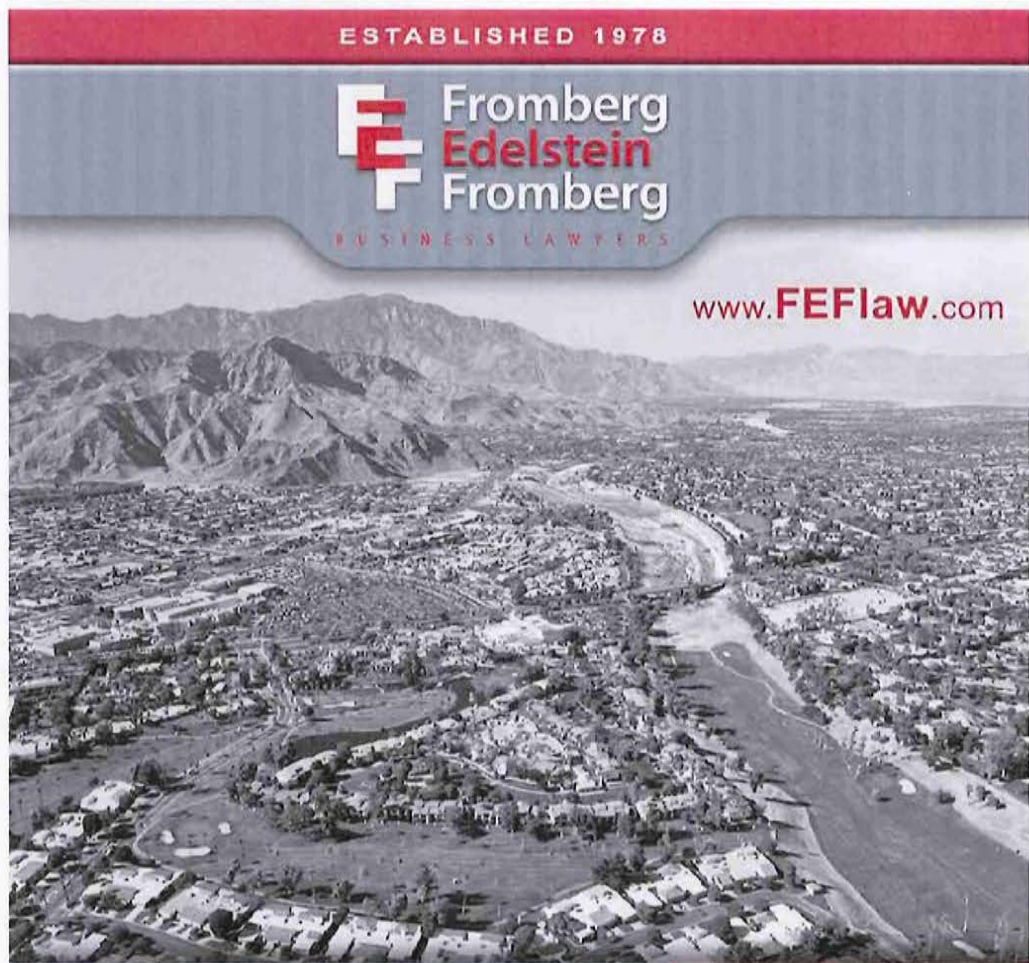
When HARC was founded in 2006, all work centered around the triennial survey. Today, it provides custom-designed research and evaluation services to local organizations like the Boys & Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley, the LGBT Community Center of the Desert, and the school districts, among others. HARC offers program evaluation, needs assessments, data analysis services, and much more.

Helping organizations turn data into a tool for change, HARC aims to be a community partner to its clients.

As a nonprofit itself, HARC needs your support

In its ongoing efforts to provide research and evaluation services to our community, HARC is funded in part by grants and donations. If you'd like to help fund this important work that has already done so much good in our Valley, visit HARCdata.org or call 760-404-1945 to make a contribution today.

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