

WWME Great Community January 2007

By Steve & Tammy McCarville and Fr. Charlie Knapp

Hot, Vibrant & Passionate Community in Phoenix Encounter

The Great Community Search is honoring Section 11's Phoenix Encounter this month. Phoenix Encounter's Executive Team is Steve & Tammy McCarville and Fr. Charlie Knapp. They can be reached for more information at steveandtammy@cox.net.

The Phoenix Encounter includes the entire State of Arizona. The many passionate community couples and priests who support the Weekend by living the WWME lifestyle make it a vibrant Encounter. There are many sharing groups, called cores, in Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff and Yuma. The cores meet twice a month for presentation, dialogue, and sharing and are open to receiving new members. Each group has a core leader and secretary couple. In the Phoenix area, core leaders get together once a month with the Local Area Executive Team for an Area Board meeting to share relationship, information and ideas. Babysitting is available at these meetings.

The structure in Phoenix is parish based, and each core lives out the mission to "renew the Church and change the world" by their focus on sharing relationship, supporting daily dialogue, supporting the WWME Weekend and encouraging parish involvement. Several encountered priests attend core meetings on a regular basis in Tucson and Phoenix. Many encountered couples are involved in their parishes where they serve in ministry or on parish council as a couple.

The email prayer chain is an active way that couples and priests support each other. When there is a need within their core, the members actively support each other and they also reach out to needs in the community at large. Recently one of our community couples asked for prayers for a great-grandchild with leukemia living in another state. When it was discovered that the child's family could not return home or retrieve personal items due to toxic levels found there, Phoenix couples not only prayed for the family but also sent them money and gift cards.

Bulletin ads, pulpit talks, individual inviting and prayer are some of the frequent methods used for inviting couples and priests to the Weekend. Community couples take ownership of the Weekend as they perform many of the Weekend related tasks like registration and Friday night hosting. Often a core will "adopt" a Weekend and take on many of the joy jobs involved for that particular Weekend from giving pulpit talks in their parishes to Friday night hosting and tuck-in. Weekend Prayer Couples are assigned based on the parish of the attending couple or priest and they continue to provide prayer and support after the Weekend by attending the Reunion and inviting the couple to core meetings. Some new couples are enriched by the follow-up Journey Program before they begin to attend regular core meetings.

Phoenix hosts Weekends almost monthly and also reaches out to Flagstaff and Tucson. Couples from Phoenix have traveled to Tucson, Yuma and Flagstaff to present pulpit talks and pass out brochures. As a result, Tucson and Flagstaff have had local Weekends and new community cores have formed. With the continued support of Phoenix, these areas will continue to grow.

The Phoenix community also knows how to have fun. Many of the cores plan social events like progressive dinners, pot lucks, museum trips, etc. There are also community-wide dances and camping trips. Dialogue in the Pines is held on a Sunday in the summer in Flagstaff. This is a family fun day with barbeque, presentation, dialogue, sharing and some kind of activity for family and friends to enjoy. People from all over Arizona attend and the location is near a campground for those who wish to make it a weekend adventure.



Dialogue in the Pines

The best part of the Phoenix Encounter is the genuine love and acceptance that people have for each other. Couples and priests have the common experience of WWME enriching their Sacraments. Their desire to support this lifestyle and spread the message is a powerful reality for all who are active in this great community. Kudos to the Great Phoenix Encounter Community!