



Board of Directors

August 2, 2022

RE: Open Letter from the Launch Pad Board of Directors

In a Country that is becoming increasingly divided, we want to make abundantly clear our respect and compassion for all youth no matter their background or identity. The Launch Pad has always been, and always will be:

- An inclusive space for all teens of any race, gender, sexuality, class, religion or ability
- A safe haven for youth who do not feel accepted in their broader communities
- A place where youth are nurtured and challenged to reach their fullest potential

Our mission is "To incite teen confidence and empowerment through innovative community education and engagement." We believe all teens have a right to learn and grow, and that care, safety and support are necessary to achieve this personal growth. We take pride in creating both a safe space and a culture that fosters respect for differences and an overall ethic of compassion and kindness.

The Launch Pad is a "Youth Driven Space" that empowers teenagers in this community to lend their voices to program development, decision making and the overall growth of our organization. We seek and value their input in areas ranging from teen leadership positions on the board, to the Teen Advisory Council (which addresses issues of our youth on a community wide scale), to simply organizing a music show for a summer evening. We are proud to say we now serve over 1,000 teenagers. These teens become better prepared for their futures, whatever they may be (perhaps even becoming future leaders in this great community).

The Launch Pad's staff and board intentionally create programming for a diverse group of teens, including those who may experience hardships in our society. We strive to provide these services in addition to, not at the expense of, any services available to other groups. We do not believe that kindness and acceptance within our community should be limited. We believe that creating a safe space so the most marginalized members of our society can feel valued creates a benefit for ALL our youth and the community as a whole.

With the diversity of programming offered at The Launch Pad, there will be some programs that do not appeal to all. That's quite okay and exactly the point, which is to create unique experiences for each teen to enjoy and forge friendships with others who share similar interests. It is important to note that all teens who attend programming at The Launch Pad do so voluntarily and with the permission and support of their parents or guardians. **Allowing the programming to be dictated by any outside political group would take the decision making away from those who matter the most.... the teens and their parents/guardians.**



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"All of us or None of Us" is one of the five core values of the Launch Pad and it serves as a reminder that we are all in this together. If one group of teens is suffering, the dignity and prosperity of the entire community is at risk. We build a culture that teaches allyship and collective empowerment that is rooted in optimism and hope. The Launch Pad boldly stands for our youth in Prescott and as teens who participate in our programs, they boldly stand for each other. While exclusion and discrimination creates more fear, more shame, and more exclusion; **inclusion and acceptance creates more connection, more trust, and more compassion.** By role modeling and intentionally facilitating teens to create a hopeful youth culture that fosters inclusion and acceptance, the cultural landscape of our community will change to a place that truly is "Everybody's Hometown."

With support of the entire Launch Pad Board of Directors, sincerely:

Andrew Baird
Board President

Joe Allen
Board Vice President