



Desert Arc CONNECTION

Palm Desert 760-346-1611

Transportation 760-404-1363

Morongo Basin 760-346-1611 x341

BE PART OF THE MAGIC: CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE LUNCHEON 2025

Save the date for Desert Arc's 7th Annual Champions of Change Recognition Awards Luncheon—our premier fundraiser of the year! Join the event on Thursday, February 6, 2025, from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM at Agua Caliente in Rancho Mirage for an inspiring afternoon celebrating remarkable achievements.

This year, Richard Balocco will be honored for his 17 years of visionary leadership as President/CEO. The event will also recognize the incredible accomplishments of four exceptional Desert Arc clients and highlight SA Recycling as Business Partner of the Year.

Catch a glimpse of the excitement and learn more by watching KESQ's Channel 3 "Eye on the Desert" TV segment showcasing this special event!  [KESQ's Eye on the Desert Segment](#)

Reserve a seat today using the QR code on the image below. Don't miss the chance to celebrate and make a lasting impact!

Champions^{OF}Change

SEVENTH ANNUAL RECOGNITION AWARDS LUNCHEON

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025

AGUA CALIENTE RESORT CASINO SPA, RANCHO MIRAGE

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM



RSVP
TODAY



Richard Balocco, President/CEO (center) with (l-r) Joshua K., Adam T., Carolina R. (seated) and Inda R.

DISABILITIES IN FOCUS: ENSURING INCLUSION AMID CHANGING DEI POLICIES

Recent shifts in federal diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies have sparked important conversations about representation—and who may be left out. President Trump's recent executive order halts federal agencies from incorporating diversity in hiring practices and training programs, placing employees working in DEI initiatives on paid leave.

While DEI efforts traditionally aim to address inequities in the workplace for marginalized groups, Desert Arc's CEO, Richard Balocco, points out a critical gap in these programs: the lack of focus on individuals with disabilities.

"Disability has often been overlooked in DEI conversations," Balocco shared. "Historically, it's been about appearances—like skin color—but we know people with disabilities have long been underrepresented."

Disability advocates emphasize the need to make these conversations more inclusive to ensure equitable opportunities for all. For Desert Arc, which empowers people with disabilities, these policy changes could have significant implications.

"What this could change is whether some of our clients get employed." That's the real impact, as Balocco noted, expressing concern over the potential effects on workplace opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Despite the challenges, Balocco remains optimistic that raising awareness and broadening the scope of DEI will lead to a more inclusive and equitable future.

Catch Richard Balocco's full interview on this topic by watching the Channel 3 KESQ News story:

<https://kesq.com/news/2025/01/24/dei-rollback-how-it-could-impact-people-with-disabilities/>



MORONGO BASIN

Hi Desert Star
56-445 29 Palms Hwy

2nd Monday / Month **February 10**



COACHELLA VALLEY

PD Campus
73255 Country Club Dr

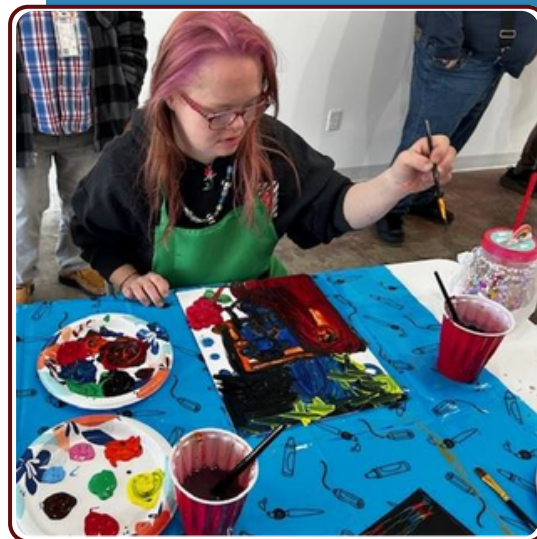
3rd Friday / Month **February 21**

CREATIVITY CLUB INSPIRES ARTISTIC EXPRESSION IN YUCCA VALLEY

Desert Arc's Morongo Basin Campus has launched a Creativity Club, giving clients the opportunity to explore different forms of art in a welcoming and inspiring environment. Held every Wednesday morning at the Hi-Desert Artists Art Center & Gallery, the club is led by Lisa and John Genesta, who guide participants through various artistic mediums, including clay, acrylic painting, and scratch art.

With support from a grant*, this program not only nurtures creativity but also provides a platform for self-expression. Artwork created by participants is proudly displayed inside the gallery each week, allowing the community to appreciate their talent and hard work.

Clients from the Palm Desert Campus join when possible, adding to the collaborative and engaging atmosphere. The Creativity Club has quickly become a highlight of the week for many, offering a fun and fulfilling way to develop artistic skills and connect with others.



Kristin brings her vision to life with acrylics

*James Bernard and Mildred Jordan Tucker Fund; At Inland Empire Community Foundation, Where Giving Grows



FEBRUARY'S LUNCH LINEUP



Mon

Tues

Wed

Thurs

Fri

**Friday
Feb 14th
is
Valentine's
Day**

Valentine's Day has its roots in ancient Rome, where the festival of Lupercalia celebrated fertility and love. Later, the holiday was named after St. Valentine, a martyred priest who secretly married couples in defiance of Roman law.

Today, it's a day to honor love in all its forms—romantic, platonic, or self-love!

And if you're single, remember: Valentine's Day isn't just for couples. It's the perfect excuse to celebrate yourself, indulge in a treat, or spend time with loved ones who make your heart happy! Love starts with you. ❤️

3

Chicken Salad with lettuce, tomato, cucumber, cheddar cheese and ranch dressing. Served with a dinner roll and fruit.

4

Turkey and Cheese Sandwich with lettuce, tomato, mayo and mustard. Served with sun chips and fruit.

5

Pepperoni Pizza with a Side Salad (ranch dressing) and fruit.

6

Chicken and Rice with steamed vegetables. Served with a dinner roll and fruit.

7

BBQ Pork Sliders. Served with Coleslaw, pretzels and fruit.

10

Crispy Chicken Sandwich with lettuce, tomato, mayo, mustard and pepper jack cheese. Served with sun chips and fruit.

11

Ham and Provolone Cheese Croissant with lettuce, tomato, mayo and mustard. Served with fruit.

12

Chicken Strips with steamed vegetables and mashed potatoes. Served with fruit.

13

Ground Beef Taco Salad with shredded lettuce, sauce, cheddar cheese, and black beans. Served with tortilla chips and fruit.

14

Southwest Chicken Mixed Salad with black beans, tomatoes, corn, cilantro dressing and cheddar cheese. Served with tortilla strips and fruit.

17

Chicken Salad with lettuce, tomato, cucumber, cheddar cheese and ranch dressing. Served with a dinner roll and fruit.

18

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**Did You
Know?**

Avocados are a superfood packed with heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, fiber, and nearly 20 vitamins and minerals. They can help reduce inflammation, support brain function, and even improve cholesterol levels. Adding avocado to your diet is a delicious way to boost overall health!

8 OZ. 1% non-flavored milk is served to CACFP participants. Two (2) servings of whole grains are served with each meal.
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



At Desert Arc, it's important to celebrate the individuals who make the community thrive, and today, the spotlight is on a team member who has been with the organization for 6 years. Sydney's presence is felt from the moment someone enters the office. Whether answering calls, greeting guests, or managing the entry gates, Sydney's friendly demeanor makes everyone feel welcomed.

For Sydney, being part of Desert Arc means more than just showing up for work—it's about giving back to the community and building a stable future. "What I love most about Desert Arc is the feeling of being welcomed," she shared. Her role may be demanding, but she handles it with grace, serving as the first point of contact for many.

In her free time, Sydney loves drawing on the computer, a creative outlet she values. She's also learned the importance of patience, a skill essential for her position. "I've learned how to be patient with people," she said, a trait that helps her succeed in a fast-paced, dynamic environment.

Sydney's personal life is filled with love and inspiration, especially from her boyfriend, due to his strength and perseverance. "Louis really inspires me because despite his disabilities, he's able to accomplish his goals," she shared.

When asked about the most important lesson she would teach others, Sydney said it's all

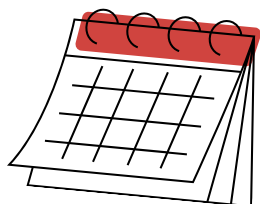


about valuing what makes you happy in life. "To truly value what makes you happy in life," she advised, reminding everyone of the importance of following personal passions.

She's also a proud pet owner of two cats, Bracken and Little Little. When it comes to movies, Sydney is fond of The Cat Returns, a whimsical story that resonates with her creative spirit.

Sydney, thank you for being the welcoming face of Desert Arc. Your dedication and positive energy are truly appreciated. Keep shining!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Feb 20th & 21st

National Date Festival Tour

Open to participants of the Adult Day Program, Behavior Management and the Integrated Community-Based Services.

ROSES ARE *Red*
VIOLETS ARE *Blue*
A REWARDING CAREER IS WAITING FOR *You*

Looking for more than just a job?
Find your purpose at **DesertArc.org**

