

# TUCSON GIVING

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## Mr. An to be honored by Gootter Foundation

By Loni Nannini

SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Over the past four decades, Kwang C. An — best known as “Mr. An” — has become synonymous with food and philanthropy in Tucson.

As a testament to the heart behind the hands that created a local restaurant empire, the Steven M. Gootter Foundation will honor Mr. An with the 2020 Philanthropic Award during the Annual Gootter Grand Slam Gala Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa.

“Mr. An came here with nothing but the shirt on his back and his incredible work ethic. He greatly appreciates the community that Tucson has been for him and wants to give back, not just financially, but with his time and talent. We are thrilled to honor him and everything he has done for our community. It is even more meaningful since he is not a stranger to heart disease and sudden cardiac death,” said Andrew Messing, president of the Gootter Foundation.

An lost his father, grandfather and six of his brothers to heart attacks, all before they reached age 61. He suffered a cardiac arrest at 57 and was resuscitated by an automated external defibrillator, so the Gootter Foundation’s AED Donation Program is important to him.

“My heart stopped and they jumped me with an AED to revive me, so an AED really saved my life. The Gootter Foundation is doing a good job and saving a lot of lives with their programs and research. It is a great cause and I am honored to receive this award. It means I promise to work harder to help raise more funds,” said An.

To date, the Gootter Foundation has gifted more than 350 AEDs to nonprofits, recreation centers, schools, sports programs, churches and locations where people “work, worship and play” as well as to patrol cars with the Tucson, Marana and Oro Valley police departments, and the Pima County Sheriff’s Department.

The foundation also provides training in use of the equipment and promotes awareness about chest compression only CPR in conjunction with REACT through the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center.

“These officers are called to emergency situations and are out on the streets in our community, so it makes sense for them to be trained in CPR and AEDs and to have these critical life-saving devices in their vehicles,” said Messing.



Kwang C. An, known by many as “Mr. An,” is a local restaurateur and philanthropist who will receive the 2020 Philanthropic Award from the Steven M. Gootter Foundation at the annual gala on Friday, Feb. 7.

### IF YOU GO

- **What:** 15th Annual Gootter Grand Slam Gala
  - **When:** 6:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 7.
  - **Where:** Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa, 3800 E. Sunrise Dr.
  - **Cost:** \$200 per person.
- Festivities include an international buffet dinner, music, entertainment and silent and live auctions. Anyone interested in purchasing an item in advance for a “buy-it-now” price can send an email to [gootterfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:gootterfoundation@gmail.com). Visit [www.gootter.org](http://www.gootter.org) for more information. Buy tickets online at [stevenmgootterfoundation.org/event/tickets/](http://stevenmgootterfoundation.org/event/tickets/) or by calling 615-6430.

The mobile AEDs are a cornerstone of the foundation’s mission to eradicate sudden cardiac death, which claimed the life of Steven M. Gootter, 42, during a morning run 15 years ago.

Sudden cardiac death is typically the result of an irregular heart beat (arrhythmia) triggered by an electrical malfunction in the heart. Abruptly and without warning, arrhythmia can cause the heart to stop pumping blood to the brain and the rest of body; death can occur within 10 minutes



As part of its mission to prevent sudden cardiac deaths, the Steven M. Gootter Foundation has donated more than 350 automated external defibrillators to local nonprofit organizations.

unless CPR is administered and an AED is used to restore normal heart rhythm. Messing said many people are unaware that sudden cardiac death is the leading cause of natural death in the United States, killing more than 335,000 people annually.

“No one thinks that sudden cardiac arrest could impact them until something happens to someone they know, and it is usu-

ally one of those people you don’t expect ... often someone who is young and fit. You see them taken by this insidious disease and you realize you need to do something to conquer it, and the community has been incredibly supportive of that mission,” Messing said.

That support has garnered more than \$5 million to fund scientific research, including the Steven M. Gootter endowed chair for

the prevention of sudden cardiac death at the University of Arizona as well as numerous investigator awards at UA Sarver Heart Center.

The research, which is cutting-edge, has returned the amount invested at least five-fold through grants awarded from the National Institutes of Health and the American Heart Association, according to Messing.

“We are an incubator, helping these researchers early on by providing seed money for promising studies so they attain can much larger grants. With the research — particularly some of the work they are doing when it comes to genetics — there is definitely light at the end of the tunnel,” Messing said.

Genetic research by endowed chair Dr. Jil Tardiff involves identifying molecular “signatures” of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, a common cause of sudden cardiac death, in young patients with gene mutations in the effort to develop early interventions to prevent the disorder.

“Lots of these SCD-related diseases are hereditary, and if they know that some parents carry the gene, they can actually make modifications so that the fetus would not be affected. It is mind-boggling, and the great news is that as technology advances, there are more opportunities for these types of research experiments,” said Messing.

Other innovative research includes work by Jared Churko, UA assistant professor of cellular and molecular medicine, who just received a second investigator award from the foundation.

Churko’s work involves the use of stem cells from patients with arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy, which can also lead to sudden cardiac death. His lab is generating cardiomyocytes (contractile beating heart cells) for further testing and development of possible therapies.

“He can take stem cells from a patient and create beating human heart muscle tissue and then stress the cells to make it seem as if they are being exercised and see how that impacts them. So far it looks like exercise does exacerbate the problem and people with the condition are better off being more sedentary ... it is very cool technology,” said Messing.

For now, Messing is grateful for the collaboration and support the home-grown foundation has received from businesses, government agencies and other organizations over the past 15 years.

Contact freelance writer Loni Nannini at [ninch2@comcast.net](mailto:ninch2@comcast.net)

### NONPROFITS’ WISHLIST

#### OLD PUEBLO COMMUNITY SERVICES

- **Mission:** When people face homelessness, Old Pueblo Community Services offers housing, counseling and support services to help them transform their lives.
- **Wish List:** Feminine hygiene products; new women’s socks and underwear, sizes S and M; board games, puzzles, books and movies; mini fans; combs and brushes; exercise equipment. For men — toiletries; new men’s socks and underwear; bicycles; and gas BBQ grills.
- **Address:** 4501 E 5th St., Tucson, AZ 85711; 546-0122; [www.helptucson.org](http://www.helptucson.org)

#### ST. LUKE’S HOME

- **Mission:** Provide quality of life for low income elders to age with dignity in an assisted living community
- **Wish List:** Front desk volunteers. Our front desk sits in the living room of our community. This is where all visitors, donations, mail and residents enter and exit St. Luke’s. We are looking for outgoing, organized volunteers to welcome visitors, accept donations and direct phone calls. Best times for volunteers are Monday-Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.; four-hour shifts preferred. For information, call Sally at 207-0790.
- **Address:** 615 E. Adams St. Tucson, AZ 85705; 207-0790; [www.stlukeshometucson.org](http://www.stlukeshometucson.org)

### WISH LIST

The Arizona Daily Star publishes a wish list every Tuesday for nonprofits and hosts a website where nonprofits can post their wishes all year. Nonprofits registered as 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible to participate for free. Visit [www.wishlisthero.org](http://www.wishlisthero.org) to register your group. Email [wishlist@tucson.com](mailto:wishlist@tucson.com) if you would like to find out how you can support organizations or receive support for your group. Community Wish List is a collaboration of the Star and Heather Hiscox, founder of WishListHero.org.

#### EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT FOUNDATION

- **Mission:** Providing resources to expand and enrich student learning in the Tucson Unified School District.
- **Wish List:** Backpacks; socks; ear buds; perishable food snacks, like granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, etc.; individually packaged underwear (boys/girls/teens/young adults); khaki pants; fun school supplies to be used as incentives in schools for perfect attendance; gift cards to Target, Walmart and other stores; laundry detergent; and coffee.
- **Address:** 5049 E. Broadway, No. 107, Tucson, AZ 85711; 325-8688; [www.eeftucson.org](http://www.eeftucson.org)

## Builders Alliance is accepting applications from charities whose facilities need fixing

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

The Arizona Builders Alliance is accepting submissions from Tucson charities in need of facility renovations.

The alliance will select a nonprofit to receive those repairs during its 2020 Volunteer Day event in early December.

In 2019, the alliance made renovations to St. Luke’s Home as part of its Volunteer Day event. More than 220 volunteers donated about \$200,000 worth of material and labor to repair and upgrade St. Luke’s Home facilities.

To be considered, the charity must be a 501(c)(3) organization, be located in the Tucson area, own its own building and preferably provide services to underprivileged children, families in need or the elderly. Private and public schools are not eligible.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, Feb. 7.

Contact Tim Bee, director for Southern Arizona, at [tbee@azbuilders.org](mailto:tbee@azbuilders.org); or office manager Debbie Carlson at [dcarlson@azbuilders.org](mailto:dcarlson@azbuilders.org); or call 881-7930 with questions and for more information.



GETTY IMAGES

## Tucson Medical Center receives \$50,000 from Quilts for a Cause for testing program

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Quilts for a Cause, a local nonprofit that auctions and sells donated handmade quilts to support women’s cancer research, donated \$50,000 to Tucson Medical Center.

TMC said the money will be used to provide funding for the genetic testing program at TMC for Women.

Since its first auction in 2003, Quilt for a Cause has raised more than \$860,000

and donated 95% of the proceeds to Tucson-area organizations in support of research, training and assistance for uninsured and under-insured women.

“Their support this year will be critical to our geneticist’s ability to provide DNA kits to patients, and empowering them to make informed decisions about their care,” said Julie Wolfe Beadle, director of major gifts for the TMC Foundation.



GETTY IMAGES



# ARIZONA TAX CREDITS

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## Specialized equipment helps thousands annually

By David Gordon  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
SPECIAL NEEDS SOLUTIONS

We made a comfortable harness for a 9-year-old with cerebral palsy so his family can support him as he learns to walk. We also adapted a rearview mirror for a woman without legs so she can safely ride her hand-pedaled bike. And sewed a weighted blanket that allows a child to sleep through the night for the first time in years.

These are a few of the nearly 1,000 pieces of equipment Special Needs Solutions makes every year. Our goal is to support the children and adults with disabilities in our community in participating as fully as possible in their lives. For us, this means creating equipment that helps increase both their independence and their ability to interact with the world around them.

The specialized equipment that children and adults with cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome and other disabilities need for sitting, mobility, making their needs known, and emotional regulation is usually expensive and, for many families, simply not affordable.

These are the families Special Needs Solutions was created to help. Because we are staffed by volunteer craftspeople, we can make this essential equipment while charging families for only the cost of the materials.

And when there is nothing commercially available to meet a child's needs, Special Needs Solutions



Special Needs Solutions' goal is to support children and adults with disabilities in the Tucson community.

### HOW TO GIVE

- **What:** Special Needs Solutions
- **Where:** 4555 S. Palo Verde Road, Suite 131, Tucson 85714
- **Phone:** 520-838-0987
- **Website:** [snstucson.org](http://snstucson.org)

designs and makes something that will. In fact, almost everything we make at Special Needs Solution is custom designed to the specific and therapeutic needs of the individual.

Every year, these pieces of equipment make a difference in the lives of over 300 children and adults with disabilities in our community. We also collaborate with more than

### SHARE YOUR STORY

The Star is asking organizations in Southern Arizona that are certified as a qualifying charitable organization or as a qualifying foster care charitable school or program to share their story with Star readers. If your organization would like to participate, please email Debbie Kornmiller at [dkornmiller@tucson.com](mailto:dkornmiller@tucson.com) for details.

100 therapists and teachers working with individuals in community agencies, private practices and in exceptional education school programs.

## Parkinson wellness organization focuses on hope through therapy

By Kimberly Peute  
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER  
PARKINSON WELLNESS RECOVERY

Parkinson Wellness Recovery is a Tucson-based, community-focused organization delivering Parkinson disease-specific physical therapy, exercise therapy, education and wellness programming to people with Parkinson's and their care partners.

Now in our 10th year and officially called NeuroFit Networks Inc., we offer over 40 exercise therapy classes a week in a fun and positive environment, providing hope for people with Parkinson's that they can get better and stay better with exercise.

Nate M. first noticed symptoms of asymmetry while practicing tai chi and flying his airplane.

After ruling out many other diagnoses, he was finally diagnosed with Parkinson's.

Since 2012, Nate has faithfully attended group classes at PWR! and credits his regular exercise regimen for restoring function and maintaining a high quality of life, including his passion for following Parkinson's research advances.

Upon retiring, Roxy M.H. and her husband researched several possible retirement spots with specific services and programming for people with Parkinson's. They ultimately decided to move to Tucson from New Jersey to be a part of the PWR! family.

Since their arrival in late 2018, Roxy's exercise routine has paid off, building the stamina and confidence she needed to play a leading role in a local theater

### HOW IT WORKS

Arizona provides two separate nonrefundable tax credits for individuals who make contributions to charitable organizations: qualifying charitable organizations and qualifying foster care charitable organizations. Tax credits are also available for donations to schools.

These tax credits are a way for Arizona taxpayers to direct their taxes to organizations and causes that are important to them.

Individuals making cash donations may claim donations as tax credits up to the allowable amount on their Arizona personal income tax returns.

Tax credits provide a dollar-for-dollar reduction of your Arizona income tax liability. This means that a \$400 tax credit saves you \$400 in taxes. On the other hand, tax deductions lower your taxable income and are equal to the percentage of your marginal tax bracket.

The allowable 2019 credit



for contributions to qualifying charitable organizations is \$400 for single and head of household taxpayers and \$800 for married taxpayers filing a joint return.

The allowable 2019 credit for contributions to qualifying foster care organizations is \$500 for single and head of household taxpayers and \$1,000 for married taxpayers filing a joint return.

For a list of qualifying organizations and more information on these or school tax credits, see [tucne.ws/taxcredits](http://tucne.ws/taxcredits) at the Arizona Department of Revenue website.

You can donate and claim the credit for 2019 up until April 15, 2020. For more details, consult your tax professional.

### HOW TO GIVE

- **What:** Parkinson Wellness Recovery
- **Where:** 140 W. Fort Lowell Road, Tucson, 85705
- **Phone:** 520-591-5346
- **Website:** [pwr4life.org](http://pwr4life.org)

production in 2019.

As an Arizona taxpayer, your directed tax credit donation of \$400 for an individual or \$800 for couple helps fund physical and exercise therapy services to the Tucson community at no additional cost to you.

A donation of \$250 provides both a physical-therapy evaluation and one month of exercise therapy.

Every donation matters.

**WE'LL BUY YOUR HOUSE!**  
**AS IS - We'll Pay CASH!**  
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**M&A Investing Co.**



Bob Boatner

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## Sam Levitz and Mr. An Team Up to Comfort Grieving Families

If you need proof that Tucsonans are some of the most generous and caring souls on earth, look no further than last month's Holiday Donation Drive in support of Tu Nidito.

The December 20 event, spearheaded by Mr. An and Sam Levitz Furniture and held at Mr. An's restaurant, raised \$134,563 for the beloved Tucson nonprofit through public donations and matching funds from local business.

"We firmly believe that part of being a successful business is being a good

community partner," said Sam Levitz, the company's president. "It's our duty and honor to give back to the community that has always supported us."

Tu Nidito is a place of acceptance and understanding for children and families impacted by serious medical conditions or death. Annually Tu Nidito serves more than 700 of our community's grieving youth and their families through free support programs. The success of the Holiday Drive will help Tu Nidito provide comfort, hope and support for more than 120 grieving families.

This is not the first time Sam Levitz Furniture has lent support to Tu Nidito. The long-time local retailer has been teaming with other Tucson leaders to generate funds for the nonprofit for two decades.

"Mr. An and I have been raising money for Tu Nidito for over 20 years," Sam noted. "A few years ago, we brought several of our Tucson business friends together to match donated funds," Sam said.

In December, those business friends included Bruce Halle, Calixtro Distributing, Ashley HomeStore, Tempur-Pedic, Raymond Kish, Epstein Construction, Idealease, Town West, Tucson.com, Brown & Brown Insurance and The Tanager Company.

**MR. AN** **SAM LEVITZ FURNITURE**

**HOLIDAY DONATION DRIVE**  
IN SUPPORT OF  
**Tu Nidito**

**Friday, December 20th**  
**5am - 8pm**

Mr. An's Restaurant  
6091 N. Oracle Rd. 85704  
(cash donations preferred)  
100% of all funds raised go to Tu Nidito

**STOP BY & DONATE, SO WE CAN RAISE \$100,000**

Thank you to our local business sponsors, matching up to **\$100,000!**

**JM PROPERTIES**

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**BROWN & BROWN INSURANCE**

**THE TANAGER COMPANY**

David Gortstein Raymond Kish The Tanager Company



**"Part of being a successful business is being a good community partner."**

Sam Levitz, President,  
Sam Levitz Furniture