

Hearts of Gold Updates and FAQ

www.tucsonheartsofgold.org

Board Activities Since July 2019

Programs:

- * **Scholarships** ~ Hearts of Gold participants and their family members are eligible for scholarships for higher education. There are up to five scholarships available for 2020 totaling \$2,000 each.
- * **Gaslight** ~ Hearts of Gold was not permitted to secure the Gaslight event due to the impending separation from SALEF until July. Although the Broadway location was sold out, we secured the Oro Valley location and the event was a success. **The event will be back at the Broadway location for 2020.**
- * **Holiday Hearts Program** ~ Hearts of Gold reviewed submissions from Department members that needed some help over the holiday season. Hearts of Gold was able to help a family that was struggling to make ends meet and made their holiday a little brighter. This will be an annual program and is not limited to Hearts of Gold participants. All Department members are eligible.
- * **Retiree Participation** ~ Hearts of Gold is now offering retiring participants the opportunity to continue making the same contributions and remain eligible to receive assistance for up to 5 years after they retire or age 65, whichever comes first.
- * **One-Time Disbursement Upon Participant Death** ~ In the event that a current participant dies, no matter the cause, on or off-duty, Hearts of Gold will now provide \$5,000 to the family of the deceased participant automatically. No action is necessary on the part of the family.
- * **Participants Transferred out of the Department** ~ In the event that a participant is transferred to another City Department as a result of Department restructuring (i.e. Communications), they may continue making contributions and remain an eligible participant.

Financial Assistance and Merchandise Donations: In addition to the assistance requests for financial hardship, Hearts of Gold has also contributed to the following Department and Law Enforcement related events and activities:

- * **Forensics Week**
- * **Title Sponsor for Family Day**
- * **Table Sponsor for Erik Hite Circle of Care Gala**
- * **Sunnyside School District Appreciation for Alfonso (Fonzy) Lievanos Family**
- * **Merchandise Donation for the Kent Rhind 5K**
- * **Merchandise Donation for the Divisional Challenge**
- * **Memorial Wreaths**

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Survey Q & A

“I wish there was an avenue to assist someone, with even a small amount, that is not a member. Also, if someone left and came back, and is in need of assistance due to a real tragedy, that HOG would be able to assist. I keep hearing how much money HOG has.”

- * The founding members of Hearts of Gold intentionally structured the program to offer assistance for Department members who contribute to the program. Contributions can easily begin by the simple submission of an enrollment form. The cost is only \$5 a paycheck to be eligible to receive assistance if needed. Hearts of Gold is eager to give back to Department members who contribute to the program and has begun giving back to more Department related events that assist all Department members. The ways in which we are permitted to provide financial assistance are bound by IRS regulations and our bylaws.

“... I have seen requests come through and have seen very few kicked back as not eligible. My only complaint is the time frame from filling out the application to when the members get check in hand.”

- * In 2019, Hearts of Gold received 15 requests for assistance. All 15 requests were approved for financial assistance. When a request is received to the Hearts of Gold email, the applicant is advised via email that the application was received. The Board will generally review the application at the next regular board meeting unless the applicant indicates an urgency, in which case, the Board may hold a special meeting. Once the application has been reviewed, the applicant is sent a decision letter via email typically within one to two days. If the application is approved, the check goes out in the mail within one to two days. Typically, the entire process from receipt of application to check in hand takes less than 3 weeks but is usually much sooner.

“The Gaslight Theatre was extremely disappointing to say the least. There was prompting to make sure tickets were purchased in the summer time for the event. I don't know if it was an intentional decision to go to the Oro Valley location, but that was something that upset a lot of people. If Hearts of Gold had asked first, they probably would have been told to keep it at the Broadway location. It seems that maybe the event was organized too late and the Broadway location was unavailable...”

- * Prior to July 2019, Hearts of Gold was operating as a program within a larger non-profit organization. All expenditures needed to be approved through them. We requested the funds to reserve the Gaslight theater at the Broadway location earlier in the year, however, due to the pending separation of the two organizations, we were not permitted to do so. One of the first things the new Board did when they took office in July was commit to the Gaslight event. By that time, the Broadway location was sold out and there were limited dates available at the Oro Valley location. The Board is aware that it was a different show and many preferred the Broadway location for a variety of reasons. ***For this reason, the Gaslight will return to the Broadway location for 2020*** and we hope to see you all there! We apologize for any inconvenience this caused.

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Survey Q & A

“... Now that Jamie has retired I do not know who the point of contact is for TPD...”

* Hearts of Gold understands that Department members have different levels of comfort when it comes to communicating with Hearts of Gold. For this reason there are multiple avenues and contact options.

1. Retired Lieutenant Jamie Brady is now the Executive Director and primary point of contact for Hearts of Gold. She may be reached in the following ways, Jamie.brady@tucsonaz.gov, info@tucsonheartsofgold.org, or 520-465-0375.
2. Sergeant Cindy Mechtel is now the TPD Liaison for Hearts of Gold and may be reached at Cindy.mechtelt@tucsonaz.gov
3. The Behavioral Sciences Unit may also be utilized to facilitate assistance requests or any other communication to Hearts of Gold.
4. For those that wish to remain anonymous to all of the above, there is a Hearts of Gold drop box located behind the desk at the main police station at 270 S. Stone. Any communication may be placed in that box and will be forwarded to the Board.
5. ***Tom Vetrano has been the Chair of the Board since July 2019. In the interest of full transparency, he is more than willing to listen to any issues, concerns, compliments, or questions directly. He can be reached at tom@vetrano.net.***

“I suggest that Hearts of Gold starts communicating with people about what it is that they are doing and how they are doing things better. Unfortunately, I have only heard negative things about Hearts of Gold to include how much money they have saved up and their unwillingness to actually help me. If Hearts of Gold wants to break its reputation of scamming people, they might want to start telling people what is going on.”

* Hearts of Gold is committed to improving communication with Department members. Since the new Board took office in July of 2019, they have disseminated two newsletters, created a website (www.tucsonheartsofgold.org) that is constantly updated with the latest news, held five meet and greets in the fall at a variety of locations and times and have 5 more planned, all in an attempt to communicate with Department members. The Board has also approved financial assistance for every application that they have reviewed since July 2019. Hearts of Gold has a significant amount of money that the Board is eager to utilize according to the mission and bylaws of the organization. The Board is open to more ideas on how we can continue to enhance and improve upon this amazing program.

HEARTS OF GOLD

