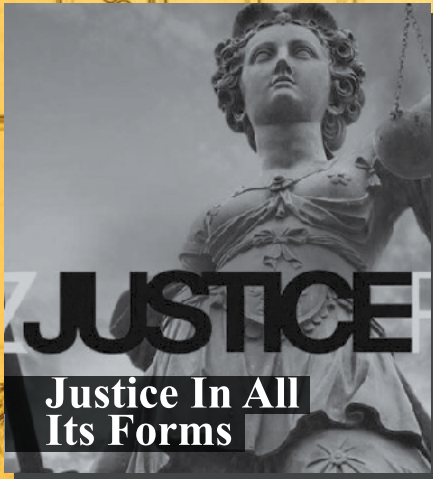


# thinking

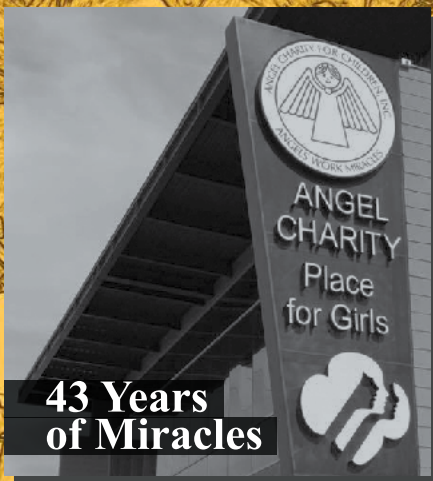
Connecting our Community with Current Issues

# STATION

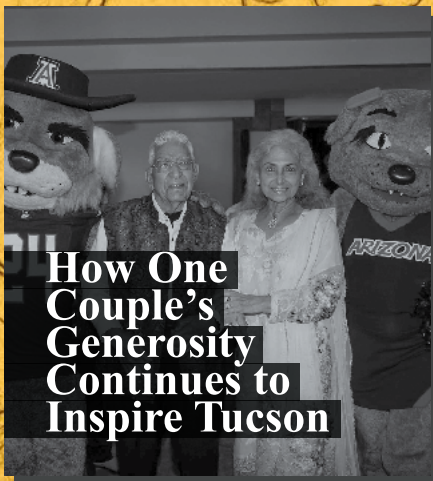


## JUSTICE

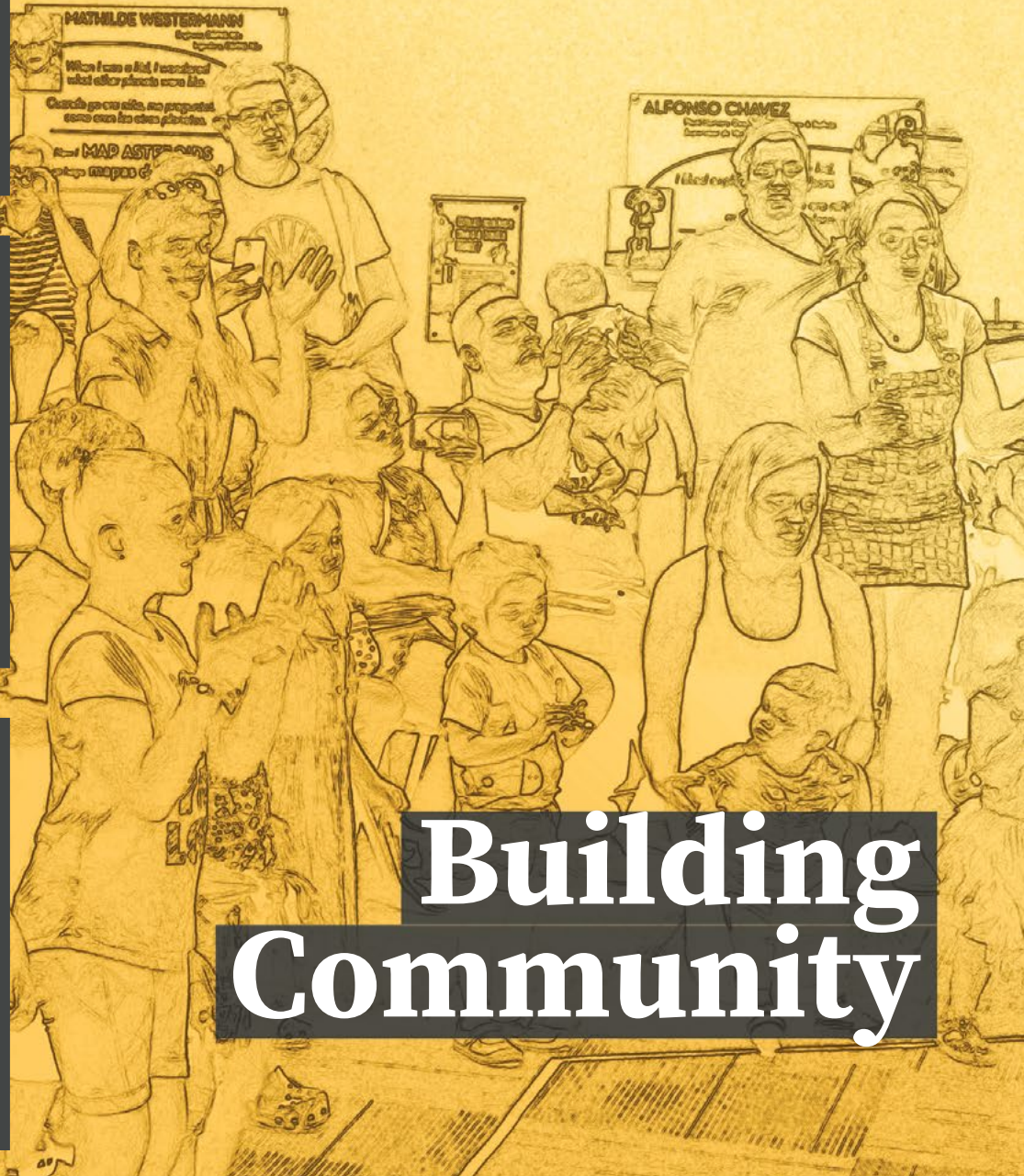
### Justice In All Its Forms



### 43 Years of Miracles



### How One Couple's Generosity Continues to Inspire Tucson



# Building Community

# Justice In All Its Forms

## Peter Akmajian

“Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.”  
— Benjamin Franklin

Since an early age, I have been concerned and at times outraged by injustice. Growing up in Armenian family directly impacted by genocide, I felt moral outrage as a child. Though I may not have understood it then, what bothered me was impunity—the ability of those in power to do as they please with no checks. Injustice and even mass murder thrives in that environment.

As I entered the legal profession, I have tried to support causes that fight for justice and against impunity. I have tried to create an environment in which justice may reign.

I serve on the board of directors of the Arizona Justice Project, which helps people who have been wrongfully convicted or who are the victims of manifest injustice, specifically excessive sentences. See: <https://azjusticeproject.org/>

One case we worked on last year involved a young man sentenced to 293 years in prison for a string of non-violent, low-level burglaries in Kingman, Arizona. Surprisingly, the courts ruled that this sentence did not violate the 8th Amendment’s ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The AJP, however, brought a well-grounded clemency case to the Arizona Board of Executive Clemency, which granted parole after a 10-year term.

AJP has many more success stories of exonerated prisoners, though freeing an innocent person from death row after decades causes one to question the integrity of a justice system that allowed such a terrible injustice in the first place. But all we can do is try to improve the system.

My other passion is access to justice, in other words working towards a system in which people have full access to the courts and to legal representation for their important legal needs.

I have long been involved with Southern Arizona Legal Aid (<https://www.sazlegalaid.org/>) and with the Pima County Bar Foundation (<https://pimacountybar.org/>). SALA provides direct representation to indigent persons in various types of cases, including landlord tenant and



family law. The Pima County Bar Foundation supports numerous programs to support unrepresented litigants in the courts and further supports basic community needs like hunger and literacy.

I also volunteer for Step Up to Justice, a homegrown organization providing legal representation to those in this community who cannot afford it (<https://www.stepuptojustice.org/>).

Lastly, I have been a longtime board member of the Triangle Y Ranch, part of the YMCA of Southern Arizona (<https://tucsonymca.org/triangle-y-camp-retreat-center/>).

While not a legal organization, the Tri-Y Camp gives underprivileged kids the chance to experience summer camp, ride horses, and learn about the outdoors. I would like to believe that such an experience helps create a good society where justice can flourish.

I like that quote from Franklin. It hits home because it is easy to live comfortably in this profession and forget the less fortunate. But that is wrong.

If the work of any of these organizations has meaning to you, here is how to donate to each:



• **Arizona Justice Project:**  
<https://azjusticeproject.org/donate/>



• **SALA:**  
<https://www.sazlegalaid.org/how-to-give/>



• **Pima County Bar Foundation:**  
<https://pimacountybar.org/?pg=contributions&cpAction-showDetail&pid=428&cid=550>



• **Step Up to Justice:**  
<https://www.stepuptojustice.org/donate>



• **Triangle Y Ranch Camp:**  
<https://tucsonymca.org/donate/> (indicate Tri-Y)

-P.A.



# Happenings

We are proud to announce that for the 15th year in a row, **Schmidt Sethi & Akmajian** has been honored as a Tier 1 law firm in our areas of practice. *Best Lawyers* is the oldest and most respected peer review publication company in the legal profession. Each year, it conducts detailed, community-based peer reviews of lawyers and law firms. Tier 1 is the highest ranking a law firm can achieve.

**Matt Schmidt**



The Engage Foundation was founded by **Matt** in 2017 and provides free recreational opportunities for kids, many of which may not otherwise have the resources or opportunity to participate. This year's two-hand touch youth rugby league kicked off with over 80 kid participants!

In addition, **Matt** has recently joined the Board of Directors of Ben's Bells, a Tucson nonprofit that "teaches individuals and communities about the positive impacts of intentional kindness and inspires people to practice kindness as a way of life."

**Peter Akmajian**



On November 18th, **Peter** spoke to a class on healthcare law at the University of Arizona College of Law on an "Overview of Medical Malpractice Law". This talk covered fundamental legal issues, as well as practical observations from **Peter's** 40 years of experience.

**Dev Sethi**



**Dev Sethi** spoke to University of Arizona student athletes at a Homecoming forum on career development and opportunities. **Dev** joined fellow UA alums, Jay Dobyms – the first undercover officer to infiltrate the Hell's Angels – and Tanya Hughes – World Champion and Olympic high jumper. His advice – work hard to make a strong first impression, then live up to it; guard your reputation; and get out of the house to connect with people.

**Ted Schmidt**



**Ted Schmidt** is spearheading a statewide celebration of the 250th birthday of the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln's birthday and statehood. He has met with the Justices of the Arizona Supreme Court and all the State's presiding judges to plan an event where lawyers throughout the state will retake their oath on the court room steps and speak to the importance of the Rule of Law to our country.

# 43 Years of Miracles: Angel Charity for Children

*Dev Sethi*

Angel Charity for Children has been making miracles happen since 1983. This all-volunteer organization of 150 members works to improve the quality of life for children in Pima County through fundraising and supporting strong community organizations working to provide our community's children with the vibrant futures they deserve. Since its first investment – 43 years ago - retiring the mortgage and expanding the Ronald McDonald House, Angel Charity has invested in 144 projects and awarded over \$33 million dollars in grants, positively impacting over 1,000,000 children.



from \$15,000 to \$75,000, round out this year's giving. Angel Charity fills a vital community need – vetting non-profits looking to fund those that are strong stewards of their resources, which they use to make a deep, positive impact.

I am proud of my family's history with Angel Charity. My mom is a long-time member. My wife, Olivia, served as the General Chair in 2017, when the beneficiaries were Diaper Bank of Southern Arizona and Beads of Courage, along with Ben's Bells, Junior Achievement of Arizona, and the Erik Hite Foundation.

Drive around Southern Arizona, and you see Angel Charity's impact everywhere. Children's Museum Tucson, Make Way for Books, Tu Nidito, Youth on Their Own, Children's Clinics for Rehabilitative Services, Steele Children's Research Center, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tucson are a small sampling of the organizations that have received transformational grants from Angel Charity's annual Halo for Hire grant process. Angel Charity's Impact and Opportunity Grants fund essential projects. Its core funding priorities are for capital expenditures – retiring mortgages, renovating or building new facilities. Angel Charity also funds medical research and care, performing arts, education, and social services programming. If it's something kids in Southern Arizona need, Angel Charity will look at boosting it.

In 2025, Angel Charity will invest over \$1,750,000 into eight beneficiaries. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Arizona and San Miguel High School will receive large, Impact Grants. Six smaller Opportunity Grants, ranging

Today, I serve on Angel Charity's Advisory Board. It's a wonderful opportunity to support an organization that does so much to strengthen the safety net for the kids of our community.

The consistent theme of my volunteering efforts is childhood development and education. Our firm has been a wonderful partner supporting everything from Ben's Bells and the Children's Museum to Salpointe and the University of Arizona Foundation. Angel Charity occupies a unique and special spot because its dollars turbo-charge beneficiaries in two ways. First, Angel Charity brings new eyes to worthy endeavors. Second, its rigorous charity selection process gives donors confidence that beneficiaries are strong, healthy, and doing things the right way.

To learn more about Angel Charity, its mission and its beneficiaries, visit [www.angelcharity.org](http://www.angelcharity.org). -D.S.



## What Our Clients Say About Us:

“★★★★★”

I want to take a moment to sincerely thank your team for all the support and dedication you have shown me. I am truly grateful and humbled by everything you have done to assist me throughout this process. Your commitment and guidance have been invaluable, and I deeply appreciate having you by my side. - T.W.

# Tara Nicole Schmidt “Have a Dream” Memorial Scholarship

## Ted Schmidt

In 1990, Ted and Ann Schmidt established the Tara Nicole Schmidt “Have a Dream” Memorial Scholarship at the University of Arizona to honor their late daughter Tara. Every 4 years, hundreds of Arizona high school seniors submit an application that includes a unique essay: “Your child is giving the eulogy at a celebration of your long and illustrious life. What will they say?” The Schmidt family personally interview and select the recipients.

The scholarship has provided 13 students the means to complete their undergraduate education in teaching, chemical engineering, art, linguistics, and business to name but a few majors.



Tara Nicole Schmidt

The current recipient, Maya Isabel Ramirez is earning a double major in Pharmaceutical Sciences and Spanish in the University of Arizona Honors College. She has studied abroad in Costa Rica, volunteered as a preceptor for organic chemistry, where she helps other students navigate this difficult subject and volunteers at a women’s shelter.

Contributions to this scholarship fund which currently approaches \$100,000 in principal can be made at: [give.uafoundation.org](https://give.uafoundation.org), search “Schmidt, Tara”. Or scan this code: The Schmidt family will be deeply grateful for your support -T.S.



# Best Lawyers®

The Best Lawyers in America - 2026 Edition



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- Personal Injury Litigation - Plaintiffs
- Professional Malpractice Law - Plaintiffs



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- Product Liability Litigation - Plaintiffs



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- Personal Injury Litigation - Plaintiffs
- Product Liability Litigation - Plaintiffs



## Matt Schmidt

- Personal Injury Litigation - Plaintiffs



# How One Couple's Generosity Continues to Inspire Tucson

## Ted Schmidt

In the heart of Tucson lives a couple whose story is defined by service—not just to medicine, but to people, families, children, and to the very idea of what community means when we lift one another. Dr. Gulshan Sethi and Neelam Sethi have not simply lived here; they have invested their time, energy, and love into this place we call home.

Neelam began her philanthropic journey in 1991 with Angel Charity for Children and has since provided leadership and funding for arts and wellness organizations across Southern Arizona. She was an early supporter of the historic Fox Tucson Theatre, serving on its board for more than a decade, and launched Bollywood at the Fox—a joyful, culturally rich fundraiser supporting children's arts programs.

She also created the annual Family Arts & Music Experience (FAME) at the Children's Museum Tucson, a free day of arts and culture for local families. A founding member of the India Society of Southern Arizona, Neelam has long promoted diversity and community celebration through Indian traditions and foodways. Together, she and Dr. Sethi have been recognized by the Children's Museum Tucson for their generosity and leadership.

Neelam has also been a champion for public health, supporting the Mel & Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health at the University of Arizona, with an emphasis on disease prevention, older-adult wellness, and children's health. Her energy and compassion have inspired countless others to give, volunteer, and build stronger connections throughout our community.

Dr. Sethi's own legacy is equally profound. When he joined the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson faculty in 1988, he brought not only extraordinary surgical skill but also a deep commitment to innovation and mentorship. In 1989, he performed Arizona's first single-lung transplant and established the Circulatory Sciences Program—the state's first master's-level program in pharmacology and perfusion technology.

Over the decades, his pioneering work in heart and lung transplantation, cardiovascular devices, and coronary artery disease advanced science and fostered collaboration across disciplines. As a voting member of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's radiological and cardiovascular devices panel, he guided the approval of life-saving technologies. He co-chaired four national multicenter



Dr. Gulshan Sethi and Neelam Sethi

clinical studies, published more than 250 peer-reviewed articles, 15 book chapters, and two monographs.

Perhaps most extraordinary of all, Dr. Sethi performed more than 15,000 open-heart surgeries, trained over 150 cardiothoracic surgery fellows, hundreds of residents, and thousands of medical students during his 50-year career. More than 40 of his mentees went on to serve as chiefs or presidents of major national and international cardiothoracic societies.

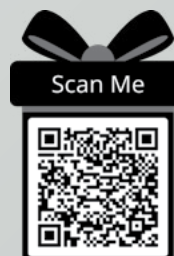
Yet what people remember most is not just his surgical mastery but his humanity. Patients speak of his gentle bedside manner. Colleagues recall his belief that laughter has a place in healing, that patients are not numbers but lives, and that skill must be paired with ethics, teamwork, and compassion.

Together, Gulshan and Neelam Sethi have supported countless charities and nonprofits—quietly, humbly, and effectively—building community by caring for those who repair, heal, teach, and uplift.

Now, the University of Arizona Foundation seeks to honor this extraordinary legacy by establishing the Gulshan Sethi, MD Endowed Professorship in Cardiothoracic Surgery, with a goal of \$1 million. This endowed chair will provide lasting support for a cardiothoracic surgeon at University of Arizona Medical School—funding research, teaching, resident training, and scholarly exchange at national and international levels.

What we build today will carry forward tomorrow, ensuring that Dr. Sethi's values, his mentorship, and his vision of healing continue to shape our community and our world.

We invite you—our neighbors, friends, and fellow community-builders—to join us. By contributing to this fund, you honor not only a surgeon and a philanthropist, but a belief: that when we help those who help others, we build more than endowed chairs—we build hope, futures, and community.



To contribute to the Endowed Professorship, please visit [give.uafoundation.org](http://give.uafoundation.org), scan the code here or contact the University of Arizona Foundation at (520) 626-9508. -T.S.



# This Firm Gives

## Matt Schmidt

Our firm strongly believes in giving back to our local community. Last year, Ted Schmidt served as our state President for the State Bar of Arizona and currently serves on the board for the Arizona State Bar Foundation; Dev Sethi serves on the advisory board of Angel Charity for Children, which supports funding for charitable causes focused on improving the quality of life for children in Pima County; Peter Akmajian serves on the board the Arizona Justice Project, which takes a second look into cases of the potentially wrongfully imprisoned; Matt Schmidt just joined the board of Ben's Bells, an organization that teaches and spreads intentional kindness in the community. These are just a few examples of the numerous organizations each partner is a part of.

That's why we decided to take it a step further. This year, each member of the firm selected a local charitable

cause that is important to them. For every case that we successfully resolve, we will make a significant donation to a charity from the list our firm created. The donation comes directly out of our fee so that it has no impact on our client's recovery. This allows our firm and our clients to turn traumatic injury cases into something positive by making a substantial difference in the community.

To date, our program has raised over \$25,000 for the local causes highlighted below. If you would like to get into our spirit of giving, the QR code next to each cause will bring you directly to the charity's donation page. Having worked for numerous nonprofits, we can all attest that even the smallest contributions add up and go a long way to support these causes. -M.S.



The mission of Angel Charity is to improve the quality of life for children in Pima County, Arizona.



To seek justice for the innocent, the wrongfully imprisoned, and those who have suffered manifest injustice under Arizona's criminal justice system.



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Arizona changes the lives of youths by matching them with caring adults to guide them on a path to success.



Together, we work to improve the quality of life of patients through research, service projects, and fundraising in an environment that promotes whole family involvement.



More Than a Bed



To provide essential items to foster, kinship and adoptive families for the children in their homes, including those in a congregate care setting, because every child deserves to be valued.



To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.



Our mission is to change lives in the communities we serve by feeding the hungry today, and building a healthy, hunger-free tomorrow.



Ability Dogs of Arizona is dedicated to providing specialized training to people and their dogs to enhance independence and quality of life.



Tu Nidito exists to create a community of acceptance and understanding for those grieving a serious medical condition or death.



*1790 East River Road, Suite 300  
Tucson, Arizona 85718*



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*Our Attorneys:  
Dev Sethi, Matt Schmidt,  
Ted Schmidt & Peter Akmajian  
Exclusively representing  
individuals in significant  
injury and wrongful death  
matters.*

*We are dedicated to providing the strongest representation for our clients in a wide range of cases involving serious injury or death. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with referring lawyers from Arizona and around the country. We appreciate the trust those lawyers have in allowing us to assist their clients. We welcome the chance to talk. If you have a case to discuss or simply want to know more about us, please visit our website.*

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