

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Long time non-profit advocate, Rodney Smith, was honored with the prestigious Community Leadership Award presented by The Leadership Consortium (TLC), a Phoenix-based non-profit organization. The awards are presented annually to Arizona individuals and organizations involved in sports, who have demonstrated courage and commitment in serving the community. This year's awards were presented on Thursday, September 4, 2008, at the US Airways Center in Phoenix, AZ.



"In an era of sports scandals and controversies," TLC CEO Denise Meridith said, "it is refreshing to honor people and organizations who are excellent role models for youth in Arizona."

Over the years such community figures, such as Jerry Colangelo of the Phoenix Suns and USA Basketball, Shane Doan of the Phoenix Coyotes, Tony Clark of the Arizona Diamondbacks, and many others have been recognized for their community service. This year's lifetime achievement award went to Tom Ambrose, Executive Director of Phoenix Suns Charities, who has been making a difference for 36 years in the Arizona community.

"It is an incredible honor to have been chosen for this award, especially, considering all the community representatives that were nominated. The Leadership Consortium is an important organization to the community of Arizona and has recognized so many great community leaders over the years. I am humbled to be a part of that group and proud of the honor I received. There have been so many others that have helped me along the way - from board members, to staff, to volunteers. I share this honor with them with great pride," says Rodney Smith.

Rodney recently launched a new non-profit organization, Helping Hands for Freedom, with one of our true American Heroes, SSG Patrick Shannon. One of their main focuses is on building a national mentorship program designed to serve military children of all branches of our armed forces.

"The children of our wounded service members, and those who lose a parent to war, suffer not only from the devastating loss of a parent and a life-changing home environment, but also from the absence of a significant contributor to their growth, development, and education. Children whose parents serve multiple deployments also face considerable change. To these children facing such significant issues, caring mentors provide the vital support, encouragement, and inspiration to help them reach their goals in life.



"I have been working with developing children for the last 17 years, and in my world, many children need people outside of their home environment to help lead them. To see their eyes light up when you are there to help them with their homework, or to see the excitement they experience when they make a big catch at a youth camp, you just know in your heart that you are making a difference. I still receive Christmas cards from children - who are grown up now - who attended a youth camp that I ran years ago. They always express their

gratitude for what we did for them. I know first hand how important community service means to others and the difference it makes," says Rodney Smith.

To assist in the efforts of Helping Hands for Freedom please visit them at [www.helpinghandsforfreedom.org](http://www.helpinghandsforfreedom.org).

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Helping Hands for Freedom is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to supporting military families facing injury and loss, and improving children's lives through mentorship and leadership programs. For more information about Helping Hands for Freedom please visit: [www.helpinghandsforfreedom.org](http://www.helpinghandsforfreedom.org)