2011

IMPACT Awards

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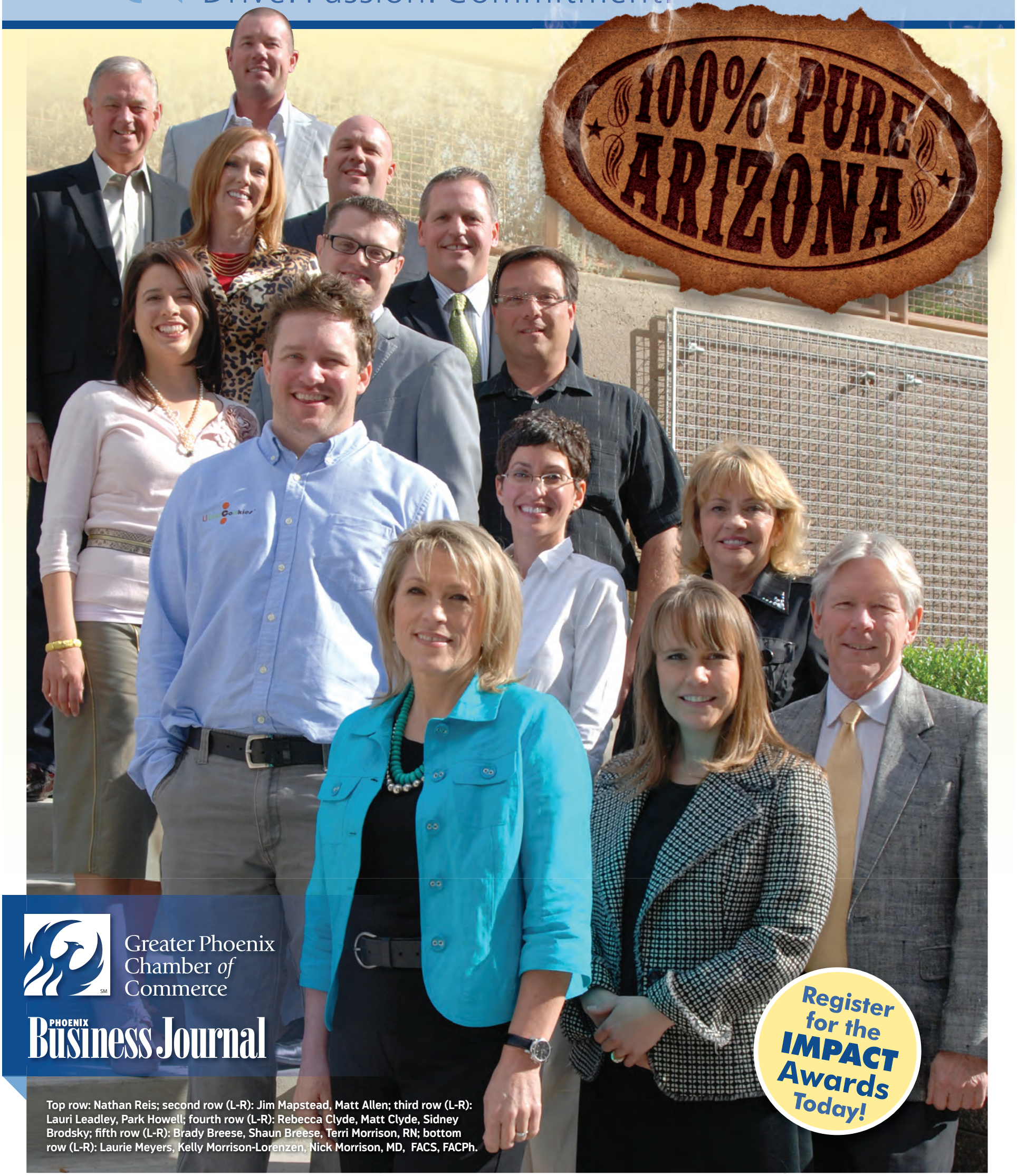

Greater Phoenix Chamber *of* Commerce

PHOENIX Business Journal

Top row: Nathan Reis; second row (L-R): Jim Mapstead, Matt Allen; third row (L-R): Lauri Leadley, Park Howell; fourth row (L-R): Rebecca Clyde, Matt Clyde, Sidney Brodsky; fifth row (L-R): Brady Breese, Shaun Breese, Terri Morrison, RN; bottom row (L-R): Laurie Meyers, Kelly Morrison-Lorenzen, Nick Morrison, MD, FACS, FACPh.

Register for the IMPACT Awards Today!

On behalf of the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce and our more than 2,900 members, I want to invite you to join us in celebrating the very best of Valley business at our 24th annual IMPACT Awards Luncheon on Thursday, May 19 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa.

Since 1988, our Chamber has been proud to honor the accomplishments of businesses and their significance to our community and our quality of life through the IMPACT Awards. Once again this year, ten enterprising business owners who have made an impact through business success, community involvement, innovation, response to adversity and company culture will be recognized. Five will receive awards, including the coveted IMPACT Business of the Year, but all are worthy of your support respect and admiration.

When Arizona completes its rebound from the greatest economic challenges in memory, it will be because of the indomitable spirit of the entrepreneur. Those who take the risks, create jobs and fuel the supply side of our economy truly represent the pioneering can-do attitude that has built our state since its beginnings. In less than a century, Arizona has gone from desert wilderness territory to a state on the forefront of new technologies and vision.

The ten companies whose stories you will read in this special section represent the true spirit of Arizona. I ask you to join me in applauding that spirit by attending the 2011 IMPACT Awards Luncheon and by bringing your employees, co-workers and clients for an afternoon that recognizes what Arizona is really about.

Just visit www.phoenixchamber.com/impact2011 and reserve your seat today.

Todd Sanders

TODD SANDERS
President & CEO
Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce

They Stand Vigilant

Chamber Honors Three Legislators

The Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce (GPCC) inaugurates a new award this year: the Sentinel Award, which honors elected state officials for their outstanding legislative and regulatory work on behalf of Arizona businesses. The Chamber's Small Business Leadership Council has selected Senators John McComish and Michele Reagan and Representative Amanda Reeve as 2011 Sentinel Award recipients based on their sponsorship of pro-business legislation, willingness to defeat bills that would adversely impact Arizona business and their accessibility to our members and our Public Affairs Department.

Senator John McComish (R-District 20) co-sponsored a number of tax bills implemented in the AZ Competitiveness package, sponsors a number of the Chamber's workers' compensation bills, chairs the committee on Banking and Insurance and is always accessible to the Chamber and its small business members. His past experience as a President/CEO of a chamber has given him a unique understanding of the GPCC and its goals.

Senator Michele Reagan (R-District 8) was a prime sponsor on SB 1041 (the "Invest Arizona" bill) and a number of other Chamber-supported issues including unemployment insurance, workers' compensation and tax policy. Having been a small business owner herself, she relates to small business owners and is always accessible to them.

Representative Amanda Reeve (R-District 6) sponsored one of the Chamber's high priority issues that creates a Fee Commission to evaluate the fund sweeps used to balance the state budget. In addition, she chairs the Environment committee, and has co-sponsored other pro-business tax strategies that keep Arizona competitive regionally and nationally and which aid small business.

"These public servants are shining examples of how the business community and the legislature can work together to build a prosperous Arizona," said GPCC Vice President, Public Affairs & Economic Development Michelle Bolton. "Senators McComish and Reagan and Representative Reeve understand the importance of government facilitating commerce, not hindering it. This is a well-deserved honor."

The first Sentinel Awards will be presented at the 24th Annual IMPACT Awards Luncheon on May 19 at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa.

Positive Signs

Engraver is in the Groove

Jim Mapstead calls himself a "serial entrepreneur." He's been a bartender, designed and built custom furniture, owned a lumber yard and hardware store, and, for the last 19 years, owned Accurate Signs & Engraving, Inc. in Phoenix.

The company is a leader in commercial and industrial engraving (name badges, desk name plates and building interior signage), and corporate reward and recognition programs. It has a large, diverse customer base, but draws the bulk of its revenues from manufacturing thousands of plastic tags for commercial installations required by utility companies.

> "I've been granted a lot in my life. The better I can make my community, the better my business will succeed."

When the recession drained the once-lucrative electrical contracting business, Mapstead went after a new target: solar panel installers. The booming industry powered a 15 percent jump in company revenues last year. Their goal now is becoming the nation's largest solar panel installer tag provider, while keeping the personal touches that are their own calling card.

"Without good customer service, businesses won't exist," Mapstead notes. "How do we want to be treated when we go someplace? We all know that, so we provide that for our customers. If we screw up, we don't go hide or blame somebody else. We take care of it. That's why our customers stay with us."

Mapstead's business looks nationally while he thinks locally, with community involvement his personal passion. He serves on numerous boards and commissions, including the Sunnyslope Village Alliance and the Phoenix Parks and Conservation Foundation. He also chairs the board of Local First Arizona, helping Arizona businesses grow while streamlining and protecting the non-profit's finances and business practices.

"It's a core principal," says Mapstead, whose employees receive four paid hours monthly to engage in charitable causes. "The better I can make my community, the better my business will succeed. I live in a great community, and what can I do to help better that community?"

■ **Accurate Signs & Engraving | (602) 944-3587**

Jim Mapstead has his hands full with a prosperous business and community activity.

Clip Artist

Small Savings Add Up To Big Business

Big ideas often have humble beginnings. CouponSense.com is no different.

"I just liked finding a deal," admits Laurie Meyers. The Chandler wife and mother drew inspiration from a former co-worker who meticulously clipped and catalogued grocery store coupons. Downsized from her job in 1998, Meyers took on a paper route that meant very early mornings, but also early access to the weekly store circular ads. She'd pore over them, sharing info with neighbors who encouraged her to make the hobby her full-time business.

"I saw the potential of this information, but I didn't envision that it would be this big. We're getting noticed now, so, wow, we're doing something right."

"Just thinking about gathering and processing all that information every week was exhausting," Meyers remembers. But she did it, snail-mailing weekly reports to a small base of savings-hopeful subscribers. As the cost of postage went up but the cost of technology came down, Meyers emailed the reports.

Thirteen years later, CouponSense.com's eight employees and an army of data entry contractors – many of them stay-at-home moms - track thousands of coupons online and match them with local grocery and drug store ads. For a monthly fee, more than 9,000 members use CouponSense.com's robust website to create a customized list of bargains that can save them 50 to 80 percent on groceries.

Thanks to word of mouth and some television exposure, CouponSense.com has seen 56 percent growth in just the last three years and has expanded from Arizona to Florida and states in-between. And Laurie Meyers has turned a "hobby out of control" into a company that generates more than $1 million annually while helping others realize their dreams.

"This empowers women," Meyers says. "It impacts their self-esteem, improves their lives and lets them know they're important and valued.

"I saw the potential of this information, but I didn't envision that it would be this big," she reflects. "We're getting noticed now, so, wow, we're doing something right."

■ **Coupon Sense | www.couponsense.com**

A walk down the aisle is a regular joy for shoppers thanks to Laurie Meyers' Coupon Sense.

Third Time Is The Charm

Fortune is in the Cards After Disappointment

Nathan Reis and Entrust Bankcard will literally go to the wall for their clients.

Nathan Reis is a classic example of business failure. That's what makes him so successful.

A top salesman at a global financial services firm by age 24, Reis made his first million at 25 but felt something was missing. "I was making plenty of money, but I was increasingly unsatisfied. I had to do something on my own," he says.

So he invested his savings in starting his own business, which promptly went under. He started a second venture, which also failed.

"It was the business of being in business that put me out of business," Reis reflects. "It had nothing to do with the product. It was payroll, getting a website, email, business cards, office space. All of a sudden, six months later, I'd almost burned through my savings."

"I wouldn't be where I am had I not failed before."

Nothing if not persistent, Reis founded Entrust Bankcard in 2006. The Mesa-based provider of small-business payment processing services has grown from five employees working at a kitchen table to 100 employees and more than $8 million in revenue in 2010. "For the price of one employee, we'll handle your books, insurance, ATM machine and your website, all in a very usable platform," Reis says.

Entrust Bankcard pursues lofty goals while keeping down-to-earth relationships with its customers. Reis plans to have a minimum of 100,000 customers within five years and to be "the benchmark for small business services in America" in ten. The roadmap? The Entrust Bankcard Cookbook, a "recipe for success," which defines its culture, management style, mission and promise to the customer. It's all part of growing beyond the bankcard business in support of their motto, "Fighting for the Small Business."

"I wouldn't be where I am had I not failed before," Reis admits. With that attitude and the knowledge of what doesn't work, there's no telling where he'll go next.

■ **Entrust Bankcard | www.entrustbankcard.com**

Familiar Taste, Unfamiliar Face

"Anonymous" Chef Has Successful Recipe

Sidney Brodsky and James Gerard Foods are a cut above.

An old culinary adage is "A chef is only as good as the last meal they prepared." James Gerard Foods proves that every day and leaves customers with great tastes in their mouths.

You've probably never heard of this South Phoenix-based company, but you've probably eaten their food. What they may lack in name recognition they more than make up for with flavor, consistency and customer service.

James Gerard Foods prepares gourmet appetizers and entrees for resorts, hotels and smaller restaurant chains. Working behind the scenes, on a given day more than 50 employees hand-craft as many as 10,000 appetizers that are served at resorts like The Phoenician and at restaurants throughout the Valley.

"We're an extension of their kitchens," says President and Executive Chef Sidney Brodsky, who joined the company in 1996 and bought out his other partners two years later. Brodsky still gets into the kitchen now and then, but his main focus is continuing his company's expansion, diversification and customer satisfaction.

"We don't just sell gourmet food products, we offer a partnership."

"We don't just sell gourmet food products," Brodsky explains. "We offer a partnership that provides innovation, research, sound advice and dependability."

When the recession hit tourism and hospitality-related businesses, Gerard Foods felt it. "We saw about 40 percent of our business disappear overnight," Brodsky says. Through hard work, watching expenses carefully and diversifying into serving smaller multi-unit restaurants throughout the Valley, they've survived and even saw a 36 percent revenue increase last year.

And as for being the best food source you've probably never heard of? That's okay with Brodsky, too.

"I've never been the fame and glory kind of guy," Brodsky admits. "I'm always the one who says 'Thank you very much' and then ducks back into the kitchen."

To their customers, James Gerard Foods isn't anonymous – they're indispensible. And that's on anybody's menu for business success.

■ **James Gerard Foods | www.jgfoodsonline.com**

Fun and Profit

Creative Firm Has a Blast Delivering Value to Clients

ideas*Collide's team doesn't mind boxes as long as they can think outside them. (L-R) Creative Director Mike Mason, (Top) Senior Account Manager Karem Planas, (Bottom) Senior Account Manager Bridget Daly, Co-Founder & CXO Rebecca Clyde and Founder & Chief Strategist Matt Clyde.

Risking a steady paycheck for the dream of a creative outlet, Matthew and his wife, Rebecca, founded ideas*Collide in 2005 in a home office. The creative services, interactive design and digital/social media marketing firm now has 13 employees in a colorful, 4,600-square foot Scottsdale studio.

It's a vibrant, fun place, full of idea-inspiring toys and gadgets. From the latest gaming systems in the "play room" to the old-school turntable spinning vinyl records, the vibe is just right for right-brained people. Need to relax for a bit? The quiet Zen Room isn't wired for any electronics.

"We always go in with the mindset that all things are possible. We never say 'no' to a client."

But it's not all fun and games. Hard work has paid off in a growing client list, including giants like eBay, Best Western and Intel, and campaigns reaching from Arizona to China. Profitable since its first quarter, ideas*Collide sees steadily-increasing billings through fresh, bold thinking and providing unique solutions.

"Our mindset is all things are possible," Clyde notes. "We never say 'no' to a client; we may say, 'that may not be possible, but this is.'"

Team members are encouraged and expected to volunteer time in the community and the agency's fund-raising efforts include the Phoenix Children's Museum and Harvest for Humanity. They're dedicated to making the Valley a better place to live and a place that can compete creatively with New York and Los Angeles.

"I want to be a creative leader in the industry," Clyde says. "I want to set Phoenix apart as a place to find marketing and creative solutions. And I want to continue to see the growth we have without sacrificing the culture."

Surely there's a creative solution to those challenges. And, just as surely, ideas*Collide will find it.

■ **ideas*Collide | www.ideascollide.com**

Medicine In A Different Vein

A Better Way is Doctor's Orders

Twenty years in hospital medicine gave Nick Morrison, MD, FACS, FACPh and his wife, Terri Morrison, RN, the chance to do a lot of good. Still, they couldn't help feeling there was a better way. In 1995 they founded their own phlebology practice, the Morrison Vein Institute, which treats vein disease at offices in Tempe and Scottsdale.

"Nick's always looking for better outcomes based on patient data," Terri says. "A treatment may be good, but if it doesn't create the best outcome for patients, he won't do it."

In 16 years, the practice has grown tenfold. Despite industry-wide challenges from health-care upheaval, they continue to innovate, cultivating a workplace with high morale, motivation and productivity. Surviving a tough 2009, they rebounded with 10 percent growth in 2010.

"We welcome patients to go to a competitor because we know the difference will be obvious to them."

A commitment to "better care, better results" isn't just apparent in how the Morrisons care for their patients; it's obvious in how their patients are treated. A warm, welcoming environment with an open-style waiting room and comfort items like coffee and fresh-baked cookies is just the start. The key ingredient is time: taking time to listen to patients, educate them on their treatment options and involve them in their care.

"We welcome patients to go to a competitor, because we know the difference will be obvious to them," says Nick Morrison.

The Morrisons have also traveled to South America for the last twenty years, taking teams of doctors from around the world to treat those without access to health care. They'll treat vein disease, fractures, cleft palates and club feet in more than 3,000 patients in a week's time; the patients, meanwhile, touch the hearts of their physicians.

"It's one of the most rewarding things we do," says Nick Morrison. "They are always very grateful, but I don't know who gets more out of it - them or us."

■ **Morrison Vein Institute | www.morrisonvein.com**

Making a Change. Together.

APS commends the recipients of the 2011 Impact Awards for setting new standards of excellence in community involvement, innovation, company culture and response to adversity. Your achievements show the diverse ways that your businesses enhance our community. APS recognizes every business can make a difference.

APS would like to help you save energy too. The APS Solutions for Business program offers incentives for a range of projects—saving you energy while strengthening your bottom line. Learn more at aps.com.

These programs are funded by APS customers and approved by the Arizona Corporation Commission.

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Story Time

Ad Firm Stresses Creativity and Consciousness

Park Howell and his team have a ball in their niche of "Sustainable Storytelling."

As a child, Park Howell was often told, "Stop telling stories." But as the fifth of seven children, he often found creative storytelling was the difference between a new pair of shoes and hand-me-downs or the best way to score an extra pizza slice at the dinner table. Today, Howell and his eponymous creative and marketing agency, Park&Co, tell stories that produce results for clients and positively impact the planet.

Sixteen years after Howell and his wife, Michelle, founded their agency in a shed behind their home, Park&Co is a flourishing Phoenix firm whose clients include Coca-Cola, Chevron and The Home Depot. It has earned acclaim in the niche of "sustainable storytelling," creating ads for the international "Water – Use It Wisely" campaign, Maricopa County's "Bring Black Blue" clean air campaign and Coca-Cola's Eco-driving initiative.

"It's not just about 'green marketing,' but being responsible to the people, processes, profits and planet your company impacts," says Howell.

> "It's not just about 'green marketing,' but about being responsible to the people, processes, profits and planet your company impacts."

Park&Co's 18 employees give back and are laid-back. They lend time and talents to Valley organizations like the Phoenix Girls Choir and Arizona Animal Welfare League, while enjoying a fun work environment. Flexible schedules, a "creative garage" with musical instruments and a big-screen TV and a "family first" attitude have paid off. The agency keeps employees three times as long as the industry average, and maintains client relationships for an average of eight years (four times the national average).

"You spend so much time in the office, it should be a fun, rewarding environment," offers Howell. "If employees are happy, engaged, educated and empowered, they'll run through brick walls on fire for you and your clients."

Having endured the worst of the recession, Park&Co is enjoying new business opportunities and its future is as bright as the bouncy red logo-adorned balls you'll find all over their office.

■ **Park&Co | www.parkandco.com**

Perchance to Dream

Former Patient Helps Others Sleep Better

Lauri Leadley spent so much time in hospitals as a child with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, she vowed to care for others as an adult. Valley Sleep Center's owner still occasionally struggles with her illness, but it never dims her smile or determination to give back.

With five Valley locations, Valley Sleep Center is one of the largest independent facilities in Arizona, diagnosing 6,000 patients annually for sleep-related issues like insomnia, sleep-walking and snoring.

Such treatments are traditionally performed in a hospital-like setting, but Leadley's patients enjoy modern technology and the comforts of home. Suites include plush beds, flat screen televisions, wireless internet and their own bathrooms. "You can't have a sleep study if you can't fall asleep," Leadley says.

> "You can't have a sleep study if you can't fall asleep."

Two years after founding the business with her husband, Glenn, Lauri was pregnant with their third child when everything changed in a day.

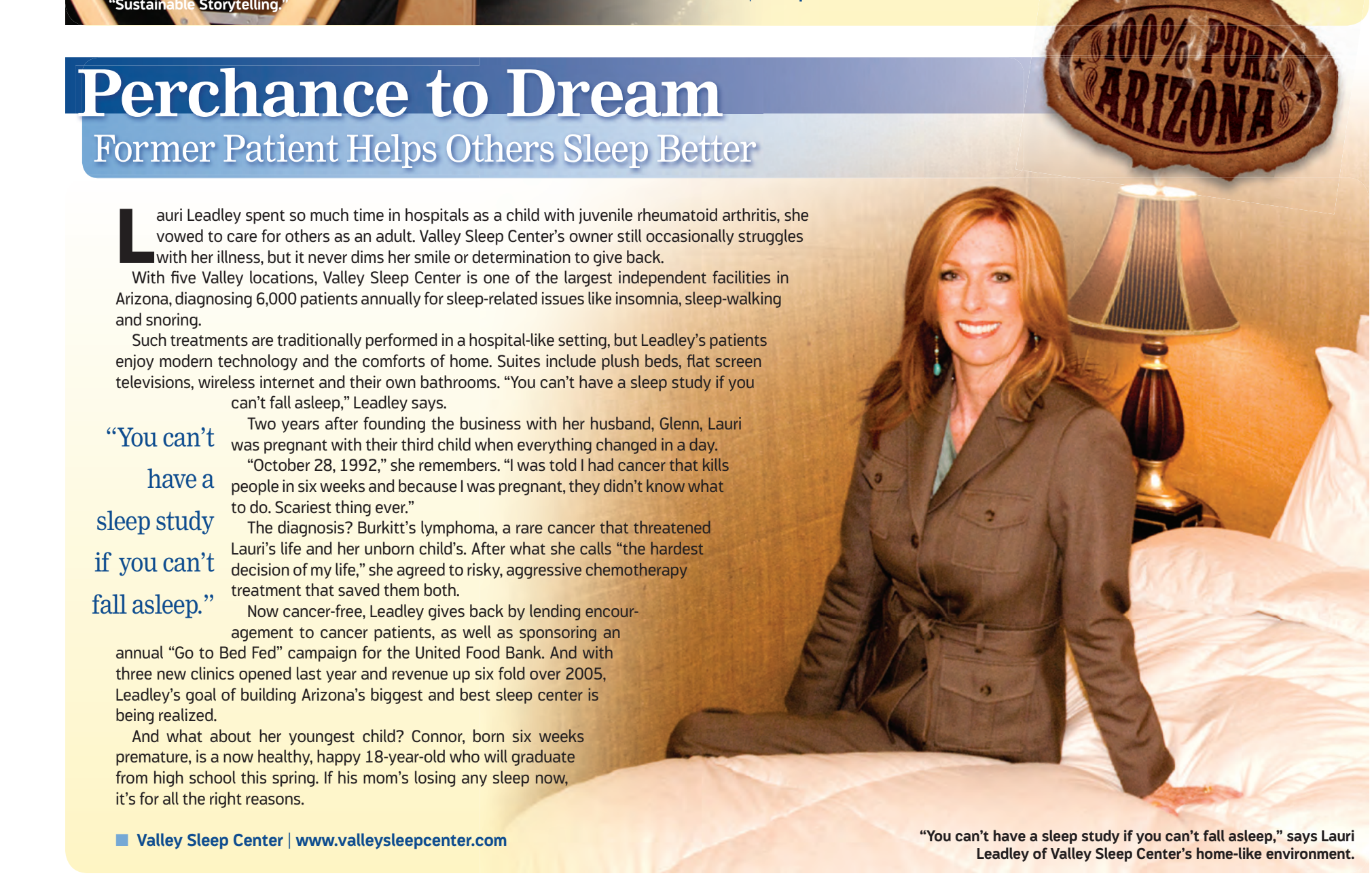
"October 28, 1992," she remembers. "I was told I had cancer that kills people in six weeks and because I was pregnant, they didn't know what to do. Scariest thing ever."

The diagnosis? Burkitt's lymphoma, a rare cancer that threatened Lauri's life and her unborn child's. After what she calls "the hardest decision of my life," she agreed to risky, aggressive chemotherapy treatment that saved them both.

Now cancer-free, Leadley gives back by lending encouragement to cancer patients, as well as sponsoring an annual "Go to Bed Fed" campaign for the United Food Bank. And with three new clinics opened last year and revenue up six fold over 2005, Leadley's goal of building Arizona's biggest and best sleep center is being realized.

And what about her youngest child? Connor, born six weeks premature, is a now healthy, happy 18-year-old who will graduate from high school this spring. If his mom's losing any sleep now, it's for all the right reasons.

■ **Valley Sleep Center | www.valleysleepcenter.com**



"You can't have a sleep study if you can't fall asleep," says Lauri Leadley of Valley Sleep Center's home-like environment.

Baked Goods

Cookie Company Came Back From the Brink

Shaun and Brady Breese figured 2009 would be their year. A unique, maturing organic cookie business and newborn baby meant a bright future. But the reality of entrepreneurship nearly turned their dreams into nightmares.

Urban Cookies' first-quarter sales declined 35 percent, their retail store was struggling and their savings were nearly gone. They made the "gut-wrenching" decision to try and survive through the profitable holiday season before closing up the business for good.

Unless.....

"It was a point of desperation. We had to do something out of character or close our doors," Shaun remembers. "Take risks or fail."

> "People have pipe dreams of starting a bakery and thinking customers are going to come walking in. That's not the case. You need a very strategic plan."

The risks included a new product (OllieCake cupcakes), lower prices, discounts for top-tier customers and enrolling in APS's business mentorship program, AAAME. The cupcakes stimulated store sales. The price cuts spurred even more, leading to increased revenue and customer retention. AAAME triggered more refinements, and Urban Cookies ended 2009 with an overall 80 percent sales increase, a diversified product line and the benefit of lessons learned.

"People have pipe dreams of starting a bakery and thinking customers are going to come walking in. That's not the case," Shaun warns. "You need a very strategic plan to bring in revenue."

Their son, Oliver (who inspired the OllieCakes, which now make up half their retail sales) is now two. He's running around his parents' thriving bakery, which has remained true to its unwavering commitment to quality, old-fashioned values and a promise to making a difference in the community.

"It's night and day," marvels Brady. "We've got two employees now, we're doing things I didn't know how to do before and we have a clearer picture of where we're going."

"I'm most proud that we didn't become a statistic," says Shaun. "We picked ourselves up and kept going. At least now we can be an inspiring story."

■ **Urban Cookies | www.urbancookies.com**

Shaun and Brady Breese were leaning toward closing their cookie company, but came up with a new recipe for success.

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Tools For Success

Customer Service Drives Auto Repair Shop

Matt Allen had to learn more tools than just wrenches and ratchets to run a successful business.

Growing up, Matt Allen loved working on cars. Tools and parts were always scattered around his parents' garage and he'd often show up at the local repair shop even when he wasn't scheduled to work, asking "Got anything I can take apart?"

So the chance to buy his own shop led Allen to roll up his sleeves and get dirty. Really dirty.

"The place was all boarded up, hadn't been painted since the Sixties," Allen recalls. "But I had a very clear vision. I knew I could do it."

That vision, Virginia Auto Service, is now a thriving auto repair facility in Central Phoenix. Its mantra of "Service, Service, Service" means little touches like courtesy shuttles, loaners and washing cars after repairs. "Whatever we can do, we'll do. We do the right thing for our customer every time," Allen says.

> "Whatever we can do, we'll do. We do the right thing for our customer every time."

But a 2004 fire nearly destroyed the business. When the shop re-opened in a few weeks, the experience had opened Allen's eyes.

"It was a wakeup call," he says. The insurance company's forensic accountant went through the shop's books, so Allen had to get under the hood of his business for the first time. "I really dug into the numbers to find out what makes a business work, and really started paying attention."

Introspection begat expansion. Investing in marketing, training, equipment and staff led to sales tripling by 2010 and recognition by MotorAge Magazine as one of its "Top 10 Shops in the Nation."

"I think I've turned into a good businessman," Allen says. "But we don't manage by the bottom line. We take care of our customers. The rest happens."

So the worst thing that could happen to any business turned out for the best. And the guy who loved to take things apart has put together a business success story.

■ **Virginia Auto Service | www.virginiaautoservice.com**

24th Annual IMPACT Awards

Thursday, May 19, 2011
11 am - 1:30 pm

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