



PHOENIX
Business Journal

FORTY
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40

CLASS OF 2009



LAURIE
 SLIVA

AGE: 32
 COMPANY: Bridges
 Camp for Girls
 TITLE: Founder,
 owner and director
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 bridgescamp.com

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL

What are your career highlights? "As an organizational sales leader with The Southwestern Co., I managed an organization of 50 students at the University of Arizona who placed No. 1 companywide. I was blessed to join a startup, Ignite for Schools. I began as a salesperson and facilitator for programs in schools, continued as a grant writer and staff trainer, and eventually was lead curriculum coordinator and national

facilitation trainer. My most meaningful accomplishment is that I followed my passion, realized my dream and founded Bridges Camp for Girls."

How are you involved in the community?

"I volunteer with Girls for a Change, coaching inner-city high school girls through the creation and execution of a social change project. I have volunteered with Casa de los Ninos, a foster home for abused and neglected children in Tucson, and Habitat for Humanity. I also have volunteered as a child life pal at University Medical Center Pediatrics in Tucson and participate in the annual MS Walks and Climb for Cancer.

"One of my favorite quotes is from Margaret Mead: 'Never doubt that a small, committed group can change the world; indeed, it is the

only thing that ever has.' The capstone project for the campers at Bridges is finding their passion and beginning the process of paying it forward to make social change. When they are able to see themselves as change agents and capable of making a difference, their self-esteem grows."

Was there a moment in your career that defined your professional path?

"I had an epiphany as I was driving to Prescott to facilitate a middle-school leadership workshop. With the birth of my boy, I knew I wanted to travel less for work. My thoughts went to the camp facilities in Prescott, where I had been to student council or cheer camp in high school and, in my career, led the Arizona Learn & Serve Camp. I recalled the thesis I wrote in college on the design of a prevention camp for adolescent girls called Bridges: Building Relationships Involving the Development of Girls' Empowering Selves. I always thought starting a camp would happen someday. In my 10 years of working with youth, I had gained the skills, confidence and experience necessary for me to be successful on my own. I made the decision that day, in my car along Arizona State Route 69, to start my own business."

If you could do anything else for a career, what would it be?

"I love to cook and entertain. I would love to own a restaurant that specializes in healthy food in a hip, comfortable environment that feels like eating at your friends' house."