

Arizona's LawForKids.org wins American Bar Association Silver Gavel Award

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ATLANTA, GA. August 8th, 2004 – American Bar Association (ABA) President Dennis Archer today honored Arizona's [LawForKids.org](#) with the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award honorable mention at its 127th annual meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Arizona's [LawForKids.org](#) is one of only nine projects in the nation recognized by the ABA in 2004 with this award and only the second new media project to be honored in the 46 year history of the ABA's Silver Gavel Awards.

Since 1958 the American Bar Association has presented Gavel Awards annually to recognize products in media and the arts that have been exemplary in fostering the American public's understanding of the law and the legal system. The Gavel Awards seek to recognize publications and programs that:

- educate the public about the American constitutional/legal system and the fundamental principles and values upon which it is based;
- educate the public about the operations of legal institutions (e.g., the courts, legislatures, regulatory agencies, prisons, and law enforcement agencies) and the role lawyers and other legal professionals play in the justice system; and
- encourage public support for improvements in the American justice system by informing the public about current practices, policies and issues.

LawForKids.org, the nation's largest public information website about the law written especially for kids, was launched in 1999 through a partnership between the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, the Arizona Supreme Court and the State Bar of Arizona. Since then, volunteer attorneys have answered hundreds of kids' questions about the law and authored thousands of pages of general legal information with the goal of making the law understandable and accessible to kids. LawForKids.org receives over 5 million hits each month, and has reached more than 3 million unique visitors during its 5 year history.

While the staff behind LawForKids.org enthusiastically accepted the American Bar Association's acknowledgement of Arizona's achievement through the LawForKids.org website, their comments were flavored with a hint of disappointment.

"Arizona kids are among few in the nation enjoying an accessible resource they can rely on to demystify important juvenile laws," says Jeff Schrade, Program Director. "There are far too few opportunities for kids to learn about the law, aside from actually getting in trouble first."

Alvaro Flores, LawForKids.org project manager continues, "More and more kids are coming to the site from outside of Arizona, yet we can only provide specific information about Arizona law."

To address the dearth of similar kid-friendly resources about the law in other states, the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education with support from the Arizona Supreme Court is using the attention from the ABA's Silver Gavel Award to promote participation in LawForKids.org from other states.

The Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education, in partnership with the New York State Bar Association, will launch a New York LawForKids.org later this year as a pilot project to

demonstrate the coordination of volunteer attorneys in other states in an effort to serve kids in their communities.

"We've re-built LawForKids.org from the ground up over the last year to accommodate involvement by other states. By using our 5 years of demonstrated success with LawForKids.org in Arizona, and the existing traffic to the site from other states, kids throughout the nation will soon be able to benefit from learning more about the law. Ignorance is not an excuse for breaking the law!" says Kevin Ruegg, AZFLS&E Executive Director.

About the Foundation

The **Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education (AZFLS&E)** plays a leading role in providing access to justice in Arizona. The Foundation reaches more than 200,000 children annually by training teachers, school resource officers and probation officers about our laws, justice system and the foundations of democracy. The Foundation also awards nearly \$2 million in grants to more than 20 non-profit organizations providing legal services to those in need, so all people in Arizona can have a voice in our justice system.

Helpful Websites:

- Arizona's LawForKids.org: <http://www.LawForKids.org>
- Arizona Foundation for Legal Services & Education: <http://www.azflse.org>
- American Bar Association Silver Gavel Awards:
<http://www.abanet.org/publiced/gavel/home.html>
- Arizona Supreme Court: <http://www.supreme.state.az.us/>