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## **DAY-LABOR ISSUE IN QUEEN CREEK**

*Cindy Hernandez, The Arizona Republic*

**Mary Gloria**, a **Queen Creek** resident, is the person people call when they need a ride to the doctor's office. **Gloria** assists the senior citizens, the children and the day laborers in the area.

**Gloria** also helped organize Dignity Walk, and drove a van alongside the participants as they walked the 25-mile journey from Mesa to the state Capitol last week.

Today, Pop Quiz talks with **Gloria** about the organization she founded and its effort to bring a day-labor center to **Queen Creek**.

Tell us about Pan de Vida.

Pan de Vida is a non-profit organization. We have been in existence officially since (summer) of 2003. We have been working with the senior citizens, the after-school programs, the hungry and the homeless, and we've also been trying to get a day-labor center going here in **Queen Creek**.

Did you study the day-laborer issue in **Queen Creek**? What were your findings?

We've gone to the other day-labor centers (and) talked to different people. (The day-labor centers) are needed. (The day laborers) are the people that are doing our dirty work, picking oranges, cleaning our bathrooms in the hotels and offices, they're the roofers. How can anybody say that they're taking people's jobs? I don't think so.

Where do the day laborers gather in **Queen Creek**?

Ellsworth and Ocotillo roads. We (the organization) get together over at Norton's Corner. When we provide meals, that's where we provide them because they've been nice enough to allow us to use their parking lot.

What has been the public's response?

I found that for the most part the people that support Pan de Vida have been very supportive (of the day labor center). In fact, many people give me clothes, shoes and food to give them. There's a few that are not happy, but for the most part they're very supportive. Last November (for Christmas) we adopted a day-laborer program. We got near 100 presents. We're talking about bags that included shoes, shirts, pants; the generosity of the people in this area.

So you think a solution for **Queen Creek** would be a day-laborer center?

These people that met with us were in agreement that a temporary (center) should be established first in **Queen Creek**. We thought that temporary would mean six months, and give it a trial. And let other people see what a day-laborer center is like and how it really improves (the area). I have talked to the businesses here, and with the exception of one, they're all very supportive.

Are you moving forward?

Yes, in fact we've been working on a proposal that we can submit to **Queen Creek**. In order for us to submit this proposal we have to have at least two sites where we plan to set up.

Do you think something should be done at the national level?

Oh, please, yes. We voted President (George) Bush in. He said he was going to do something about this whole situation. He is sitting on his promises. So we're really disappointed. That would be the only thing that could save us from all of this.

**Mary Gloria**

Age: 61.

Claim to fame: Founder of Pan de Vida.

Where did you grow up? Mesa.

Describe your role in Pan de Vida. I am the founder/president.

I wear many hats. Since we are limited financially, I am my own secretary and public relations person. We have a board, all **volunteers**. When we say non-profit, we mean non-profit.

Educational, professional or political experience: Got married at 15; raised 17 children; earned GED; began volunteering at churches and schools; became director of the religious education program, Our Lady of Guadalupe, **Queen Creek**; did community organizing for neighborhood center; was director of homecare department.

Best advice ever received: Education is going to get me anywhere that I want to go; to become more assertive.

Worst advice ever received: None. I think most of the people that I've worked with have helped me along the way.

Interests: Reading; being with people and helping them get ahead.

What is the biggest misconception people have about you?

They (the town, family, friends) didn't think I was going to do what I was going to do. I love a challenge.

Pop Quiz puts topical questions to people in the news. Readers are invited to offer names of possible subjects for this feature and questions they should be asked. Write Opinions, The Arizona Republic, 106 E. Baseline Road, Mesa, AZ 85210, contact us at [se.letters@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:se.letters@arizonarepublic.com) or fax us at (602) 444-7985.

**POP QUIZ: MARY GLORIA**

**CAPTION: Mary Gloria** is pushing for a day-labor center for **Queen Creek**.

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