

# A Fiesta for the Arizona Community

The college football bowl game drive economic growth while championing charitable causes

by Tyler Butler



► In 1971, nine local business leaders gained approval from NCAA on the idea of an Arizona-based college football bowl game to enhance the stature of the state. Today, that game is the iconic Vrbo Fiesta Bowl. Over the years, the game has had many high-profile sponsors. And with their support, the Fiesta Bowl has created a world-class community organization that executes innovative experiences, drives economic growth and champions charitable causes, inspiring pride in all Arizonans.

The mission for this organization is simple: to create a positive economic impact for Arizona and focus on community while having fun. Supporting sports endeavors for thousands of Arizonians is core to the Fiesta Bowl commitment to community. And the organization realizes that the pathway to success for today's youth and teens starts in the classrooms of those called to educate the next generation. It is these reasons that drive the Fiesta Bowl's focus on youth, sports and education.

"The Fiesta Bowl's 'More Than Just A Game®' is not just a tagline; it's how we make a difference in the lives of Arizonans every day," says Randal Norton, chair of the Fiesta Bowl Board of Directors. "Our annual events help support statewide nonprofits that provide a wide range of programs that are truly inspiring to our foundation, volunteers and fans. When you witness firsthand how these deserving charities deliver to their beneficiaries, it validates our mission and motivates us to do more."

In addition to this legacy, the organization is also a local association made up of more than 3,000 business and civic leaders that — through its year-round events — help provide critical funds to nonprofit organizations across Arizona that positively impact through youth, sports and education. Among these groups is the Yellow Jacket Committee. The community leaders who comprise this assembly dedicate their time and effort to fundraising and helping stage all the events.

The commitment and leadership of many enables the execution of the bowl games, the charitable giving efforts and positive outreach into the community. And, through a series of major annual programs, The Fiesta Bowl, its sponsors and its host of community supporters join forces and activate integral outreach efforts that are leaving an indelible impact on Arizona. Through the bowl games and events such as the Fiesta Bowl Parade, corporate partnerships and numerous

community events throughout the year, Fiesta Bowl Charities has granted nearly \$20 million in charitable giving in the last six years alone and nearly \$25 million to the Arizona community in the last 11 years. Charitable giving and legacy programs are the core of this organization's DNA.

The Fiesta operates with the belief that tomorrow's great stories come from the investments made today. So, through a variety of initiatives, the organization is making permanent change possible in our communities. Wishes for Teachers, now in year seven, provided \$2,500 awards to 400 teachers for a total of \$1 million in donations in November of 2022.

Through the organization's KABOOM! Playground Builds, volunteers from the Fiesta Bowl come together with partners — including BHHS Legacy Foundation, PNC Bank, Lerner & Rowe and KABOOM! — to build new, innovative playground and multi-purpose sports courts for areas in need. And in October, more than 100 volunteers from Fiesta Bowl Charities, BHHS Legacy Foundation and KABOOM! came together to build the state-of-the-art playground and sports court for more than 800 children in the Fort Mohave community. A similar group came together in November 2022 to build a playground in Glendale, the organization's 13th site for a Fiesta Bowl Charities playground legacy project over the last five years.

Bringing the joy of football directly to the community is also of importance. Each year, The Fiesta Bowl holds its annual Youth Football Clinic for kids ages 5 to 14. The non-contact clinic teaches more than just fundamentals to kids and is led by trained athletes and coaches. The kids spend the day learning, practicing and going through various drills. The Fiesta Bowl says this clinic also builds confidence, a strong work ethic and motivation that will help kids succeed on and off the field.

Through its two annual bowl games in the Valley, the Vrbo Fiesta Bowl and the Guaranteed Rate Bowl, as well as community events throughout the year, Fiesta Bowl Charities aided 40 Arizona nonprofits through its 2022-23 Grant Cycle, impacting an estimated 1 million Arizonans. With a wealth of community support and established, strategic initiatives raising funds for meaningful programs, the future Fiesta Bowl impact on Arizona will undoubtedly continue to be much deeper than the annual game, thus solidifying this organization as a real game changer for Arizona. ■

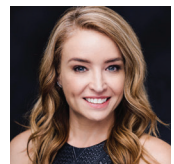
Vrbo Fiesta Bowl [fiestabowl.org/sports/vrbofb](https://fiestabowl.org/sports/vrbofb)



## GAME DAY DETAILS

Catch the Vrbo Fiesta Bowl on Saturday, December 31, at State Farm Stadium — which this year serves as a College Football Playoff Semifinal Game. The winner will go on to the College Football Playoff National Championship on Jan. 9, 2023. For tickets, visit [seatgeek.com/fiesta-bowl-tickets](https://seatgeek.com/fiesta-bowl-tickets).

For more details on the Fiesta Bowl and its series of regular programs, find their annual impact report at [fiestabowl.org/sports/2020/5/27/community-impact-report](https://fiestabowl.org/sports/2020/5/27/community-impact-report).



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