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## NEWS UPDATE



DARRYL WEBB /TRIBUNE

Parents of the Year Vincent and Anni Beach, right, get a hug from their presenter Dana Osborne at a ceremony Thursday in Scottsdale.

### Arizona Parents of the Year are honored

BY BETH LUCAS  
TRIBUNE

The bluegrass band they formed eight years ago from a passel of neighborhood children serenaded Chandler residents Anni and Vincent Beach Thursday night as they were honored as Parents of the Year by the Arizona Parents Day Council.

Maria Muñoz, also of Chandler, was named Parent of the Year.

The Beaches, both substitute music teachers, found children knocking on their door asking for music lessons, and soon a multicultural band of 30 young performers called the Jam Pac Blue Grass Band was formed. The children started out with pop cans and string instruments and now have the support from The Blue Grass Association.

"This just gives a boost to what we've been working on," Vincent Beach said of Thursday night's honor.

Elisia Hernandez, 13, has been with the group six years.

"I've really gotten to be a better person."

Muñoz left a domestic abuse situation and went on to graduate from the University of Phoenix in human services and works for Maricopa County Head Start. On weekends she volunteers at hospitals helping children cope with their illnesses.

"She's a fantastic mother, very involved in all our lives," said daughter Vanessa Lopez, 20. Muñoz has three children.

All three parents will be nominated for the national Parent of the Year 2003. Parents Day was created by Congress in 1994 as the

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fourth Sunday in July.

Parent Council member Rep. Mark Anderson, R-Mesa, said the day is about encouraging good parenting.

"We spend literally hundreds of millions of dollars of your taxpayer money trying to mitigate the cost of bad parenting," he said. "We really try to help people understand good parenting."

The awards banquet took place at the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort in Scottsdale.



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