

40TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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# Independiente

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A publication of the University of Arizona School of Journalism

## **Mayan Migrants 4**

Mayan migrants in Arizona honor their culture by helping others

## **Kitchen of Dreams 20**

House of Neighborly Service developing commercial kitchen for food entrepreneurs

## **Lalo Guerrero: National Treasure 28**

Son honors father of chicano music

## **South Tucson Election Results 39**





# Table of Contents / Fall 2016

- 03 Letter from the Editor
- 04 Tucson Mayans Honor Culture
- 07 Migrantes Mayans Honran Cultura
- 09 New City Program to Offer Day Work
- 10 Santa Rita Park: Haven or Hazard
- 12 Coalition Works for Cleaner South Tucson
- 13 Aliados para el Bienestar
- 14 Library Takes to Streets
- 15 Setting Aside their Criminal Past
- 16 Oasis in a Food Desert
- 18 Oasis en el Desierto
- 20 Kitchen of Dreams
- 22 Little Angels Take Big Steps
- 24 Marigolds Bridge Worlds
- 26 Paradise Found
- 28 Lalo Guererro: National Treasure
- 30 Los Nawdy Dawgs
- 32 Chicano Hip-Hop Artist
- 33 Redefiniendo Hip-Hop
- 34 International Gaming
- 36 Car Clubs
- 37 New Path Along Old Routes
- 38 Minor Crime, Major Headache
- 39 South Tucson Election Results

**Photo Left:** Lilly Marquez, a member of the Mexican American Student Association, holds a sign during the “Not My President” protest on the University of Arizona campus. Photo by Christina Duran.

**Cover Photo:** Members of Ballet Folklórico Los Mextucac perform at a Christmas tree lighting event at the House of Neighborly Service on December 1. Photo by Angelo Lavo

## From the Editors:

2016 was a difficult year for journalism. As Americans followed press coverage of arguably the most controversial presidential campaign in our nation's history, it was easy to blame reporters for what was said or not said, for the reach of their influence, for sharpening the division of an already divided country. UA journalism students began reporting for this semester's issue of *El Independiente* in a climate of unease, our nation teetering on the brink of an unknown future, and some of us questioned why we were studying to work in the media in the first place.

Then we started spending time in South Tucson, and started writing, and everything became clear.

Despite the rhetoric of hate and slander present in big media, one only has to look at the local level to see that hope and good is still strong in our country.

This issue features stories of people in Tucson and South Tucson attempting to make their community, and their nation, better in whatever way they can: from helping migrants traveling from the rural highlands of Guatemala, to teaching former convicted criminals how to restore their civil rights, to delivering books to their neighbors' doorsteps.

We study journalism to be worthy of telling their stories. As we graduate and prepare to enter a turbulent field, we hope the lessons we learned while putting together this publication will help us build a better media in the future.

**News Editors,**  
Emily Ellis and Angelo Lavo

## Carta de los editores:

El 2016 fue un año difícil para el periodismo. Mientras que los estadounidenses seguían la cobertura de la prensa de lo que sin duda fue la campaña más controversial de la historia de nuestra nación, fue fácil culpar a los reporteros por lo que se dijo o lo que no se dijo, por el alcance de su influencia, y por agudizar la división de un país ya dividido. Los estudiantes de periodismo de la Universidad de Arizona empezaron su reportaje del ejemplar de *El Independiente* de este semestre en un ambiente de inquietud, nuestra nación tambaleaba al borde de un futuro incierto, y algunos nos preguntábamos: En primer lugar, ¿por qué trabajamos para los medios?

Después empezamos a pasar el tiempo en el pueblo de South Tucson, y empezamos a escribir y todo se clarificó.

A pesar del odio y los insultos presentes hacia los grandes medios de comunicación, uno solo tiene que ver a nivel local para ver que la esperanza y el bien aún están fuertemente presentes en nuestro país.

Este ejemplar presenta historias de la gente de Tucson y de South Tucson intentando hacer su comunidad y su país, un lugar mejor como sea posible: desde ayudar a los migrantes que viajan desde las tierras altas rurales de Guatemala, a ayudar a ex-convictos restaurar sus derechos civiles, hasta entregar libros en las puertas de las casas de sus vecinos.

Estudiamos periodismo para tener la dicha de decir sus historias. Mientras que nos graduamos y entramos a un campo turbulento, esperamos que las lecciones que aprendimos mientras armábamos éste ejemplar, nos ayuden a mejorar los medios de comunicación en el futuro.

**Sus editores de noticias,**  
Emily Ellis and Angelo Lavo

Photo by Michael Evans

Sam Stahl holds up a modified American flag during a protest on the University of Arizona campus following the November elections.

# El Independiente / Staff

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Photo by Christina Duran

Manuel Ortiz picks chiltepin from his garden. Ortiz is an immigrant from Guatemala and has been living in Tucson for 23 years.

# Tucson Mayans Honor Culture Through Service to Others

By Emily Ellis

Every Sunday the residents of Nahuala, Guatemala, walk quietly through the pale dawn mist to the white church that stands in the center of their small town. The women go to the pews on the right. Their heads are draped with colorful, hand-woven shawls. Some have yawning babies strapped to their backs by sturdy cloth bands. The men go to the left, where the pews are far more empty.

The priest always begins the service the same way. He reads a list of names in Mayan K'iche – a language that, while spoken only in a small section of a country the size of Tennessee, has nonetheless become the 17th most spoken language in US immigration courts. The women kneel, eyes closed, while

their children squirm in the hard pews and tug at their stiff church clothes.

“Let us pray for our sons and brothers who are crossing into the United States. God bless and preserve Roberto Ixma. God bless and preserve Daniel Tobar. God bless and preserve . . .”

This week, he lists sixteen men. Some will vanish into the Sonora Desert. Some will survive the brutal journey across all 2,500 miles of Mexico and will sidle past la migra patrolling the Arizona border. They will board Greyhound buses bound for New York and Los Angeles and disappear into the U.S.'s largest cities, returning to Guatemala years later, once they have paid off the thousands of dollars they owe their coyotes and have earned enough to support their families. And some will be detained at

*“I think if people in the States knew how much it hurts our community, they might change the laws, make it easier to work.”*

**Manuel Tahay**  
Mayor of Nahuala, Guatemala

the border and sent back, only to try again another year.

“The worst thing [about migration] is that it tears families apart,” says Manuel Tahay, mayor of Nahuala. After the service ends, he pauses to watch the congregation file out into the growing sunlight and linger around the church steps to buy steaming glass mugs of *arroz con leche*. “I think if people in the States knew how much it hurts our community, they might change the laws, make it easier to work. If they just knew that we don’t want to stay there forever. We’d rather stay here. But there are no jobs. People feel they have no choice.”

## Body and Heart

Guatemalans make up a significant part of the Latin American migrant population in the United States. An estimated 100,000 Guatemalans attempt to cross into the United States each year, and more than half are indigenous people from rural areas, according to a report from the Universidad de San Carlos. In a country still economically crippled from a 36-year civil war, the average Mayan person in Guatemala makes less than \$1.50 an hour working in service or agricultural jobs. Many see migration as the only way they can escape poverty and provide adequate education, shelter and healthcare for their families.

Yet for a person from a closely-knit indigenous community, attempting to honor distinctive cultural beliefs in a hostile new land is an emotionally daunting task.

Manuel Ortiz, a K’iche-speaking Mayan who regularly volunteers to help indigenous Guatemalans who cross into Arizona, knows what it is like to live with your body and heart in two different worlds.

“This is where we are now,” he says simply, gesturing around his small, shadowy living room on Tucson’s north side. Ortiz migrated from his community in Totonicapán, a half hour south of Nahuala, in 1993, seeking asylum during the Guatemalan civil war. He has remained in Arizona ever since.

“But it isn’t home,” he says. His wife, Catarina, nods in agreement.

“I think about my community every day,” Manuel continues. “The food, my language, the mountains. For an indigenous person, that is the only real home.”

## El Exterior

Sebastian Quinac shoots a hand into the air. At Tucson’s Historic Y, a psychologist is giving a talk about the abuses committed against Mayan Ixil women during the Guatemalan civil war. Quinac, outreach coordinator at the Guatemalan consulate,

helped organize the event. There was a question from the audience about the indigenous definition of justice.

“If I may,” Quinac begins. “To Mayan people, justice is paying back for a crime or a sin that exists. Until there is retribution, this evil never goes away. Justice is paying what they owe us, for what they did.”

Quinac knows something about justice. In the early 1980s, after right-wing Gen. Rios Montt seized control of the Guatemalan government in a bloody coup d’état, many Mayan people were accused of anti-government sentiment and counterinsurgency. Quinac, a Kachiquel-speaker from Chimaltenango, was one of them. He fled to Arizona in 1983 after receiving several

death threats. He now travels throughout the state translating at detention centers and immigration courts, as well as organizing cultural events for the consulate.

“It is a great trauma for a Mayan person to come to *el exterior*,” he says. “In many cases, they’re coming from a small community with a very distinctive culture and a profound relationship with nature. It’s a great change for a Mayan person to leave these customs, this way of being a human being.”

Indigenous Guatemalans have a long history of migrating to the United States. When Quinac and Manuel Ortiz fled their war-torn country in the ’80s and ’90s, they were considered political refugees by the U.S. government. In the 2000s,



Photo by Emily Ellis

A woman sells her weavings on the street in Nahuala, Guatemala. Selling their work is one of the few ways that indigenous women can make a living.



Photo by Emily Ellis

Mayor Manuel Tahay speaks with women weaving in Nahuala, Guatemala. Emigration to the U.S. has left few men in the town.

## “Je la’ pa nujujub” (Nahuala folksong)

Je la’ pa nujujub’  
K’o jun je’lik ali  
Rumal la’ xinbi’ij in chech  
We kawaj katkuli’ wuk’

Sib’alaj kinki’kotik  
Kak’uli le ali wuk’  
Kaqaq’an qak’aslema  
Je la’ pa Nawal Ja’

Nimalaj utzil,  
pa le w’och in  
Kaqaqok jun q’och  
pa le jujub’

“Over by My Mountain”

Over by my mountain  
There is a lovely girl  
She was so lovely, I asked her  
If she would marry me

I’m very happy  
The lovely girl will marry me  
We’re going to make our life together  
Over in Nahuala

We’re going to be so happy  
In my home together,  
We’re going to build a house  
Over on the mountain.

however, strict immigration policies prevent economically driven migrants from receiving temporary work visas. Despite this, the percent of Guatemalan migrants in the United States has risen by 497 percent since 1990, according to a Migration Policy report.

“The risk, the expense – it doesn’t seem worth it,” sighs Ila Abernathy. She runs St. Michael’s and All Angel’s Guatemala Project, a Tucson-based organization that sends humanitarian missions to rural Guatemalan communities. Although the organization focuses on health care, Abernathy has often found herself trying to dissuade Guatemalan men from migrating to the United States.

“I tell them, ‘I live by the border, I see the memorials for the dead along the wall,’” she says. “But they believe that if you go the states and work hard, you can provide shelter and education for your families.”

This belief drives thousands of migrants across the US-Mexican border every year. There are several programs in Tucson that have risen up to support them, including Alitas, where Sebastian Quinac and the Ortizes volunteer their translation services. A part of Catholic Community Services, Alitas was founded in response to the influx of unaccompanied minors from Central American in 2014. Today, the program helps Central American women and children –

many of whom are from Guatemala – connect with husbands and fathers in other parts of the country.

“It’s a huge comfort for these people that we have volunteers who can speak their languages,” says Sydney Tuller, volunteer coordinator for Alitas. “They come to us with such fear, and it’s invaluable to have people here in Tucson that know what they’ve been through.”

Although Quinac knows what it’s like to be afraid, he believes that it’s important for Mayans to have pride in their culture, no matter where they are.

“For many Mayans, it’s an embarrassment to speak their language or wear traditional clothes [in the United States.],” he says. “But it’s important to have pride in our identity. We must remember who we are, or risk losing ourselves.”

### Home

Even after 30 years, the Ortizes are not fully at home in Arizona. Most of their family lives outside the state or in Guatemala. Manuel is semi-retired from his landscaping business and many days, he says, he and his wife don’t even leave the house.

“No one talks about it, but I’ve known people who have died not crossing from the

desert, but of *el estres* of living here,” he says quietly. “For a Mayan person, being so far from your family, for so long – it’s easy to start drinking, to get depressed.”

To combat homesickness, the Ortizes make an effort to connect with other Guatemalans living in Tucson by regularly organizing dinners and soccer games.

“It’s just a small group of us here, but I love the parties,” Catarina laughs. “Then I get to wear my huipil! It always feels so wonderful to put it on.”

There is a long pause, and Manuel looks up from fiddling with his iPhone. “I’m trying to find the Nahuala Estación,” he explains shyly.

Nahuala Estación, he says, is the only K’iche-language radio station in Guatemala. “We try to listen to it everyday, but sometimes it doesn’t come in,” Catarina adds.

“Here it is!” Manuel says, setting his phone triumphantly onto the coffee table. The sounds of a singing choir, softened by static, emits from the speakers: Manuel explains that they are broadcasting a church service from Nahuala.

Catarina and Manuel sit in silence as the distant voices fill their living room, gazing at a point far beyond its shadowy walls: a white church, fog-shrouded mountains, home.

# Los migrantes Mayas en Arizona honran su cultura ayudando a sus compatriotas

Por Emily Ellis

Traducido por Hiriana N. Gallegos

Todos los domingos los residentes de Nahuala, Guatemala, caminan silenciosamente mediante la neblina pálida del amanecer a la iglesia blanca que está en medio de su pueblito. Las mujeres van a las bancas de la derecha. Sus cabezas están cubiertas con mantones coloridos tejidos a mano. Algunas tienen a bebés bostezando amarrados en sus espaldas con tiras de tela. Los hombres van a la izquierda, donde las bancas están mucho más vacías.

El padre siempre empieza la misa de la misma manera. Lee una lista de nombres en K'iche Maya, un idioma que, aunque se habla en una sección pequeña de un país del tamaño de Tennessee, se ha convertido en el decimoséptimo idioma más hablado en los tribunales de inmigración estadounidenses.

Las mujeres se arrodillan con los ojos cerrados, mientras que sus hijos se estremecen en las bancas duras, jalándose la ropa tiesa de misa.

“Oremos por nuestros hijos y hermanos que están cruzando a los Estados Unidos. Dios bendiga y preserve a Roberto Ixma. Dios bendiga y preserve a Daniel Tobar. Dios bendiga y preserve...”

Esta semana, nombra a dieciséis hombres. Unos desvanecerán dentro del Desierto de Sonora. Algunos sobrevivirán la jornada brutal a través de las 2,500 millas de México, pasando incógnitamente por la migra que patrulla la frontera de Arizona. Se subirán a los autobuses Greyhound camino a Nueva York y a Los Ángeles y desaparecerán en las ciudades más grandes de Estados Unidos, regresando a Guatemala varios años después.

Una vez que paguen los miles de dólares que les deben a sus coyotes y hayan ganado lo suficiente para sustentar a sus familias. Algunos serán detenidos en la frontera y enviados de regreso, solo para volver a intentar otro año.

“Lo peor [acerca de la inmigración] es que separa a las familias”, dice Manuel Tahay, el alcalde de Nahuala.

Después de que se termina la misa, él se detiene para ver salir a la congregación en fila hacia la luz del sol creciente y que se entretiene alrededor de los escalones de la iglesia para

comparar un tazón de arroz con leche caliente. “Creo que si las personas en los Estados Unidos supieran cuanto hiere a nuestra comunidad, tal vez cambiarían las leyes, facilitarían el poder trabajar. Si solo supieran que no nos queremos quedar ahí para siempre. Preferimos quedarnos aquí. Pero no hay trabajos. Las personas sienten que no tienen opción”.

## El Cuerpo y El Corazón

Los guatemaltecos forman una parte significativa de la población de inmigrantes latinoamericanos en Estados Unidos. Aproximadamente, 100,000 guatemaltecos intentan cruzar a Estados Unidos cada año, y más de la mitad son personas indígenas de áreas rurales, de acuerdo con un reportaje de la Universidad de San Carlos.

En este país que aún está paralizado económicamente debido a una guerra civil de 36 años, la persona Maya promedio en Guatemala gana menos de \$1.50 trabajando en el servicio o en trabajos de agricultura. Muchos ven la inmigración como la manera única de escapar la pobreza y de poder proveer la educación adecuada, albergue y cuidados de la salud para sus familias.

Sin embargo, para una comunidad indígena muy unida, intentar honrar las creencias propias de su cultura, en un país nuevo y hostil es una tarea emocionalmente desalentadora.

Manuel Ortiz, un hombre Maya de habla K'iche, quien regularmente sirve como voluntario para ayudar a los guatemaltecos indígenas que cruzan a Arizona, sabe cómo se vive con el cuerpo y el corazón en dos mundos distintos.

“Aquí es donde estamos ahora”, dice con simplicidad, gesticulando alrededor de su sala pequeña y oscura en el norte de Tucson.

Ortiz emigró de su comunidad en Totonicapán, una media hora al sur de Nahuala, en 1993, buscando asilo durante la guerra civil guatemalteca. Ha permanecido en Arizona desde entonces.

“Pero no es casa”, agrega. Su esposa, Catarina, asienta con la cabeza.

“Pienso en mi comunidad todos los días”, continúa Manuel. “La comida, mi idioma, las montañas. Para una persona indígena, ese es el único hogar”.



Foto por Christina Duran  
Catarina Ortiz muestra uno de sus huipiles.

## El Exterior

Sebastián Quinac alza la mano. En el Historic Y de Tucson, un psicólogo da una plática acerca de los abusos cometidos contra las mujeres mayas ixiles durante la guerra civil guatemalteca. Quinac, el coordinador de difusión en el consulado guatemalteco, ayudó a organizar el evento. Había una pregunta de la audiencia acerca de la definición indígena de la justicia.

“Si me permiten”, comienza Quinac, “para las personas Mayas, la justicia es pagar por un

Los guatemaltecos indígenas tienen un largo historial de emigrar a los Estados Unidos. Cuando Quinac y Manuel Ortiz huyeron de su país destrozado por la guerra en los años 80 y 90, eran considerados refugiados políticos por el gobierno estadounidense. Sin embargo, en los años 2000, las políticas de inmigración estrictas previenen que los inmigrantes determinados económicamente reciban visas temporales para trabajar. No obstante, el porcentaje de los inmigrantes guatemaltecos en los Estados Unidos ha incrementado por 497 por ciento desde 1990,



Foto por Emily Ellis

Una mujer demuestra como se tela de mano en Nahuala, Guatemala. Tejiendo es una de las pocas formas en que mujeres indígenas hacen su vivir.

delito o un pecado que existe. Hasta que haya retribución, esté mal nunca desaparece. La justicia es pagar por lo que nos deben, por lo que nos hicieron”, expresa Quinac.

Quinac sabe algo acerca de la justicia. Al principio de los 1980s, después que el General Ríos Montt de la derecha tomó el control del gobierno en un sangriento golpe de estado, muchas personas Mayas fueron acusadas de sentimientos antigubernamentales y contrainsurgencia. Quinac, un hablante Kachiquel de Chimaltenango, era uno de ellos. Huyó a Arizona en 1983 después de recibir varias amenazas de muerte. Ahora viaja a lo largo de todo el estado traduciendo en los centros de detención y los tribunales de inmigración, al igual que la organización de eventos culturales para el consulado.

“Es una experiencia traumática para una persona Maya venir al exterior”, agrega. “En muchos de los casos, vienen de una comunidad pequeña con una cultura muy propia y una relación profunda con la naturaleza. Es un gran cambio para una persona Maya dejar estas costumbres, esta manera de ser humano”.

de acuerdo con un reporte de la Política de Inmigración.

“El riesgo, el gasto – no parece que valga la pena”, suspira Ila Abernathy. Ella dirige el proyecto de St. Michael’s and All Angel’s Guatemala Project, una organización de Tucson que manda misiones humanitarias a comunidades en zonas rurales de Guatemala. Aunque la organización se enfoca en los cuidados de salud, Abernathy frecuentemente intenta detener a los hombres guatemaltecos de emigrar a los Estados Unidos.

“Les digo, ‘vivo cerca de la frontera, veo los monumentos para los muertos a lo largo de la frontera. Pero ellos creen que si vienen a Los Estados Unidos y trabajan pueden proporcionarles vivienda y educación a sus familias”, comparte ella.

Esta ideología lleva a miles de inmigrantes a través de la frontera de Estados Unidos con México cada año. Hay varios programas en Tucson que se han puesto en acción para ayudarlos, incluyendo Alitas, en donde Sebastian Quinac y los Ortiz ofrecen sus servicios de traducción. Una parte de los Servicios Católicos

de la Comunidad, Alitas fue fundado en respuesta a la afluencia de menores no acompañados de Centroamérica en el 2014. Hoy en día, el programa ayuda a las mujeres y menores de Centroamérica – muchos de ellos son de Guatemala – para que se reúnan con sus esposos y padres en otras partes del país.

“Es muy alentador para estas personas que tengamos voluntarios que hablen sus idiomas”, comenta Sydney Tuller, coordinadora voluntaria para Alitas. “Vienen con nosotros con tanto temor, y el tener a personas aquí en Tucson que saben por lo que han pasado no tiene precio”.

A pesar que Quinac sabe lo que es tener miedo, cree que es importante para los Mayas tener orgullo en su cultura, sin importar en dónde están.

“Para los Mayas, es una vergüenza hablar su idioma o vestir con la ropa tradicional aquí en los Estados Unidos”, menciona. “Pero es importante tener orgullo en nuestra identidad. Tenemos que acordarnos quienes somos o corremos el riesgo de perdernos a nosotros mismos”.

## El Hogar

Aún después de 30 años, los Ortiz no están completamente en su hogar en Arizona. Muchos de sus familiares viven fuera del estado o en Guatemala. Manuel casi se retira de su negocio de paisajismo, y dice que muchos días, ni él ni su esposa salen de la casa.

“Nadie lo dice, pero conozco a personas que han muerto no de la cruzada del desierto, pero del estrés de vivir aquí”, agrega silenciosamente. “Para una persona Maya, estar tan lejos de la familia por tanto tiempo – es fácil empezar a beber, deprimirse”.

Para combatir la nostalgia, los Ortiz hacen un esfuerzo para conectarse con otros guatemaltecos viviendo en Tucson, organizando cenas y juegos de fútbol.

“Somos un pequeño grupo aquí, pero me encantan las fiestas”, se ríe Catarina. “¡Y me puedo poner mi huipil! Siempre se siente maravilloso cuando me lo pongo”.

Hay una pausa larga y Manuel quita los ojos de su teléfono. “Intento encontrar la estación Nahuala”, explica apenado.

La estación Nahuala es la única estación de radio en Guatemala con el idioma K’iche. “Intentamos escucharla todos los días, pero algunas veces no tenemos señal”, agrega Catarina.

“¡Aquí está!” dice Manuel, poniendo el teléfono exitosamente en la mesa de centro. Los sonidos del coro, suavizado por las interferencias, se escucha en las bocinas: Manuel explica que están transmitiendo una misa de la iglesia de Nahuala.

Catarina y Manuel se sientan en silencio en donde las voces distantes llenan la sala, viendo un punto más allá de las paredes oscuras: una iglesia blanca, montañas cubiertas de neblina, lo que le llaman hogar.



# New City Program to Offer Day Work for the Homeless

By Melissa Hughes

Cars putter by as a middle-aged man trudges down a cracked and sun-bleached sidewalk. Tufts of his knotted, curly hair flutter in the wind of passing traffic and he tightly grips the straps of his stuffed, dingy backpack.

Finally, he reaches the intersection where Oracle meets River and he stops at the corner. Stiffly, he unwinds his arms from his pack, sets it on the ground, unzips it and fishes out a cardboard sign.

“HOMELESS. PLEASE HELP. GOD BLESS,” it reads.

Unfortunately, this is an all too familiar scene. Homeless people pepper the streets in Tucson and South Tucson. In fact, Pima County has the highest density of homeless people in Arizona and sits just above the national average, according to an annual 2015 survey conducted by the Arizona Department of Economic Security.

Though the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development reports that the overall number of the homeless population is decreasing, DES states that Tucson still sits just above the national average.

To try and combat this problem, the Tucson City Council voted in favor of implementing a new “Tucson Homeless Work Program,” which was slated to begin December 1.

“This is relatively novel,” says Matt Pate, a council aide in the 5th Ward. “It’s designed to help vulnerable people.”

The program is a collaboration between the city and a large handful of local charitable organizations, with Old Pueblo Community Services serving as the “pilot program administrator.”

Every Tuesday and Thursday, a driver (provided by Old Pueblo Community Services) and an “engagement specialist” (provided by Catholic Community Services and paid for by Cenpatico) will drive a 12-person van around to local shelters.

There, the employees will pick up six homeless volunteers and put them to work. The workers will complete various tasks given to them by the Environmental Services

Department, like picking up litter and refurbishing signs.

After five hours of work, they will be given a meal and \$45 in cash. Then they have the option to either stay and speak with the engagement specialist, or retrieve their belongings from the van and head out.

“A lot of the folks who are homeless in town, I mean, a traditional nine-to-five job isn’t gonna work because they either have mental health or substance issues,” Pate says. “So this kind of gives them another path to gain a little bit of stability.”

Pate says that members of the 5th Ward started thinking about implementing this program back in October 2015 when they heard about Albuquerque’s “There’s a Better Way” pilot program, which functions similarly.

The Albuquerque pilot concluded in March of this year with great success, and Tucson officials decided to implement the program with the help of local charities.

Tom Litwicki, the CEO of Old Pueblo Community Services, hopes that this program will help lead participants to long-term stability. “It’s a big leap of faith and trust for them to come in to housing and trust us,” Litwicki says. “Hopefully, by engaging them on what they really see as their need, we’ll build a relationship.”

Building relationships is the cornerstone of this operation, which is why the engagement specialist who rides along in the van will be equipped with knowledge about community services, welfare and knowledge in mental health services.

Ultimately though, Litwicki admits his personal goal with the program is simply to get people off the streets. “The one thing about homelessness in Tucson, we’ve made some gains. But every year when we go out, the number of people that are actually living on the streets, stays about the same,” he says.

“When we count the homeless on the streets next year, I hope we count a few less.”



Photo by Michael Evans

People around Santa Rita Park gather for The Loving Church’s fresh brewed coffee and donuts.



Photo by Michael Evans

# Santa Rita Park

## Haven for Some, Hazard for Others

By Emily Ellis

Rain begins to fall over Santa Rita Park as Gary Martinez, 58, limps over to where he has spread his freshly washed clothes over the scrubby grass. His wife, 63, pushes a laden shopping cart towards the shelter of the bleachers by the baseball field. A blue sleeping bag tumbles from the cart, and she bends to pick it up, wincing. Martinez, arms full of damp laundry, shouts at her to leave it.

“My lady has a bad back,” he explains later. “I gotta watch out for her, make sure she doesn’t hurt herself.”

Ever since they failed to pay the rent for their south side apartment five years ago, the Martinezes, both of who are disabled, spend their days at Santa Rita. The expansive park, located alongside East 22nd Street, houses two baseball fields and a skate park in the midst of grass. It is not uncommon to see families gathered to watch baseball games on the weekends; nor is it uncommon to see people in soiled clothes pacing and muttering beneath the thick ponderosa pines.

For some, Santa Rita is a beautiful place that they cannot fully enjoy because of the dozens of homeless people who flock to it daily. Tammy Norris, a Tucson resident who came to the park for the first time on a recent Saturday to watch a

*“It’s important to understand, many of these people end up [homeless] through no fault of their own. To them, the park is one of the nicest places they can find.”*

**Thomas Gonzales**  
Tucson Police Department Officer

baseball game, says she will never return.

“This is not a safe place for kids,” Norris says frankly. “If I had known how many [homeless people] were here, I would not have brought my daughters.”

Crime at Santa Rita Park is a legitimate concern, with over 50 cases of assault, theft and vandalism reported in August and September 2016, according to a report from spotcrime.com. Most involved one homeless person against another.

However, in a city where homelessness is a chronic issue and shelters have limited capacities,

Santa Rita is one of the few options available for people searching for a place to lay their heads.

For Joseph Whitaker, the park is the closest thing to a home he can find.

“[The cops] kick me out, but I keep coming back,” Whitaker says, motioning towards the stone picnic table where he usually camps. It is illegal to be in the park after 10 p.m., but Whitaker says he usually risks it. He likes Santa Rita due to its proximity to Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission and the Casa Maria Soup Kitchen.

“I never bother nobody,” Whitaker says. He has been homeless for 15 years. A pale scar runs across his shaved head, evidence of the trouble he experienced during a stint in prison. “Most of us here, we just want a safe haven, like everyone else.”

Amos H. Jung, pastor at The Loving Church on East Roger Road, has been doing his part to make Santa Rita seem a little more like a haven. Six days a week, he loads his van with coffee and donuts and drives over to the southeast corner of the park, where most of homeless people gather.

“Some people think we shouldn’t encourage them,” says Jung, who started the breakfast program four years ago. “But it is our duty to care for the poor.”

“It’s the riffraff that come and make us look

bad,” Whitaker adds, cradling his Styrofoam cup of coffee. “We try to keep them out though, keep the park safe.”

There are legitimate reasons for concern about the safety of Santa Rita Park. Two homicides occurred there in the past sixteen months, including a homeless man who was stabbed in May. It is enough to make some community members think twice about using the park amenities.

“I’ve never seen a cop here, never,” Roy Busby says flatly. He is a little league coach who has been coming to Santa Rita for more than 20 years. “We come here for games, but as soon as it starts getting dark and they [the homeless] start moving in, we’re out. It’d be nice stay after a game and have a barbecue, but that’s just not fun at a place like this.”

Tucson Police Department officer Thomas Gonzalez, who spent the first 10 years of his career patrolling the south side, says he understands why the homeless in Santa Rita Park make community members uneasy.

“Neighbors have an expectation to enjoy the park without encountering problems like mentally unstable people and substance abuse,” he says. “It’s not pretty, but it’s important to understand, many of these people end up [homeless] through no fault of their own. To them, the park is one of the nicest places they can find. These people can easily be victimized as well, and that’s why you start receiving reports of assaults and things like that.”

Gonzales admits that the high number of calls the TPD receives keeps officers from regularly patrolling Santa Rita.

“I just feel bad – I wish there was an easy answer,” he says. “It kills me to see people that need care and don’t get it.”

Homelessness is a nationwide problem, but it is particularly glaring in Arizona, where more than 21 percent of families live below the federal poverty level, compared to the nationwide average of 14.3 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

“[Homelessness] is a really complex issue,” says Peggy Hutchinson, CEO of Primavera, a foundation that provides affordable housing for Tucson’s homeless. “The people you see on the streets, they might be homeless because they can’t afford their medication, or because they lost their pension. They might be between houses, or on a waitlist for a shelter. They might be working, but still can’t afford housing. In this country, it can happen to anyone.”

According to Hutchinson, the limited capacities of shelters and low-cost housing is the main reason why people pass their days in public places like Santa Rita Park. Although there are many shelters in Tucson, most of them have a 90-day limit, in addition to regulations designed to protect both staff and occupants, according to Pima County’s Plan to End Homelessness. Housing preference is usually given to “high-risk” demographics, including families, women and elderly people.

The frustration that results from wading

through red tape in an effort to secure housing is another reason why people avoid shelters, Hutchinson says.

“These are people who have experienced a lot of stress and violence in their lives,” she sighs. “When you’re already fragile, and are being told to call and come back again and again . . . many people stop trying.”

When they first became homeless, the Martinezes tried to stay in shelters and even motels, but none would allow them with their two pit bull-type dogs. Having grown tired of being put on endless waitlists and filling out countless forms, only to be turned away, they feel that Santa Rita Park offers them more freedom.

“We’re getting old, is the thing,” Martinez says. “It’s more dangerous [to be homeless] when you’re old. Someday I’d like to go out to Benson, try to get a cheap trailer. It’s a long way though.”

His wife, who is still sitting with their shopping cart under the bleachers, waves at him. Martinez stands up immediately. “Excuse me, mija, I gotta go.”

The rain has stopped, and the wet grass glitters under the emerging sun. Baseball players jog back onto the field, while the homeless folks move out from under the shelter of trees and picnic tables, shaking water off their belongings.

The crack of a bat echoes through the park, and Martinez motions excitedly for his wife to look at the field. Taking her gently by the arm, he leads her out to watch the game.



Photo by Michael Evans

Jay Kim, a member of The Loving Church, hands out donuts at Santa Rita Park.

# Coalition Works Towards a Cleaner South Tucson

By Christina Duran

On a bright Saturday morning, a small crowd gathers around a white truck parked in front of the House of Neighborly Services. Standing with his back to the truck's South Tucson logo, Lorenzo Gonzalez hands out boxes of spray paint, plastic bags full of sponges, rags, sandpaper, and buckets brimming with water. He gives quick instructions to the crowd.

"Remember, do not paint the grout," Gonzalez yells. "I'll be coming around to each of the frames if anyone needs anything. Thank you!"

Groups of three to four people will paint the frames of the iconic South Tucson murals that were created by Las Artes, an arts education program for high school dropouts.

This September event is just one of many efforts undertaken by the Healthy South Tucson coalition as part of a larger set of goals.

Healthy South Tucson is a coalition of organizations from South Tucson, Tucson and Pima County that grew out of the Weed and Seed Program.

Though there are 33 different organizations involved, the oldest members are Primavera Foundation, House of Neighborly Services and Gospel Rescue Mission.

Last year, the coalition reevaluated after a time of uncertainty.

"It was kind of in limbo," says Gonzalez, city planner for South Tucson and president of Healthy South Tucson. "There were questions about leadership."

Those questions were answered when members elected a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. At the meeting last year, Healthy South Tucson adopted a new strategic plan.

"We decided to strengthen it... and to try to come up with a mission and a vision of where we wanted it to go," says Gonzalez. "We started to tackle problems that existed and somewhere in there it became Healthy South Tucson."

The coalition's mission encompasses all aspects of building a healthy community, but members of the coalition find it difficult to define the group's primary goal.

Sitting in a quiet conference room in the South Tucson city hall, Gonzalez speaks frankly. "I think some of the things we have identified might be a little too much to handle at this point, but eventually that's what we want to get to."

Like Gonzalez, Kerri Lopez, director of House



Photo by Christina Duran

Anna Aguilar, a resident of South Tucson, cleans the mural at Fourth Avenue as part of a large beautification project organized by the Healthy South Tucson coalition.

of Neighborly Services and vice-president of Healthy South Tucson, finds the number of goals overwhelming.

"Sometimes it feels like we kind of get distracted by all the components of health and think we have to tackle all of them in order to be a health coalition," Lopez says.

"But really, we can tackle one thing and let it bleed into all the areas of health."

Gonzalez agrees and says the strategic plan was a way for the coalition to find its voice.

For now, it continues to work on the projects at hand which include not only these clean-ups, but their annual health and back-to-school fairs.

In 2012 the coalition, originally under the name Healthy Habits, launched its first ever health fair. In 2014, it began the Back-to-School Fair to provide children with "the things they need like shoes and underwear and school supplies," Gonzalez says.

Like other organizations, money is a factor.

The two annual fairs are funded through donations and fundraising, as are many of the coalition's other projects.

For this September clean-up, the Gospel Rescue Mission donated \$200 from their outreach budget for paint and other supplies, says Suzanne Williams, director of Community Ministries and Volunteering at the Gospel Rescue Mission.

While funding is important, members want to

focus on building volunteer involvement.

As representatives from Gospel Rescue Mission, Tucson Urban League, Primavera, House of Neighborly Services, and the City of South Tucson (represented by Gonzalez) head to the murals, only a few locals show up to help out.

Gonzalez drives carefully with a ladder jutting out of the trunk, trying not to jostle the water buckets. He sighs, shaking his head before he says, "You see, that's the problem. Trying to get people to come and to care about their city."

The coalition members hope residents will see the changes in their community and want to contribute to the effort.

"If you start to clean up and you start to maintain it then I think you're going to change the image," Gonzalez says. "You change the psychology."

In the meantime, the coalition members will continue to publish digital newsletters and engage the community through social media and their website.

Gonzalez heads back to the House of Neighborly Services with black trash bags clanging from the sound of empty spray cans, dirty rags and sponges.

Seven of the ten frames were painted, more than expected. Some of the frames have uneven streaks of yellow paint, with the drips of clumped paint visible at close range.

But as Gonzalez says, "We do what we can."

# Aliados para el bienestar

Por Christina Duran

Traducido Por Hiriana N. Gallegos

En una calurosa mañana de sábado, varias personas se juntan alrededor de una camioneta blanca en frente de la organización House of Neighborly Services. Lorenzo González se para con la espalda hacia su camioneta con el logo del Sur de Tucson repartiendo cajas de pintura de aerosol, bolsas de plástico llenas de esponjas, trapos, papel de lija y baldes hasta el tope de agua. Brevemente le da instrucciones al público.

“¡Recuerden no pinten la lechada!”, grita el Sr. González. “Voy a pasar por cada uno de los marcos si alguien necesita algo, ¡Gracias!”

Grupos de tres a cuatro personas pintaban los marcos de los murales icónicos del Sur de Tucson creados por Las Artes, un programa de educación de artes para los estudiantes que no terminaron la preparatoria.

Este evento que se hace en septiembre es uno de los muchos esfuerzos que la alianza Healthy South Tucson asume como parte de sus metas.

Healthy South Tucson es una alianza entre organizaciones de South Tucson, Tucson y el condado de Pima, que ha crecido por medio del Programa Weed and Seed. Aunque hay 33 organizaciones, las que han sido miembros por más tiempo son Primavera Foundation, House of Neighborly Services y Gospel Rescue Mission.

El año pasado, se revaluó la alianza después de un lapso de incertidumbre.

“Era como estar en el limbo”, comenta González, planificador del Sur de Tucson y presidente de Healthy South Tucson. “Habían dudas acerca del liderazgo”.

Esas dudas se resolvieron cuando los miembros escogieron al presidente, vicepresidente, secretaria, y tesorero. Healthy South Tucson adoptó un nuevo plan estratégico en la junta del año pasado.

“Decidimos fortalecerlo e intentamos proponer una misión y visión de hacia dónde queríamos dirigirlo”, agrega González. “Empezamos a encargarnos de los problemas que existían y de ahí surgió Healthy South Tucson”.

La misión de la alianza cubre todos los aspectos para desarrollar una comunidad saludable, pero a los miembros se les hace difícil definir la meta principal del grupo. Sentado en un cuarto de conferencia en el municipio de South Tucson, Gonzales habla francamente.

“Creo que algunas de las cosas que hemos identificado pueden ser un poco más de lo que nos podemos encargar en estos momentos, pero



Foto por Christina Duran

Lorenzo Gonzalez, presidente de Healthy South Tucson, quita la cinta de carrocería al mural nuevamente pintado.

eventualmente ahí es donde queremos llegar”.

Al igual que González, Kerri Lopez, la directora de House of Neighborly Services y vicepresidenta de Healthy South Tucson, piensa que el número de metas son agobiantes.

“Algunas veces parece que nos distraemos por los componentes de la salud y pensamos que nos tenemos que encargar de todos para poder ser una alianza de salud”, menciona López.

“Pero en realidad, podemos encargarnos de una cosa y dejar que se traspase a todas las áreas de salud”. González está de acuerdo y dice que el plan estratégico era una manera para que la alianza encontrará su voz. Por el momento, continúa trabajando en los proyectos que tiene al alcance, que incluyen no solamente estas limpiezas, pero también su feria anual de salud y la feria del regreso a clases.

En 2012 la alianza, que originalmente estaba bajo el nombre de Healthy Habits, lanzó su primera feria de salud. En 2014, empezó la feria del regreso de clases para darle a los menores, “las cosas que necesitan como zapatos, ropa interior y útiles escolares”, González menciona.

El dinero siempre es un factor, al igual que para otras organizaciones.

Las dos ferias anuales son fundadas por medio de las donaciones y la recaudación de fondos, como muchos de los proyectos de la alianza.

Para la limpieza de este septiembre, Gospel Rescue Mission donó \$200 de su presupuesto de proyección y lo usó para la pintura y otros materiales, comenta Suzanne Williams, la directora de Community Ministries y Volunteering at the Gospel Rescue Mission.

Mientras es importante la recaudación de fondos, los miembros quieren enfocarse en el desarrollo de la participación del trabajo voluntario.

Aunque los representantes del Gospel Rescue Mission, Tucson Urban League, Primavera, House of Neighborly Services, South Tucson (representado por González) van a los murales, solo unas pocas personas residentes de allí van a ayudar.

González conduce cuidadosamente con una escalera saliendo de la cajuela, para que no se derrumben los baldes de agua. Suspira antes de decir, “Ves, ese es el problema. El conseguir que las personas vengan y que cuiden su ciudad”.

Los miembros de la alianza tienen la esperanza que los residentes al ver los cambios en su comunidad van a querer contribuir al esfuerzo.

“Si se empieza a limpiar y se le empieza a dar mantenimiento se cambia la imagen”, expresa González. “Cambias la psicología”.

Mientras tanto, los integrantes de la alianza continuarán publicando su boletín informativo digital involucrando a la comunidad por los medios sociales y su página de red.

González regresa a House of Neighborly Services con bolsas negras para la basura con botes vacíos de aerosol pegándose el uno contra el otro, trapos sucios y esponjas.

Siete de los diez marcos se pintaron, más de los que se esperaban. Algunos de los marcos tienen rastros de pintura amarilla, con gotas de pintura en grumos que se pueden ver de cerca.

Pero como dice González, “Hacemos lo que podemos”.

# Pima County Library



Pima County's first Bookbike at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library. The modified cargo bike, made by Haley Tricycles in Philadelphia, is outfitted with book shelves. Donated books are given away during appearances.

By CJ D'Innocente

Pedaling under the hot Tucson sun, Karen Greene glances at the passing street signs as she bikes toward her destination. Today she is making her monthly visit to the Armory Park Senior Center.

Greene works for the Pima County Public Library and while she is usually found at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library, every so often, she relishes the opportunity to hop on the Bookbike and hand out books.

Greene suggested the idea of the Bookbike to the library in early 2012, and in almost four years of cycling, the library has given out nearly 58,000 books to local organizations and individuals.

"I wanted to do something with bikes here in Tucson," Greene says. "Luckily the library system went along with this idea."

Initially, only the Main Library participated in the program. But now, the Eckstrom-Columbus and Santa Rosa branches have also taken up the effort.

Greene learned about the Bookbike idea from a colleague who told her about a similar program in Chicago. Although the extensive process required for implementing new government programs initially discouraged her, she decided finally to pursue the idea after hearing about the success of similar programs in Portland, Oregon. As a former Portland resident and an avid cyclist, Greene took it upon herself to implement the Bookbike in Tucson.

The idea is to make literature available to people who are unable to get to the library or

who don't feel comfortable in the library setting, Greene says. Each month, the Bookbike visits several locations including Casa Maria Soup Kitchen, Santa Rita Park, Veinte de Agosto Park and Armory Park Senior Center. Greene also brings the Bookbike out to the Library Plaza near the Main Library on Tuesdays when food trucks are there.



Photos Courtesy of Pima County

Karen Greene with the Bookbike.

"It's been nice to go to locations over time where you get to know folks and their reading interests," Greene says. "I try to set aside books I know Armory Park Senior Center participants want, for example, as that is my monthly visit."

The community's reception of the Bookbike has been nothing but positive.

"People can't believe the books are free," Greene says. "Lots of times people will bring books back to the Bookbike for others to enjoy."

While the Main Library focuses on reaching out to adults, the Eckstrom-Columbus branch is

also using the Bookbike to bring literature to day care centers. Lorie Karcher, program coordinator of the Bookbike at the Eckstrom-Columbus branch, expanded the program as a means of getting children to read early.

The books distributed by the Bookbike are gathered in part from donations, either from the public or from the Friends of the Pima County Public Library. The rest are books that are no longer needed in the library's collection.

One of the most pressing issues with the program is acquiring enough Spanish language content. To solve this issue, the program has reached out to Spanish language book publishers who donate overstock to the cause. Even though the books are not always in perfect condition, fans of the Bookbike don't seem to mind.

"They always have something interesting to read," says Arnold Thompson, resident of Armory Park, as he meticulously pours over this month's selection.

The Bookbike also hands out free reading glasses for participants who require them, courtesy of Casa de los Leones, one of the Bookbike's popular stops.

As for the future of the Bookbike, Greene has set her sights on incorporating technology. She thinks Wi-Fi hotspots could be used to turn the bikes into mobile libraries, allowing people to check out library books from their own homes. As the program develops, Greene is confident the Bookbike will continue to spread to libraries around the world.

"This program is simple, replicable, and easy for someone to step into it," she said.

# Setting Aside Their Criminal Past County Restores Criminals' Rights

By Angelo Lavo

All it takes is a laptop, a form, maybe two, and someone with knowledge of the process and access to online records.

A lawyer could certainly perform the job, but it could be as much as \$2,400.

Felons with multiple convictions cannot vote, run for public office, sit on a jury or possess a firearm. They must have these rights restored via what is called a judicial "set aside." In general, the set aside is an important step for former prisoners to return to a "normal" life.

The Pima County Public Defender's Office, in partnership with the University of Arizona's James E. Rogers College of Law, Pima County Clerk of the Superior Court and local nonprofits Primavera Foundation and Second Chance, provides four free opportunities annually for felons to apply to have their Arizona or federal convictions set aside and their rights restored.

On a recent October afternoon, a clinic assisted more than 80 disenfranchised felons.

"Convicts need community recognition of their [rights] restoration," says Marla Rapaport, an attorney with the Pima County Public Defender's Office. A self-described "lifer," Rapaport has worked as a Pima County public defender her entire legal career and leads the clinics.

Perhaps a quarter of the clinic's attendees are seeking restoration because they need, or have been denied, housing.

"If you can't find housing it's very hard to move forward with life," Rapaport says. People who have done prison time often have trouble getting housing if the property manager or owner conducts criminal background checks.

Last spring, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban



Photo by Angelo Lavo

Alissa Jones discusses the progress she has made since the rights restoration clinic in October.

*Felons with multiple convictions cannot vote, run for public office, sit on a jury or possess a firearm.*

Development released a memo indicating that disproportionate incarceration rates of blacks and Latinos often result in unequal impacts on minority home seekers. Further, criminal-history-based restrictions on housing opportunities violate the Fair Housing Act if they impact one race or national origin over another. But discrimination still happens.

## Moving through

The clinic scene is organized chaos. Reluctant looks on the faces of arriving participants soon turn into anticipation, and upon completion of the process, satisfaction.

Alissa Jones, 45, a single-mother of four, recently lost her home in a fire but had trouble finding another place because of her criminal convictions. Jones' brother took her in for the time

being and her goal is to secure housing by next spring.

For Jones, having her rights restored is as symbolic as it is practical. Finding housing is a challenge but she is also concerned about the dynamic within her household, especially regaining the trust of her 17-year-old son.

Waiting for her name to be called by one of the clinic's thirteen volunteers—lawyers, law students, ex-lawyers and otherwise concerned citizens—Jones shuffles through court documents as she discusses some of her life's decisions.

"I had a drug problem," she says. "Been clean seven years."

In 1999 Jones was arrested for "theft by means of control" of a vehicle and served nine months in prison. This is one of two charges she is seeking to have set aside. "I call it my other life."

Kristine Alger, an attorney for

the Pima County Legal Defender's Office, calls Jones' name and the two begin the process.

The first step is to search for all charges connected to Jones and, in doing so, Alger informs Jones that one of her earliest misdemeanors was dropped. This research is arguably the most technical and critical part of the process. One does not want to miss a charge and then find out at the rights restoration hearing that they must go through the whole process again.

Since Jones served time in prison she is required to attach a "certificate of absolute discharge" to prove she fully served her prison sentence. She has it in her document stack.

Jones and Alger complete her motion form and take it to the on-site clerk who tells them that they have erringly placed two charges onto a single form. Each charge must be on its own form.

Alger and Jones make swift work of the correction and submit the finalized forms to the clerk who will officially file all the motions received from the clinic later in the evening.

The court has 45 days to respond to the motion.

Jones' fingers are crossed.

As of 2010, there were approximately 95,893 disenfranchised felons in Arizona, according to a 2012 study. The state's recidivism rate hovers around 50 percent, but Rapaport views rights restoration as one of the best weapons to combat high recidivism rates.

Volunteers agree. "The clinics are a great thing," says Joseph Scott, a retired community developer and clinic volunteer.

For Scott, the clinics provide the necessary service of giving access to information that the disenfranchised would otherwise not have.

Plus, law students and volunteers benefit as well.

"It's a win-win," Scott says.

# Oasis Created in a Food Desert



Photo by Christina Duran

Hilda Rivera is ready for customers at the Nogales Mercado held every Friday.

By Christina Duran

Down Morley Avenue, one side of the street is lined with storefronts selling girls party clothes and bright plastic toys. On the other side, tents and tables occupy what's usually a vacant parking lot.

Each table is laden with an assortment of produce and homemade treats, from kale and yellow butternut squash, to pomegranates, empanadas, and different cheeses. A big metal pot nestled between the crates of food lure Nogalenses with the rich scent of *carne con chile* tamales.

Friday afternoons, near the border that separates Nogales and Sonora, people gather around to listen to the latest Latino hits and enjoy the food at the Nogales Mercado.

In 2012 the Mariposa Community Health

Center (MCHC) and Nogales Community Development (NCD) partnered to found the Nogales Mercado. Their aim is to improve health and bring economic sustainability to Nogales, which is classified as a food desert by the USDA. A food desert is an area with a scarcity of low-priced healthy fruits and vegetables.

"The market was an opportunity for the community to invest in their health and in their economy," says Santos Yescas, program manager at the NCD.

The Nogales Mercado features a *mesa cooperativa*, a consignment table, where local farmers, some local and some providing from their Tucson farms, can sell their product without having to attend the market.

Other vendors that attend must set up their own tables to sell products. Many of these

vendors sell merchandise on Fridays to bring in a bit more cash for their families.

Maria Elena Mandel, 60, has sold her homemade soaps, bath scrubs, purses, jewelry, and cards at the market since 2013 to pay her living expenses.

Mandel's dark brown hair is flecked with white and pulled back in a tight bun. She greets everyone with a toothy smile.

She calls these workdays her "social Fridays," because she meets people from all over town.

At home she makes all of her products while also caring for her son who is ill with cancer. Though her son's health expenses are paid for, Mandel still has to work to get food on the table and pay other bills.

For now, her business headquarters is a folding table that sits under a plastic roof every Friday.



“This is my venture,” Mandel says.

A few tents away from Mandel, Hilda Rivera tends to her budding business.

In a clean white apron, standing in front of a sign with the bold, white word “TAMALES” etched onto a bright red background, Rivera serves her customers, who have eagerly lined up in front of her station.

Rivera joined the market a year ago after friends urged her to sell something at a Día de los Muertos event. She came with the intention to sell flower arrangements, and only brought her tamales as an extra product.

However, the Nogalitos spoke and her tamales sold out. Rivera now sells them every Friday, and is planning to expand her product line.

“I am working on selling frozen tamales that people can take home and heat up,” Rivera says, opening a cooler to show a stack of tamales packed in ice.

Rivera, a volunteer at the Mariposa Community Health Center and self-proclaimed housewife, uses the money she earns at the Nogales Mercado for whatever her and her family may need.

As the Nogales Mercado grows, program manager Santos Yescas debates whether or not he should charge the vendors for their spot in the market, which is now free.

Nogales Community Development gives vendors lessons in business finances, and helps them receive certification to accept WIC, SNAP, and FMNP checks, all without charge. However, Yescas believes vendors should invest in their own businesses,



Photo by Christina Duran

Juanita Gonzales holds up a basket of chiles at the Nogales Mercado.

starting with their spot in the market.

“Sometimes vendors do not show up,” says Yescas. “And we need them here to attract people to the market.”

While the market is meant to inspire healthy choices, the products Mandel, Rivera, and other vendors offer attract people to the market, far more than the one table laden with healthy affordable food choices.

Natalie Ainza, food system coordinator at MCHC, knows many people do not come

to the mercado for the organic fruits and vegetables at the *mesa cooperativa*. But she remains optimistic.

Trying to demonstrate how to use the products in a recipe at a recent Friday market, Ainza tosses pomegranates, ice, kale, and other greens into a blender and poured the green liquid into a cup: a green juice.

“It’s all part of the same learning process,” Ainza says.

For Raul Ulloa, 67, health is just part of living.

He attends every Friday and tries to buy from every vendor—from Rivera’s tamales with a *cafecito*, to whatever the consignment table is offering.

“I eat everything,” Ulloa says proudly.

He also participates in the Friday bike ride organized by OS3, an organization that promotes biking in Nogales. The organization found a home in the farmer’s market three years ago, where it grew from eight to 10 bike riders a week to a whopping 80 loyal riders.

Each Friday, children in helmets and adults in full biking gear ride the nine-mile trek from downtown Nogales to the Safeway on Mariposa Road, right off the interstate.

“We love to help our community,” says Melissa Maldonado, president of OS3.

In the future Yescas and Ainza hope to see rows of tents to the other end of the lot, and a place where people can gather from all over, not just Nogales.

“We’re here to help,” Ainza says.



Photo by Christina Duran

The *mesa cooperativa* at the Nogales Mercado showcases all sorts of seasonal vegetables and even eggs produced by Rio Rico High School students.

# Un oasis en el desierto

Por Christina Duran  
Traducido por Hiriana N. Gallegos

Bajo Morley Ave., una parte de la calle se cubre de tiendas que venden ropa de salir para mujeres y juguetes de todos los colores. El otro lado de la calle se llena de puestos y mesas en lo que generalmente es un estacionamiento.

Cada mesa está llena de una variedad de productos y antojitos caseros, desde col crespita y calabacín, hasta granadas, empanadas y diferentes tipos de quesos. Una gran olla atrae la atención de los Nogalenses con el rico olor de los tamales de carne con chile.

Cada viernes por la tarde, cerca de la frontera que separa a Nogales, Arizona y Nogales Sonora, México, se reúne la gente para escuchar los últimos éxitos de la música latina y para deleitarse de la comida del Nogales Mercado.

En el 2012, la clínica Mariposa Community Health Center (MCHC) y la organización Nogales Community Development (NCD) se unieron para fundar el Nogales Mercado. Su meta es mejorar la salud y brindar sostenibilidad económica a Nogales, la cual fue clasificada como un desierto alimentario por el Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos (USDA). Un desierto alimentario es una zona escasa de frutas y verduras saludables de bajo costo.

“El mercado fue una oportunidad de la comunidad para invertir en su salud y economía”, dice Santos Yescas, gestor del programa en NCD.

El Nogales Mercado cuenta con una “mesa cooperativa”, donde los agricultores locales, algunos locales y otros que proveen desde sus granjas en Tucson, pueden vender sus productos sin tener que ir al mercado. Otros vendedores que van al mercado deben de armar sus propias mesas y vender sus productos. Muchos de estos vendedores, venden su mercancía los viernes para poder llevar más dinero a sus casas.

María Elena Mandel, de 60 años de edad, ha vendido sus jabones caseros,



Foto por Christina Duran

Hilda Rivera, 45, vende tamales hecho en casa de carne con chile, maíz, y pollo en e Nogales Mercado.

exfoliantes, bolsas, joyas y barajas en el mercado desde el 2013 para subsistir.

Mandel recoge su cabello castaño oscuro con algunas canas en un chongo. Saluda a todos con una sonrisa de oreja a oreja.

Les llama a estos días laborales “viernes social”, porque conoce a gente de todo el pueblo.

Ella hace todos sus productos en casa mientras que también cuida a su hijo que tiene cáncer. Aunque le pagan los gastos médicos de su hijo, Mandel tiene que trabajar para poner comida en su mesa y pagar otros servicios.

Por ahora, su oficina central consta de una mesa plegable bajo un techo de plástico todos los viernes.

“Esta es mi empresa”, dice Mandel.

Hilda Rivera, que se encuentra a unas pocas carpas de la carpa de Mandel, atiende su negocio los viernes.

Con un mandil blanco e impecable, Rivera se para enfrente de un letrero rojo brillante que contrasta con unas grandes letras blancas que dicen “TAMALES” para atender a sus clientes, quienes se han formado ansiosamente en su puesto.

Rivera se unió al mercado hace un año

cuando sus amigos le insistieron que vendiera algo en el evento del Día de los Muertos. Llegó con la intención de vender arreglos florales, y solo trajo sus tamales para que fuera un producto extra.

Sin embargo, los Nogalitos corrieron la voz y sus tamales se vendieron rápidamente. Rivera ahora los vende todos los viernes, y planea en expandir su línea de productos.

“Estoy trabajando en vender tamales congelados para que la gente se los lleve a su casa y los cocine”, dice Rivera mientras abre una hilera para enseñarnos la pila de tamales congelados.

Rivera, una voluntaria en la clínica MCHC, se autoproclama ama de casa y usa el dinero que gana en el mercado para lo que sea que ella o su familia necesite.

Mientras que el Nogales Mercado crece, el gestor del programa Santos Yescas, considera si debería cobrarle o no a los vendedores por su lugar en el mercado, el cual es gratuito actualmente.

La organización NCD les proporciona a los vendedores clases de finanzas comerciales, y los ayuda a obtener certificación para poder recibir cheques

WIC, SNAP y FMNP, todo sin ningún costo. Sin embargo, Yescas cree que deberían invertir en sus negocios propios, empezando por su puesto en el mercado.

“Algunas veces los vendedores no vienen”, dice Yescas. “Y los necesitamos aquí para atraer a la clientela al mercado”.

Aunque el mercado tenía la meta de inspirar a tomar mejores decisiones acerca de la salud, los productos que ofrecen Mandel, Rivera y otros vendedores atraen a la gente al mercado, mucho más que aquellos que tienen un puesto con comida saludable barata.

Natalie Aianza, coordinadora del sistema de comida en MCHC, sabe que la gente no viene al mercado para las frutas y verduras orgánicas en la mesa cooperativa. Pero se mantiene optimista.

Para poder demostrar cómo usar los productos en una receta, un viernes de mercado, Aianza echa granadas, hielo, col y otras verduras a una licuadora y echa el resultado a un vaso: es un jugo verde.

“Todo es parte del proceso de aprendizaje”, dice Aianza.

Para Raúl Ulloa, de 67 años de edad, la salud es solamente una parte de vivir.

Va todos los viernes y trata de comprarles a todos los vendedores--desde los tamales de Rivera con un cafecito, hasta lo que sea que ofrezca la mesa cooperativa.

“Como de todo”, dice Ulloa con orgullo.

También participa en el paseo en bicicleta que se organiza por OS3, una organización que promueve el ciclismo en Nogales. La organización hizo del mercado su hogar hace tres años, empezó con 10 ciclistas leales y creció hasta 80.

Cada viernes, niños en cascos y adultos con todo el equipo de ciclismo se pasean por el trayecto de nueve millas desde el centro de Nogales hasta la tienda Safeway en Mariposa Road, que se encuentra a la derecha de la interestatal.

“Nos encanta ayudar a nuestra comunidad”, dice Melissa Maldonado, presidenta de OS3.

En un futuro, Yescas y Aianza esperan ver filas de puestos al otro lado del estacionamiento, y ven un lugar donde la gente de todas partes se pueda reunir, no solamente de Nogales.

“Estamos aquí para ayudar”, dice Aianza.



Foto por Christina Duran

Maria Elena Mandel venden una variedad de joyería, cartas, y jabones orgánicos en el Nogales Mercado.

# Kitchen of Dre

By Angelo Lavo

In this UNESCO City of Gastronomy, amongst year-round farmers' markets, burgeoning farms, and in-demand food trucks, restaurants and bakeries, a vibrant food plan is coming to fruition.

The YWCA of Southern Arizona is developing Tucson's first, and the state's second, kitchen incubator at the House of Neighborly Services in South Tucson. Kitchen incubators offer more than a commercial kitchen for food entrepreneurs to cook in. An incubator provides training, mentorship and planning in business and product development with the end goal of graduating its participants.

"What should be at the heart of the city's heart, but a kitchen?" asks Kerri Lopez-Howell, director of the House of Neighborly Services.

Building 2 on the historic campus of the House in South Tucson is earmarked for transformation. To date, Lopez-Howell and the YWCA have raised \$92,000. A Community Development Block Grant, a corporate pledge and bounty from a recent competition called Fast Pitch Tucson produced by Social Venture Partners of Tucson make up the current funding. Lopez-Howell has left no stone unturned in her quest to make the kitchen incubator a reality.

A stainless commercial-grade exhaust hood and gas range, a walk-in refrigerator, bountiful prep space and an assortment of other kitchen equipment are soon to become permanent fixtures within Building 2's walls.

Lopez-Howell sits tall in her sparse, under-renovation office reflecting on her first year as director. South Tucson embodies community for her. "We have the best neighbors," she says, "and our campus has the open feel. Openness is here, we just need the kitchen now to complete our home."

The midday calm on the House of Neighborly Service campus is clearly no indicator of the extensive planning and development underway to make the kitchen a reality. "My brain is so heavy," Lopez-Howell cheerfully laments after outlining the current objectives on her plate. All of this is new, challenging and exciting for her.

The task is manageable thanks to YWCA leadership, camaraderie with other South Tucson organizations, frequent visits from city planners Mick Jensen and Lorenzo Gonzales and the invaluable wisdom of Ray Flores, owner of El



Kerri Lopez-Howell in front of Building 2 on the House of Neighborly Service campus.

Charro and now official advisor of the incubator project.

South Tucson city planner Jensen supports the YWCA's vision for the incubator.

"I think it's really an important project for the possibility it offers to our residents and others," he says. "This is the kind of community that could really benefit from that kind of facility."

Jensen points out that the YWCA saw the value of the House of Neighborly Service and is pleased that the YWCA is maintaining the House's identity and roots in the community, all

while developing new missions that tackle some of South Tucson's pressing social problems, including poverty.

"Poverty is at the root of so many problems that people often identify in South Tucson," he says.

## National Trend

The food incubator model is sweeping the nation as a solution to the high costs of market entry and bureaucratic red tape that all food entrepreneurs face. Between 2013 and 2016 over 65 food

# ams



Photo by Angelo Lavo

incubators have sprouted in mostly urban communities, bringing the national total to over 200, according to a report released by Econsult Solutions, an economic consulting firm researching the market.

There are three main types of food incubators: shared-use kitchens, kitchen incubators and accelerators. Shared-use kitchens simply rent space and equipment to community members. Kitchen incubators launch new or early-stage food businesses, providing them facilities, equipment and business mentoring and expertise. Accelerators

focus on taking successfully established businesses to the next level.

Seemingly born out of the Great Recession, many speculated kitchen incubators were a fad, according to Econsult. However, the specialty food industry grew over 20 percent between 2012 and 2014 and is now a nationwide \$100 billion market. Fortune.com reported in June 2016 that big food firms like Kellogg, General Mills and Campbell Soup have launched venture capital funds to tap into the growing specialty foods market. People are more concerned about food taste, quality and locality and the companies are aware and positioning to capitalize by helping small food businesses scale up.

However, food incubators themselves are not risk averse and entering the specialty food market comes with great risk. Econsult reports that half of all incubators losing money are rural and in general are not profitable in a rural setting. The successful incubators are urban or suburban and offer a nexus of services including linking entrepreneurs to capital and markets through funding or contracts. Food incubators take the “it takes a village” approach and applies it to food entrepreneurship.

Overall, 61 percent of food incubators are for profit while only 39 percent operate as nonprofits. Some 70 percent of nonprofit incubators receive grants and 82 percent report revenue increases since 2013. So the YWCA may be entering the market at the right time.

## Success Story

Administrators from the YWCA recently visited La Cocina, a successful food incubator located in San Francisco that serves low-income and immigrant food entrepreneurs, mostly women.

Liane Hernandez, community director at the YWCA, was impressed and inspired by the level of technical expertise as well as advocacy at La Cocina. “The level of professionalism in the presentation of the products was fantastic,” she says. Product packaging and label design are generally outside a food entrepreneur’s wheelhouse.

La Cocina takes a multi-prong approach at the incubator, including advocating issues such as food deserts and food justice in the community. They are especially dedicated to their immediate neighborhood, says Hernandez. All of these things the YWCA continues to draw on for inspiration.

On its website La Cocina lists a number of graduates from their program. Onigilly, a company attempting to revolutionize the fast food industry by serving onigiri, a seaweed wrapped rice ball with savory filling, has opened four locations in San Francisco.

“This is not a lemonade stand, it is a lemonade company. This is not a bake sale, it is a bakery,” Caleb Zigas, executive director of La Cocina, said in a promotional Youtube video.

La Cocina cultivates and legitimizes small food businesses.

The YWCA hopes to do the same.

## Engine for Change

A recent visit to the Santa Cruz River Farmers Market at Mercado San Agustin on West Congress Street showcased a handful of food startups including I Heart Maiz, a tortilla chip and tamale company; Selena’s Salvadorian Food, and Pappardelle’s Pasta Tucson, to name a few.

Erin Durband, owner of Pappardelle’s Pasta Tucson, a distribution partner of Pappardelle’s Pasta Co. based out of Denver, Co., has observed the growth of Tucson’s local food economy firsthand. She only sells at farmer’s markets.

“I think it’s amazing,” she says of the YWCA’s plan. As a distributor, Durband does not face the same dilemma as other food entrepreneurs but she hears of the difficulties of finding commercial kitchen space to rent. She thinks the kitchen incubator will benefit Tucson’s food entrepreneur community.

The overarching goal of the incubator is to further self-determination in the South Tucson and Tucson communities, says Marisol Flores-Aguirre, director of the Women’s Business Center at the YWCA.

“The impact of the kitchen goes beyond a single entrepreneur. Its purpose is to transform the community,” she says. It is intended to become an economic engine and stimulate the local food economy.

To build that engine the food incubator is pairing the YWCA’s tried and true wraparound business services with the new commercial kitchen. The YWCA’s programs generally focus on middle to low-income women and immigrants. But, the kitchen incubator will be open to all food entrepreneurs in Tucson and South Tucson.

“There’s a high mortality rate in the food business,” warns Flores, the kitchen incubator project’s official advisor. He sees the incubator as a practical measure to support and grow the local food economy.

“There’s a tremendous amount of risk in the food business,” says Flores before detailing the obstacles entrepreneurs face. He is concerned that the growing body of business regulations coupled with the requirements of food products distributors, such as the local grocery store or Costco, pose a substantial hurdle for small food business entrepreneurs.

But with the proper supports in place small food businesses face a better chance of survival.

The YWCA will hold a public event on January 19 at the House of Neighborly Service to introduce the kitchen to the community. Lopez-Howell anticipates taking applications for the program starting in February. Construction will begin in early spring with completion expected in May.

Perhaps a year from now Tucsonans will discover a new, delicious and undeniably unique food item at a farmers’ market, and they’ll have the House of Neighborly Service to thank for helping to make that good taste a reality.

# LITTLE ANGELS TAKE BIG STEPS TO UNDERSTAND GRIEF AND LOSS

By Phoebe Stevens

Children with painted faces run around Armory Park in homemade costumes, while their families spread out across the plush green lawn and relax beneath the sun's warmth. From the air that buzzes with laughter and chatter, most people would not assume that the event being held that day had anything to do with death.

But mortality is one of the main themes at the Procession of Little Angels. It's a family-oriented extension of the annual All Souls Procession. It is an event held every year to provide a safe and kid-friendly space for children to explore and understand the concepts of death, grief and loss, which are all present at All Souls.

"While you can find those elements in the All Souls Procession, because Little Angels is a kid-driven event, there's this sense of the joy of being alive," says event director Jhon Sanders. The "very festive, very playful" event prevents death from being a somber topic, and allows children to conceptualize it in the ways that come naturally to them.

Children's curiosity is one of the youthful instincts Little Angels plays upon to help them understand death. Every year at the Procession of Little Angels, people and their families can erect personal altars along the path that winds around Armory Park. Children gaze out from framed photographs, laughing in the arms of family members, and votive candles burn to memorialize lives that have since passed. Golden, fuschia and tomato-red flowers frame poems and handwritten prayers.

While the personal altars are an opportunity to pay homage to deceased loved ones, Sanders says they also become "focal points of conversation." As children and their families tour the altars, the kids can ask their questions and those attending the altars have the opportunity to share their stories.

It is a way for children to understand the universality of death and for people to come together and "recognize our shared humanity and mortality," Sanders says.

The personal altars are inspired by Dia de los Muertos traditions, in which people leave out foods and gifts for their deceased relatives as a way of remembering them and



Photo by Christina Duran

Ripley Mayaraso, 4, poses for a photo at the Procession of Little Angels, showing off her angel wings.

honoring their lives.

For Nallali Vargas, attending Little Angels with her daughters is a way for her to share that part of her culture.

"It was never something that was scary to me, so [my daughters] grow up knowing things do die, but you get to see them again," she says.

The Stories that Soar! program also helps children engage with their curiosities about concepts like death. Stories that Soar! is a Literacy Connects program that takes compositions written by children and turns them into live-action performance. Because the culture at large doesn't offer many opportunities to talk about death or



Photo by Christina Duran

Emma Nelms, 8, writes a message for her deceased dog at the Procession of Little Angels at Armory Park Center.

loss, “children often process those thoughts through their writing” or other creative expressions, says Literacy Connects artistic director Sharon O’Brien.

This year one of the stories performed at Little Angels, “Flowers,” was about a child’s garden, which grew and flourished until one day all of the flowers died. The child-author wrote that the mother said, “It’s okay, because they are going to drop their seeds and grow again.” The Stories that Soar! performance of this story illustrated how this child perceived the life cycle.

Sanders says that creative expression is a way to tease out and confront feelings we don’t take the time to think about in our day-to-day life, which is what makes costuming another important element in the Procession of Little Angels. Children are encouraged to wear homemade costumes and workshops are held in the weeks leading up to Little Angels to aid them in making them.

In addition to making costumes, decorating wings is one of the most

iconic art activities done at Little Angels, according to Sanders. The wings, pre-cut by Sanders and other volunteers in the community, are all different styles. From jetpacks to lightning bolts, from dragons to bat wings, there is a pair to suit every child.

After the children pick their wings, they can write names or messages on them, an activity that again tunes into their creative expression. According to Sanders, kids in the past have brought photos of people who have passed on to tape to the wings.

“They make them into sort of a ritual object for the Procession to memorialize,” he says. Other times, “it’s just as simple as making something beautiful.”


By looking at death through the eyes of children, the Procession of Little Angels reminds adults too of the beauty of life.

Sanders says, “It’s a chance for everybody to step out of their ordinary routines and remember what’s important in life, and to do that together as a community, which is really the key thing about Little Angels.”



Photo by Christina Duran

Mia Ramirez, 6, thinks of whom to write a poem for at the Little Angels Procession.



“Spirits come from a dark place. To attract them to the material world, you need something bright. And something with a very strong aroma.”

- Luis Coronado  
Historian

Photo by Emily Ellis

Marigolds were placed throughout the Tucson Botanical Garden as part of the Frida Kahlo exhibit.

# Marigolds Bridge the Worlds of the Living and the Dead

By Emily Ellis

Luis Coronado needed just one thing to complete his altar for Día de los Muertos. Something that represents ancient Aztec legends. Something that brightens altars in homes throughout Latin America and the United States every autumn. Something used around the world to lure the

souls of the dead back to earth.

Luckily, he found what he was looking for on sale at Costco.

“You can see why they’re called *las flores de los muertos*,” says Coronado, a Mexican historian at the University of Arizona. He hefts a large pot of bobbing golden flowers onto a corner of the altar he has built in the UA Latin American Studies Department. A

sickly-sweet smell wafts over the grinning sugar skulls and black-and-white photographs.

“Spirits come from a dark place,” he says. “To attract them to the material world, you need something bright. And something with a very strong aroma.”

Coronado calls the flowers *cempasuchil*, an indigenous Nahuatl word from central



Mexico meaning “twenty petals.” In Hindu culture, where they adorn altars, wedding guests, and corpses all year long, they’re called *genda phool*. In English, they are known as marigolds, a reference to European Catholics who placed the flower on altars to the Virgin Mary in place of gold coins.

The sunny, perky flower thrives in a variety of climates, supports the agricultural economy in developing countries, and has been used across the globe for centuries to bridge the gap between the worlds of the living and the dead.

“We use them for altars and funerals in India,” says Sukanya Bhat, owner of India Dukaan Grocery on North Campbell Avenue. She didn’t know that marigolds were also used in Hispanic ceremonies, but was not surprised. “We’re all human. Beautiful things connect us together.”

Although gardening blogs dispute the geographic origin of marigolds, most botanists agree that multitude of modern subspecies originated from the delicate yellow Aztec marigold. Portuguese and Spanish conquistadors were responsible for spreading the flower to other parts of the world in the 16th century, according to environmental historian Jim J. Parson’s article *Latin America and the World of Flowers*.

The use of marigolds in death rituals can be traced back to an Aztec origin myth, in which

the sun-god Tonatiuh created the flower to honor two grieving lovers, Xóchitl y Huitzilin. When Xochitl died in battle, Huitzilin asked Tonatiuh to reunite them on earth. The god granted her wish by turning her into a golden flower and her deceased lover into a hummingbird. Ever since, Aztecs used the *cempasuchil* to call their dearly departed back to the physical world.

“I don’t think conquistadors said to people ‘hey, you should use this flower in death rituals like the Aztecs do,’” Coronado chuckles. “They look like the sun, which is a strong symbol for all people. That’s why they have worked into so many different cosmologies.”

Jack Lukans, a horticulturist at Green Things Nursery in Tucson, thinks that marigolds’ global popularity is partly due to their economic viability. Despite its reputation, the flower is biologically resilient to death: its strong, musky scent repels many garden pests, and it thrives in nutrient-poor soil.

“If you’re a nursery in Tucson, it’s kind of your civic and economic duty to grow marigolds,” Lukans says. It is a couple days after Tucson’s annual November All Souls Procession, and only a few bedraggled marigolds remain in a corner of the greenhouse. “I planted around 200, and they

sold out in days.”

Green Things isn’t the only place turning a profit on the golden flower. On the other side of the border, marigolds play an important role in the Mexican economy in addition to its culture. In 2015, *cempasuchil* sales throughout the country brought in approximately 90 million pesos in revenue (or \$450,000), according to a report from the Mexican Services for Information on Agriculture and Fisheries.

But for some people, the cultural history, botanical hardiness, and profitability of marigolds doesn’t matter. For them, something is only as meaningful as the energy that grieving individuals pour into it.

“People from all religions tend to look for signs of a dead loved one in nature – in birds, in flowers,” says Annette Soto, a Cherokee national. She annually attends the free All Souls Community Craftshops held by Tucson-based organization Many Mouths, One Stomach, where anyone can come to make a mask or flower crown to use in Tucson’s All Souls Procession. “It helps people heal from a loss if they can touch something that they believe connects to the spirit world.”

Soto carefully paints bright orange flowers around the edge of her mask, a symbol that, over the centuries, has come to carry the grief of humanity on its fragile petals.



Photo by Emily Ellis

A marigold adorns a traditional Día de los Muertos skeleton that is part of an altar for the University of Arizona’s department of Latin American Studies.

# Paradise Found

## Tucson Artist Exhibiting in Mesa and Los Angeles

By Konner Speth

**D**aniel Martin Diaz sits alone in a booth at Hotel Congress, sipping a cup of tea. His collared shirt and thick beard are matching shades of deep black. A large silver ring shaped like a skull glitters on his finger. He watches the employees who come in and out of the room with a quiet smile, his dark eyes thoughtful behind thick oval glasses.

Diaz is an artist, composer and musician whose visual work reflects a fusion of imagery that seems to grow organically from Latin mysticism and history, Mexican Catholicism, mythology and scientific illustration.

“His art uses spiritual and alchemical symbolism to convey a sense of mystery,” says Greg Golden, one of Daniel’s closest friends since 1999.

Perhaps Diaz’s most visible Tucson work is attached to the parking garage near the Fourth Avenue underpass to downtown. “Desert Splendor” is described by the Tucson Weekly’s Margaret Regan as “a metal swathe of maize-colored plant forms softening the straight lines of Congress Street.”

His current exhibit, “Paradise Lost,” a series of 10 drawings based on his interpretation of John Milton’s poem, is at the Mesa Arts Center through January 15.

Tucson was the beginning of his artistic journey and is still his home base

Diaz’s first gallery, Sacred Machine, opened in downtown Tucson in 2010. He closed it in 2014 when he decided to take his work to Los Angeles. But Tucson drew him back shortly after.

The current exhibit at the Mesa Arts Center has been Diaz’s dream for some time. To create a visual interpretation of John Milton’s epic poem “Paradise Lost” was something he had thought about a lot—and believed would require about 10 years to complete. But when Mesa contacted him, they wanted the 10 drawings completed in two years.

“The moment I committed to them, the most intense anxiety and mixes of emotions kicked into me,” Diaz says.



Photo by Jordan Glenn

Art work by Daniel Diaz adorns the metal facade of the parking garage on 4th Ave. and Congress.

### If you go

- **What:** Diaz will exhibit at La Luz de Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles with his favorite living artist, Norbert Kox, and Hudson Marquez
- **When:** Feb. 3 to 26, 2017.
- **Where:** 4633 Hollywood Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90027

But, he feels the pressure of meeting the deadline showed through his art and helped him create it within the emotions he was feeling. “Maybe it was the best thing that ever happened, to do it in such a small amount of time,” he says. “You can see the anxiety in my work. There’s this energy of the things I’ve been thinking about for the last 10 or 15 years.”

The idea was to illustrate Milton’s “Fall of Man” and “War in Heaven” in contemporary times. Diaz was partly inspired by the situation under which John Milton wrote his epic poem. Milton was dying and felt that it was the best thing that ever happened to him because he had to turn internally, into himself because his reality was no more and

his paradise was lost, Diaz says.

The exhibit is described by the Phoenix New Times as some of the “Best Art We Saw in Metro Phoenix During September 2016.”

“People are generally in awe of the whole body of work,” says exhibit curator Tiffany Fairall. “The large bomb in the center of the room definitely gets a reaction, because it makes such a statement.” In addition, she says, “Visitors have a tendency to gravitate toward imagery and stories that are familiar such as Adam and Eve, anything apocalyptic and the Tower of Babel.”

Next up: Diaz will exhibit at La Luz de Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles with his favorite living artist, Norbert Kox, and Hudson Marquez, Feb. 3 to 26, 2017. The exhibit will feature original pieces by all three artists.

In the future, Diaz sees himself in the film industry. Film is truly a combination of all art forms, he says.

“I want to keep doing what I’m doing,” he says.

"Cosmological Mysteries" by Daniel Diaz



The chalkboard is divided into several sections:

- Top Section:** A large, central diagram featuring a funnel-like structure with a grid of lines, surrounded by various geometric shapes and patterns, including a circular structure with radial lines and another with a grid.
- Bottom Left Section:** Contains mathematical equations and text:
  - $$\mathcal{L}_{\text{Gauge}} = -\frac{1}{4} F_{\mu\nu} F^{\mu\nu} - \frac{1}{4} (D_\mu B_\nu - \partial_\nu B_\mu)^2$$
  - $$\mathcal{L}_H = D_\mu \phi^\dagger D_\mu \phi - \lambda (\phi^\dagger \phi - \frac{v^2}{2})^2$$
  - $$D_\mu \phi = (\partial_\mu - i g \frac{\tau}{2} - i \frac{1}{2} g' B_\mu) \phi$$
  - $$\phi = \begin{pmatrix} \phi^+ \\ \phi^0 \end{pmatrix}$$
  - Text: "Don't Forget Higgs", "Don't forget to Submit Paper!!", "WILL PRESENT AT ATLAS!", "Two Component Options", "CMS ATLAS CONFERENCE".
- Bottom Center Section:** A diagram showing a funnel-like structure with a grid of lines, similar to the top section but smaller.
- Bottom Right Section:** Contains text and a diagram:
  - Text: "WELCOME", "Integrated Luminosity", "Tevatron ~ 1086 fb<sup>-1</sup>", "LHC ~ 1.95 fb<sup>-1</sup> (+)", "1.96 TeV vs. 7 TeV (4 TeV)".
  - Diagram: A tree diagram showing particle production and decay, with labels like "Tevatron", "Higgs", "Associated Production", "b, c, W", "W, Z".

Courtesy of Daniel Martin Diaz / Photo by Alan Sturm

# National Folk Treasure

## Tucson's Own Lalo Guerrero: Father of Chicano Music



Photo Courtesy of Mark Guerrero

Lalo Guerrero y sus Cinco Lobos perform at a club on Olvera Street in downtown Los Angeles in the '40s.

By Hailey Freeman

While crew members and volunteers haul speakers, cords and amplifiers off the makeshift stage at Tucson Meet Yourself, guitarist George Landa mingles with the handful of fans waiting in line to buy his band's CD.

Clad in a black newsboy hat and bowling shirt adorned with flames, Landa graciously accepts compliments from his supporters.

He and his fellow Los Nawdy Dawgs band members have just wrapped an hour-long tribute performance honoring the musicianship of Tucson-born Eduardo "Lalo" Guerrero, otherwise known as the Father of Chicano Music.

Lalo is recognized as a National Folk Treasure by the Smithsonian Institution. He pioneered a number of musical techniques and styles, becoming the first musician to incorporate Chicano slang into his lyrics. He learned this slang, or *caló*, growing up in Tucson, according to his son Mark Guerrero. He also frequently incorporated multiple tempos or musical genres into one song.

This year would have marked Lalo's 100th birthday. Born in Barrio Viejo to a large Mexican family, his mother taught him to play the guitar at a young age and as a teenager, Lalo played with the Tucson quartet Los Carlistas. The group's successes included a part in the 1937 Gene Autry film "Boots and Saddles" and representing Tucson at the 1939

New York World's Fair, according to Mark. Shortly after moving to southern California, Lalo helped shape the music scene that came to be known as Chicano rock.

"No one else's music had the originality and diversity of his music," Mark Guerrero says.

Mark, who is an accomplished musician in his own right, began recording and touring with his father at age 14. It was not until he graduated with a degree in Chicano studies from California State University, Los Angeles, however, that he "started incorporating Latin rhythms and Chicano themes into [his] original music."

Mark appreciates the fact that numerous rock bands, trios and mariachis continue to

play his father's music.

"I'm very pleased with musical tributes to my dad," Mark says. "He's considered the 'Father of Chicano Music' because he truly is and there is no one else who comes close to claiming the title."

During his career, Lalo recorded over 700 songs in nearly every Latin genre including salsa, banda and cumbia. His songwriting and recording knew no limits; he penned and performed parodies, political tunes and even children's songs, according to Mark.

One song in particular, "Canción Mexicana," is informally considered Mexico's second national anthem. The tune embodies love for Mexican identity, life, culture and history.

"Here is a Tucson-born Chicano who writes a song that is true Mexican to the core," says reporter Ernesto "Neto" Portillo. "That song is enshrined in Mexican culture and is accepted in Mexico as one of its own."

Before Lalo, Mexican music was rarely played outside of Hispanic communities like Tucson, El Paso and L.A. during World War II. As a young musician based in southern California, Lalo introduced other parts of the country to mariachi music, according to Portillo.

"He began traveling with mariachi groups to faraway places like Kansas and the greater southwest," Portillo jokes. "He took Mexican music to little towns and small cities."

Lalo also wrote a number of songs related to the Zoot Suit era, a period of heightened nationalism and anti-foreign attitude during the 1940s-1950s. The Pachucos, Mexican-Americans who dressed in zoot suits and used Chicano slang, were especially singled out.

The Zoot Suit Riots were confrontations in which young minorities, especially Mexican-Americans, became the target of attacks because they "dressed different, listened to different music and looked foreign," Portillo says.

Songs like "Los Chucos Suaves" and "Marihuana Boogie" became pivotal songs to the Pachuco subculture.

In addition, Lalo supported the United Farmworkers in the 1960s. He composed several songs about social injustice and even wrote a corrido for Cesar Chavez. His parody "No Chicanos on TV" addressed the lack of television and movie roles for Hispanics in the United States.

"He was at the forefront, musically and artistically, of Chicano civil rights music," Portillo says.

Portillo believes Lalo made it possible for Mexican-American musicians to be accepted on a wider scale.

"Musically speaking, they took his persona and his trailblazing route," Portillo says.



Photo Courtesy of Mark Guerrero

Lalo Guerrero plays his guitar at the age of 86 outside of a building in Barrio Viejo in Tucson where he was born and grew up.

Los Nawdy Dawgs guitarist George Landa also emphasizes the importance of Lalo's contributions.

"We didn't create this; it was given to us," Landa says. "We have to pay respect and honor the man who paved the way for us."

Los Nawdy Dawgs have followed Lalo's path. In 2013, the group created an album entitled "Lalo's Town" featuring a compilation of Lalo's songs as well as the band's original tunes.

The album's inspiration stemmed from an encounter with Mark Guerrero, whom Los Nawdy Dawgs met after attending a screening of a documentary "Lalo Guerrero: The Original Chicano" at the Fox Theatre in Tucson. The band was invited to the event by The Chicano Radio Network.

"One time, I'm lying in my room, minding my own business and I get a vision of Lalo Guerrero saying 'somebody's gotta carry the Chicano music and bring it back,'" Landa says.

Los Nawdy Dawgs subsequently began studying Lalo's work and "putting [their] own spin on the material," according to Landa.

The band took a step back from its Latin Blues roots to extensively immerse itself in Chicano music culture.

Although Los Nawdy Dawgs bassist John Liñán was previously familiar with Lalo's music, he was surprised to learn about the wide variety of genres his work encompassed.

"If you grew up on the south side of Tucson, Lalo was part of your soundtrack," Liñán says.

"But you never get to appreciate it fully until you actually start playing the music."

Aside from his musical talents, Lalo's endearing personality and stage presence appealed to many.

"He had charm, humor and insight on music and people," says Bob "Pepe" Galvez, a former local music store owner.

While running two separate record stores in the 1980s and '90s, Galvez would usually keep for himself any of Lalo's music that came in.

"I probably have one of the biggest collections and I'm very proud of it," Galvez says of his Lalo library.

Galvez, who currently hosts the KXCI radio show "Sabor del Barrio," believes Lalo's natural humor attracted all types of audiences.

"There's No Tortillas" and "Pancho Claus" are among the titles of his parodies.

"He appealed to a variety of people, especially Anglos," Galvez says. "He just cracked people up."

On a more serious note, Lalo grew up in an era when identity formation was next to impossible for a Mexican-American.

Mexican-Americans were neither fully embraced by Mexicans nor Anglo-Americans, according to Tucsonan Julie Godoy, who majored in Latin American Studies and History at Northern Arizona University and attended the Los Nawdy Dawgs concert. To Mexicans, Chicanos had lost their culture and become privileged Americans, or "pochos." To Anglos, Chicanos were viewed as only Mexicans.

Lalo Guerrero was pivotal in breaking away from this mindset and popularizing Chicano culture.

"Chicano music is special because of the bond it has with our cultural heritage," says Godoy. "The music relays lyrics and feelings that build pride."

Although she now calls Tucson home, Godoy was born and raised in Los Angeles. The city served as the foundation upon which the Chicano community thrived and the location to which Lalo relocated to shape the Chicano rock culture.

"I grew up in L.A. where the vatos would cruise the streets of our neighborhoods playing music that would end up making a great impact on my life," Godoy says. "Chicano music reminds me of my culture, my people and my history."

Godoy believes in the importance of introducing young people to the music of Lalo Guerrero.

"Lalo Guerrero's music is as relevant today as it was during the height of his musical career," Godoy says. "The younger generation of today can learn a lot from Lalo's music."

# Los Nawdy Dawgs

## Band Brings Latin Flair to Performances

By Hailey Freeman

George Landa fondly recalls an email he received after his band Los Nawdy Dawgs released their first CD, a compilation of Christmas songs. The message came around mid-January from a woman whose mother had recently passed away. Her mother listened to the CD all throughout the holidays until the very day she died.

“She thanked me because we helped make her mom’s life so peaceful listening to the CD,” Landa says. “And that reinforces my belief in what we play and what we share.”

It didn’t matter that the woman and her mother lived over 1,600 miles away in Terre Haute, Indiana. What matters is that Los Nawdy Dawgs’ music transcends geographic

boundaries and touches people.

Los Nawdy Dawgs is a Tucson-based Latin Blues and Rock band that performs songs in English and Spanish. They have played alongside the likes of Carlos Santana and ZZ Top.

Not bad for a group that traces its roots back to lower Arizona, or as Landa dubs it, “the other L.A.”

Landa was introduced to the Nawdy Dawgs in 2001 after responding to a newspaper ad seeking a lead guitarist.

“I ended up firing everybody, taking over the band and adding the ‘los,’” Landa says.

He enlisted the help of childhood friend James “Eddie” Mansfield, whom he grew up with in Nogales, Arizona. Mansfield took over as drummer and lead vocalist of the band. Percussionist Bill Martinez was added to the roster followed by bassist John Liñán.

Landa says the band members knew they had to keep their day-jobs “to pay the mortgage because there’s no money in the music business.”

“I told the guys we’re gonna learn some originals, do some covers to get some gigs, dress nice, meet some pretty girls and have a great time,” Landa says. “Everybody signed on board, we had a vision and we went for it.”

Mansfield believes the key to the band’s success has been the camaraderie among its members.

“We learn from each other because we’ve been through a lot together and individually,” Mansfield says.

Liñán explains how a lot of their experiences overlap and that each member understands where the others are going.

“We’ve all been around the block enough, not only in life, but musically,” Liñán says. “I’m the newest member of the band but there’s almost a shared common history among us.”

Landa echoes that sentiment.

“It’s an unwritten vocabulary we have that everybody brings to the table,” Landa says. “They all have their story and they trust it enough to share it with you.”

A large part of each member’s story involves where they grew up and what influenced their musical taste.

George Landa realized he wanted to become a musician after watching The Beatles’ first appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show.

“When I saw The Beatles come on and do their thing, I knew exactly where my life was headed,” Landa says.

According to Landa, growing up in Nogales, Arizona, was the best musical education one could receive. A short drive across the border to Nogales, Sonora, offered the chance to play in larger venues for bigger crowds and make more money.

The best musicians played in Nogales, Sonora, because the best bars were there. The brothels had orchestras and bands with horn players that played anything from samba to Sinatra.

*“Oh, and we do it ‘dawgy style’ because we’re Los Nawdy Dawgs.”*

**George Landa**  
Los Nawdy Dogs Guitarist

“Musically, these guys were playing all different singers and that was the best kind of school,” Landa says. “Even though I was taking music theory and trombone in high school, when I got suspended from the basketball team for not cutting my hair, the action was in Mexico.”

Landa started as a roadie for seasoned musicians after he offered to use his truck to haul their equipment between gigs.

“They wouldn’t let me play the first two sets, but by the third set one of them was drunk so I ended up being on guitar, or bass or piano,” Landa says. “All these cats were nine to 10 years older and you better learn how to hang with these guys or they’ll walk all over you.”

Before Los Nawdy Dawgs, Mansfield translated English lyrics to Spanish while touring with a former band throughout California.

“For me, when I started playing, I was a



Photo by Michael Evans

George Landa, guitarist and founder of Los Nawdy Dawgs, sings during one of the band’s practice sessions.



Photo by Michael Evans

John Liñán, the bassist for Los Nawdy Dawgs, plays during a practice session.

guitar player,” Mansfield says. “Later on, the drummer in another band quit so I had to learn the songs in three days.”

Liñán grew up on the south side of Tucson listening to an eclectic mix of Norteño music, R&B and Motown. He developed a preference for playing and listening to metal music in his teens.

“I grew up on a side of town where at home I might listen to Latin stuff and the Beatles, then hang out with my friends and listen to Iron Maiden,” Liñán says. “And meanwhile someone on the street is bumping The Gap Band or Earth, Wind & Fire.”

Liñán did not realize how much this exposure to an array of genres affected him until he started branching out in his early 20s, playing different types of rhythms.

As for his selection in instruments: “I didn’t decide to play the bass,” Liñán says. “The bass chose me.”

The band members recognize the importance of sharing their music with others.

“If God has given you a gift, you need to share it and give as honest as you can,” Landa says. “I’ve always said if it’s an audience of one person or 1000 people,

you make an honest effort and play with everything you got.”

Part of Los Nawdy Dawgs’ success can be traced to their ability to change identities for different gigs and genres.

“We’ve endured,” Landa says. “We keep moving and evolving.”

The band strives to appeal to a variety of audiences. They want to make the listening experience familiar “but still exotic enough to draw you in,” according to Liñán.

“It’s like with Santana, every race and creed, no matter who you are or what you do, no matter what status you are, you’ll dig it,” Liñán says.

Mansfield says the band shares what they have learned with those willing to listen.

“Our music is for everybody, not just certain kinds of people,” Mansfield says.

So far, they have put out four albums: “Xmas Dawgy Style,” “Los Nawdy Dawgs,” “Copas con el Diablo” and “Lalo’s Town.”

Los Nawdy Dawgs play anything from Johnny Cash to Duke Ellington to Latin standards. Their library includes Creedence Clearwater Revival tunes and Lalo Guerrero songs.

In fact, the band performed a tribute concert honoring Lalo Guerrero this month.

They shared the stage with Lalo’s son, Mark, and Ry Cooder at the El Casino Ballroom. Los Nawdy Dawgs revamped Lalo’s material from the 1930s and ‘40s.

The band will also perform a Christmas Eve show at Casino del Sol and is slated to perform in a few festivals next year.

“We are going to get the basics of the arrangements and modernize them a little bit,” Landa says. “We’re gonna go out and have a great show, because it’s a one-time shot.”

One thing is certain: Los Nawdy Dawgs will continue honoring the musicians who paved the way for them.

“We are standing on the shoulders of giants, the ones before us,” Mansfield says. “Without those from the past bringing all the music here, we wouldn’t be anything.”

Landa says his band shares the message that it is okay to have fun and enjoy life.

“If you’ve got nice clothes, nice gear, girls smiling at you, seize the moment and play because it could be gone in a heartbeat,” Landa says.

“Oh, and we do it ‘dawgy style’ because we’re Los Nawdy Dawgs.”

# Local Artist Redefines Chicano Hip-Hop

By Stephen H. Crane III

The small, crowded hookah lounge was filled with an audience awaiting a young artist's first performance.

But the performer's flash drive failed. He had no music to back him up.

"The crazy thing was that I performed acapella," he says. "I went up there and ripped the stage. People were going crazy."

Spit Hell Manuel, AKA Manuel Andrade, may have had a rocky start as a performer, but today the passionate and personable Chicano is making a career for himself in hip-hop. He has four albums available, and has created well over 40 songs.

He grew up and currently lives in Avondale,

gaining attention from fans and the genre was noticed.

Andrade was raised mostly by his great-grandparents who taught him Spanish. "I didn't fit in too often because I was too fat, or too smart, or geeky, or whatever the hell it was that week, you feel me? It's whatever though," Andrade says. "It molded me."

He worked random jobs over the years which furthered his knowledge of Spanish and Chicano culture.

"Chicano is who I am, fam. It's a lifestyle," Andrade says. "It's waking up and knowing you gotta look *bien firme* when you walk out with the homies. It's what I've lived growing up and how I think to this day."

He picked up the saxophone in fifth grade.

started to come closer to the stage, that they realized that I was really about it, you know?" Andrade says.

"Legit, if you aren't a hustler in this game, you aren't going anywhere fast."

Fan Andrew Talahaftewa, 22, says Andrade's music is different from traditional hip-hop. "His music is revolutionary. He breaks the stereotypical 'cholo chicano rapper' barrier," Talahaftewa says. "He speaks about his own life, and he knows how to infuse his emotions with the beat he is listening to."

Another fan, Anthony DeLaura, 23, appreciates Andrade's style because it's thoughtful and real. "Most songs out today are all about partying, drugs, or getting drunk, but Manny's music has meaning behind it," DeLaura says. "You feel like you're listening to someone talk to you one-on-one through a song."

To Andrade, having friends and family enjoy his music puts him at ease. But one of the biggest drawbacks to focusing on his career, he says, is missing time with them. But the effort is paying off.

"He's one of the more diverse and musically intelligent artists I've ever worked with," says Andrade's producer, Ryan Downing.

Andrade describes it differently. "You gotta risk it to get the biscuit, pimp, and it's not meant for everyone who thinks they can rap, this game," he says. "But if you're ready to lose it all before you begin to win, by all means, come on through."

At the end of the day, Andrade is an entertainer. He strives to make people feel what he is feeling through his words and lyrics.

"If it doesn't bump or if I can't smile while listening to it, I won't release it," he says. "My music must trigger emotions and thoughts. Has to, period. Otherwise, it's garbage to me."



Photo by medafOracle Photography

Manuel Andrade, also known as Spit Hell Manuel, poses for a promotional photo in Downtown Phoenix.

Arizona, which he describes as pretty rough.

"They told me, being Mexican in rap ain't cool, so I'm here to kick doors down and break all the rules," says Andrade in his song, "Feel It."

Chicano hip-hop has been around since the 1990s, but was not widely known for over a decade. For a long time fans referred to it as "underground's underground," meaning that the genre went unnoticed by the mainstream media.

It was not until around 2012 when Chicano artists from Arizona like MC Magic, Pyro AZMB, and now Spit Hell Manuel, started

He wrote his first song in eighth grade when he collaborated with his older brother to compose music for a friend who had died. After sharing the song, students at his school wanted copies.

"Music was just an expression of what I couldn't say out loud," says Andrade, who is now 22 years old. "And nowadays it's still a way for me to be myself and to say what I truly feel inside."

Getting to where he is now was strenuous, Andrade says, but also intimidating. He felt people looked down on him.

"It wasn't until I started to spit that they

## Lyrics by Spit Hell Manuel

- "Homie told me that the love is only temporary; They only love you when the need for you is necessary."  
— from "Dead Flowers."
- "Lord Father protect me from all that hates me; Protect me from the people shaped demons that would break me."  
— from "Rosary."



# Redefiniendo Chicano Hip-Hop

Por Stephen H. Crane III  
Traducido por Hiriana N. Gallegos



Foto por medaOracle Photography

Manuel Andrade se para arriba de un techo por donde se puede ver el valle de Downtown Phoenix.

La pequeña sala de narguile estaba llena de espectadores que esperaban presenciar el primer concierto de un artista joven.

Pero la memoria USB del artista no funcionó. No tenía la música de fondo.

“Lo más absurdo es que canté a capela”, compartió el cantante. “Me subí al escenario y le di con todo. La gente se alocó”.

Spit Hell Manuel, alias Manuel Andrade, tal vez tuvo un comienzo escabroso como artista, pero hoy en día el chicano apasionado y simpático está desempeñando su carrera en hip-hop. Tiene cuatro discos disponibles y ha creado más de 40 canciones.

Andrade creció y actualmente vive en Avondale, Arizona, el cual él describe como algo difícil.

“Me dijeron que ser mexicano en rap no esta de onda, así que aquí estoy para tumbar puertas y quebrar las reglas”, lo dice Andrade en su canción, “Feel It”.

El hip-hop chicano ha estado presente desde los 90's, pero por más de un siglo no era muy conocido. Por mucho tiempo los fanáticos le llamaban “el subterráneo del subterráneo”, que significa que el género pasó desapercibido de los medios de comunicación populares.

No fue hasta el 2012 cuando artistas

chicanos como MC Magic, Pyro AZMB y ahora Spit Hell Manuel, empezaron a recibir atención de los fans y el género fue conocido.

Los bisabuelos de Andrade fueron quienes lo criaron la mayor parte de su vida y quienes le enseñaron español.

“Muy pocas veces encajaba con los demás porque era muy gordo, o porque era muy listo, o bicho raro, o lo que fuera esa semana, ¿me entiendes? Pero lo superé”, expresa Andrade. “Me moldeó”.

Tuvo varios empleos a lo largo de los años ampliando su conocimiento en la cultura mexicana y chicana.

“Yo soy Chicano, carnal. Es un estilo de vida”, Andrade agrega. “Es despertar en las mañanas y saber que te tienes que mirar bien firme cuando sales con los cuates. Es como he vivido al crecer y como pienso hoy en día”.

Empezó a tocar el saxofón en quinto grado. Escribió su primera canción en octavo grado cuando colaboró con su hermano mayor para componer música dirigida a un amigo que había fallecido. Después de compartir la canción, los estudiantes de la escuela querían copias.

“La música era una manera de expresar lo que no podía decir en voz alta”, explica Andrade, que ahora tiene 22 años de edad.

“Y hasta el día de hoy aún es una manera en la que puedo ser yo mismo y decir lo que en verdad siento por dentro”.

El poder llegar hasta donde se encuentra actualmente fue extenuante, indica Andrade, pero también amedrentador. Él sentía que las personas lo miraban con desdén.

“No fue hasta que empecé a cantar que empezaron a acercarse al escenario, se dieron cuenta que en verdad era lo mío, ¿sabes?” Andrade añadió.

“En serio, que si no eres un trafagón en esta vida, no llegarás rápido a ningún lado y punto”.

El fanático Andrew Talahaftewa, de 22 años, dice que la música de Andrade es diferente del hip-hop tradicional. “La música de él es revolucionaria. Él quebranta la barrera del estereotipo del ‘rapero chicano cholo’”, Talahaftewa agregó. “Habla acerca de su propia vida, y sabe cómo infundir sus emociones con el ritmo que escucha”.

Otro fanático, Anthony DeLaura, de 23 años de edad, valora el estilo de Andrade porque es profundo y verdadero. “La mayoría de las canciones que se escuchan hoy en día son todas acerca de fiestas, drogas o de emborracharse, pero la música de Manny tiene significado detrás de sus canciones”, DeLaura opina. “Sientes como si estuvieras escuchando a alguien hablar personalmente contigo a través de una canción”.

En tener amigos y familia, tranquiliza a Andrade por que disfrutan su música. Pero comenta que una de las desventajas más grandes de enfocarse en su carrera es que no pasa mucho tiempo con su familia y amigos. Pero su esfuerzo está valiendo la pena.

“Es uno de los artistas más diversos y musicalmente inteligentes con quien he trabajado”, indicó el productor de Andrade, Ryan Downing.

Andrade lo describe diferente, “Debes de tomar riesgos para obtener frutos, chulo, y no es para todos que piensan que pueden cantar rap, en este juego si estás listo para perderlo todo antes de que empezar a ganar, por supuesto, adelante”.

Al final del día, Andrade es un artista. Su meta es hacer que la gente sienta lo que él siente a través de sus palabras y versos.

“Si no suena bien o si no puedo sonreír después de escucharlo no lo puedo lanzar”, comparte Andrade. “Mi música tiene que provocar emoción y pensamientos. Tiene que hacerlo, sin vuelta de hoja. De otra manera lo considero basura.”

# International Players Take Gaming to the Next Level

By Stephen H. Crane III

Video games are usually just a pastime for most players around the world, a way to unwind and escape from reality at the end of a long day. But for some, gaming is a serious business, rising to highly competitive levels with international tournaments and thousands of dollars in prizes.

In Mexico, however, competitive gaming goes beyond language, ethnicity and earnings to create new relationships and opportunities.

“I made my best friends in this community, and we support each other,” says Werk Miguel Yee Soto, owner of Red Gibbon, an eSports gaming team based in Mexicali state. “Language barriers have never gotten in the way because Smash is like music or religion.”

Smash Bros.—or Super Smash Bros.—is a popular fighting video game series created by Masahiro Sakurai in 1999. For players on both sides of the border, however, it has come to be much more than a “kid’s game.”

All around the world, Smash Bros. has become a way for people to meet others who share their same interests. For most players in Mexico traveling is difficult, so meeting fellow players in person can be hard. Smash Bros. tournaments are often held on weekends at hobby shops, coffee houses and occasionally bars. At these tournaments, people can play together for fun or to compete, sparking new relationships through a single round of gaming.

“I’ve been lucky and I can say I have yet to meet a bad person in it,” says Fernando Ruiz, the number one player from Caborca, Sonora. “All the way to U.S.A. and South America, every single player I met have been really good persons.”

## An Organized Melee

Despite its significance in the lives of players around the world, the Super Smash Bros. series is a nontraditional fighting game based on a very simple concept. Super Smash Bros. Melee, or Melee, was released in 2001, and has been the most popular in terms of tournaments and competitions. All games in



Photo Courtesy of Red Gibbon Gaming

Members of Red Gibbon Gaming play a Nintendo game called “Super Smash Bros” during a competition in front of many eager viewers.

the series features iconic characters spanning from different video games, such as Mario from Super Mario Bros. and Pikachu from Pokémon.

The object of Smash Bros. is to choose a character, and then proceed to use attacks to knock other players off a stage. Players start with a percentage count of zero, and as they are attacked, the number increases. The higher the number, the easier it is to get knocked off the stage.

As simple as it may sound, Melee has many technical components to it, which players have studied and learned through hours of practicing with others. Even after 15 years, the game has a tremendous following, with people of all ages playing Melee all over the globe.

“It’s hard to get proper training if you play against the same person all the time,” says Ruiz. “Even if they are good, you can’t improve that much if you don’t play other people.”

Although most players are in it for the

sense of community, it is possible to win money in Melee competitions.

Today the best players are making money from the tournaments that are held around Melee alone. The communities these events have created are what is known as electronic sports, or also the eSports community.

Through eSports, players from all over the globe can play video games as if they were professional athletes. They can join teams, become sponsored and play for money.

Over the years, Mexican Melee players have begun to show their skills, and the Melee community in Mexico is thriving.

Ruiz, 22, goes by the name “Far!” in the Melee community. He is a player for the eSports team Red Gibbon. Ruiz lives in Caborca, Sonora, and finds it difficult to travel from Mexico to Arizona for Melee tournaments.

“Traveling and attending to tournaments is expensive and I don’t always get my worth back with tournaments winnings,” Ruiz says.

Despite these hardships, Ruiz claims

Melee has easily made the biggest impact on his life, more than any other thing he has spent time on.

“I had the chance to travel to a bunch of places to play, from different parts of USA to tournaments in Brazil and Chile,” Ruiz says. “I also got featured on a Red Bull eSports Tweet after one of my wins.”

## A Friendly Competition

Red Gibbon is a relatively new eSports team, and most players hail from Mexicali state. The team is ranked higher than any other team in Mexico for Melee. Owned and operated by Werk Miguel Yee Soto, Red Gibbon does not only play Melee. It has players who play two other versions of the Super Smash Bros. games, as well as King of Fighters. The players still remain friendly regardless.

Teams are not necessary to play eSports, but they make it easier to meet others with the same passion and practice. Players also

earn sponsorships if their performance is above average with tournament winnings, and the teams can pay them depending on their personal win record. Teams create opportunities for the players they recruit.

“To keep it simple, the Smash community gave me a chance to be somebody,” says Felipe Carmona, the media director of Red Gibbon. “They are gonna be there for me no matter where I am from, no matter my sex, or my religion.”

Ruiz says the Melee community is growing in Mexico, due to the success of competitive gaming as a whole.

Many tournaments are held every week, and meeting famous players is always a perk for him. He claims almost all of the top players are really good friends, even if they don’t live in the same area of Mexico.

Daniel Gomez, a competitive Melee player, says Tucson is a great spot for tournaments.

“I’ve had the opportunity to play with and make friends with players from Japan,

Mexico and Europe,” says Gomez. “It’s almost as if we share an unspoken language through the game itself.”

The biggest tournament of the year is held annually in Las Vegas, Nevada, and is known as Evolution, but also referred to as EVO. Red Gibbon players participated in EVO 2016. Top player Javier Dantes Ruiz took on many top players of America. Javier Ruiz himself is ranked as the best player of Mexico and is also a member of Red Gibbon.

The eSports communities continue to grow, with more players becoming involved from countries such as China, Japan and Canada. However, Latin America still remains one of the biggest areas for highly ranked players, and as time goes on, the numbers are likely to rise.

“The competition is the best part,” says Ruiz.

“Attending tournaments, playing, losing, grinding and coming back to win has to be one of the greatest feelings I ever had.”



Photo Courtesy of Red Gibbon Gaming

A crowd of gamers watch as two players battle during a competition in Tucson.

# Car Clubs Signify Identity for Chicanos in South Tucson

By Ciara Biscoe

Old school music from Michael Jackson's "Thriller" to Selena's "Como La Flor" blares from speakers next to the dancing DJ as he hypes up the crowd. Across the DJ booth, on the other end of the parking lot, grinning parents and their screaming kids exit a haunted house.

Chuck Peralta stands in the middle of the undersized parking lot at the John Valenzuela Youth Center, surveying the scene and smiling. Customized cars ranging from 1964 Impalas to 2012 Chevy Camaros are parked parallel to one another. For years, Nemesis Car Club members have been a part of Peralta's life. Now, they are helping their community by celebrating what brings them together: cars.

Peralta has worked for the youth center for over 30 years, and the Car Show & Halloween Bash is one of his favorite events. Every year, for eight years, several

car clubs have come together to help raise money for the kids at the youth center. Everyone pays a \$10 to \$15 fee to have their car in the show, and the proceeds go towards supplies for class activities and sports equipment.

"It's one big community coming together to see and support the center, and to support our youth," Peralta says.

Car clubs have been a part of Chicano culture in Tucson since the 1970s. Peralta himself has been a member of Nemesis for more than 10 years. Each club, bearing names like Nemesis, Old Memories and the Sophisticated Few, is set apart by its own unique shirt, jacket or license plate frames.

For members who have been active in their clubs for years, these groups have become part of their identity.

"This whole car club is like a family. We are like a piece of a puzzle," says Sebastian Paz, president of the Nemesis Car Club.

In many cases, members inherited their love of cars from their fathers, grandfathers,

cousins or even uncles.

"I have a 1970 K5 Orange Blazer," Paz says. "I've had this Blazer since I was 15 years old. Me and my dad paid \$4300 for it and it took me three years to put everything together."

He enjoys showing off his truck and is even more excited to see his two little girls, dressed like a mermaid and a doll, jump in the Blazer and pose for pictures.

Celestino Fernandez, a sociology professor at the University of Arizona, is a fan of car shows himself. He has judged many competitions and has even participated with the 1963 Chevrolet Impala Super Sport that he restored and a 1966 Chevy pick-up. Some of his research focuses on what cars mean to both American and Chicano culture.

"In some respects, car culture in South Tucson is no different than car culture anywhere else," Fernandez says. "What's different is the way in which cars are customized. In South Tucson one finds lots of lowriders, automobiles of any model or brand customized in the traditional lowrider style: lowered to the ground with a great deal of attention to detail, elaborate paint jobs, small steering wheels, spoke rims and more."

In the United States, car shows became popular in the 1950s, while lowriders became a trend in Tucson around the 1970s. The distinctive car is now viewed as a sign of independence, status and group identity within Chicano communities, according to Fernandez.

A completed custom-made car is satisfying enough for many men and women, but showing it off with other car enthusiasts makes popping the hood much more meaningful.

"It's like a brotherhood. It doesn't matter what color or what name, some put the colors on their car or we put it on our arms," says Alfred Montano, who has been a member of the Old Memories club for 14 years.

"At the end of the day, when it comes down to it, we're a brotherhood, all of us."



Photo by Ciara Biscoe

A 1970 K5 Orange Blazer owned by Sebastian Paz, President of Nemesis Car Club, was on display at the Car Show & Halloween Bash, an event that helps raise money for the John Valenzuela Youth Center.

# A New Path Along an Old Route

By Christina Duran

The year was 1913. On a December day, builders finished the construction of a domed building lined with columns. Situated in the middle of a desert landscape, this building would become the epicenter of all hustle and bustle for the residents of a young Tucson.

For 11 years, the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad depot brought economic prosperity to Tucson because of its use in the nearby copper industry. Today the depot still stands on Congress Street just east of I-10, its railroad

tracks mostly hidden beneath the dry dirt where they occasionally peek out raw and bare, like the skeletal remains of a sleeping snake winding down alongside I-10.

The cities of Tucson and South Tucson and the Regional Transportation Authority plan to memorialize the train that once chugged along those tracks with a six-mile asphalt path that connects open green spaces, with funding by the RTA. The El Paso and Southwestern Greenway path will follow the old railroad tracks starting from the intersection of University Boulevard and Main Avenue, down and east through South Tucson as far as the Kino Sports Complex.

At the moment, some segments of the path have been completed and others are in the planning stages, awaiting construction.

In March 2017, work will begin to pave the greenway from the south side of 29th Street then down along 11th Avenue, past the Historic Railroad bridge to 10th Avenue, taking the opportunity to follow the city of South Tucson's current sewage construction.

Mick Jensen, city planner of South Tucson, believes the path is a great opportunity for the city and has the possibility of not only providing a larger green space, but preserving and displaying the culture of South Tucson.

"It's going to be so close to [South Tucson residents]," Jensen says. "We want them to like what they see."

At the House of Neighborly Services in South Tucson, Kerri Lopez says

residents who are aware of the project are excited. "It's a great opportunity for us,"

Lopez says.

"It might even bring back some families into South Tucson."

A major appeal of the project is the prospect of more green space. Other than school playgrounds and small nodes of parks, like the one at the House of Neighborly Services, South Tucson has few parks.

At the moment, Jensen has an eye on a plot of land located at the corner of 35th Street and Eighth Avenue, currently owned by the Chevron Corporation. He says the land can be purchased with \$150,000 from the Neighborhood Reinvestment fund passed by the citizens of South Tucson.

The triangular-shaped land of approximately 20,000 acres is barren, but Jensen envisions a mini-park with lush green vegetation and a massive art installation that portrays the history and culture of South Tucson. Tentatively, Jensen says art by Las Artes, an education program that is responsible for the mosaics of South Tucson, would be the perfect organization to contribute to the project.

Historic recognition and preservation is a large part of the project. The first pages of the master plan show sections of the path that would honor historical landmarks like the Roundhouse on the corner of West 25th Street, east of I-10, a curved brick building where as many as 11 train engines were once serviced. They may also honor the old Auction House on 29th Street just off of I-10, which once held livestock exchanges.

Signs will be put in place to educate people about these historical locations as they travel along the path. Sections of the path will also expose parts of the railroad tracks, a reminder of the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad train.

The biking community is enthusiastic about the greenway.

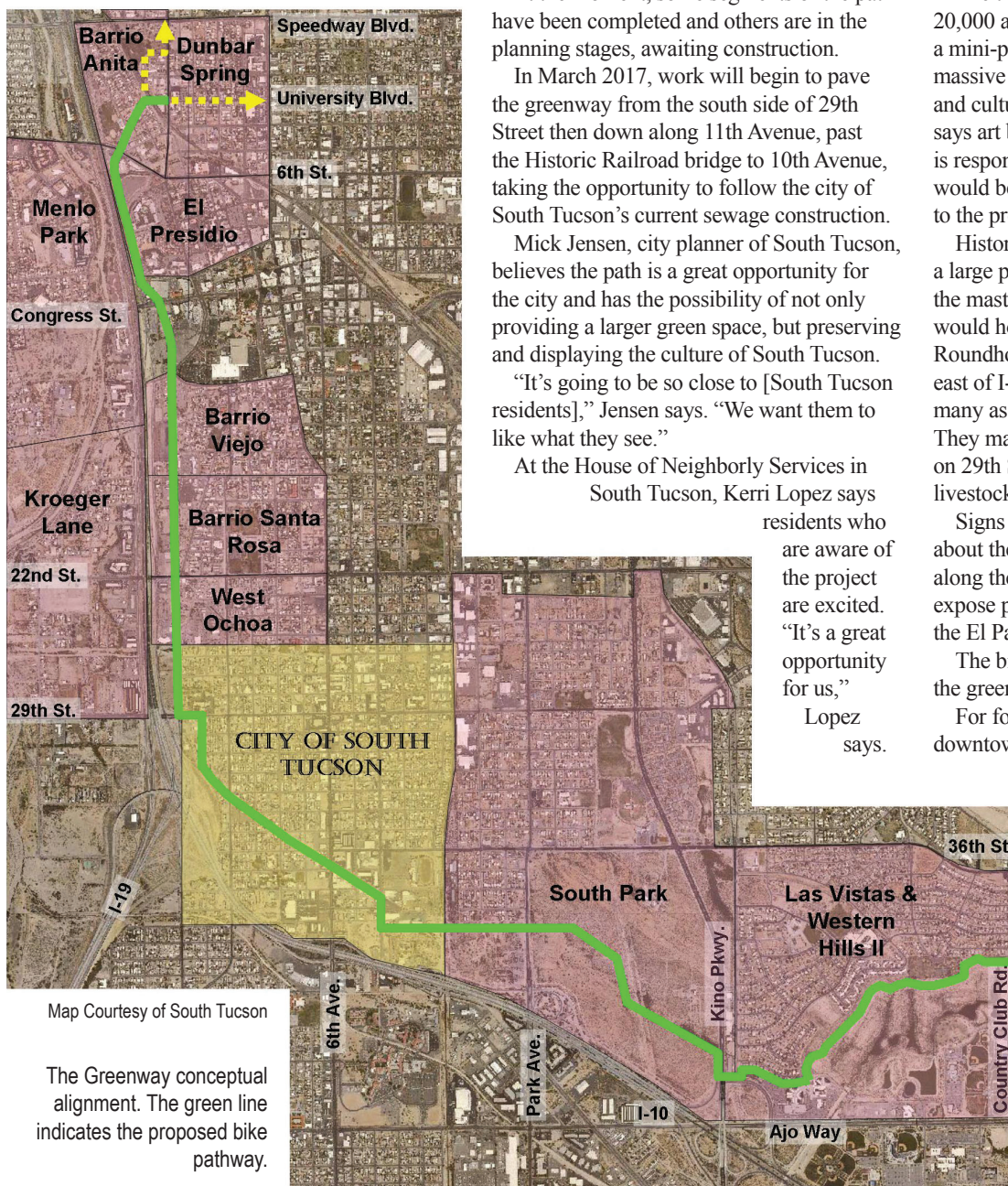
For four years the Cyclovia route went from downtown through South Tucson, starting in 2011.

"It'll be a great connector," Kylie Walzak, lead program manager and Cyclovia Tucson coordinator of Living Streets Alliance.

She says the greenway project will provide more opportunities for people who want to bike and for more events like Cyclovia in South Tucson.

"It's just the beginning," Lopez says.

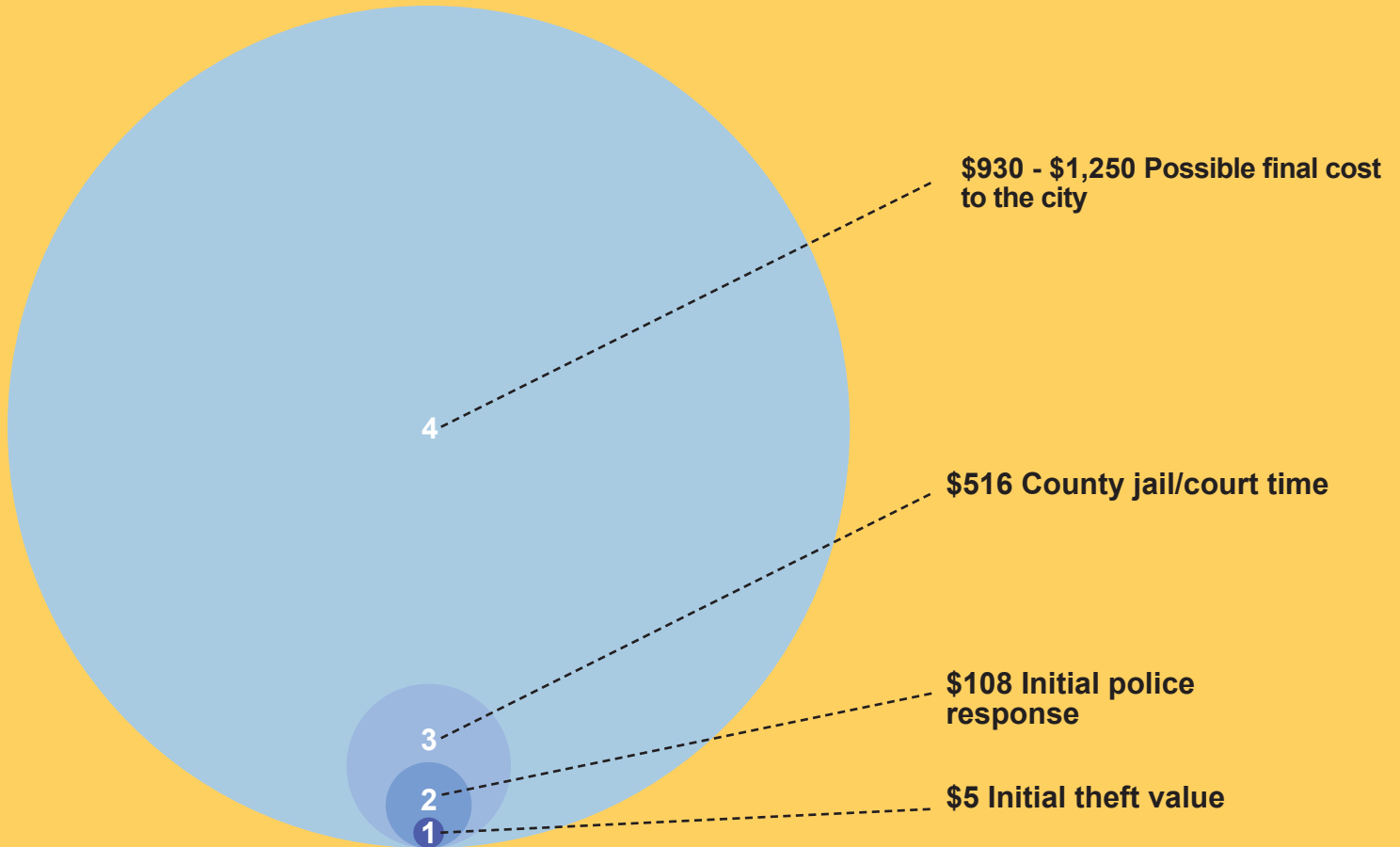
"And it's so exciting."



Map Courtesy of South Tucson

The Greenway conceptual alignment. The green line indicates the proposed bike pathway.

# Minor Crime, Major Headache



By Michael Evans

It happens several times a week. A call comes into police dispatch; another person has shoplifted from a local Walgreens or grocery store. Two police officers are sent to the scene of the crime.

The person has lifted a bottle of water or some junk food that costs no more than five dollars, but the officers still have the duty to process the theft, resulting in a mass expenditure of time and money by the city.

South Tucson has a 511 percent higher crime rate than the national average. However, of the 905 crimes reported annually, 92.5 percent are listed under “theft,” according to the FBI’s uniform crime reports.

“I don’t think it gives an accurate portrayal,” said Michael Ford, the chief of police for South Tucson.

Ford believes that there should be a distinction between property crime, both commercial and residential, and crimes against a person, or violent crimes.

“People assume crime means homicide,

aggravated assault or sexual assault,” Ford said.

However, an overwhelming number of thefts in South Tucson are under \$300. This means that much of the responses by South Tucson officers are for petty theft.

The cost for the city to respond, charge, book and jail is out of proportion to the minor crime committed.

The initial response for shoplifting takes two officers away from patrolling for an hour or two, including the time to return to headquarters to fill out all necessary paperwork. That means the initial response for a \$5 shoplifting call results in a net loss to the city of \$108, when the officers salaries of approximately \$27 an hour are factored in.

It takes approximately 30 to 40 minutes to review the city police database to determine if the individual is a repeat offender, a first time offender, or has an outstanding warrant.

“Imagine if we are doing four to five of these a week,” Ford said. “There are so many man hours that aren’t being spent for community policing, neighborhood

preservation, or other preventative measures.”

If the shoplifter is placed into custody, they are driven to Pima County Jail where they are booked for one day at a fee of approximately \$300. It is an additional \$90 for each day the person is held until their appearance in court.

Once the person is brought to court for arraignment and trial, officers are responsible for transport to and from the jail and courthouse. In addition, officers may have to testify and fill out more paperwork. To keep the two officers in court for a minimum of four hours would cost the police department an additional \$216 and distract officers from doing more productive work.

“It hurts us,” Ford said.

If a person is arrested and booked but has to undergo treatment or detox before appearing in court, they could spend a week in jail which would cost \$930, Ford said. Totaled up for the city of South Tucson, a report of a \$5 theft, may result in a minimum cost of \$516. If it is a repeat offender it could cost the city a minimum of \$930.

# South Tucson Election Results



By Angelo Lavo

As the wind blew 75-foot limit signs, Sun Van drivers walked disabled riders to the polling doors and volunteers helped voters find their correct polling place via a mobile app, Election Day at the John A. Valenzuela Youth Center, Pima County polling precinct 47, was, "The very model of civility," noted Annie Franklin, a volunteer election observer.

If anything, the atmosphere at the youth center was a stark contrast to the divisive campaigning and rhetoric that dominated the news cycles for the better part of the past year.

Voting results from South Tucson's polling place also heavily contrasted the presidential election outcome, illuminating Hispanic voter preferences in a predominantly Latino city situated close to the U.S. and Mexico border.

The results to the right are from South Tucson's polling precinct only, the final county and state results are not represented.

"People are waking up and finally understanding we live in a republic, we live in a business," Salvador Camacho, 45, said after exiting precinct 47. He expressed the need for a constitutionalist in office, hinting at his support for Trump.

"I need to do something," Yaritza Lopez, 20, said, "We're doomed if Trump gets in." Lopez agreed with the minimum wage increase but opposed recreational marijuana because she has siblings she does not want exposed to it.

Alba Mesa, 37, felt this election cycle shined a light on the importance of researching before voting. She cited instances of news distortion in mainstream media and online.

"I feel good that we're [Hispanics] finally getting out," Cesar Aguirre, 34, who recently had his right to vote restored, said, "But sad that it took a character like Trump to do it."

## TUSD Governing Board

### Top Three

Cam Juarez	857
Lori Riegel	542
Rachael Sedgwick	436

## Polling Precinct #47

Registered Voters: 3,190

Ballots Cast: 1,745

Voter Turnout: 54.7 Percent

### Key

- Democrat
- Republican
- Other

### Presidential Vote

- Clinton
- Trump



### Senate

- Kirkpatrick
- McCain



### House of Representatives

- Grijalva
- Write-In



### Pima County Sheriff

- Nanos
- Napier



### Proposition 205 - Recreational Marijuana



### Proposition 206 - Increase Minimum Wage to \$12/hr



### Proposition 441 - Increase Cap on City Expenditures



### Proposition 443 - Extend Franchise Agreement with Southwest Gas



### Proposition 453 - Grant Franchise to TEP



Celebrating 40 years of covering South Tucson & the Latino community

# EL INDEPENDIENTE

