

## Community Highlights!

### La Fuerza Geo Team

La Fuerza Geo Team in **78745** held its first meeting of the year. Council Member Ann Kitchen, staff member Ken Craig and the Assistant Division Manager from the Austin Code Department were all present. The group discussed concerns related to safety, traffic, code compliance, green spaces, and trash, all of which affect physical activity and food access in their neighborhood. Community leaders and city officials pledged to work together to create a happy and healthy community and have next steps planned for an ongoing collaboration.



### Park Funding Wins: Ponciana Park, Williamson Creek, Houston Elem.

Ponciana Park and Williamson Creek Central Greenbelt have both received **significant funding** from the City to develop their green spaces! **Ponciana Park** received \$200,000 through the City of Austin's Parkland Dedication Fees to install a playground and implement the park's master plan. **Williamson Creek Central Greenbelt** was awarded nearly \$60,000 through the Neighborhood Partnering Program grant to develop the beginning portions of a trail system for the Williamson Creek Greenbelt. This project, **Connect Garrison** is a multi-year vision drawn up by GAVA leaders with their community to make physical activity accessible from the Northwest corner of their zip code all the way to their district Park. The **Houston School Park Adoption Team** was also awarded a GAVA Mini-grant to install permanent goal posts on the park's soccer field that will be available to the community and for the Police Activity League children's soccer program. Big congratulations, teams!

### Soccer at St. Elmo School Park

Thanks to a GAVA mini-grant and the efforts of teens from Sierra Ridge and Sierra Vista, soccer goals will be installed at **St. Elmo School Park** on **Saturday, Feb 20th**. Teens leveraged coaching The City of Austin, the teens, and their parents will be coming out to paint the lines and celebrate their victory. These teenagers have formed a competitive soccer team with the help of the Police Activities League (PAL). Thank you to Cesar Lopez for volunteering to be their coach, and congratulations, teams!

### Farm Stands offering Double Dollars for Produce Purchases

The Sierra Ridge and Cunningham farm stands are now offering Double Dollar for SNAP purchases (\$2 toward fruits and veggies for every \$1 of SNAP spent)! Stop by Sierra Ridge on **Wednesdays** from **3-5pm** or Cunningham Elementary on **Fridays** from **2:45 - 4pm** to purchase fresh, affordable produce from Farmshare Austin!



The **78744 Resident Farm Stand Committee** is working to start a neighborhood farm stand in this area. We would like to know your preferences. Please fill out the online survey below. Paper copies available in English and Spanish at the Mendez Family Resource Center! Survey Link: <http://goo.gl/forms/q4Ub2zyIHA>

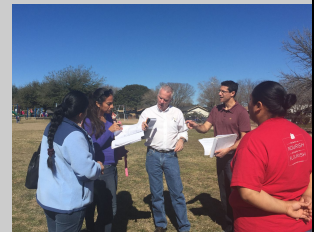
## More Community Highlights!

### Armadillo Park

Leaders from **Armadillo Park Neighborhood Association (APNA)**, Kim Gamble and Margot Rochon, started building a site plan for Armadillo Park. The plan includes **four beautification events** as well as a search for more team leaders. Congratulations on their hard work beautifying this nature reserve!

### Parks and Recreation Department Tour of Area Parks

In January, park and creek teams continued their advocacy work related to the Park Block Grant. Team leaders held a meeting with PARD to discuss the distribution of these funds, and they also conducted site visits of green spaces in 78744 and 78745 to determine which priorities could be funded through Park Block Grant funds. Leaders from park and creek adoption teams participated in these site tours at: Onion Creek Metropolitan Park, Ponciana Park, Houston School Park, Odom School Park, Joslin School Park, St. Elmo School Park, Armadillo Park, Williamson Creek Central Greenbelt, Cunningham School Park, Franklin Park, Garrison Park, Kendra Page Park, and Dove Springs District Park. Congratulations to all teams on their amazing work!



### "Vecinos Unidos" Become a Neighborhood Watch Team

GAVA Geographic team, Vecinos Unidos de Wagon Bend, completed the Austin Police Department's "Train the Trainer" program and will be an official neighborhood watch team in 78744 along Wagon Bend. This resident team is dedicated to creating a safer neighborhood where their families and children can be safe to exercise and play outdoors along E. Williamson Creek.

### Brighter Bites

Over the course of eight weeks in 2015, Brighter Bites distributed more than **373,000 pounds of produce** to nearly **1640 families** in the 78744 & 78745 zip codes! The fall cycle was a huge success with parent and community volunteers/leaders playing a significant role in that success. Families, teachers, and principals are thrilled with Brighter Bites and the tremendous impact it has made on their community in such a short time. The Brighter Bites spring cycle in Austin will extend from **January 18 to March 11, 2016** at the following elementary schools: Casey, Cunningham, Houston, Langford, Odom, Perez, Pleasant Hill, Rodriguez and Widen.

### 1/4 Cent Funding for Traffic & Mobility and APNA Geo Team

Very special recognition to the APNA leaders, Henrietta Cameron-Mann, Angy Hardy and Maria del Rosario Gutierrez, for their work to secure funding for traffic projects in their neighborhood. After gathering many traffic concerns from different parts of the neighborhood, the team was active in representing these needs for prioritization to their Council District Office in order to have a more walkable neighborhood. **As a result, out of 20 projects funded via the 1/4 Cent Fund in District 2, 9 were awarded within the APNA boundaries. A total amount of \$501,400 is going to be invested in the improvement of sidewalks and a pedestrian hybrid beacon within the APNA's area in 78745.**

## 78745 Calendar

Meeting / Event	Date	Contact
<b>Weekly soccer game in 78745</b> Let's play soccer, meet neighbors, build soccer activities and a park adoption team for our neighborhood park!	<b>Every Sunday!</b> 4:00 PM St. Elmo Park 4312 S 1st, Austin, TX 78745	<b>Mariano Di Vincenzo</b> GAVA Community Organizer at FC 713-854-2627 mariano.divincenzo@foundcom.org
<b>Sierra Ridge Farm Stand</b> Stop by every week for fresh, affordable, in-season produce! Now offering double dollars for SNAP purchases. Also inquire about volunteer opportunities!	<b>Every Wednesday!</b> 3:00 - 5:00 PM Sierra Ridge Apartments 201 W St. Elmo Rd	<b>Simone Benz</b> Community Outreach Coordinator at SFC 214-449-9957 simone@sustainablefoodcenter.org
<b>Cunningham Farm Stand</b> Stop by every week for fresh, affordable, in-season produce! Now offering double dollars for SNAP purchases. Also inquire about volunteer opportunities!	<b>Every Friday!</b> 2:45 - 4:00 PM Cunningham Elementary School Corner of Berkeley and Buffalo Pass	<b>Simone Benz</b> Community Outreach Coordinator at SFC 214-449-9957 simone@sustainablefoodcenter.org
<b>It's My Park Day Volunteer Registration</b> Help us maintain and improve your local park by volunteering for one of our It's My Park Day projects. Check out the full list of projects to find one that's right for you, and be sure to recruit your friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The more the merrier!	<b>Tuesday, February 9</b> Volunteer Registration Opens <a href="http://austinparks.org/volunteer/impd">http://austinparks.org/volunteer/impd</a> <b>Saturday, March 5</b> It's My Park Day Event!	<b>Cynthia Rodriguez</b> Austin Parks Foundation GAVA Physical Activity Community Organizer Cynthia@austinparks.org
<b>78745 &amp; 78744 Physical Activity Sector Meeting</b> Join us for a combined 78744/78745 PA Sector Meeting! Teams will continue to collaborate about Park Block Grant funding in preparation for the next Open Space Committee meeting.	<b>Thursday, February 11</b> 6:30-8:00 PM Marathon Kids 2512 S IH 35 Frontage Rd, #350 Austin, TX 78704	<b>Cynthia Rodriguez</b> Austin Parks Foundation GAVA Physical Activity Community Organizer Cynthia@austinparks.org
<b>Pleasant Hill Elementary School Parent Meeting</b> Parents will discuss the groups they have been involved in at the community and how others can get involved. Call to confirm meeting time.	<b>Friday, February 12</b> 8:30 - 9:30 AM Pleasant Hill Elementary School 6405 Circle S. Road	<b>Alejandra Gonzalez</b> <b>U.T. School of Public Health</b> GAVA School Sector Organizer alejandra.b.gonzalez@uth.tmc.edu
<b>Soccer Goal Installation at St. Elmo Park</b> The La Voz team will meet at St. Elmo park to install soccer goals, and have an inauguration game!	<b>Saturday, Feb. 20th</b> <b>3:00 PM</b> <b>St. Elmo Elementary Park</b>	<b>Mariano Di Vincenzo</b> GAVA Community Organizer at FC 713-854-2627 mariano.divincenzo@foundcom.org
<b>Austin Park's Foundation Grant Info Session</b> Join us to learn more about our ACL Music Festival Grants Program, how to apply, what we fund and more! All are welcome to join us for this pre-deadline session. We'll cover: types of projects, application deadlines and timelines, best practices for a successful application and much more!	<b>February 17, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm &amp; February 24, 7:00 pm -8:00 pm</b> Terrazas Branch – Austin Public Library  1105 E Cesar Chavez St Register here: <a href="http://austinparks.org/calendar/grant-info-session/">http://austinparks.org/calendar/grant-info-session/</a>	<b>Cynthia Rodriguez</b> APF/GAVA Community Organizer 512-477-1566, ext 11 cynthia@austinparks.org
<b>APNA Traffic &amp; Mobility Meeting</b> Come to discuss your traffic concerns in 78745 so we can strategize solutions together.	<b>Thursday, February 25</b> 7:00 - 8:00 PM Garden Terraces 1015 W William Cannon Dr	<b>Ivanna Neri</b> Geo-Teams Community Organizer 78745 <a href="mailto:ivanna@marathonkids.org">ivanna@marathonkids.org</a> 512-998-3648
<b>La Fuerza de Westgate Meeting</b> Join us as we implement strategies for improving the health of the Jones Rd/Westgate neighborhood!	<b>Saturday, February 27</b> 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM Tahoe Trail	<b>Ivanna Neri</b> Geo-Teams Community Organizer 78745 <a href="mailto:ivanna@marathonkids.org">ivanna@marathonkids.org</a> 512-998-3648

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<b>Houston Elementary Garden Work Days!</b> Join Houston parents and school team to work on their beautiful gardens. This is a great opportunity to meet other parents and community members.	<b>Saturday, February 6 &amp; 13</b> 8:30 - 1P M <b>Celebration, Saturday February 26, TBD</b> Houston Elementary	<b>Simone Benz</b> Sustainable Food Center Community Outreach Coordinator simone@sustainablefoodcenter.org 512-220-1146
<b>It's My Park Day Volunteer Registration</b> Help us maintain and improve your local park by volunteering for one of our It's My Park Day projects. Check out the full list of projects to find one that's right for you, and be sure to recruit your friends, neighbors, and co-workers. The more the merrier!	<b>Tuesday, February 9</b> Volunteer Registration Opens <a href="http://austinparks.org/volunteer/impd">http://austinparks.org/volunteer/impd</a> <b>Saturday, March 5</b> It's My Park Day Event!	<b>Cynthia Rodriguez</b> Austin Parks Foundation GAVA Physical Activity Community Organizer Cynthia@austinparks.org
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<b>Vecinos Unidos Geo Team Meeting</b> Join Vecinos Unidos from Wagon Bend as they plan for It's My Park Day at E. Williamson Creek and action steps for the Neighborhood Watch group!	<b>Friday, February 12</b> 7:15 - 8:15 PM Location TBD <b>Saturday, March 5, 8:30 am- 12:00 pm</b> It's My Park Day at E. Williamson Creek	<b>Estrella de León</b> Geo Team Organizer 78744 estrella@marathonkids.org <b>512-477-1259 X 1703</b>
<b>Basic Organic Gardening Class</b> Join the Sustainable Food Center for a three-class program on organic gardening! Learn how to grow your own healthy produce.	<b>Tuesday, February 16</b> <b>Thursday, February 18</b> <b>Tuesday, February 23</b> 2:30 - 4:00 PM Williams Elementary School Austin, TX 78748	<b>Simone Benz</b> Community Outreach Coordinator Sustainable Food Center 512-220-1146 simone@sustainablefoodcenter.org
<b>Austin Park's Foundation Grant Info Session</b> Join us to learn more about our ACL Music Festival Grants Program, how to apply, what we fund and more! All are welcome to join us for this pre-deadline session. We'll cover: types of projects, application deadlines and timelines, best practices for a successful application and much more!	<b>February 17, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm &amp; February 24, 7:00 pm -8:00 pm</b> Terrazas Branch – Austin Public Library 1105 E Cesar Chavez St Austin, TX 78702 Register here: <a href="http://austinparks.org/calendar/grant-info-session/">http://austinparks.org/calendar/grant-info-session/</a>	<b>Cynthia Rodriguez</b> APF/GAVA Community Organizer 512-477-1566, ext 11 cynthia@austinparks.org
<b>Dove Springs Community-School Alliance Meeting</b>	<b>Friday, February 19</b> 8:30- 10AM Mendez Middle School Library	<b>Sulamita Mora</b> Family Resource Center Director, Mendez Middle School sulamita.mora@austinisd.org 512-841-1016
<b>Mendez Middle School Coordinated School Health Meeting</b> Wellness and Technology Corner Come learn about community health resources and free blood pressure and Cholesterol screenings	<b>Tuesday, February 23</b> 7:30 - 9 am Mendez Middle School @ corner Nuckols Crossing and Palo Blanco	<b>Sulamita Mora</b> Family Resource Center Director, Mendez Middle School sulamita.mora@austinisd.org 512-841-1016



## **New Members of the GAVA Coalition / Nuevos miembros de la coalición GAVA**



### **Meet Sarah Jovinelly, new Graduate Fellow for GAVA**

Please welcome Sarah Jovinelly, graduate student at the UT School of Social Work! Sarah will be working with GAVA until early May, doing a combination of community organizing in 78744 and 78745, as well as some administrative projects. Sarah previously worked with the Texas Civil Rights Project on their Safe Schools Texas program, and as a community organizer for the Prison Justice League. She will be graduating with her Master's in Social Work in May. She speaks Spanish, is very excited to be a part of GAVA's work, and looks forward to meeting and learning from everyone.

### **Presentando a Sarah Jovinelly, la nueva colega de posgrado en GAVA**

Demos la bienvenida a Sarah Jovinelly, estudiante de la maestría de trabajo social en la universidad de Texas! Sarah estará trabajando con GAVA hasta principios de mayo haciendo una combinación de trabajos de organización comunitaria en el 78744 y 78745, como también estará haciendo proyectos administrativos. Previamente, Sarah trabajó con el Proyecto de Derechos Civiles de Texas (Texas Civil Rights Project) en el programa de Escuelas Seguras en Texas y como organizadora comunitaria para la Liga de Justicia de la Prisión (Prison Justice League). Ella se estará graduando de su maestría en trabajo social en mayo. Ella habla español, está muy emocionada de ser parte del trabajo de GAVA, y tiene muchas ganas de conocer y aprender de todos.