

Community Highlights!

Houston School Park Celebration

Community members gathered to celebrate the reopening and recent developments at Houston School Park on December 5th. Council Member Delia Garza, Executive Director of Facilities at AISD Paul Turner, Principal of Houston Elementary Elia Camarillo, leaders from the 78744 GAVA park teams, and many community members and residents were in attendance at the ribbon cutting ceremony. Officer Paula Aguilar from PAL also organized a soccer match and youth enjoyed soccer games throughout the celebration. Congratulations to the Houston School Park team!



Williamson Creek Central Greenbelt

The Williamson Creek Central Greenbelt team added eight new raised beds (including 24 homemade ollas) to the Emerald Wood Community Garden. The team is also happy to report that they have

received their water tap, which allowed them to add new raised beds (and new gardeners!) to the community garden. All materials for the raised beds were funded by a GAVA mini-grant. Congratulations to the Williamson Creek Central Greenbelt team!

Open Spaces Committee

Meeting: Park & Creek teams from 78744 and 78745 created a statement letter, circulated petitions, met with Council Members and presented at the Open Spaces Committee meeting to advocate for fund distribution from the Park Block Grant. The teams' efforts

and hard work were successful, and the Committee recommended that PARD and GAVA teams meet to further discuss green space needs and priorities. (picture from the Open Space Committee meeting at City Hall)

Cunningham School Park: The Cunningham School Park team participated in a work day at Cunningham School Park. The school received a grant which allowed them to build new 10 benches throughout the park. Be sure to stop by Cunningham School Park and check out all the wonderful new additions!

More Community Highlights!



Vecinos Unidos 78744 Geo Team, celebrated the holidays by hosting a block party along Wagon Bend on Dec. 19th to meet and greet members of the team!

The team also had the opportunity to inform and invite neighbors to the work they are doing in forming a neighborhood safety watch committee, cleaning up E. Williamson Creek and neighborhood beautification.



At the beginning of December, **La Fuerza de Westgate in 78745** had a neighborhood walk with a staff person from District 5, Ken Craig. The leaders Maribel Reynoso, Patricia Carrasco, Jose Ortuno, Connie Lane and Maribel walked with Mr. Craig along the streets and explained the issues they are facing with safety, trash, traffic and lighting. They also went to the Bread Basket Store and showed the improvements and changes they have made by introducing fruits, vegetables and

healthy snacks. Leaders and Mr. Craig set next steps and committed to host a meeting in January to keep moving their work forward with the neighborhood.

The **La Voz in 78745** team applied and was approved for a GAVA mini-grant, for the installation of soccer goals at St. Elmo park. The team will be working with the Police Activities League to set up year-round soccer programming at the school park.

The Michael & Susan Dell Community Collaborative for Child Health awarded small grants to three GAVA schools to help them promote healthy eating and/or drinking. **Houston Elementary** was awarded \$500 to help incentivize students when staff "CATCH" them being healthy. **Casey Elementary** received a \$250 grant to help them provide healthy snacks to students participating in their Fittest Family activities (Zumba club, running club, soccer club and monthly family events, and **Cunningham** was awarded \$500 to support a healthy event day at the local 7 eleven where community members will participate in and sample healthy recipes..



With a mini-grant awarded to her by GAVA, leader **Elisia Ramirez** in 78745 was able to create a safe, enclosed infant play area with equipment to encourage floor play and healthy gross motor and brain development at her home daycare center.

78745 Calendar

Meeting / Event	Date	Contact
Weekly soccer game in 78745 Let's play soccer, meet neighbors, build soccer activities and a park adoption team for our neighborhood park!	Every Sunday! 5:30 PM St. Elmo Park 4312 S 1st, Austin, TX 78745	Mariano Di Vincenzo GAVA Community Organizer at Foundation Communities 713-854-2627 mariano.divincenzo@foundcom.org
La Voz Meeting Join us as we implement strategies for improving the health of the St. Elmo neighborhood!	TBD	Mariano Di Vincenzo GAVA Community Organizer at Foundation Communities 713-854-2627 mariano.divincenzo@foundcom.org
La Fuerza de Westgate Meeting Join us as we implement strategies for improving the health of the Jones Rd/Westgate neighborhood!	Third week of January day, place and time are still TBD	Ivanna Neri Geo-Teams Community Organizer 78745 ivanna@marathonkids.org 512-998-3648
78745 & 78744 Physical Activity Sector Meeting Park Block Grant funding in preparation for the next Open Space Committee meeting	Wednesday, January 13 6:30-8pm Southeast Branch Library 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd, Austin, TX 78744	Cynthia Rodriguez Austin Parks Foundation GAVA Physical Activity Community Organizer Cynthia@austinparks.org
Austin Interfaith Leaders Meeting Monthly meeting with GAVA partner Austin Interfaith, a non-partisan, multi-issue organization of 37+ institutions that work together to address public issues.	Thursday, January 21 7:00 - 8:30pm St. John/San Juan Lutheran Church 409 W Ben White, 78704	Kathleen Davis Lead Organizer with Austin Interfaith 512-944.4344 kdavis@austininterfaith.org
Armadillo Park Neighborhood Association Quarterly Meeting	Saturday, January 30 2pm Manchaca Library 5500 Manchaca Rd, Austin, TX 78745	Henrietta Cameron-Mann President of APNA henrietta523@earthlink.net Ivanna Neri GAVA Geo Team Community Organizer-78745 ivanna@marathonkids.org
Early Childhood Sector Meeting	Saturday, January 30 10:00am-11:00am Southeast Branch Library 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd, Austin, TX 78744	Laura Olson Early Childhood Sector Manager 512-569-5880 laura.olson@uwatx.org
It's My Park Day! Sign up to lead a project at your park! Registration is now open! Visit http://austinparks.org/volunteer/impd for more info.	Saturday, March 5	Cynthia Rodriguez Austin Parks Foundation GAVA Physical Activity Community Organizer Cynthia@austinparks.org

About GAVA

Go! Austin/VAMOS! Austin (GAVA) is a partnership of residents, community leaders and nonprofit agencies who are devoted to improving the health of our children and community. More importantly, we are a neighborhood united for health through improved nutrition and physical activity. For more information contact: Alba Sereno, MSSW, GAVA Community Director-78745 alba@marathonkids.org 214-799-3767.

78744 Calendar

Meeting / Event	Date	Contact
78745 & 78744 Physical Activity Sector Meeting Park Block Grant funding in preparation for the next Open Space Committee meeting	Tuesday, January 13 6:30-8 PM Southeast Branch Library 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd, Austin, TX 78744.	Cynthia Rodriguez Austin Parks Foundation GAVA Physical Activity Community Organizer Cynthia@austinparks.org
Vecinos Unidos (Wagon Bend) Team Meeting	Friday, January 15 7:15 - 8:15 PM 6218 Wagon Bend	Estrella de León Geo Team Organizer 78744 estrella@marathonkids.org 512-477-1259 X 1703
Dove Springs Community-School Alliance Meeting	Friday, January 15 8:30- 10AM Mendez Middle School Library	Sulamita Mora Mendez Middle School, Family Resource Center Director 512-841-1016
Austin Interfaith Leaders Meeting Monthly meeting with GAVA partner Austin Interfaith, a non-partisan, multi-issue organization of 37+ institutions that work together to address public issues.	Thursday, January 21 7:00 - 8:30pm St. John/San Juan Lutheran Church 409 W Ben White, 78704	Kathleen Davis Lead Organizer with Austin Interfaith 512-944.4344 kdavis@austininterfaith.org
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It's My Park Day! Sign up to lead a project at your park! Registration is now open! Visit http://austinparks.org/volunteer/impd for more info.	Saturday, March 5 See registration page for event times and locations!	Cynthia Rodriguez Austin Parks Foundation GAVA Physical Activity Community Organizer Cynthia@austinparks.org

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Meet Sulamita Mora, Director of the Family Resource Center at Mendez Middle School

Please welcome Sulamita Mora, LMSW! Sulamita picks up the baton from Leonor Vargas, former FRC Director, who accepted a position as Supervisor for Parent Programs with AISD (Congrats to Leonor!). Sulamita brings fresh insight both to her role as FRC Director and GAVA School Sector member. Prior to her position as Director of the FRC, Sulamita spent three years working with Refugee Services of Texas as a social worker providing support refugees and immigrants. A key passion is also her desire to help mobilize community members around shared interests that align needs with resources, advocacy with action!

Presentando a Sulamita Mora, la nueva directora del centro de recursos familiares en la escuela intermedia Consuelo Méndez

Demos la bienvenida Sulamita Mora, LMSW! Sulamita continúa el trabajo de Leonor Vargas, la previa directora del centro de recursos familiares (FRC por sus siglas en inglés) la escuela intermedia Consuelo Méndez, quien aceptó la posición de directora de supervisora de programas para padres en el distrito escolar de Austin (Felicidades Leonor!). **Sulamita llega con nuevas perspectivas a su rol como directora del FRC y al rol de miembro del sector de escuelas en la coalición GAVA.**

Antes de su empleo con el FRC Sulamita trabajó tres años con Refugee Services of Texas como trabajadora social proveyendo apoyo a personas con estatus de refugiado y a personas inmigrantes. Un punto de pasión de Sulamita es la movilización de miembros de la comunidad ante intereses compartidos que alinean necesidades con recursos, la abogacía con acción!



Meet Kurt Cadena-Mitchell, Special Projects Organizer for Austin Interfaith

Kurt Cadena-Mitchell is the new Special Projects Organizer with Austin Interfaith, and will be working with GAVA. Kurt has been a volunteer leader with Austin Interfaith since 2010 as a member of Wildflower Unitarian Universalist Church. He graduated with a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Texas at Austin, and has worked with children and families in public schools, non-profit settings and faith-based organizations. Kurt previously worked with GAVA in 78744, and his most recent work experience was with the Texas Health & Human Services Commission.

Presentando a Kurt Cadena-Mitchel, organizador de proyectos especiales de Austin Interfaith

Kurt Cadena-Mitchell es el nuevo organizador de proyectos especiales de Austin Interfaith, y trabajara con GAVA. Kurt ha sido voluntario con Austin Interfaith desde el 2010 como miembro de la iglesia Wildflower Unitaria Universalista. Se recibió con una maestría en trabajo social de la universidad de Tejas en Austin y a trabajado con niños y familias en escuelas públicas, en el ámbito de organizaciones sin fines de lucro y con organizaciones religiosas. Kurt trabajó previamente con GAVA en 78744 y su más reciente experiencia profesional fue con la Comisión de Salud y Servicios Humanos del estado de Tejas.