



the  
**WEST VIEW**



- Read opinions about caring for community cats, the proposed Tiny Home Village, and the SLC School District. [Pages 4-7](#)

This issue was funded in part by a federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program grant through Salt Lake County



## Why SLCC commissioned a Latinx artist from Rose Park

By Cristian Martinez

*This story is jointly published by nonprofits Amplify Utah and West View Media, in collaboration with Salt Lake Community College, to elevate diverse perspectives in local media through student journalism.*

After months of work and a delay by the pandemic, Agustin Bautista-Silva presented his mural to a small gathering of students and staff at Salt Lake Community College in April.

“The mural you will see today is a representation of all

**See MURALIST, page 9**

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE SPECKMAN

Artist Agustin Bautista-Silva on the day of the unveiling.

## As more people shelter in vehicles, Salt Lake City’s Westside feels the effects

By Charlotte Fife-Jepperson

Westside residents have seen an increase in people living in RVs on the side of roads in their neighborhoods. After a summer of RVs parked along 1700 South between the old Raging Waters property and Redwood Road, it was a major topic of concern at several Glendale Community Council meetings.

“Residents have reported increased drug

activity, trespassing on private property, and unsanitary public health conditions in the area,” said Glendale Community Council Chair Turner Bitton.

Unauthorized RV communities have also sprung up on 900, 1300 and 2100 South, and further west in the industrial areas.

“The issue of people living in cars or RVs is not new, but the increase is a symptom of broader economic struggles all across the nation,” said Andrew Johnston, Salt Lake

City Director of Homelessness Policy and Outreach.

According to Johnston, local homelessness providers do not know how many people are living in their vehicles right now, and that the issue is complicated because it is difficult to determine whether occupants of RVs are without homes and/or technically considered unsheltered. “Some RVs are mobile homes that are just traveling through, and some have access to water, power and sewer hook-

ups, which means they would be deemed ‘suitable for human occupancy,’” he said.

Johnston said that folks who live in their vehicles in the city do so for a variety of reasons, but after talking with many of them, he learned that “most have been priced out of the housing market.”

Longtime Westside resident, Kevin Hunt, agrees. Hunt has been homeless “off and on”

**See VEHICLES, page 16**



**STAFF**

**FIND US ONLINE**

www.westviewmedia.org  
 Facebook: West View Media  
 Twitter: @WestViewMedia  
 Instagram: @thewestview

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Charlotte Fife-Jepperson

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Robert Ware

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Joseph Arrington, President  
 Ayrel Clark-Proffitt,  
 Melissa Malcolm King  
 Erik Lopez, Treasurer  
 Jacobo Rueda, Secretary  
 Ben Trentelman  
 Jasmine Walton  
 Edgar Zúñiga

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Joseph Arrington  
 Turner Bitton  
 Angie Eliason  
 Cristian Martinez  
 Rachel McKeen  
 Sarah Morton  
 Troy Mumm  
 Frances Ngo  
 Amy O'Connor  
 Melanie Pehrson  
 David Ricketts  
 Rich Stowell  
 Ray Wheeler  
 Sheena Wolfe

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**

Vegor Pedersen

**CONTRIBUTORS WANTED**

The West View invites you to join our monthly Community Newsroom meetings to help produce content for future issues. To learn more, visit westviewmedia.org or send an email to editors@westviewmedia.org.

**DONATE NOW**

westviewmedia.org/donate

**OUR MISSION**

To increase awareness of west-side issues through local journalism that informs, engages and connects diverse communities in Salt Lake City.

**OUR VISION**

Through a commitment to social justice and increasing civic participation we create a more informed, engaged and equitable community.

**ABOUT US**

The West View is a product of West View Media, a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) community news organization that offers an authentic look into Salt Lake City's Westside through stories written primarily by community members. Published quarterly, The West View is mailed to over 22,000 homes and businesses throughout the Fairpark, Glendale, Rose Park, Westpointe, Jordan Meadows and Poplar Grove neighborhoods. An additional 2,000 copies are hand-distributed to local businesses and public spaces in nearby areas.

**STORY SUBMISSIONS**

If you have a story tip or would like to contribute a story to The West View, please pitch your idea to our Community Newsroom by sending an email to: editors@westviewmedia.org. Include your full name, address, phone number, and a brief description of your story. You will be invited to attend a Community Newsroom meeting to discuss story ideas and to receive feedback from other newsroom participants. The West View reserves the right to edit all submissions and letters for libel, slander, clarity and length.

**TO GIVE FEEDBACK**

West View Media welcomes comments, suggestions, and corrections. Contact editors@westviewmedia.org, or by mail PO Box 271516 Salt Lake City, UT 84127



*from the editors*

As the content of this issue shows, our Westside communities are facing challenges on a broad range of topics, from homelessness to police reform and staffing, to voting, and legislative redistricting.

Much of our focus in this issue has been on raising awareness of policy decisions at a local, city, and state level that will shape our daily lives and determine how we're represented in government. But too often our voices aren't part of those conversations.

For example, Salt Lake City's Westside has no representation on the city planning commission, which affects decisions on zoning that could make way for development projects, like The Other Side Village – housing for people who are coming out of chronic homelessness. That's why it is so important that we have representation on city boards and commissions.

Part of our mission at West View Media (the nonprofit that governs The West View) is to encourage our readers to become more informed and engaged and to have their voices heard. We provide a civic dialogue platform for local voices to speak to fellow community members, elected leaders and even people who live in other parts of the city.

So please send us your opinions, letters to the editor, community observations, and photos. Uplifting, concerning – all of it. Send us your voices, and we'll do our best to feature them.

Finally, the Westside's outstanding group of city council candidates for Districts 1 and 2 deserve a note of recognition. Seeking public office is admirable. It's hard work, it's a big commitment, and often entails making difficult decisions. We commend all of the candidates who are running, and hope that you will make voting in this election a priority.

*Editors' note: In this issue, we're formalizing the spelling of our communities to Salt Lake City's "Westside." It has been written multiple ways in multiple places, and this decision is simply to maintain consistency throughout our pages.*



Charlotte Fife-Jepperson



Rob Ware

**“A Cup of Culture”**  
 Delicious flavors, vibrant art, and more!



**MESTIZO**  
 coffeehouse

Experience community.  
 631 West North Temple SLC, Ut 84116  
 mestizocoffeehouse.com




**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Writers, Photographers, Graphic Designers or anyone with a desire to keep community news in their neighborhood.

**INTERESTED?**

Contact editors@westviewmedia.org for more information

## Zoning changes considered for proposed tiny-home village on Salt Lake City's Westside

By Sheena Wolfe & Charlotte Fife-Jepperson

A proposal for a “tiny home” community called The Other Side Village – slated to house chronically homeless individuals on 45.13 acres of land on Salt Lake City's Westside – is moving through the Salt Lake City Planning Commission and could be approved by the Salt Lake City Council later this year.

The site at 1850 W. Indiana Avenue, currently owned by the city, is being considered for a zoning change from public lands (PL Zone) to a form-based district (FB-NU2). The zone change is needed, according to SLC Mayor Erin Mendenhall, because public land use does not allow for the village's planned residential and mixed-use development. There will be a public hearing at the Planning Commission meeting on Oct. 27. Members of the public are encouraged to submit comments about the zoning change.

The first phase of the proposed project, located at 1850 W. Indiana Avenue just west of Redwood Road, will cost approximately \$7.5 million to be raised primarily by private donations and in-kind services, said Samuel Grenny, who runs village communications, noting that more than \$2 million has already been raised and, if the project is approved, the first 50 homes are expected to be completed this spring.

The tiny-home village project got underway last April when Mayor Erin Mendenhall asked The Other Side Academy to spearhead the initiative because of its “proven track record of successfully managing a peer-based community.”

According to its website, The Other Side Academy, founded in 2016, is a self-sufficient community that houses up to 100 longtime felons who through intensive care and counseling work to become productive citizens rather than lifetime offenders with extensive jail sentences.

At an August open house held

for residents of the nearby Poplar Grove and Glendale neighborhoods, Jennisa Fields said, “I had some major concerns about homeless people wandering through my community and the associated crime and drug use, but after hearing about the project, I now feel that the homeless village will have the opposite effect,” she said.

Other Poplar Grove neighbors, Melanie Pehrson-Noyce and Sam Noyce said they feel the village will be positive for the surrounding communities. “The planned grocery store, park, community garden and possible amphitheater are things that surrounding neighborhoods need. They (the homeless in the village) won't be taking anything away from us. They deserve to have the basic necessities just like we have,” said Sam Noyce.

However, not everyone is in favor of the proposed location of The Other Side Village.

Residents have formed a group called “Poplar Grove Unite” in opposition to the location. They have an active Facebook page and organized a meeting in September that was held at the Pioneer Police Precinct.

Levi Oliveira, who lives in Glendale near the Fortitude Treatment Center – a state correctional halfway house at 1747 S. 900 West – said that while he is sympathetic to the needs of the homeless, he feels that the Westside is already overburdened with halfway houses, shelters, jails, and the soon-to-be state prison, and he wishes more residents would demand better for our community. “We are a dumping ground, and we have been beaten down so long that we don't speak up anymore,” he said.

Poplar Grove Unite organizer and mother of three, Esther Stowell, said, “We have a lot of problems in our neighborhood. I've personally seen feces, needles, used condoms and garbage on our children's school playground. Our



PHOTO BY SHEENA WOLFE

Local resident, Jennisa Fields, studies The Other Side Village's proposed master plan displayed at an open house in August. The village is a planned tiny-home neighborhood for the chronically homeless in Salt Lake City.

kids don't need to see this as the norm. We are speaking out because we want our children to be safe, to be able to walk to school on clean sidewalks and play in needle-free parks.”

At an August virtual meeting hosted by Other Side Village proponents, local resident Madison Elms asked why the village can't be spread out into several locations instead of one large space. Joseph Grenny said that the project must be a certain scale to bring the number of support agencies and amenities.

Because the old Salt Lake City dump was located on the site several decades ago, there are concerns about soil contamination. District 2 Council Member Dennis Faris said that a 2018 EPA report stated that no further soil mitigation was necessary, as long as the old landfill site was vacant, fenced and no housing or schools were located within 200 feet.

Other Side staff indicated that during their first phase of construction they would not build on the landfill site, but they might use it as a parking area. Faris said he “has concerns and wants to make sure people are safe.” He is awaiting the findings of a current EPA study.

The village master plan calls for an estimated 440 single homes –

between 250 and 400 square feet in size – in a gated community with furnished living room, bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom with shower. Rent will be \$200-\$400 per month and residents will be required to pay their rent on time, obey civil laws, and follow the housing rules to be set up by the community.

According to the village's zoning amendment the housing will be arranged in neighborhoods of approximately 25-35 homes each with amenities and green spaces to include a small pavilion, laundry, and a multipurpose room for social gatherings.

When completed, the village will include a park, a performing arts center, amphitheater, grocery store, coffee shop, barbershop and hair salon, community garden, a dog park, an Airbnb for visiting relatives, neighborhood gathering spots, mental and physical health facilities, and family and employment services, according to village plans.

At the August open house event, The Other Side Academy and The Other Side Village Board Chair Joseph Grenny said, the planned village will have a full-coverage camera system and a 24-hour security patrol. In addition, he said that people moving into the village will have to meet certain criteria if

they want to stay. They will have to make an application and be background-checked, and they will undergo an extensive and constant peer review process.

“For those who think this village will be a cesspool for additional crime in the Glendale and Poplar Grove neighborhoods, I ask that you look at the statistics of The Other Side Academy [on 667 E. 100 South] where crime has actually gone down since we came into the city six years ago,” said Joseph.

Only individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness are eligible to live in the village. “We define chronic homelessness as any person who has been living unsheltered for the last 12 months continuously or on multiple occasions within the past three years that total 12 months,” said Samuel Grenny. Those with past sex offenses or arson convictions are not eligible for residence, he said, adding that “the key to making this community a success is the social system and support that will surround each resident.”

*Charlotte Fife-Jepperson is the sister-in-law of D2 Council Member and candidate Dennis Faris.*



opinion

# Hope for a brighter future for Salt Lake City School District



By Joseph Arrington

The 2019-2020 school year started innocuously, with many students excited for furthering their education and many looking forward to their last year before going to college and/or starting their professional careers. Things did not go quite as planned, and it wasn't just COVID's fault.

Pandemic notwithstanding, Salt Lake's educational leadership saw significant turbulence. A slight majority of the Salt Lake School Board disapproved of Su-

perintendent Lexi Cunningham's leadership, as well as District Business Administrator Janet Roberts. Cunningham served in her capacity for four years; Roberts for almost 30 years. The two employees resigned on the last day of the academic year, June 30, 2021.

According to an interview with The Salt Lake Tribune, then board member Michael Nemelka felt they were unjustly targeted by the board. He partially attributes the call for their resignations to their desires to dismiss over a dozen principals within the district, including the former principal of West High School, who was fired for driving two intoxicated students home instead of involving parents or police – a judgment call that, although was meant to care for the students, went against district policy.

The school board itself was also wrought with internal conflict. Just one month after Cunningham and Roberts resigned, messages among the board revealed a hostile environment inappropriate for a team meant to guide our children's edu-

cation, especially amidst the challenges of remote learning. This led to training to improve professional etiquette, as reported by The Salt Lake Tribune.

The drama around the board continued when the youngest elected member in history, then 29-year-old entrepreneur and social activist Joél-Léhi Organista, was arrested for allegedly possessing child pornography and using social media to reach out to minors for online sexual encounters. His three-day trial is set to begin November 23. It appears that no child within the boundaries of Mr. Organista's appointment had any inappropriate interactions with him.

Thankfully, it seems the storm is dissipating. On July 1, Dr. Timothy Gadson began his appointment as the new superintendent for the Salt Lake City School District. Gadson came from Anoka, Minnesota, where he served as Associate Superintendent of High Schools. He earned a bachelor's degree majoring in both Business

Economics and Secondary Education from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. He then earned a master's degree, followed by a PhD, from Washington State University (both in Educational Leadership and Higher Education Administration). He has a history of progressive leadership in education, starting as a principal and moving to his current role.

In an interview with The Tribune, Gadson discussed the district's diversity (which comes largely from Salt Lake's Westside), how to continue the successes and opportunities for growth learned during the pandemic, and overall morale for the district's leadership.

To fill the position vacated by Organista, the board appointed Rose Park resident Bryce Williams. An alumnus of West High School (where he served as student body president), he went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Social Work from the University of Utah (where he was also involved in student government) before transitioning to his master's degree training there in

Educational Leadership and Policy.

Williams' career has been centered around helping students on their path through their education to finding their own careers. He has worked at the U of U's Bennion Center for over 10 years, most recently as Senior Program Manager, and volunteered his time as a board member for the Salt Lake Education Foundation and the West High Alumni Association (WHAA). For the latter, he co-founded a mentorship program alongside current WHAA President Emily Berry. This program couples scholarship recipients with mentors to help students navigate their first year of higher education.

Our prayers and congratulations are with Dr. Gadson and Mr. Williams as they move forward in their new appointments, working to be the force of change needed for the future of our children's education.

*Joseph is West View Media's Board President and a former resident of Jordan Meadows.*

## FY21-22 CITY BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

# Funding a More Equitable SLC



CITY COUNCIL

FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

Total Budget

**\$367 million**

The FY21-22 budget concentrates on essential services such as road repair, public safety, housing, providing support for the community to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and citywide equity issues. The new budget also put federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to lasting use.

Visit [tinyurl.com/SLCFY22Budget](https://tinyurl.com/SLCFY22Budget) to learn more about the budget >

**History matters. Relationships matter. Representation matters.**



**Our Community's #1 Choice for City Council**

**Erik Lopez**  
Poplar Grove  
Community Council Chair

**Rep. Sandra Hollins**  
Utah House District 23

**Rep. Angela Romero**  
Utah House District 26

**Turner Bitton**  
Glendale  
Community Council Chair

**A few reasons our community leaders support Billy Palmer for City Council:**

- A history rooted in our neighborhoods.
- 20+ years fighting for the Westside.
- A solid record of achievement.
- The community relationships to lead.
- A vision for the Westside's future.

 **Billy PALMER**  
[billypalmerSLC.com](http://billypalmerSLC.com)  
CITY COUNCIL 2  


**Rank Billy Palmer #1 on your ballot.**

**Learn more at: [billypalmerSLC.com](http://billypalmerSLC.com)**



**opinion**

# Help address cat overpopulation with spay and neuter programs



**By Amy O'Connor**

My husband and I noticed five adorable young cats playing along the Jordan River near our home. They had likely been abandoned by someone who didn't want to keep the animals anymore and are part of a nationwide problem, the scale of which few people recognize. According to the National Feline Research Council (NFRC), the best available estimate suggests that the

population of community cats is about 32 million nationally! These are cats that are wild and without an owner or a home.

If not spayed and neutered, kittens grow up outdoors, become wild and start breeding by about 4-6 months of age, perpetuating the rapid increase in our community's uncared for cat population. According to one estimate from the NFRC, when just one male and female cat breed, their offspring can result in up to 5,000 more surviving wild cats in our neighborhoods within seven years. This is why there is a movement across the country that addresses this challenge by humanely capturing and fixing community cats.

Of course, the little pride of cats in front of our home produced kittens, seven of which survived. We ultimately caught all four mothers and their kittens, had the mothers spayed and returned to our yard, and brought five of the young,

tame kittens to the Salt Lake County Animal Services for spaying and adoption. We took two of the kittens that were already afraid of humans into our home for socialization with people so that they, too, could be adopted.

To help address the community cat overpopulation, organizations like Salt Lake County Animal Services, Best Friends, Salt Lake Spay and Neuter, Whiskers, and Community Animal Welfare Society all work with volunteers who trap community cats, socialize and find homes for kittens, and have the adults and kittens spayed and neutered.

The program of catching and fixing community cats and returning them to our neighborhoods is known as Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR). While TNR is effective in cutting down on the number of homeless cats, it does not address their long-term care and feeding. The exception is when volunteer caretakers take the initiative to



feed the animals and sometimes also provide Styrofoam boxes for shelter, water bowls, and veterinary services.

Many animals in TNR programs do not get that benefit and end up fending for themselves, a difficult existence at best. Some organizations, such as the Orchard Animal Clinic, do not support TNR. Instead, these organizations provide spay, neuter, and veterinary services only where a caretaker is committed to providing long-term food and shelter. The entire system of volunteer trappers – organiza-

tions that provide humane traps and spay and neuter services, and community cat caretakers – is completely overwhelmed by the scale of this enormous challenge.

Although it can be overwhelming, you can make a difference, one animal at a time, by spaying and neutering your own pets and providing care for community cats.

*Amy O'Connor teaches English as a Second Language and enjoys gardening, playing the piano, walking along the Jordan River and spending time with her cats.*



**Dennis Faris has spent the last 18 years working to improve his community, leading on issues like Affordable Housing, Public Safety, and Community Greenspace. This November, RANK DENNIS FIRST on your Mail-In Ballot!**



**SCAN THIS**  
To learn more about Dennis' vision for Salt Lake City!



**NEIGHBOR • LEADER • ADVOCATE**

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Dennis Faris

**opinion**

## Tiny Home Village would put too much strain on an already struggling community

**By Rich Stowell**

Many residents of Poplar Grove were taken aback when they heard that a homeless village would be a great asset to our neighborhood.

The developers of a “master-planned neighborhood that provides affordable, permanent housing, access to social services, and a supportive community for [chronically homeless] men and women” have done a lot of work marketing their project.

They don’t have Poplar Grove’s interest in mind, however. Residents of our neighborhood should say no.

The organizers of The Other Side Academy have petitioned the city to allow them to develop almost 50 acres near the intersection of Indiana Avenue and Redwood Road.

The village would bring about 500 new residents into our neighborhood, all of whom would be immediately coming out of chronic homelessness. Put another way, the day before each of the potential resident moves in, he or she would have been homeless for a long time.

We can all recognize that such an endeavor will tax the resources and energy of those who provide services as well as the greater community of which it is a part.

The efforts of The Other Village organizers should be applauded. They bring earnestness and creativity to a problem that vexes our city.

However, the resources that would be required to make such an ambitious project succeed are not currently available in our neighborhood.

Moving ahead with this development

would put our neighborhood at risk for a variety of reasons.

The Westside is like a hospital patient in critical but stable condition. We experience the highest rates of drug abuse in the city. We have relatively low home ownership rates. We know too well that our parks teeter on the brink of un-usability at times, with homeless individuals camping illegally at Poplar Grove Park and 9th South Park. Our residents tend to have less disposable income and less disposable time to put into volunteer work.

The river, which should be a jewel, is unhealthy and unsafe partly because of illegal long-term camping along its banks.

The Westside neighborhoods need time to develop, clean up and improve before being asked to host a homeless village.

Bringing 500 chronically homeless individuals would be more than our neighborhood could bear.

It strains credulity to argue that a massive influx of the chronically homeless wouldn’t bring additional strains to the area. Even assuming that the village itself is remarkably free of crime, drug use, and sanitation issues, the surrounding neighborhood would take on those that couldn’t make the cut.

Individuals who hope to get housing in the village, or who want to visit their friends there, or who get expelled for various reasons, would end up crowding the parks, river, and neighborhoods even more.

Many children walk to and from the four elementary schools located within a mile of the proposed homeless village. That is not a recipe for a safe and healthy community.

The chronically homeless need housing. The Other Side Village might very well be a solution. Not here, though. Not now. There are surely dozens of other 50-acre plots in Salt Lake, or Davis Counties that are better suited for a project this resource-intensive.

The Other Side Village might end up being an asset to another community that is ready for the challenge.

*Rich Stowell is a Poplar Grove resident, father of three, serves in the military and as bishop of the 26th Ward of the LDS Church.*

## Why not support a creative, low-budget affordable housing solution?

**By Ray Wheeler**

Before my fellow Westsiders respond with traditional, oppositional NIMBY brain-lock to the proposal to build a “tiny home” village west of Redwood Road on Indiana Ave., I invite those with doubts to watch a 12-minute YouTube video, at <https://tinyurl.com/yrrx5mva>, about the internationally renowned “Community First! Village in Austin, Texas, which has served as a model for the project here in Salt Lake City.

This supported community in Texas has been so successful that it is set to expand its current number of micro-homes for formerly homeless people from 240 to 1,900 in 2022. These tiny homes will include unique, 3D-printed homes, RVs, and canvas-sided cottages.

The Community First! Village business plan is to provide affordable housing, with rent in the range of \$240 to \$400 per month, to those formerly homeless persons who are highly motivated to live in small, energy efficient, private dwellings within a supported community that provides a sense of ownership, responsibility, and belonging.

Its many thoughtfully designed social services include community kitchens, shared restrooms and showers, blacksmith shop, carpentry shop, car care center and art studios where community members can learn skills and work for income from sales of products and services in several small retail stores. There is a chapel, a large community garden, some common open space, a cafe or grille, and larger common spaces for social events. The entire village,

maintained by its own residents, is a model of cleanliness and tidiness.

The behavior required of community members is clearly defined. They must respect all pertinent civil laws and clearly articulated community rules. If they fail to do so, they must leave.

The proposed tiny home village in Salt Lake City is a project of a nonprofit called “The Other Side Academy,” whose mission is to provide an exit strategy from what might be thought of as the two-way “prison-to-street pipeline.” Like the Community First! Village, the Other Side Village would provide structure, support, and work opportunities for community members.

The Other Side Academy currently specializes in helping determined, young people escape the torment of drug addiction and jail time. The program is neither a warehouse for the hopelessly addicted, nor an addiction rehabilitation center. Rather it is a place where those who are willing and capable of giving up drugs, can learn work skills within a supportive community to eventually re-enter society. The Academy would be highly selective in recruiting its Tiny Home Village community members and would place large responsibility on residents to earn their keep.

Ask yourself this: Instead of continuing to push homeless individuals around in our streets, parks, and temporary overflow shelters, shouldn’t we encourage creative solutions to lead the chronically homeless out of their cycles of despair and ruin? Even though such programs can only empower the most highly motivated, they can serve as a testing ground and a beacon for the development of more cost-effective solutions to chronic homelessness.

If the proposed Other Side Academy site is too close for comfort, we might explore alternative sites further west. It would be a far better use of the Northwest Quadrant area than what has so far been proposed.

*Ray Wheeler is a Glendale resident who loves the natural world, kayaking the Jordan River, tinkering around the house, and exploring solutions to the world’s problems.*



# Urban Arts Gallery hosts mask exhibit

During the month of October, masks created by different local artists will be on exhibit at the Urban Arts Gallery, just in time for Halloween.

Located in The Gateway near downtown Salt Lake City, the gallery has been showing the works of local artists since 2013. Its mission is “to foster the arts in all forms in order to create an aware, empowered and connected community,” said gallery Manager Scott Tuckfield, noting that the gallery is under the non-profit umbrella of the Utah Arts Alliance.

Westside resident and *West View* newspaper staff writer Sheena Wolfe will be one of 15 featured artists in the “Spirit in Disguise” exhibit, showcasing masks in all forms. Wolfe is an award-winning artist and has been making kiln-formed glass masks for more than 20 years. She makes her own molds using actual people’s faces and

fires in cycles that create three-dimensional layers. She is the only glass artist in the show.

“Working with glass has always been therapeutic for me and fused glass is especially inspiring because the finished product stays a surprise until the kiln is cool enough to open –sometimes this can be two or three days,” Wolfe said. “It is my hope that each person who sees my creations feels that added sparkle that only glass can create. Each mask I design is uniquely different and has a distinct personality.”

Other artists in the October show are Anthony Siciliano, Chris Madsen, Desarae Lee, Essie Shaw, Frank McEntire, Garnett Wyatt, Grant Fuhst, Ivan Ramos, Jenna Rogan, Kelsie Mower, Roxanna Barco, Vincent Mattina, Vivian Arthus and Zane Anderson.

A public reception for these artists will be held during the Friday

SLC Gallery Stroll on Oct. 15 from 6-9 p.m. The gallery stroll takes place on the third Friday of each month (except December when it’s on the first Friday of the month).

Participating art galleries all over the city open their doors after hours to welcome art enthusiasts as they travel from gallery to gallery viewing visual art and meeting artists. This free event has been happening in Salt Lake City since 1983. Due to COVID-19, masks and social distancing is required at this time. Check the website at [www.gallerystroll.org](http://www.gallerystroll.org), or call 801-870-0956 to find out more information about participating galleries, which vary from month to month.

PHOTO BY SHEENA WOLFE  
*Born Under Punches* by Grant Fuhst is among the art pieces on display at the Urban Arts Gallery in October.



**Estamos aquí para todos ustedes y tenemos planes de salud para sus necesidades. Inscríbase antes del 15 de enero.**

Llame a SelectHealth al **801-442-6293**.



[SelectHealth.org](http://SelectHealth.org)



**From MURALIST, page 1**

the times our parents, grandparents, and ancestors wanted us to fly,” Bautista said during the unveiling at the Taylorsville campus. “We all have a similar story.”

Two students pulled back the curtains, revealing a colorful scene depicting a monarch butterfly’s migration from the hands of an individual.

The mural, commissioned by the school’s Latinx Heritage Committee, is emblematic of the journey to the United States that is familiar to many Latinx individuals – either from personal experiences or ancestral stories. The piece, Bautista said, is meant to represent its community on the walls of SLCC.

**Agustin Bautista-Silva**

In 2005, when Bautista was 10 years old, his mother brought him and his younger brother from their home state of Guerrero, Mexico, to Salt Lake City’s Rose Park neighborhood. College was not in his initial plans.

“I always wanted to join the military,” Bautista said.

He submitted two letters of application while he was still in high school. Despite being a DACA

recipient, he said he was rejected because he is not a permanent resident.

“At this point, I didn’t know what I was going to do,” Bautista said. “I had never put any thought into college or studying for a degree.”

Around the same time, during his senior year of high school, an engineering class and a supportive teacher fueled Bautista’s interest in robotics. The teacher encouraged Bautista to apply for college and paid his application fee.

A few months later, Bautista started classes at SLCC.

“I started meeting more people that looked like me and shared my goals,” Bautista said. “I became more attached to the school.”

The connections he made with the Latinx community at SLCC, he said, helped him to stay focused, especially after returning to college following a year-long break, which he took to work fulltime to pay for tuition.

Bautista, who graduated from SLCC in 2018 and received his bachelor’s from Weber State University in electronics and engineering in April, works for the college in the Orientation and Student Success office. When he saw an announcement from the school’s

Latinx Heritage Committee seeking submissions for a new campus mural last year, Bautista figured it was a good opportunity to tap into his sketching hobby.

**‘I Belong’**

As of 2020, Hispanic students account for nearly 20% of the school’s student body, according to the SLCC Fact Book. Sendys Estevez, chair of the Latinx Heritage Committee, said the art piece was proposed to reaffirm the experiences of Latinx students on campus through art.

“We wanted to share our story in the college,” Estevez said.

Orientation and Student Success Director Richard Diaz agreed, noting one of the school’s seven values focuses on inclusivity.

“When you walk into the college, you look for something that makes you say, ‘This is a place where I belong,’” he said. “Our community is very diverse, and so we have to be representative of that diversity not just in our student body but also in our spaces.”

Of the many submissions, Bautista’s topical element of migration represented by the butterfly’s journey resonated with the committee.

“The topic of migration hits a lot

of us,” Bautista said. “When you talk to more people, you realize we all share a similar perspective.”

**Dreamers**

For Brenda Santoyo, who works with undocumented students at SLCC’s Dream Center, the mural offers an invitation of inclusion to Latinx students.

“If someone feels like they belong and feels connected to the campus, they’re more likely to persist,” Santoyo explained.

According to the Utah System for Higher Education, 551 undocumented students attend SLCC as of 2020. This is more than double the next closest institution, Utah Valley University, with 244 undocumented students. These figures reflect students who qualify for in-state tuition.

Santoyo emphasized that aside from the mural, initiatives from the Dream Center and the Orientation and Student Success office are available to help Latinx students. For example, the Dream Center hosted its first annual UndocuWeek in April. The week-long event included workshops centered around the lived experiences of undocumented students.

The student success office also

offers the Bruin Scholars program, which is designed to aid first-generation, undocumented and non-traditional students by connecting them to resources and dedicated staff.

“If you feel you belong somewhere, it’s more likely you’ll continue and strive for something,” Bautista said.

**Legacy**

Ultimately, Bautista hopes the mural can help and inspire future Latinx students in similar ways in which he received aid from peers during his time at SLCC.

“Every single person I’ve met along the way, like Richard, the students I’ve interacted with, had a big impact on me,” Bautista said. “You’re doing it not only for yourself but for other people, too.”

For Bautista, the path one creates will be a model for future generations.

“Even though it might not seem like it, every student that graduates is leaving behind a legacy,” he said. “There is always someone out there looking up to you.”

*Cristian Martinez is a journalism student at Salt Lake Community College.*

## KRCL re-invests in Westside presence with new building

By Rachel McKeen

KRCL has promoted local culture and social happenings for Utahns for over forty years.

In June 2021, after twenty years at its 1971 West North Temple studio, KRCL’s radio headquarters moved to a temporary location at 535 West 300 North. The new location doesn’t change KRCL’s ongoing commitment to Salt Lake City’s Westside; rather, it reaffirms the station’s long-standing presence as one of the Westside’s community-centered arts and cultural organizations.

Pursuing greater financial security, a greener facility, and a location central to its listeners, KRCL plans to remain in its current space while local developer Chris Parker of Giv Group builds the future offices nearby, at the

heart of what will become a new music district.

Executive Director Tristin Tabish explained, “KRCL is eager to engage with our new neighbors, including Rise Up School of Dance and Municipal Ballet Co., to help add a vibrant and dynamic presence to the neighborhood. The Westside of Salt Lake City is growing rapidly, and we’re committed to ensuring that KRCL makes a positive difference in the changing face (and soundtrack) of the neighborhood and city.”

“We’re pretty stoked about the block,” Parker said, though he was unable to divulge full details because the new plans may still be impacted by discussion with neighborhood stakeholders. “We couldn’t ask for a more community-conscious partner than Giv Group to help us establish our new

home. The sky’s the limit (think street concerts and block parties) and we’re so grateful to Chris and his team along with our community for their love and support.” KRCL hopes to break ground on the new building (on the same block as The Union Event Center) in 2022.

“With an influx of new tenants moving to Citizens West [500 West 300 North] and surrounding housing developments,” Tabish explained, “KRCL is excited to introduce the station to folks who are new to Utah or have never discovered us.”

Despite the new physical location, KRCL’s programming, the station’s locations on the airwaves and the internet remain the same: 90.9 FM and [www.krcl.org](http://www.krcl.org).



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAM CRUMP PHOTOGRAPHY  
KRCL’s future On-Air Studios, band room and production studios at 535 West 300 North.

# Voters will choose candidates in a new way this fall

By Turner Bitton

Residents of Salt Lake City who are active voters in city elections may have noticed the disappearance of a staple of city elections – the primary. That’s because Salt Lake City, along with several other municipalities in Utah, has adopted Ranked Choice Voting as the mechanism for the 2021 municipal election.

Ranked choice voting has grown in popularity across the nation and while this is Salt Lake City’s first experience using this electoral system, it is safe and secure. Several cities as well as the Utah Democratic Party and Utah Republican Party have successfully used ranked choice voting in their elections.

Ranked choice voting is what it sounds like – rather than being required to select only one candidate on the ballot, voters will be given the opportunity to rank multiple candidates according to their own preference. Ranked choice voting is billed by proponents such as FairVote as a way of

making democracy fairer and more functional.

In short, ranked choice voting is about ensuring that the winner of the election wins with a clear majority of votes, rather than a plurality of votes cast.

It is most helpful to think of ranked choice voting as occurring in rounds. In a ranked choice voting electoral system, voters rank candidates by preference. These preferences correspond with each round of voting. If any candidate receives more than fifty percent of votes in the first round, they win the election outright.

If when ballots are counted, there is no candidate with over fifty percent of votes, the candidate with the fewest number of votes is eliminated. Once eliminated, the votes of people who supported that candidate will be reallocated to individual voters’ second choice. Then the votes are retabulated. This process continues until a candidate receives over fifty percent of the vote.

Here’s a simple explanation of how ranked choice voting will work on bal-

lots in Salt Lake City.

Let’s say that there are 6 candidates on your ballot for city council. As a voter using ranked choice voting, you can choose to rank all of them or only a few of them. You do not have to rank all candidates but be aware that races with more candidates could go through multiple rounds of voting. If you do not want a particular candidate to win, don’t include them in your rankings because then there is no chance they receive the vote you cast for them.

Your first choice will be counted first. If that candidate gets the lowest number of votes in the first round, your vote will then be counted for your second choice and so on until a candidate wins a majority of the votes.

Because every candidate will appear on your ballot and will undergo the process of elimination in subsequent rounds, there is no need for a primary. Essentially, the primary and general elections will be held at the same time with each round taking the place of a primary election.

## THREE IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER AS YOU CAST YOUR BALLOT:

- Read your ballot thoroughly before completing it. Your ballot will include instructions for successfully voting and your ballot must be completed correctly to count.
- You do not have to vote for every candidate. However, if your preferred candidate receives the fewest number of votes in the first round, your subsequent rankings will matter.
- Expect some delays in reporting a winner. Ranked choice voting means that some delay in declaring a winner could occur as the tabulation goes through multiple rounds of counting.



**Beans Are our Beansness**

**SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES and CANDIDATES who will make out Westside stronger, cleaner, business-oriented, and affordable!**

**Get to know your District 1, 2, and 3 City Council Candidates! Ask questions and vote! This election is going to shape our future.**



THERE ARE 5 CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS UP FOR ELECTION:  
1, 2\*, 3, 5 AND 7.  
\*THIS IS A TWO-YEAR TERM DUE TO A VACANCY

**SALT LAKE CITY WILL BE USING A NEW METHOD OF VOTING FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 2, 2021, KNOWN AS:**

**RANKED CHOICE VOTING**

VISIT [WWW.SLC.GOV/RCV](http://WWW.SLC.GOV/RCV) FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RANKED CHOICE VOTING.





# Salt Lake City Council Districts One and Two Candidate Q & A

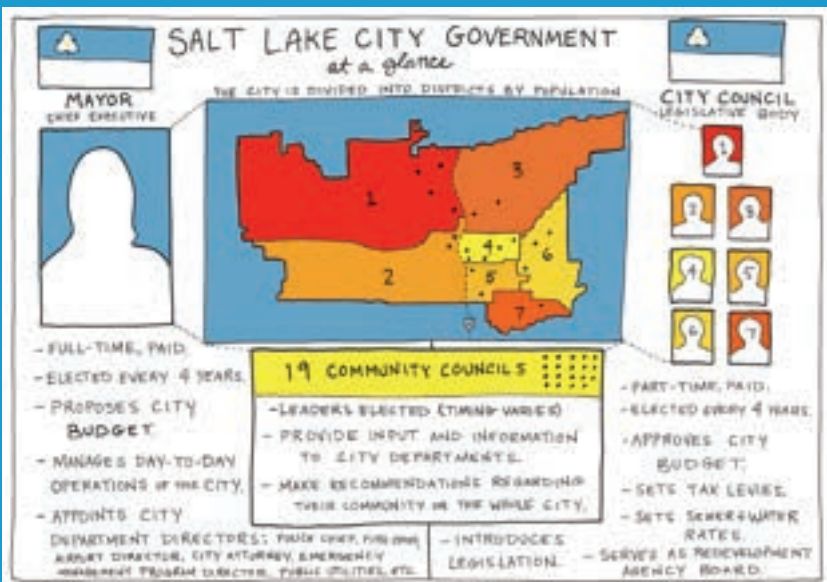
## Your vote matters

Salt Lake City’s Westside historically has a very low voter turnout. That is especially true for municipal elections, even though these local elections have a more direct impact on our lives. For example, our city council makes decisions about our police and fire departments, our streets and parks, our public utilities – virtually every aspect of our communities.

Normally, city council members are up for election every four years. However, this year, voters in City Council District 2 (Glendale, Poplar Grove, and Fairpark) will vote on a special city council race due to the resignation last April of former Council Member Andrew Johnston, who is now working in the Salt Lake City Mayor’s office as the Director of Homelessness Policy and Outreach. Whoever is elected in District 2 will only serve a two-year term.

Voters in Rose Park, Westpointe, and Jordan Meadows will elect a new District 1 City Council member this November, since former Council Member James Rogers resigned in early October. The City Council will appoint a replacement for Rogers in November, after the election. The appointee will fill the remainder of Roger’s term through December, after which the winner of the election will take over. It is likely that the city council will appoint the candidate who was elected.

**For more election info, including how to register to vote, visit the Salt Lake County Clerk’s at <https://slco.org/clerk/elections/>**



## DISTRICT ONE



### Richard Barnes

**What qualifies you to represent your district?**

I was born at LDS Hospital, raised in Bountiful, have owned my Rose Park home since 1993, married in SL temple to my wife Brenda for 23 years, and my ancestors were here since the 1850s. BS Geology, University of Utah. Republican Legislative District 23 Chair for 12+ years.

**Identify two key issues that you are concerned about. As a city council member, what specific actions will you take to address those issues?**

I will do everything in my power to protect our environment. Our water supply, especially City Creek, must be protected from potential threats from pollution, overuse, and appropriation by entities other than Salt Lake City. I am also concerned about our air quality and threats from erosion, water pollution, as well as over building in potential earthquake and flood zones, especially in the proposed inland port and other areas west of Redwood Road.

We must also “back the blue” and defend our law enforcement officers so that they can return home safely to their families at the end of their shifts, secure in the knowledge that they have the backing of our civic leaders and of our community as a whole. Laws and ordinances should be kept as few as possible and easy to understand by the average citizen.



### Blake Perez

**What qualifies you to represent your district?**

As the former chair of the Rose Park Community Council, I have a track record of delivering results that have helped to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. As a former transportation planner for Salt Lake City, I know why a keen eye on our budget matters.

**Identify two key issues that you are concerned about. As a city council member, what specific actions will you take to address those issues?**

Air quality- I’ve got three main strategies to improve our air quality. First, reducing our emissions by investing in more multimodal options like transit, biking, and walking. Second, we need to aggressively pursue carbon sequestration by using city-owned land and public right of ways to plant more trees and vegetation. Carbon sequestration is pivotal in pulling our carbon legacy out of our atmosphere and improving our climate. Third, we must continue to invest in reliable particulate data as air quality dynamics change. Western wildfires, summer ozone, and a shrinking Great Salt Lake are all adding different particulates to our air shed and we must make sure our communities have access to accurate information.

Growth- Our most recent census data showed the incredible growth of our state - and the youngest population in the country. While this is an incredible opportunity for expanding our tax base, we must keep our eye on how this growth impacts our local communities, natural resources, and quality of life. It is critical that any updated zoning or land-use policy is matched with transportation policy and investments that aim to reduce emissions, make our public right of ways safer, and build long term resiliency and sustainability. As we grow, our public safety needs to evolve and meet the values and principles of our communities. I’ll ensure our public safety departments are equipped to meet the evolving needs of today and the future.

## DISTRICT ONE



### Victoria Petro-Eschler

#### What qualifies you to represent your district?

I have lived here since 2013 and run a music-based non-profit that gives our community's kids a safe place to be after

school. As our district's Historic Landmarks Representative since 2017, I effectively use my master's in political science and refined experience advocating for the people and places I love.

#### Identify two key issues that you are concerned about. As a city council member, what specific actions will you take to address those issues?

**Homelessness** - I propose we implement a three-year crisis management plan that focuses on bringing order to the current situation, offering hope to those who are homeless and security to the residents of our communities. We need to conduct a clear needs assessment, gathering data on the actual state of the crisis, and generate a comprehensive plan for addressing it. As part of the plan, the city needs to outline the issues that are within the city's purview and capacity to address and clearly outline the work the county and state will need to supplement. During this crisis management stage, the infrastructure must be developed to address the various constituencies within our homeless community. Once the crisis is stabilized and infrastructure is built, the following timeframe needs to be marked by a sustainable action plan and specific MOU's between the county, state, and city to ensure future management of the issue.

**Economic Development** - We are home to the most innovative (and often most delicious) entrepreneurs in the city. The tamales from the Smith's parking lot alone deserve their own storefront. I want to work for an economic development strategy that creates abundant opportunity for local business owners to grow their ideas to prosperity. Equitable opportunities should be the norm for our district. As a Westside council member, I will ensure that the RDA and Economic Development department invests in us, rather than trying to fix us or save us, as can be the default. I am excited at the idea that the growth of our neighborhood could mean walkable eateries and coffee shops and boutiques. I am determined to ensure that our residents can be part of the growth and see a sustainable future for themselves here!

## DISTRICT TWO



### Dennis Faris

#### What qualifies you to represent your district?

I've spent 18 years working to improve my community. My approach to almost every issue is to

find realistic short term steps toward achieving a long term goal. What work can we begin today to more efficiently and effectively improve our lives and our community a little bit each day?

#### Identify two key issues that you are concerned about. As a city council member, what specific actions will you take to address those issues?

Our community has many concerns regarding public safety. As an immediate step, after less than 6 weeks in office and with the help of my colleagues on the City Council, we approved a wage increase in the annual budget that successfully ensured our public safety employees are the best paid anywhere in the state. We also allocated funding to achieve my goal of establishing a new alternate response model that will be presented soon. This model could consider being staffed with social workers and EMT's to be able to better address noncriminal issues like homelessness and mental health concerns. This can relieve strain on our first responders to quickly improve response times across our city.

My approach has continued in my efforts to maintain, increase, and improve our public greenspaces. As the Chair of the PNUT Board, I worked alongside many others to create the new Three Creeks Confluence Park. I also fought hard with Poplar Grove Community Council to refurbish the Fisher Mansion back to glory, starting with the renovation of the Carriage House that will commence next year, and continuing with funding proposed in a new bond to finally make the main building safe and functional. I am now working toward creating a public/private partnership between SLC, nonprofits, and businesses to use available resources to keep our Jordan River Parkway Trail cleaner and safer for all our residents, without costing any additional money.



### Billy Palmer

#### What qualifies you to represent your district?

Aside from my 50 years living on the Westside, what makes me most qualified is my experience fighting for and empowering our neighborhoods, and my relationships within our community.

That history matters and it's why I've earned the support of our Westside elected officials and community leaders.

#### Identify two key issues that you are concerned about. As a city council member, what specific actions will you take to address those issues?

Among the many issues facing the Westside and our city, we need a broader vision that understands how our social and economic challenges are connected so we can truly address their causes and find real solutions. Community empowerment and equity should drive our policies on affordable housing, homelessness, development, and public safety.

On homelessness, we must approach the issue from a human level, redefine how we measure capacity, and innovate better solutions because everyone knows what we have now is not working. We must make our resource centers more robust, increase the number of beds available for individuals and families, improve coordination among service providers, and develop further outreach and wrap-around services to deal with those individuals who refuse to enter shelters due to trauma, mental health, or addiction.

Our housing policies must provide options across all incomes. We cannot concentrate all the city's low-income housing on the Westside. Our city must develop and incentivize inclusionary housing projects to offer affordable, mixed-income housing, giving people their neighborhood of choice and developing a viable consumer base to foster, attract and support businesses on the Westside. Through home ownership and economic growth, we can empower our community and make a more equitable city.

As our city grows, we must also focus on public safety and sustainability. As our city grows larger, our transportation and infrastructure priorities serve as real measures of equity. Our Westside neighborhoods deserve equitable infrastructure, which includes our roads, bridges, power grid, Internet access, sewer system, sidewalks, curbs and gutters. Our Westside neighborhoods deserve a transportation system that is affordable, accessible and convenient. Our Westside neighborhoods deserve safe streets for everyone who uses our roads and sidewalks.





## Alejandro "Ale" Puy

### What qualifies you to represent your district?

I am a doer. As a new American, I understand equity. I crafted municipal policy as a former employee of the SL County Council. I found resources to fund training and officers as a former civilian employee of the Unified Police. I am well-rounded and solve issues. I match our district's needs.

### Identify two key issues that you are concerned about. As a city council member, what specific actions will you take to address those issues? Homelessness & Affordable Housing

**Homelessness / Affordable Housing:** Right now, the city's passivity is pitting neighbors against the homeless and each other. We are stalling and not doing anything meaningful. We push the homeless from one corner of the Westside to the other. That is not leadership. Short term: We need small legal camping zones created all over the city (other cities create partnerships with churches to host them). Protected camping would provide some sort of order so we can help unsheltered people while making sure our citizens can enjoy their own neighborhoods. Long-term: allocate a sufficient amount of the coming one-time federal money to tackle homelessness. I know there are many priorities to which this money can be allocated, but this is the most serious crisis we have, and we need to demonstrate it is by investing strategically and heavily.

**Crime & Safety:** Even in safer areas of District 2 people are wary of the stress we are under. Public safety must be a priority for our kids, our seniors, and all our families. We have too many family calls for high-priority calls that take far too long to answer. It is a serious matter. The Westside has a harsh reputation, and the city exacerbates our stress by not putting the resources we need to address the issues we face.

The other side of public safety we need to address, are the issues with our roads, streetlights (or lack thereof), and crosswalks (or lack thereof). We've seen a disproportionate number of kids run over. We see unaddressed speeding in residential neighborhoods. Our sidewalks are impassible in areas. As a council member, I will be on top of this because this is what affects our quality of life.



## Nigel Swaby

### What qualifies you to represent your district?

In a word, experience. I grew up here. I went to school here.

I understand the people who live here. I've spent tons of time in city council

work sessions learning how council members think and work and I've been a tireless advocate for Westside issues as a community council member and chair of a business chamber.

### Identify two key issues that you are concerned about. As a city council member, what specific actions will you take to address those issues?

Residents tell me public safety and homelessness top the list of challenges to the city. To me, public safety includes crime, fire and auto/pedestrian safety. We have an officer shortage in Salt Lake City and a problem with both jail space and prosecutions. The first step is to rebuild our police force. Salt Lake City should lead when it comes to salaries and that should help with recruiting experienced officers from other departments. We should expand the Ambassador program to get more uniforms on the streets where we need them the most. We should hire private security to protect public property like parks and other real estate assets. The latter two steps will reduce calls to police, reduce fires and send a message to criminals that Salt Lake is no longer a good place to do business. Once this is in place, then we can address the criminal element in public camps better while we enforce existing laws and provide resources to the most shelter-resistant homeless people.

We need to work on reducing systemic barriers to the homeless like identification requirements and requiring shelter stays to access other types of housing aid. I would also revisit zoning for single room occupancy throughout the city. SROs are a viable and effective means of providing housing for the most vulnerable, but they need to have on-site case management. Salt Lake also needs to investigate raising the city's minimum wage because of the high cost of living. State law doesn't currently limit municipalities from doing this. We can't lower the cost of housing significantly, nor can we lower the cost of living. Creating a higher minimum wage in SLC, supporting entrepreneurship and recruiting businesses with higher average wages are all steps to make housing more attainable to residents.



## Daniel Tuutau

### What qualifies you to represent your district?

I'm a Polynesian-American resident of Poplar Grove. Being a resident here for the past decade,

I understand the need for representation of our diverse population. I come with a fresh perspective and am excited for the good we can do together.

### Identify two key issues that you are concerned about. As a city council member, what specific actions will you take to address those issues?

A - We need to create better ways to engage our community members. The Westside has been neglected for so long that many of its residents feel that civic engagement is futile. Also, the problems of the day-to-day grind make it difficult for our citizens to feel like their participation is worthwhile. When government officials see that apathy, they continue that neglect as status quo. That's a tough cycle to break, but we can do it. The more voices that are represented, the better the outcomes will be in our city's development. I think fostering a better sense of ownership will also increase involvement, and that will come as we continue to improve our Westside and make it a place we are even more proud to call home.

B - I think economic development is another key issue for our district. A lot of focus is put on Covid-19 recovery, but I think our neighborhoods need to do more than just recover to pre-Covid-19 status. We need real economic growth that will translate to everything else improving in our community. The more we can keep our wealth in our district, or even better to attract outside wealth, will improve the quality of life by helping to provide the funding for projects and programs needed to facilitate that. If we can generate that kind of economic power, by encouraging more businesses to start or move to our area, we will also see improvements in other areas as well.



**Behind  
on Rent?**

[RentRelief.utah.gov](http://RentRelief.utah.gov)

This program helps renters with past-due rent, eligible fees, security deposits, utilities, internet, and home energy costs they are unable to pay due to circumstances related to COVID-19. Expenses from March 13, 2020, to December 31, 2021, may be covered. Landlords may also apply on behalf of renters.

For assistance with your application, contact:

**Community Action Program - (801) 359-2444**  
[www.rentassistance.us/li/Salt\\_Lake\\_Community\\_Action\\_Program](http://www.rentassistance.us/li/Salt_Lake_Community_Action_Program)



Paid for by Salt Lake County Housing and Community Development

Este programa ayuda a los inquilinos con alquiler atrasado, ciertos costos, depósitos de seguridad, servicios, internet y electricidad que no puedan pagar por circunstancias debidas al COVID-19. Gastos del 13 de marzo 2020 al 31 de diciembre 2021, podrían ser cubiertos. Caseros también pueden solicitar para sus inquilinos.

Para ayuda en español y otros idiomas con su solicitud, comuníquese con:

**University Neighborhood Partners - (801) 213-8550**  
[partners.utah.edu/unp-helping-to-navigate-emergency-rental-assistance](http://partners.utah.edu/unp-helping-to-navigate-emergency-rental-assistance)



Pagado por Salt Lake County Housing and Community Development



**¿Esta  
Atrasado en  
tu Renta?**

[RentRelief.utah.gov/Espanol](http://RentRelief.utah.gov/Espanol)



# Voter-approved independent commission and legislative committee to create competing redistricting maps

By **Angie Eliason and Rob Ware**

Every 10 years, a national process of census and legislative redistricting takes place. During redistricting, new boundaries for congressional and state legislative districts are drawn. This process determines the amount of Congressional seats a state is appointed, how resources are allocated, and helps state representatives make more informed decisions that reflect the needs of the districts they serve.

Utah's legislature typically oversees state redistricting, but 2021's redistricting process is more complicated. Two separate bodies, an independent commission and a committee of state legislators, will be creating redistricting maps,

with the legislature free to select maps from either.

The complication began in 2018, when Utah voters approved Proposition 4, which authorized the formation of the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission (UIRC) to create state legislative district maps outside of a partisan framework. The commissioners are appointed by the state government leaders, but there are restrictions in place to prevent partisanship and promote transparency.

"The commission will be doing all the mapping live online and the public can watch and listen to the process and provide feedback," said Aly Escobar, Administrative Coordinator for the UIRC. "For the first time in the history of Utah, the people have more accessibility

to voice their opinion regarding who they want to represent them."

That sentiment is echoed by Representative Sandra Hollins, Democrat of District 23, who explained that "the ultimate purpose of redistricting is to make sure that people are represented fairly. We shouldn't be choosing our constituents, they should be choosing us." With its insistence on nonpartisanship, Prop. 4 was designed to ensure that was the case.

According to Prop. 4, anyone who was a candidate or elected official, a lobbyist, or who received compensation from a political party, committee, or PAC within the previous four years could not serve on the commission. Two of the seven commission positions are also restricted to persons with

no political affiliation.

The UIRC is tasked with collecting data and feedback from community members through public hearings and direct communication. In addition to attending community meetings, members of the community are able to conveniently submit comments, propose maps, and find information about the redistricting process online at [redistricting.utah.gov](http://redistricting.utah.gov).

The commission's original role was to produce maps that reflect what they learned and observed in the community, presenting these maps to the legislature for consideration. The legislature was then free to accept or reject those maps, but any replacement maps from the legislature would be required to reflect the independent

commission's nonpartisan considerations.

In 2020, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 200, which effectively made the UIRC advisory and allowed the legislature to create its own redistricting committee, which Rep. Hollins is a part of. The legislature's committee will create and propose its own maps, which will be presented to the legislature in addition to the UIRC's maps. This change prompted some community members to worry that the process may simply be politics as usual, regardless of Prop. 4's intent.

"When prop 4 passed, the legislature had the chance to accept the will of the people," said Richard

**See REDISTRICTING, page 18**

## COVID-19 Student Safety

School is back in session! In-person learning and COVID-19 safety are both high priorities. The best way to protect yourself and others is by wearing a mask and getting vaccinated. The Salt Lake County Health Department recommends everyone 12 years and older be vaccinated.

### Protect yourself and others:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Stay home when you're sick
- Quarantine after potential exposure

Let's keep each other safe so our children can enjoy school in person and participate in extracurricular activities. If you have questions about how to get vaccinated, please contact the Salt Lake County Health Department at 385-468-7468 or visit [ThisIsOurShot.com](http://ThisIsOurShot.com).

## Seguridad Estudiantil ante el COVID-19

¡El regreso a clases está aquí! Las clases presenciales y la seguridad ante el COVID-19 ambas son de alta prioridad. La mejor manera de protegerse a sí mismo y a otras personas es usando el cubrebocas y vacunándose. El Departamento de Salud del Condado de Salt Lake recomienda que todas las personas de 12 años de edad en adelante sean vacunadas.

### Protéjase y proteja a los demás:

- Lavarse las manos frecuentemente
- Quedarse en casa cuando está enfermo
- Establecer una cuarentena tras una posible exposición

Hay que cuidarnos los unos a los otros para que nuestros niños puedan disfrutar de clases presenciales y actividades extracurriculares. Si tiene preguntas acerca de cómo conseguir la vacuna, por favor comuníquese con el Departamento de Salud del Condado de Salt Lake llamando al 385-468-7468, o visite [ThisIsOurShot.com](http://ThisIsOurShot.com).



### Dennis Faris

Council Member, District 2  
*Miembro del Concejo, Distrito 2*

801-535-7781

[dennis.faris@slcgov.com](mailto:dennis.faris@slcgov.com)



[www.slcdistrict2.com](http://www.slcdistrict2.com)  
**#WestsideStrong**

## From VEHICLES, page 1

for 35 years. He attributes the growing homelessness problem to a lack of affordable housing. He also said that a divorce, family fall-out, and extensive credit card debt have contributed to him being homeless. He also struggles with alcohol and drug addiction.

Over the years that Hunt has experienced homelessness, he said he has felt “pretty lonesome.” “I feel like a throw-away,” he said.

Hunt grew up on Salt Lake City’s Westside on Genessee Ave. in Poplar Grove, a block away from the spot where he was interviewed in the Native Plant Garden near 850 West 900 South. Born in 1963 in Salt Lake City, Hunt grew up with three sisters and two brothers. He attended local schools – Riverside, Parkview, Jordan Junior, and West High – and the 26th Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints near 700 South.

In his teens, he got into some trouble and found his way into a precursor to today’s Youth Works program. It was offered through Neighborhood Housing Services (now NeighborWorks Salt Lake) and made possible by the Jobs Training Program Act. He successfully completed the program and returned in the late ‘80s to help mentor troubled youth and teach construction skills.

NeighborWorks Salt Lake Director Maria Garcia said, “Hunt did well with the youth and was a hard worker, but he left us for a full-time job.”

Hunt said he was sober for 17 years but relapsed three years ago after he and his wife divorced after 31 years of marriage. He used to be a member of a Harley motorcycle club called “Sober Riders.” For now, his Harley is being stored by his best friend, who has been checking up on Hunt every weekend for the past three and a half years. “He told me that I could have my Harley back once I get sober,” said Hunt.

Hunt said that when he got divorced, he gave his ex-wife their Poplar Grove house. “I don’t manage my house well when I’m on drugs,” he said.

Hunt was frank about his crim-



PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE FIFE-JEPPERSON

A community of about fifteen RVs (some broken down) relocated to 900 South between 800 and 900 West in September after they were forced to leave 1700 South near the old Raging Waters Park. A few weeks later they moved on, after they were given notice by the authorities to vacate the area in preparation for a cleanup.

inal history. He said he met his ex-wife in Las Vegas when he was running from the law. He had around \$10,000 in credit card debt, but eventually got a reduction in charges. He pulled up his shirt to reveal a large scar from a time he was stabbed in the 80s and said that he still has bullets inside his body from being shot. He said that he quit stealing in 2001, except for the time he stole a diesel battery in a moment of desperation. “I was really hungry,” he said.

He has four daughters that he hasn’t spoken to in years, although it was apparent that he is very proud of them. “I am embarrassed about my life,” he said.

Today, Hunt feels fortunate to live in a used RV that was given to

him by a woman he used to work for at an auto auction company on 5600 West. He said that a local auto shop allows him to park his RV on their property in exchange for keeping watch at night for would-be catalytic converter thieves.

In late September, when he found out that all the people who had been living in RVs along 1700 South were being forced to move, he helped tow several broken-down RVs to a new location on 900 South between 800 and 900 West. “They would have lost their RVs,” he said with concern. “Why doesn’t someone designate an area for them to live in – with port-potties and trash cans?”

Hunt is well-known among the people who are living on the streets

on Salt Lake City’s Westside, “My friends at Fasttrac [on 802 S. 900 West] told me that I should become the “Homeless Association President,” he said with a laugh. “I really care about the youth.”

Two days before our interview, Hunt said that he happened upon an 18-year-old Chicano boy in front of Boost Mobile near 700 South and 900 West. He could tell that this young man was going through something very difficult, so he stopped and talked to him.

The boy asked for a cigarette, and at first, Hunt said no. But after the distraught young man told him that he and his girlfriend had just had a baby and broken up, Hunt handed him a cigarette and talked with him for an hour or so. He told

him not to give up hope and gave him options, such as joining the military.

The young man asked if they could talk again in the future, so they agreed to meet at the same time and place the next evening. The next day, the young man thanked Hunt, and told him that he was on his way to commit suicide the day before but changed his mind after their conversation.

Hunt hopes that things will change for the better for his homeless friends on the streets, and he believes that the two most important things they are lacking, besides the basic necessities of shelter and food, are education and a good family foundation.



# She's a grand new flag

## Rose Park residents rally to rededicate community flagpole

By Charlotte Fife-Jepperson

Last Memorial Day, Rose Park residents Angela Morgan and Kent Mayberry gathered support on social media to replace a small, tattered flag on the community flagpole at 1000 N. 900 West in the Park 'n Ride lot. They pushed for the Rose Park Community Council to regain guardianship of the flag from the city, because it wasn't being maintained well.

On July 3, 2021, just in time for the Fourth of July holiday, community members gathered for a rededication of the flagpole, and the installment of a new, large flag paid for with donations from community members.

The flagpole contains a plaque honoring the late VerDon Rodger Parker, who served as RPCC chair at the time the flagpole was originally installed over 30 years ago. Corky Reeser with RPCC said that the city pledged to install a new light to illuminate the flag at night.

PHOTOS BY DAVID RICKETTS

A new flag proudly waves on the Rose Park community flagpole near 1000 North 900 West. View more photos in our online photo gallery at [westviewmedia.org](http://westviewmedia.org).





# SLC raises police pay by 30% to improve recruitment

By Sheena Wolfe

The Salt Lake City Police Department lost 90 police officers last fiscal year, largely due to officers moving to other local police departments where pay was significantly higher, said Police Detective Mick Ruff. He also noted that a 30% pay increase for the SLCPD officers, which passed the Salt Lake City Council in June, is helping to fill the gap.

The pay raises negotiated with the Salt Lake Police Association – nearly 30% for entry-level officers and 12% for senior-level officers – were necessary to attract and retain quality police officers, said SLC Mayor Erin Mendenhall at a June press conference.

Prior to the pay increase, entry-level Salt Lake City police officers started at about \$21/hour. With the pay raise, that number increases to \$26. That’s a change from \$44,000/year to over \$54,000, said Joe McBride, SLC Police Association president, noting that senior-level officer pay went from about \$35/hour to over \$39, an annual increase from \$73,000 to over \$81,000. “We are really happy with

this pay increase, and it will do a lot to help overall morale,” McBride said.

Though he acknowledged that the raise is a major recruiting tool that will bring new talent and keep more experienced officers from moving to nearby communities, McBride also expressed concern about other factors impacting recruiting. “Even with the raise, the gap in hiring and retaining qualified police officers will continue to be difficult for a number of reasons including an overall feeling that SLC police officers are not supported by the administration or the community,” McBride said, adding that another problem is that “we are seeing fewer people wanting to become police officers.”

“The exact number of vacancies in the SLCPD is difficult to pinpoint because this number changes weekly,” said Ruff, noting that 22 new officers started at the SLC Police Academy in August and “there are a handful of re-hires and lateral officers who have come back to the department because of the raise.”

Part of the problem with filling the gap, Ruff said, is that it takes

3-5 months to fully screen an applicant and “then ramp-up an academy class.” All newly hired officers, he added, are then placed in a 22-week basic police academy followed by a 14-week field training program, though veteran recruits can be fast-tracked. “A handful of officers come with previous experience from other agencies, and they attend a two-week lateral academy before going to a field training program,” he said.

The SLC Equity in Policing Commission recommended hiring a full-time recruitment officer, which may help close the personnel gap while addressing SLCPD diversity shortfalls. In the meantime, officers are “stressed thin,” said McBride, “and so is the community in many instances.”

Last year, even with the officer deficit, the department fielded 123,000 calls for service, not including officer-initiated activity, said Ruff. Given the volume of calls and need for officers, it’s no surprise that McBride had his own recommendation to help overall morale: hiring a full-time counselor to help officers deal with the inherent stress of the job.

## From REDISTRICTING, page 15

Jaramillo, President of the Utah Coalition of La Raza. Jaramillo worries that, by making the UIRC advisory in nature, the legislature has given itself the power to ignore the nonpartisan recommendations, imposing instead “their own maps that they have drawn and have been drawing the whole time.”

According to the UIRC’s Escobar, “explosive population growth on the west side of Salt Lake County has created the need for more representation,” including on Salt Lake’s Westside. She hopes this will lead to more persons of color in elected office at local, state, and federal levels, potentially increas-

ing the political power of historically underrepresented – yet consistently growing – demographics on the Westside.

Conversely, Jaramillo worries that ignoring the UIRC’s nonpartisan recommendations may reduce representation for Salt Lake’s Westside: “When you divide communities, you dilute their voices.” He does see value in the UIRC’s work to incorporate voices from the Westside’s minority populations as well as the communities as a whole, noting that “everything from start to finish shows a serious and authentic consideration for our communities,” and he hopes to see maps that align with the intent of the UIRC’s.

The UIRC comprises seven members appointed by the governor’s office and state legislative leadership. It includes legal experts, civil servants, retired politicians, a retired Court of Appeals judge, and a former Chief Justice of Utah’s Supreme Court. It’s chaired by Rex L. Facer II, Associate Professor of Public Management in the George Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics at Brigham Young University’s Marriott School of Business.

The legislature’s redistricting committee comprises 20 senators and representatives (15 Republicans and 5 Democrats), including Rep. Hollins, who represents part of Salt Lake’s Westside in District 23.



**NIGEL**  
for  
**Salt Lake**

www.NigelForSaltLake.com

Westside proud since 1977

**COUNCIL DISTRICT 2**



**Red Iguana 2**

New Hours!  
**Open**  
11 a.m to 9 p.m.  
Closed Monday

Reservations  
801-214-6050

Dine In - Curbside Pickup - Delivery

**OPEN FOR DINE-IN**





# Racial equity in policing commission delivers recommendations, enters monitoring phase

By Sheena Wolfe

With its phase one recommendations accepted by the Salt Lake City Council, mayor, and police chief, the Salt Lake City Racial Equity in Policing Commission (SLCREPC) has begun phase two, which involves monitoring implementation of phase one suggestions and looking at outcomes and indicators to help analyze the success of changes in training, practices, and policies at the SLCPD.

For example, said SLCREPC Commissioner and Westside resident Moisés Próspero, additional social workers are being hired by the SLCPD for crisis intervention in the community. “We believe teams that consist of a detective and a social worker can help to calm potentially volatile situations especially in instances where mental illness plays a factor,” Próspero explained.

“If a counselor goes out on a mental health call, there is more likelihood of a successful resolution that doesn’t involve an arrest or jail time. One indicator of success might be that there are fewer arrests among the mentally ill population and more referrals to appropriate services,” he concluded, noting he believes future statistics will show this to be true.

According to its phase one report, the commission found that mental health access disproportionately impacts minority communities, and that 25% of calls to law enforcement from African Americans are mental health related.

“Measurements of success can also be used to access or continue funding for needed programs, such as the Promising Youth Project (PYP),” Próspero said. The PYP is a comprehensive crime, violence, and gang reduction program that contains a summer camp component where life skills and leadership are stressed in addition to fun and adventure. “It’s currently funded through grants,” Próspero said, noting that if program goals are achieved the commission may recommend that the PYP be fully funded by the city.

The summer portion of the PYP is critical for continuity, he said. “Our school police officers work with at-risk kids during the school year and see improvements in their attitudes and behaviors, but then summer comes along, and these kids lose the guidance and mentorship from officers,” said Próspero. “Youth are more likely to fall back into old habits.”

The SLCREPC in its phase one report gave instances where training, practices and policies are successful and gave instances where these indicators do not add up to success. Próspero cited the current memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the SLCPD and the Salt Lake City School District that governs the school resource officers (school police officers) as an example of a successful outcome.

“School shootings throughout the country in past years resulted in increased school police officers, which often resulted in increased student ci-



PHOTO COURTESY OF SLC COUNCIL

At a press conference announcing the creation of the SLC Racial Equity in Policing Commission, the six original core commissioners appointed by Mayor Mendenhall pose in the International Peace Gardens in the summer of 2020. From left to right: Darlene McDonald, Rev. France Davis, Nicole Salazar-Hall, Verona Sagato-Mauga, Aden Batar, Moisés Próspero, City Council Chair Amy Fowler, Mayor Erin Mendenhall

tations and arrests. This gave rise to the term ‘school-to-prison pipeline,’ because citations and arrests were made for a variety of misbehaviors that were not actually criminal offenses such as talking back to a teacher or giving ‘attitude’ to the police officer,” he said, adding that the MOU gives a clearer understanding of what constitutes an arrest and what should be addressed through discipline policy.

The MOU also spells out the roles and responsibilities of school police officers and school administrators, said Próspero, and as a result children at risk for behavioral problems are given appropriate intervention rather than jail time and suspension. Arrests in schools have correspondingly decreased.

An example of where training, policies, and procedures need improvement is in hiring police officers who are good at connecting to the public, especially in communi-

ties of color. “Right now,” Próspero said, “there is little cultural or bias training, and the ethnic population of the current police department does not match that of the communities they represent.” He continued, “Additionally, the commission would like to see more people of color on the police force to represent the community they serve and more police officers who are community-oriented.”

To produce these outcomes, the commission in its phase one report has recommended hiring a professional recruiter and that the police force receive community-based training on the history of policing with people of color and working with the neighborhoods in general. “We want to see police officers who can work with and interact with the community,” said Próspero.

In addition to outcomes and indicators for measurement, the commission would like to see new

initiatives implemented using best policies and practices, Próspero said, noting that the SLCREPC will continue to study the overall structure of the SLCPD as it relates to minorities, and that it plans to make further recommendations in a phase two report.

The SLCREPC was formed at the request of Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall more than a year ago in response to nationwide protests regarding police brutality against people of color. During phase one – and after studying current procedures and policies in the SLCPD, looking at national best-practices models, and talking with police officers and the community – the commission produced recommendations in three key areas: police training, police policies and practices, and school safety.

Recommendations of the com-

**See COMMISSION, page 20**

**See COMMISSION, page 20**

mission's training subcommittee include improving guidelines for increasing diversity of field training, more training in crisis intervention, and overall recruitment of people of color and those with experience working with the community.

Recommendations of the commission's policies and practices subcommittee include improved analysis of information from police body cameras, an internal implicit bias survey, and engagement

in a process to develop the best and most appropriate system for incoming calls, diversion, and dispatch coordination and response.

Recommendations of the commission's school safety subcommittee include improvements in the MOU between the police department and the city school districts regarding student interaction with school resource officers, additional equipment and space for the Promising Youth Program, discussion of hiring protocols for the SLCPD, and collaboration be-

tween various youth programs.

When asked what commission recommendations have been implemented to date, SLCPD Communications Director Brent Weisberg said: "We are continuing to evaluate with the SLCREPC, the city, and other stakeholders to review the commission's recommendations to ensure we are providing safe and equitable services to our community."

*For a complete outline of the commission's findings, visit [slc.gov/boards/repagenda](http://slc.gov/boards/repagenda).*

*Serving west side youth for 10 years!*



## JOIN OUR TEAM!

Youth 6-18 yrs old / Race Swami offers five skill levels as well as a swimming lessons program for new swimmers

Swim Practices held at Northwest Rec Center in Rose Park and Granger High School in West Valley City

Race Swami is a year round USA Swimming program

Monthly fees vary by level, and the program offers reduced fees for families who qualify, as well as free tutoring services, ACT Prep and other Enrichment opportunities for scholastic success

**For more information, email [info@raceswami.org](mailto:info@raceswami.org) or call Minerva Huerta at 801-618-9807. Visit us at [raceswami.org](http://raceswami.org)**

## WE ARE TURNING 10!



Our volunteer community newsroom operates on a non-profit model. If you like what you see in The West View, please support it.

Donate online at [WESTVIEWMEDIA.ORG/DONATE](http://WESTVIEWMEDIA.ORG/DONATE), with the QR code, or by mail:

WEST VIEW MEDIA  
PO BOX 271516  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84127



Sorenson Multi-Cultural Center  
855 West California Ave.

### Basketball

Mon - Fri 7:30am - 9pm

### Boxing Gym

Mon - Thurs 1 - 8pm  
Friday 1 - 7pm

Call 385-468-1300  
for reservations



**Wearing a face covering is required at all times when inside the building, except when actively exercising**



**Reservations required for all Programs**





**Dennis Faris ha vivido los últimos 18 años trabajando para mejorar su comunidad, liderando temas como vivienda asequible, seguridad pública y espacio verde comunitario.**

**¡Este noviembre, vota por DENNIS FARIS en tu boleta por correo!**



**ESCANÉAME**

**¡Para conocer más sobre la visión de Dennis para Salt Lake City!**



**VECINO • LÍDER • PROTECTOR**

Pagado por el Comité para elegir a Dennis Faris



Sorenson  
Community  
Campus



Free  
City Connect  
Wifi across the  
campus

Sorenson Unity Center  
1383 South 900 West

Fitness Center

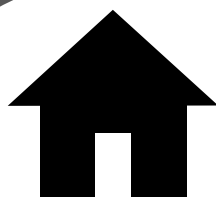
Call 385-468-1300  
for reservations

Mon - Fri      7:30am - 9pm  
Saturday      9am - 5pm

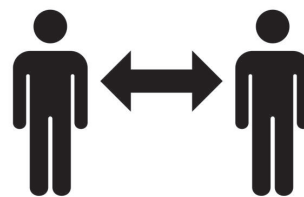
Donated Dental

Call 801-972-2747  
for appointments

Mon - Fri      9am - 4pm



Stay home  
if you are sick  
or have any  
symptoms of  
illness



Maintain your distance at all times.  
6 feet from those outside of  
your household.  
10 feet while exercising







# COVID-19 MORTGAGE PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

NEIGHBORWORKS SALT LAKE IS OFFERING ASSISTANCE TO ANY ELIGIBLE SALT LAKE CITY RESIDENTS FOR UP TO 3 MONTHS OF MORTGAGE PAYMENTS COVERED.





\*An application does not guarantee mortgage payment assistance. For qualifying Salt Lake City Homeowners that have experienced COVID-19 hardship. Eligibility based on income requirements\*



## VICTORIA IS OUR COMMUNITY'S CHOICE

Our neighbors & community leaders know that Victoria is the clear choice for city council. Victoria is an active voice in our community who continually works on behalf of our neighborhood in a variety of capacities.

We can trust Victoria will put in the long hours needed to represent everyone at the Salt Lake City Council.

-  [VoteVictoriaSLC.com](http://VoteVictoriaSLC.com)
-  [VoteVictoriaSLC](https://www.facebook.com/VoteVictoriaSLC)
-  [@VoteVictoriaSLC](https://twitter.com/VoteVictoriaSLC)
-  (801) 796-2577 *(My cell)*

Paid for by Friends of Victoria Petro-Eschler



# Si Se Puede; “Yes You Can” is the official motto of Race Swami Swim Team

By Kirsten Buker

*This story is jointly published by nonprofits Amplify Utah and West View Media, in collaboration with Salt Lake Community College, to elevate diverse perspectives in local media through student journalism.*

The pool is silent except for the rhythmic slapping of water as the swimmers move back and forth. The laps seem endless, and the quiet breaks only when the coach calls out instructions. The smell of chlorine sits in the air as the swimmers listen.

Younger swimmers laugh a few lanes over at the Granger High School pool, but this group of older swimmers is more focused. Still, there's laughter.

“The coaches make it fun, even though you are working out,” said 13-year-old Mirely Muñoz, who joined the team nearly eight years ago after moving to Salt Lake from Wyoming.

Muñoz swims for Race Swami, a team founded in 2011 to offer kids in the Rose Park and Glendale communities a place in the world of competitive youth swimming. About 80% of the team's swimmers are athletes of color -- a rarity in the predominantly white sport, said founding coach Matt Finnigan.

Finnigan, who swam collegiately at Florida State University, first noticed a gap in opportunities for local swimmers as the coach of Judge Memorial Catholic High School's team. A couple of his swimmers from Rose Park and Glendale wanted to keep swimming through the summer.

Finnigan encouraged them to join a year-round club, but they said there was nothing close by and they couldn't afford to join one of the clubs in the wealthier neighborhoods like students at Judge, an east-side private school, could afford.

Finnigan said he knew Race Swami would need steady funding to offer scholarships and cover other expenses like technical competition suits that can cost hundreds of dollars.

It took a year of planning, plus funding from various foundations to get the team up and running. Race Swami's first donation came from the McCarthy Family Foundation in Salt Lake City and was followed by donations from the Sorenson Legacy Foundation and the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation.

A donation from the Larry H. and Gail Miller Foundation provides each new swimmer with the specialized swimming gear required for competitive swimming, such as paddles, fins, kickboards and snorkels.

“The donations provide a chance for the swimmers to train hard and get to a higher level,” Finnigan said.

Catching up

Data from USA Swimming, the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States, shows just 7% of its members are Hispanic or Latinx and 6% are African American or Black.

The lack of representation in the sport, Finnigan said, brought challenges when the team first competed. Finnigan said a meet official criticized the team's appearance, blaming swimmers' socioeconomic status.

“I know you have poor kids,” Finnigan recalls the official saying, “but I need them in real suits.”

Later, Finnigan secured a donation for high-end hoodies embroidered with the team's and swimmer's names. When they showed up at a local meet, he was asked by another coach how his team could afford the expensive gear.

“Our kids deserved those,” he said. “They wanted to look good.”

It wasn't until 2016 that USA Swimming, in an effort to increase diversity, began releasing a series of cultural inclusion guides, according to Swimsam Magazine. The guides -- which focus on African American, Asian American, LGBTQ+, Hispanic/Latino communities in swimming -- serve as a tool for improving diversity and inclusion. The Hispanic/Latino Cultural Inclusion Resource Guide is written in both English and Spanish.



PHOTO BY RUSSELL LAUBER

Race Swami swimmers are happy to be swimming again after a long Covid break.

Finnigan said he wishes these resources were available when he started the team. He encountered language barriers early on. Many of the swimmers were bilingual, but parents only spoke Spanish. It made communication difficult for Finnigan. The kids helped translate and, now he said, his Spanish has improved.

“It's better than it was. The kids still like to correct me though,” he said.

## Keep on swimming

As USA Swimming focuses on increasing representation, 17-year-old sprint freestyler Amy Chung said she's more focused on the sport itself.

“When I'm at a meet, I notice there aren't a lot of people that look like me, but I don't feel different,” said Chung, who has been swimming since she was 8. “Everyone is there to compete.”

And she loves to compete. Not only in the pool but also in the

classroom, where strong academics at Taylorsville High School are taking her to the Naval Academy in the fall. Chung, who is Asian American, joined Race Swami last year because she loves the support she feels from her teammates and coaches.

She credits the coaches for preparing her for the hard work and challenges that she will face as she works to get into medical school.

“The coaches here have taught us more than swimming,” she said. “I've learned time management, to work with teammates, and to be competitive.”

The swimmers have also learned to be resilient.

“At first it was hurtful when other teams would make comments [about our backgrounds] in the locker rooms,” said Lorena Thompson, a 16-year-old junior at West High School.

After 10 years of swimming, she has learned to focus instead on swimming fast and giving back to

the community, which Finnigan encourages. Last year, for example, the team partnered with students from the University of Utah to make mats out of plastic bags to be used at women's shelters in Salt Lake City.

Ed Muñoz also appreciates the sense of community he feels with the team. After moving to Utah from Wyoming in 2013, the single dad of two daughters felt lost without any family or friends for support. Instead, they found a place to belong at Race Swami.

“The swim team became our community,” Muñoz said, noting his daughter Mirely has connected with the female dominated-team.

Mirely, who was the youngest member of the team when she began swimming at eight years old, says the best thing about the team is the moral support.

“The coaches take the time to listen and help everyone with their

**See SWAMI, page 24**





# the WEST VIEW

PERMIT# 2771  
PRSRT STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID

Postal Patron

**CALL FOR  
VOLUNTEERS**

Your community, your news, your voice. Get involved in your community newspaper by contributing stories, helping with distribution, or copy editing. If you are interested, send us an email at [editors@westviewmedia.org](mailto:editors@westviewmedia.org).

## Fight the light to help Utah birds

By Frances Ngo

As the full moon of autumn rises over the Salt Lake Valley, Utah songbirds are embarking on an epic journey. Every fall, millions of birds throughout North America begin their migration from northern summer territories to their southern wintering grounds. Species as small as hummingbirds will travel from Utah all the way to Mexico or Central America. Some birds will go even farther, flying to the tip of South America!

Two-thirds of migratory songbirds travel under the cover of night. These birds have evolved to migrate at night because there are cooler temperatures, less turbulent skies, and fewer predators to avoid. Unfortunately, today's landscape presents a challenge: artificial light.

Light from street lamps, billboards, car dealerships, buildings, and houses creates light pollution. Light pollution is one of the reasons why we can't see many stars in the city at night! This is also a problem for birds. Birds rely on navigational cues like moonlight, constellations, or the location of the setting sun. Light pollution obscures or competes with these cues, leading birds down into our city.

Once they enter the maze of buildings, glass windows become another obstacle. Bird eyes can't perceive glass the same way that human eyes do. Many of these birds collide with buildings and glass structures before they can find their way out of the city. In 2017,



PHOTO BY FRANCES NGO

Example of a yard sign encouraging people to turn off lights for migrating birds.

Tracy Aviary and the Utah chapter of the International Dark Skies Association (formerly Dark Sky-SLC) launched the Salt Lake Avian Collision Survey (SLACS): a community science study to document bird-building collisions during spring and fall migration in Salt Lake City.

Since we began this project in 2017, we have documented 144 bird-building collisions involving 38 species. This number represents a small fraction of the birds that likely collide with windows in the area considering we're only surveying 20 blocks intermittently throughout the migration season. Although there is some variation from season to season, we most often find sparrows, warblers, hummingbirds, and tanagers among the victims.

Luckily, there are solutions! Shortly after we began SLACS, Tracy Aviary and IDA Utah

launched a "Lights Out Salt Lake" initiative to encourage people to turn out their lights at night during peak migration. We encourage residents and business owners to turn off any non-essential lighting between 11pm and 6am during peak migratory months (August-October and March-May). We can also help the birds by making glass easier for them to see. There are many products and solutions to retrofit windows so that they are visible to birds; for example, inexpensive decals and paint.

Tracy Aviary will continue to work on local solutions while documenting collisions in our area, and we are always looking for volunteers to conduct surveys with the SLACS team. If you are interested, you can visit [www.tracyaviaryconservation.org/slacs](http://www.tracyaviaryconservation.org/slacs) to learn more.

### From SWAMI, page 23

personal needs and not just swimming stuff," she said. "They help us with school too."

### From the pool to life

It is this mindset of helping outside the pool that brought coach Russell Lauber out of retirement and back onto the pool deck as an assistant coach at Race Swami. Lauber coached the Cottonwood Heights Aquatics Team for 27 years and Brighton High School for 25 years. Under his tenure, the girls' teams won an unprecedented 20 consecutive state championships and his boys' teams won 16 state championships.

"If all we wanted were fast swimmers, we would get trained seals," he said. "When the swimming days are over and you move on to college and a professional life, no one asks how fast you were. Instead, they ask can you handle the rigor of the school, job or program. Swimming prepares these kids for life challenges."

Finnigan is proud of what he says is the team's 100% high school graduation rate.

He said his wife Mary Chris Finnigan works as an academic advisor at the University of Utah and helps arrange academic tutors for homework. She also sets up ACT prep classes for older swimmers.

"All of the kids from our club have gone on to college," he said. "Swimming has given them the confidence to set high goals and pursue them."

*Kirsten Buker is a journalism student at Salt Lake Community College.*