

Galindo Neighborhood Association News



Hi Neighbors!

Happy Spring! It was so great to see so many of you at South Austin Neighborhood Park for It's My Park Day on March 7th. We got so much brush and debris collected in just a few hours! Thanks to everyone who showed up on a drizzly day!

Some of you may be aware that Dawson Elementary is slated for closure at the end of this school year, along with five other schools, including Becker Elementary in the Bouldin neighborhood.

The properties have been designated as surplus as the Austin Independent School District (AISD) does not think they will be needed for educational purposes in the next twenty years. Several options for the properties are being considered: from leasing with improvements provided by AISD or leasing with no improvements, a long-term lease of 50-99 years, or selling the property outright for development.

To get community feedback, AISD has scheduled community meetings throughout the month of March and the beginning of April at the schools scheduled for closure and repurposing. Dawson's meeting was on Monday, March 9. The first meeting was well attended.

Please follow the link below to learn more about this process and to give your input to the school board before April 10, 2026.

<https://tinyurl.com/37hwzsmx>

See you around the neighborhood,

Patty Sprinkle
GENA President

Upcoming Meetings

March 23rd

May 18th

7pm, South Austin
Recreation Center

About GENA

The Galindo Elementary Neighborhood Association ("GENA") seeks to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, representing residents and property owners within the boundaries of Oltorf St (N), Ben White (S), the Union Pacific Railway (W) and S 1st St (E).

Find out more at:

www.gena.org

A New Chapter at Galindo: Principal Barreto-Romero on Opportunity, Community, and Change

By Madyson Russell

As part of a districtwide cost-saving plan for the 2026–2027 school year, Austin Independent School District will close eight elementary schools and two middle schools — including Dawson and Becker Elementary.

In response to the upcoming rezoning that will send many Becker students to Galindo Elementary, Madyson Russell reached out to Galindo Principal Natascha Barreto-Romero for a Q&A highlighting the school, its community, and how it is preparing to welcome new families during this transition.

Q: Please describe your role at Galindo Elementary and how long you have been in this role.

A: I have been the principal of Galindo Elementary for the past 10 years.

I see my role as advocating for the needs of our students by empowering committed educators to create a strong, inclusive school community where every student is supported and achieving at high levels every day. This work is rooted in building strong relationships, maintaining high expectations, and ensuring teaching and learning remain at the center of everything we do. I work alongside our staff, families, and community partners to ensure every student feels safe, challenged, and deeply supported academically and socially.



Q: What is your favorite thing about Galindo Elementary?

A: My favorite thing about Galindo is our people. Our students are curious, kind, and resilient; our staff is deeply committed to continuous growth; and our families are incredibly supportive and engaged. There is a strong sense of belonging here; students are known, valued, and celebrated for who they are.

Q: What are some of the most innovative programs Galindo Elementary offers to students?

A: Galindo Elementary is proud to offer a Green and Global program that provides students with meaningful, hands-on learning experiences connected to sustainability and the world around them. Through outdoor learning opportunities, students regularly interact with our campus green features, including our goats, chickens, pigs, bees, and gardens. These experiences help students develop responsibility, environmental awareness, and real-world problem-solving skills while deepening academic learning across content areas.

We are also especially proud of our collaborative support for students receiving special education services. Galindo offers every type of special education program available in AISD, all within our campus. Our strong co-teaching model allows general education and special education teachers to work side by side to differentiate instruction and ensure access to high-quality learning for all students. This inclusive approach benefits students receiving special education services, students identified as gifted and talented, and all learners by meeting individual needs within a supportive classroom environment.

In addition, Galindo offers a Dual Language program that supports bilingualism, biliteracy, and cross-cultural understanding. Across programs, our teachers collaborate intentionally to deliver rigorous, engaging instruction while supporting students' academic, social, and emotional growth.

(interview with Principal Barreto-Romero, continued from page 2)

Q: What are you most excited about for the 26–27 school year?

A: As we look ahead to the 26–27 school year, I am most excited about the opportunity to grow together as a newly unified school community. With consolidation comes the chance to blend traditions, strengths, and voices to create something even stronger. Our focus will remain on building strong relationships, maintaining high academic expectations, and ensuring every student and family feels welcomed and supported from day one.

Q: If you could tell the parents of children who will be attending Galindo Elementary due to AISD's school consolidation and reassignment plan one thing, what would it be?

A: I would want families to know that their children will be cared for, challenged, and embraced at Galindo. We understand that change can be difficult, and we are committed to walking alongside families through this transition with transparency, compassion, and open communication. Our goal is to create a school where every child feels a strong sense of belonging and has access to high-quality learning experiences every day.

Galindo: Thanks for Showing Up BIG for the March 3rd Primary!

By Heather Nelson

On March 3rd, voters headed to the polls in record numbers for the Democratic and Republican Primaries. This election determined who will be on your ballot in the November 3rd general election, with the exception of races that will be headed to a runoff on **May 26th**.

Voters clearly signaled their enthusiasm this year, due to several high-profile contests at the state and federal levels. Notably:

- US Senator: In the Democratic Primary, TX Rep. James Talarico of Austin secured the nomination versus US Rep. Jasmine Crockett; on the Republican side, TX Attorney Gen. Ken Paxton and Incumbent Sen John Cornyn will head to a runoff
- Texas Governor: Galindo's current TX State Rep. Gina Hinojosa handily won the Democratic nomination and will face Greg Abbott in November
- Texas U.S. Rep District 49: Montserrat Garibay and Kathie Tovo will face each other in the May runoff

Incredibly, Galindo (precinct 416) had an overall **~34% voter turnout rate***, an unprecedented level which both exceeded the Travis county-wide rate of ~30%, and our precinct's turnout in the 2024 primaries!



Above: GENA VP Heather's cat Zelda approves of Galindo's voter turnout!

Thank you, Galindo, for getting out to vote! Be on the lookout for more announcements on timing and locations for the runoff election on May 26th.

**Note: this figure was adjusted to account for the fact that Voter Registration Totals in Travis County's CSV/XLS reports will be DUPLICATED due to Open Primary System. Source: results.enr.clarityelections.com/TX/Travis/125931/web.345435/#/summary*

Neighbor Spotlight — a Q&A with Ricardo Garza

By Paul Dietz

Galindo is a neighborhood where interesting people do fascinating things. Ricardo Garza personifies this vibe. He's a Galindo original and an award-winning producer of Austin-based television programs focused on edifying the American Hispanic community.

I walked to his house for our interview and thought, "how cool" as I peered down his street and saw a tunnel formed under a canopy of ancient oak trees. Then I saw him, a white-haired man, busily working in his front yard, amid sunlight beams piercing through the trees. After greetings and introductions, he pointed to some cut tree branches and said, "Hey, can you move these to the side?" "Ahh... sure," I responded as I bent down to pick up a big branch, as he cautioned, "don't hurt your back!" Suddenly, I was part of his Galindo story, and it didn't take long to sense his candor, openness, and neighborliness. I had prepared interview questions, but as we took a seat, I wanted to tear them up and ask new ones!

Q: What originally brought you to Galindo, and how has it changed?



A: I moved to my home in Galindo in 1988 to be closer to my ACTV office at the Dougherty Arts Center on Barton Springs Road. This house means a lot to me – it's where I raised my family, took care of my mother, and enjoyed South Austin's social climate. Back in the 1980s, we simply called this neighborhood "South Austin"; we didn't think about neighborhood associations like Galindo, Bouldin Creek, or Dawson. South Austin's vibe was like the Latin Quarters in Paris, yet with its own unique and artsy "live and let live" atmosphere that attracted artists and enthusiasts from all over the world. In fact, Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin lived near me for a while in a house close to Oltorf. I think Austin's music culture attracted him. My daughter met him while she worked the counter at Rent-A-Center. She recalled seeing a man getting out of an old car and thinking he looked familiar... maybe like the lead

singer of Led Zeppelin? But then she thought, "No, that can't be him, one of the greatest rock stars in the world, wouldn't be driving that car... would he?" When she asked for his driver's license to fill out paperwork, it read Robert Plant!

Q: Tell me about your TV production career.

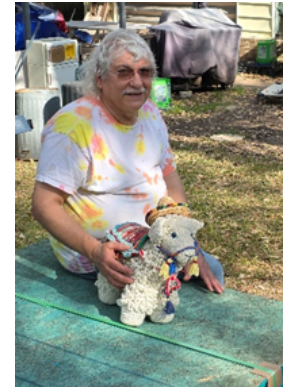
A: I moved to Austin in 1974 as a UT undergraduate majoring in Radio-Television-Film. Prior to that, I joined the army as a volunteer and served two tours in Vietnam, which gave me tuition benefits under the GI Bill. After graduating in 1976, I got my first professional job as a Production Assistant with the Carrascolendas children's program, which was locally produced at the KLRU Austin PBS studio on the north edge of the UT campus. It was the first nationally broadcast Spanish/English bilingual children's series, airing from 1970 to 1976. I loved this job because I deeply believed in its mission of using TV to help Hispanic American children learn English while nurturing their cultural heritage. I experienced this firsthand as a boy when I learned English by watching TV and felt the social pressure Hispanic children experience in America. Carrascolendas was also Austin's first nationally broadcast media production, which helped pave the way for PBS's Austin City Limits four years later and established Austin as an exporter of its art and culture. Sadly, Carrascolendas's production was stopped in 1977 due to government funding cuts, but, fortunately, its episodes can still be found on YouTube by searching "Carrascolendas." *(continue reading at gena.org/garza-spotlight/)*

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I'm pretty busy taking care of Mia, a Great Pyranese/Lab, and my cat Tigo. I regularly do Tai Chi—it has resolved a lot of the pain I had throughout my body and even avoided potential shoulder surgery.

(interview with Ricardo Garza, continued from page 4)

I recommend everybody investigate starting this as early as possible if they have discomfort. I also like cooking and have just finished making pickled ginger from scratch, it was a pain! I like to crochet one-of-a-kind items and either give them away or sell them.



Thank you Ricardo for everything you've done for Galindo, Austin, and Beyond!

To read the full interview, visit gena.org/garza-spotlight/

It's My Park Day: Thank you, volunteers!

By Sev Coursen



Thank you to everyone who participated in the very enjoyable and productive Spring 2026 "It's My Park Day" volunteer event in the South Austin Neighborhood on March 7!

We had excellent Galindo representation in the volunteers making improvements to our beloved park; 75 percent of the 36 volunteers were neighborhood residents! Brush and downed limbs were gathered in three huge piles, and many bags of trash were collected throughout the park and along the creek.

Neighborhood residents also contribute to park improvements throughout the year, picking up trash, reminding dog owners to clean up after their animals, and completing mulching and many other projects.

To read the full interview, visit gena.org/its-my-park-day-spring-update/

Community Matters — Renew Your G.E.N.A. Membership

In times like these, community matters more than ever — and one of the most meaningful places to show up is right here at home.

The **Galindo Elementary Neighborhood Association (G.E.N.A.)** brings neighbors together to care for our streets, our parks, and our shared future. From safety and traffic to development, the environment, and South Austin Neighborhood Park, G.E.N.A. works daily to protect what makes Galindo feel like home.

As we step into **2026**, your participation plays a vital role. When more neighbors engage, **our voices are stronger**, our concerns are heard, and our neighborhood is better protected.

If you haven't renewed yet, **now is the time** — membership is just **\$20 per household per year**.



Meetings

General Member Meetings are open to the public and held every other month at **South Austin Recreation Center, 1100 Cumberland Rd.**

Dues are \$20 per household per calendar year to be a voting Member. You do not need to be a voting member to attend.

Upcoming Meetings:

- March 23, 2026
- May 18, 2026

GENA Officers (2026)

Board

President: Patty Sprinkle
 Vice-President: Heather Nelson
 Secretary: Lisa McGiffert
 Treasurer: Lori Perry
 Communications: Madyson Russell
 Austin Neighborhood Council Representative: Van Wilson
 Zoning: Ryan McCarthy

Committees

Parks: Sev Coursen

Contact

Let's get in touch! To share input, ideas, or feedback:

W: www.gena.org

E: newsletter@gena.org

A: PO Box 41232 Austin TX 78704



Scan the QR code to join the neighborhood Facebook group!

www.gena.org

Neighborhood Updates & Changes

Read below for a curated list of neighborhood updates and changes:

- **600 Cumberland & South First development:** Thank you to everyone who donated to the GoFundMe. Because of your donations, neighbors were able to meet with a lawyer for an exploratory session. **Come to our next meeting on March 23 for the full update.**
- **Half-Price Books coming to South 1st.** The Half Price Books' location on South Lamar closed on March 15 in preparation for a brand new store along South First Street (Expected to open late Spring of 2026).
- **Possible Redevelopment planned for 2420 S 1st St.** Steam Realty partners are pursuing a redevelopment plan for the mostly vacant 1.18-acre lot between Oltorf and Herndon on South First Street. The broker is saying there is a precedent to upzone to MF-6 across a 3-acre assemblage. If the rezoning went through, this site could potentially be in a similar situation to 600 Cumberland.

Upcoming Events



May 9 & 10: Art04 Studio Tour

- Calling all artists, **Art04 Studio Tour is returning** this year and is inviting artists in the **78704** neighborhoods to participate.
- **The deadline to apply is March 29**
- Learn more about the studio tour
- Artist Application: Art04studiotour.com
- Questions? Email Art04.valerie@gmail.com

Let's Stay in Touch

Do you want to stay up to date on what's happening in the neighborhood? We keep neighbors updated through our website at **gena.org**, our Facebook group (see left), and our **e-mail list** (send an e-mail to newsletter@gena.org to be added or subscribe at gena.org).

See You in the Neighborhood!