

Atticus Adair  
Aidan Alcalá  
Zane Alexander  
Harrison Allard  
Olivia Allen  
Conner Alvey  
Chloe Anderson  
Emmi Anderson  
Steven Anzures  
Brynn Ard  
Ella Ayres  
Kate Bachman  
Evie Barnard  
Miles Becht  
Davis Benavidez  
Corgan Berger  
Eli Betton  
Linnea Bieri  
Charlotte Blackmon  
Nick Boehle  
Samantha Bogle  
Teagan Boyd  
Josie Bradsby  
Jude Brandimarte  
Lily Brode  
Camille Brown  
Beck Burger  
Lubbock Burton  
Siena Butlin  
Thea Cahoon  
Corbin Campbell  
Zoe Campbell  
Adella Carcione  
Ruby Cloke  
Ellie Collard  
Sabine Collins  
Zada Cook  
Six Corell  
Evelyn Cox  
Ace Crane  
Noah Dainton  
Nathan Dart  
Ruby Davidson  
Stella Davidson  
Imani Davis  
Sophia Dawson  
Mariela Denson  
Ania Deraet  
Tomas Diago Leon  
Hana Diamond  
Reagan Dias  
Elle Dieterich  
Quinn Doolen-Hicks  
Kathryn Dooley  
Eliana Drucker-Falk  
Carter Eason  
Sage Edwards  
Kayden Elkow  
Maia Ernst  
Olivia Escalante  
Elizabeth Estrada  
Margot Evelyn  
Anasofia Eymann  
Helena Finos



Catalina Flores  
Meme Flores  
Cara Fong  
Anna Fox  
Arwen Frederiksen  
Oscar Friend  
Jolie Gabriel

Ethan Games  
Reva Gill  
Joaquin Godines  
Sophia Gonzalez  
Leah Gordon  
Luke Gordon

## For one Austin neighborhood, community during a pandemic began with a song ... or two

It's 6 p.m. on your average Wednesday night. Kids and adults of all ages gather in the middle of a street in a downtown East Cesar Chavez neighborhood under a disco ball that reflects specks of light onto their faces as kids run around chasing each other.

The group grows, and Ariel Quintans, a father and long-time member of the neighborhood, brings out his speaker and music floods the streets. Then it happens: people gather in a circle standing next to their family members and start to sing. Whether it's David Bowie or Katy Perry, every day for the past year, they have come together in the street to sing.

"I know that every day around 5:30 I need to look at my computer to see if a song has been posted," said neighborhood member Frauke Baylor.

The daily "sing-along" has become a staple of the day, and for many, it is the one constant thing. This idea was first introduced by Janine Bergin when lockdown began in March of 2020.

"I saw these videos of people standing on their balconies (in Italy) all singing at a certain time of the day," she said.

That first day, around 10 families gathered, masked and distanced from the other families, in the street in the shade of a large tree.

"[The sing-along] has been a way to stay connected and not feel so lonely and isolated. The one safe thing we could do was step outside our front gate and see other people," Bergin says.

Since then, the number of safe activities organized by this group has

only grown with each event observing COVID-19 safety protocols such as masking and distancing. During the 2020 election, a large projector screen was placed outside in one neighbor's yard, where NBC's election results were projected onto the screen. Neighbors gathered and sat on lawn chairs and blankets discussing the results.

"Going through [the 2020 election] collectively, with other people, made a lot of a difference," Baylor said, showcasing one more way the group has stuck together.

But that's not all: a theatrical performance, a Christmas party, and birthdays have all been observed by the group to help create a measure of normalcy. At each event tables were set up on the street and neighbors brought food to be shared. For the theatrical performance, a makeshift stage was created through the use of a hanging white sheet, and five children performed a play of their own creation.

Greenfield is a "community organizer," a phrase that he defines as "harnessing peoples' support and abilities towards a unified goal." Since then, the couple has made it their duty to create a group out of a collection of unsuspecting neighbors.

He also acknowledges, however, that the pandemic has made it difficult to continue to help this group grow.

"The other thing I have been working on is what they call place-making," he said, "which is contributing to the physical environment to make it feel more welcoming."

Place-making has been one key way

for him to establish the appearance of a welcoming group. Christmas lights, colorfully-painted benches, a community bulletin board, a disco ball and artworks have all gone up in an effort to carry out place-making, and to make those nightly sing-alongs even more like a party.

Not only has a community grown for the adults, but it has also provided new opportunities for families and kids. Sarah Avey, a mother of two says that the community serves as an anchor for the family, helping her and her kids adapt to the changes in the world.

"The (sing-along) is like a close-of-day ritual," she says. "It's so consistent." Not only that, but over the past month, as the community has grown, a large group of children has formed. Unlike one year ago, when children rarely played outside, groups of kids can now be seen walking the streets with masks on.

For many, the appearance of kids has been welcome.

"For the kiddos, being able to go out and see their friends I feel is something that a lot of people aren't able to do. Everything from the social interactions to getting out and being physical is amazing" father Ariel Quintans says.

Kids are not the only ones who benefit from these interactions.

"I'm a grandmother, and I miss my grandchildren so much, that just seeing children every night added a measure of joy," Bergin said.

Story by Naomi Di-Capua



**SAFE STREETS:** Three neighbors sit on self-painted benches in the street, after a community art event. This moment is an example of place-making to create a more comforting outdoor environment. Photo by Naomi Di-Capua



Felix Grimsley-Ridenour  
Sabina Guardado  
Brigid Haikola  
Liam Hall  
Griffin Haltom  
Jacob Hazen  
Margaret Hearne  
Lucas Heddeleston

Maddie Hello  
Major Henson  
Onyx Hoke  
Samuel Hoke  
Cate Holder  
Molly Holder  
Ethan Hunteman  
Julia Husted

Ethan Hutcheson  
Inara Jah  
Ben Johnson  
Savannah Johnson  
Emma Johnston  
Ella Jones  
Alexander Jourdan  
Eleanor Kadas