



## Newsletter for August 2025



# SAVE THE DATE



**OCTOBER 18, 2025**

10am - Noon

**2934 N. ESTRELLA AVENUE  
TUCSON, AZ. 85705**



[www.thehomingproject.org](http://www.thehomingproject.org)

### Save the date for the Ribbon Cutting & Village Tour!

Join Us for the ribbon-cutting and a tour of the village, celebrating an important milestone in our collective effort to end homelessness.

*Ribbon Cutting & Village Tour*

October 18, 10:00 AM – Noon

2934 N. Estrella Avenue, Tucson

Look for the complete article on the Ribbon Cutting & Village Tour on our website, [HERE](#).

### The Homing Project Fall Campaign: *Finding a Way. Home.* By Claudio Raygoza, Marketing & Design Consultant

Our next chapter we've named our "*Finding a Way. Home.*" campaign. Our goal is to raise the final \$200,000 needed to complete Phase I and bring our village fully to life.

Look for the complete article on our "*Finding a Way. Home.*" campaign on our website, [HERE](#).

Ways to Contribute:

- Make a one-time or recurring donation
- Give at any level—\$50, \$500, \$5,000, or more—every gift makes an impact
- Volunteer your time in construction, landscaping, or resident support
- Sponsor a paver, a micro-shelter, or an essential village service
- Share our mission with your friends, family, and networks

To donate, please click on this [Google Form Link](#)

*Hey, don't you know someone who would appreciate knowing about The Homing Project? How about forwarding this newsletter to them?*



### FINALLY, BUILDERS, YOUR MOMENT IS HERE; THERE ARE STRUCTURES TO BE BUILT!

By Kris Olson-Garewal, CEO, and Yolanda Sethi, Volunteer Coordinator

Many people enthusiastically volunteered for The Homing Project, wanting to build. They got a taste of construction in April when forty volunteers assembled the prefabricated micro-houses at the village site in a little more than half a day. Now we have lots more for volunteers to do:

- 1) There will be a 30 ft by 30 ft **dining patio** composed of hundreds of pavers. Ever laid pavers? If not, you can learn. In addition, the dining patio needs a metal ramada assembled along with its six supports set in concrete bases. If you're interested in being the team leader, please note that when you volunteer.
- 2) The 10 ft by 12 ft **laundry shed** will be built on site. Dave Tonsing, the Team Leader is asking for 3-4 experienced handymen/carpenters for his team.
- 3) **Landscaping** will be done the first week of October. This means going to the nursery to pick up our order of large trees and many medium sized bushes and succulents; planting all the above, and then connecting them to the irrigation system. (Irrigation system and trees are paid for by a Pima County Extreme Heat Grant.) This will require 8-10 people.
- 4) Install an opaque privacy **fence** around the perimeter and install three gates. This will require 5-8 people.
- 5) Lay the stabilized **decomposed granite pathway** between the buildings. This will require 6-8 people, preferably bringing their own wheelbarrows. If you're interested in being the team leader, please note that when you volunteer.
- 6) Finish the **inside of a small kitchen**. Install the stove vent, insulation, wallboard, and then paint. This will require 3-6 people. If you're interested in being the team leader, please note that when you volunteer.
- 7) **Pour a sand volleyball court**. The site has already been dug out for this. If you're interested in being the team leader, please note that when you volunteer.
- 8) **Install electrical panels and AC's**. Not that complicated we believe. It does not involve any hook ups to just attach the panel and to put in the air conditioners - just like window ACs.

While we do not have exact dates for the different opportunities right now, please do sign up to volunteer. As soon as the final electrical permit is received, the trenches for the electrical lines can be covered and work can begin to finish everything else. **Please sign up to volunteer** for the opportunities that you would like to participate in. We will let you know the exact work dates for each area as soon as we know when work can proceed, which we anticipate will be sometime in September.



## Raj Garewal's Reflections on The Homing Project By Kiarra Celaya

With the village's grand opening quickly approaching, it's time to reflect on just how far we've come. A few years ago, the thought of opening a village to aid the vulnerable was only an idea.

In an interview, Raj Garewal recounted the early moments of the project recalling how, "The timing was just right." Raj had returned home to Arizona after working with the unhoused communities in California, and his mother, Kristin (Kris) Olson-Garewal, had recently retired from her lengthy medical career, when their discussion of the unjust and problematic approach being taken with the growing homeless population in Tucson sparked inspiration. Having seen what other states had accomplished providing small homes and vital services to support the unhoused, Raj and Kris thought, "That might work here." Soon after, the pair hit the ground running; although it wasn't easy, nevertheless, they persevered. Now, in August 2025, after countless hours of effort, dedication and commitment by volunteers recruited to their project, a village is soon coming into existence. So, when the ribbon is cut and the doors open, what once was a simple idea shared by Raj and Kris, will become a beacon of hope and change in our Tucson community.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Save the Date for our Fall Cactus and Plant Sale!

**October 4, 10 AM - 2 PM**

Many cacti and plants will be available to purchase to benefit The Homing Project at our October 4 sale. Donations of cacti and other plants are still very welcome! Volunteers are still needed to help with repotting the donated cacti and plants, setting up for the sale, and helping during the sale itself. If you would like to volunteer, please sign up for the cactus & plant sale on our website under Volunteer. If you can donate cacti or plants, please email [yolanda.sethi@thehomingproject.org](mailto:yolanda.sethi@thehomingproject.org) to arrange that. More details will be available soon on our Events page.



### Ride El Tour de Tucson for The Homing Project!

Join nearly 10,000 cyclists in one of the premier bicycling events in the USA, and help raise funds for The Homing Project. Participants can choose from a variety of levels for fundraising: 102 mile, 62 mile, 32 mile, family fun ride, and a 5k walk/run. *When you register to ride, choose The Homing Project as your charity.*

## RECENT EVENTS

### A Joyful July: Art Auction Fundraiser Shines Bright with \$11,000 Raised!

Report by Jennifer Leinhos, Treasurer



With a lively crowd, beautiful weather, and an atmosphere full of creativity and community spirit, Monsoon & Moonlight Arts, a Vintage Market & Silent Auction held on July 26<sup>th</sup>, exceeded all expectations and raised an incredible \$11,000 to support The Homing Project!

The event was the brainchild of artists Mary Spencer and Bonnie Mroczkowski, who came up with the entire show's layout. They then approached Shannon Riggs of the Made in Tucson Market & the Historic Fourth Avenue Coalition who graciously donated their space for a full three days for the event. Then the event was pitched to The Homing Project as the beneficiary, who loved the idea. Jennifer Leinhos, Treasurer and volunteer for The Homing Project jumped on board and she and Mary started the work in earnest.

Also donated were the beautiful, raved over poster for the event designed by Johnny Carillo, the time and effort of the many artists that set up the show, sales support during the show, effort breaking down the show, and the beautiful live music of Denise Lane and Tammy West during the show. Speaking of donations, the Monsoon & Moonlight event was only able to happen because of the generosity of many, many local artists and other kind donors. More than 700 stunning pieces of art, and countless other items such as jewelry, house décor, t-shirts, and even a \$500 tattoo gift certificate were donated. Shelly Brooks of Mystic Pieces alone donated 498 pieces of jewelry and other handmade fashions! The event was also a beneficiary of the sale of the Pennington House estate in Tubac, when new owner Diane Janssen donated a houseful of large artworks.

The evening of the event, The Homing Project demo micro-shelter was on display and people went inside it to see what the project is all about. There was a hot dog truck with snacks for sale, free (or by donation) homemade treats, and refreshing limeade available. The live music created the perfect soundtrack for an evening of shopping and socializing. Also, a table was equipped to allow attendees to make cards to give to the residents of the homes, once the village is up and running. Over 30 enthusiastic volunteers from The Homing Project pitched in, helping with setup, sales, and guest support throughout the evening.

Behind the scenes, Mary Spencer and Jennifer Leinhos poured their hearts into planning and organizing for months, ensuring every detail was perfect. Their dedication paid off in a big way!

If you missed this fundraiser don't worry, the success of this event has us already dreaming about next year's edition. Keep reading the newsletters!

## THP Table at the TCSS plant sale

By Yolanda Sethi, Volunteer Coordinator



Thank you to the Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society for giving us the opportunity to have a table at their Blooming Barrel cactus sale. These echinopsis were rescued and donated by Michelle Sheehan and potted with care by some volunteers. Our sales resulted in about \$300 and that amount was matched by a generous member of the TCSS. We continue to need donations of cacti and plants that can be propagated and prepared for our upcoming sale of cacti and plants on October 4. Volunteers to help with this and with planning for the sale are needed! Please email or call Yolanda if you want to join this effort.

Yolanda.sethi@thehomingproject.org 520-661-3494

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

### Introducing Two New Board Members

By Peter Williams, Ph.D., Board Member and Volunteer

We at The Homing Project have spent the past several months organizing ourselves even as we make progress on our first village. There are two new Board members. And we have been shifting to the organization we think we're going to need in the future. More on that organizational work will be in next month's newsletter.

One new Board member is Janin Struminger, a recently retired MD. She brings strong administrative experience with several Tucson area hospitals to go with her 30 years of board-certified medical practice in infectious diseases. And she has been an active community volunteer on GED literacy issues, teaching GED math classes, and helping at a women's shelter. She has often seen first-hand the challenges of being unhoused through her patients and their caregivers. Her work with The Homing Project will include attention to vocational training and job placement.

In addition, I joined the Board as Board Secretary. I bring extensive experience in public administration, team-building, and organizational development, having spent 30 years focused on addressing organization conflict, strategic planning, and collaborative problem-solving, mostly in the federal government. My doctoral dissertation focused on bridging the theory and practice of collaborative management, which is part of what The Homing Project is doing as well.

If you have time and interest in serving as a volunteer staff member, we have several committees and working groups that could use your help! Please let us know your interests and how you'd most like to become involved.



A 'Giftster' registry has been set up to allow supporters to buy furnishings for village residents' micro-shelters. Click on this [link to view the registry](#).

Help the Cause -- Buy some Raffle Tickets!



**Jim Click Raffle 2025.** Enter to win a 2025 Kia Carnival Hybrid SX Prestige. Tickets are \$25 each or 5 for \$100. Every dollar of our raffle ticket sales goes to The Homing Project! Purchase raffle tickets on the project [website](#).

Casa Maria volunteers help unhoused people in So. Tucson deal with the heat!

See the August 8th Luminaria article [HERE](#)

### The Homing Project Board Meeting and Volunteer Meeting Dates

Month	Board Mtg	Volunteers Mtg
August 2025	Wed. 27th	Sat. 30th
September 2025	Wed. 24th	Sat. 27th
October 2025	Wed. 22nd	Sat. 25th

**Board Meetings** convene at [Kris Olson's home](#) at 5:30 PM. Volunteers are welcome to attend.

**Volunteer Meetings** are now being held at 10 AM on last Saturdays, as shown above, at City of Tucson Ward 3 meeting room, 1510 E. Grant Rd. Join us to plan new events and to discuss past ones.

The Board and Newsletter Staff of [The Homing Project](#) thank You for choosing to serve our community with us,

#### The Homing Project Newsletter

Joe Vaughan produced this month's newsletter with assistance from Kiarra Celaya. Email suggestions of items for inclusion to: [newsletter@thehomingproject.org](mailto:newsletter@thehomingproject.org)



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