

What: Community calls on City, State accountability for all casualties of the housing, climate, and opioid crises

Who: Yanawana Herbolarios with friends and neighbors of Albert Garcia

When: Various. See schedule of events below

Where: Various. See schedule of events below.

Why: On August 12, amid more than a month of almost daily triple-digit days, our friend and neighbor Albert Garcia passed away on the streets of the Collins Garden neighborhood on San Antonio's Westside. Those who knew Albert's story may remember that he lost limbs following Winter Storm Uri in 2021, becoming a double amputee, and that a number of people worked together both inside and outside multiple levels of government over the course of a year to get him off the streets and into housing. (See deceleration.news/2022/01/12/his-name-is-albert-lessons-from-a-polar-vortex-part-1-of-3/).

In July 2023, an abusive caregiver pushed Albert out of stable housing, then out of 18 months of sobriety, landing him back on the streets of his old neighborhood in the middle of the heatwave currently engulfing much of the US South. This time, he didn't survive long enough for the agencies charged with protecting the most vulnerable to locate housing options for him. His death points to the paradox of multiple systems in crisis, where the most vulnerable and medically fragile unhoused people are in fact the least able to access housing and care.

We grieve the loss of Albert who, despite the many hardships he lived through, remained kind, sweet, sarcastic, and funny until the end. Born and raised on the Westside in the Alazan Courts, he was a star football player for Lanier, and while incarcerated he studied religion and became an ordained minister. He loved people and children, and when most recently housed dreamed of getting prosthetics and becoming an inspirational speaker, returning to his alma mater to share his story in the hopes of helping other avoid the pitfalls he fell into. We are outraged that the two public agencies intended to protect him—the State of Texas's Adult Protective Services and the City of San Antonio's Department of Human Services—were unable to rehouse him with the rapidity required of his situation. We are outraged that governments at all levels have failed to respond to the climate emergency we are living through with the urgency that is required, leading to the deaths not only of houseless people like Albert but of workers and incarcerated people. We mourn not only Albert's unjust death but all those people

and communities, human and more-than-human, who will suffer first and worst because those in power fail to act with all due haste to transform our communities and economies into ones centered on care, protection, justice, and ecological sanity.

We call on all advocates for the unhoused, all housing justice activists, all mutual aid organizations, all street outreach teams, all climate justice organizations and activists, all neighborhood residents, and all ordinary people of conscience to attend a vigil for Albert at his old camp under the Nogalitos off-ramp—and follow this with any of several ways you can take action in response.

As Mother Jones said, we must mourn our dead and fight like hell for the living. As the City solicits our input on budget priorities, join us for a month of action to remember Albert and all others allowed to die by those with the power to invest in people and planet over police and prisons.

Schedule of Events:

- Tues, August 22 at 6:30pm: Give your input at the City's Budget Town Hall for District 5 (Normoyle Community Center, 700 Culbertson Ave 78225). We need more resources for harm reduction services, housing options accessible to unhoused people with medical needs, and climate disaster preparations that consider the needs of the unhoused, outdoor workers, and incarcerated people! Register here to speak: <https://www.saspeakup.com/sabudget2024>
- Thurs, August 24 at 6:30pm: Give your input at the City's Budget Town Hall for District 2 (Second Baptist Church, 3310 E Commerce 78220). We need more resources for harm reduction services, housing options accessible to unhoused people with medical needs, and climate disaster preparations that consider the needs of the unhoused, outdoor workers, and incarcerated people! Register here to speak: <https://www.saspeakup.com/sabudget2024>
- Sunday, August 27 at 7:30pm: Sunset Community Vigil for Albert Garcia at the intersection of IH-35 South and Floyd St, in the grassy triangle across from the Nogalitos St off-ramp (see map)
- Wednesday, August 30: Citizens to be Heard. Share your words and thoughts about Albert and your vision of what needs to happen at the City level to prevent other similar deaths.

- Friday, September 1 at 8am: Die-In outside of the State of Texas's Adult Protective Services (3635 SE Military 78223)
- Friday, September 8 at 8am: Die-In outside the City of San Antonio's Department of Human Services (100 W Houston St 78205)
- Saturday, September 23 from 9am-1pm: Advocates March Honoring Houseless Community (gather at Bexar County Courthouse, 300 Dolorosa 78205)