

JANUARY 28, 2024



## Cultural Edition



Not featuring Aanvi Goyal

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER By Aarya Shah

Growing up in San Antonio, I have been surrounded by its diverse cultures and vibrant history, celebrating the Fiesta parade in downtown and going to field trips at the Alamo. These were not only enjoyable experiences but have also been instrumental in fostering a sense of connection to the city's past. Living here, I have gotten to explore other cultures outside of my own through enjoying a variety of Mexican foods and discovering a whole restaurant for waffles and fried chicken. Through participating in various volunteer projects with TIPS JVP, I've not only contributed to the community but also gained a unique perspective, allowing me to explore different facets of San Antonio and its diverse neighborhoods and areas. These experiences collectively paint a rich portrait of my connection to this vibrant city, shaping my understanding of its past and fostering a continual exploration of its dynamic present and diverse communities.

I am super excited for this new year and the many projects like the Basura Bash coming up, as well as getting new projects up and running. Finally, I present to you Volume 6, Issue 2 of the TIPS JVP Newsletter on San Antonio History and Culture. I hope you enjoy!

VOLUME 6  
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# SAN ANTONIO CULTURE

By Neel Mittal



Embracing a rich diversity of cultures, traditions, religions, and ethnicities interacting on a daily basis, San Antonio is widely regarded as a "melting pot." Throughout history, the centrality of San Antonio has made it a magnet for people from diverse backgrounds, creating a dynamic tapestry where individuals from anywhere around the world can feel involved and accepted. The "confluence of cultures" that has arrived and lived in San Antonio since its establishment has developed an interesting and culturally rich heritage, directly contributing to the city's unique and vibrant culture.

Expressing its cultural identity with pride, the city holds a deep affection for the San Antonio Spurs, its beloved NBA basketball team. Since their establishment in 1967, the Spurs have not only been a major attraction, bringing notability and fostering a sense of unity through their remarkable contributions to the NBA, but even bringing pride and spirit. The team's mascot, the Coyote, serves as a vibrant and interactive symbol, adding an extra layer of energy and excitement to spirited events and creating lasting memories for fans. From 2002 to 2016, the Spurs boasted a formidable trio of NBA players, affectionately known as "The Big Three" – Tim Duncan, Manu Ginóbili, and Tony Parker. Together, they clinched four NBA Championship wins, the most recent one in 2014. Nowadays, the Spurs have been celebrating earning the #1 Draft Pick of the NBA this past year, Victor Wembanyama, who was the best draft prospect of the Class of 2023.

San Antonio is a vibrant mosaic woven from a myriad of cultural and ethnic influences, including the rich flavors of Mexican and Texan traditions, the historical imprints of German and Irish heritage, and the diverse enrichments from African American communities. There are many events that encapsulate San Antonio's rich culture, one of which many of us celebrate - Diwali. San Antonio was the first city in the United States to sponsor an official Diwali celebration, hosting more than 10,000 people per year. Other events that San Antonio is notable for are the Fiesta, a city-wide festival in April, which honors the memory of the lives lost in the Battle of the Alamo and San Jacinto, and Cinco de Mayo, a festival taking place in the Historic Market Square in Downtown San Antonio.

San Antonio derives its uniqueness from its rich and diverse history. Founded in 1718 as a Spanish mission and presidio, the city played a pivotal role in shaping the history of Texas. The Alamo (the site of the Battle of the Alamo) became a symbol of resilience during the Texas Revolution against Mexico. The city's history also characterizes its aptitude for the coexistence of various cultures. The San Antonio Missions are regarded as a UNESCO World Heritage site, displaying the blending of Spanish and Native American influences. Especially nowadays, historical districts like La Villita and the King William Historic District can give an idea of the preserved architecture and features that show the story of San Antonio's evolution. The River Walk in Downtown San Antonio provides the charm and allure of a picturesque urban waterway. It is an iconic destination for both locals and visitors, serving as a hub for cultural events and festivals and making it a central element in San Antonio's enchanting ambiance.

San Antonio, with its quirks and compliments, weaves together diverse cultures, traditions, and a rich history. From the Spurs fostering unity to festive cultural celebrations like Diwali San Antonio and Fiesta, the city thrives on promoting its multicultural identity. The numerous historic destinations like the Missions and the Alamo showcase a prominent history and a harmonious blend of influences. Places like the River Walk give the city a charm that is unique to only San Antonio, exemplifying its vibrancy.

# INTERVIEW

Arpitha Kadaba and Aanvi Goyal

*Mr. Don Rios is a United States History teacher at Clark High School. Mr. Rios has been teaching for over 10 years and has lived in San Antonio Texas his entire life.*

## **1. First, can you highlight some key events that have played a pivotal role in shaping San Antonio's history?**

San Antonio has a fascinating history with several key events. One significant event was the Battle of the Alamo in 1836, a pivotal moment during the Texas Revolution. The city's Spanish colonial heritage and role as a gateway to the American West have also contributed to its unique historical tapestry.

## **2. How would you describe the cultural fabric of San Antonio? Are there unique traditions that stand out?**

San Antonio's cultural fabric is incredibly diverse, reflecting its Native American, Spanish, Mexican, and Western influences. One distinctive tradition is Fiesta San Antonio, an annual celebration that showcases the city's multicultural heritage. The vibrant colors, parades, and events during Fiesta truly capture the essence of San Antonio's cultural richness.

## **3. Are there any iconic dishes or culinary traditions associated with San Antonio that have historical significance?**

Yes, San Antonio is renowned for its Tex-Mex cuisine.

Dishes like chili, tamales, and the iconic breakfast taco have deep roots in the city's history, blending Mexican and American culinary traditions. The historic Market Square, or El Mercado, is a fantastic place to experience and savor these culinary delights.

## **How has San Antonio evolved, especially in the context of urban development and growth?**

San Antonio has undergone significant changes over the years. From its origins as a Spanish mission to its role as a major military and trade hub, the city has experienced substantial urban development. The River Walk, for instance, has transformed from a flood control project in the 1930s to one of the city's most iconic and bustling attractions, showcasing the city's commitment to preserving its historical treasures.

## **5. Lastly, how do you incorporate San Antonio's history and culture into your history lessons? Are there specific aspects you find most engaging for students?**

Integrating local history into lessons is crucial for making history relevant to students. I often use field trips to historical sites like the Alamo or missions to provide a tangible connection to the past. Additionally, exploring personal stories and cultural traditions helps students connect with the material more personally. The multicultural influences in San Antonio's history offer a diverse and engaging backdrop for classroom discussions.

# Events

By Neerja Bathla

On January 27th, members of the TIPS JVP came together to support Book Buddies, an organization dedicated to enhancing the reading experiences of children in the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD). The volunteers actively engaged in sorting through many of donated books, carefully categorizing them for various age groups, including PreK-Kindergarten, 1st - 2nd grade, 3rd - 5th grade, and 6th - 8th grade. They have also converted a school bus into a mobile library for schools who don't have one in which we helped stock books. Their great efforts ensured that the books were not only age appropriate but also in excellent condition, ready to be enjoyed by young readers. A sincere thank you is extended to all volunteers for their commitment to supporting their community and coming out to volunteer.

**Upcoming:** February 17- Basura Bash at the Coker United Methodist Church

[Texas Indo Physicians Society Junior Volunteer Program](#)