



La Voz de Esperanza

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- We advocate for a wide variety of social, economic & environmental justice issues.
- Opinions expressed in La Voz are not necessarily those of the Esperanza Center.

La Voz de Esperanza

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Articles due by the 8th of each month

Policy Statements

- * We ask that articles be visionary, progressive, instructive & thoughtful. Submissions must be literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic, violent, or oppressive & may be edited for length.
- * All letters in response to Esperanza activities or articles in La Voz will be considered for publication. Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.



Our cover page photo seems an unlikely choice for the winter issue of *La Voz de Esperanza*, but given the warm, sunny days that we've endured throughout December of 2024—it is not so far-fetched. The timing of the Dec 2024/Jan 2025 issue commemorates the 5th Anniversary of the dismantling of the rookery at Bird Island in Elmendorf Lake in San Antonio's Westside in December of 2019. *La Voz* highlighted the attack on the birds in April of that year, and *Esperanza Buena Gente* joined a city-wide effort to save the birds from being removed or eradicated—rallying and speaking before City Council, to no avail. The City of San Antonio managed to drive out the birds inhabiting Elmendorf Lake using aggressive and harmful tactics and have steadily progressed to harass the birds at Brackenridge Park and Woodlawn Lake.

On Wednesday, December 5, 2024, the Supreme Court of Texas heard oral arguments in "*Perez v. City of San Antonio*" in which the Lipan-Apache Native American Church seeks to halt a restoration project in Brackenridge Park by the City of San Antonio that includes the removal of trees and birds in an area where the Native American group worships. The plaintiffs are utilizing and testing a new state constitutional amendment that was added post-COVID specifically to protect religious services from any laws or rules that could limit them. In essence, government cannot ban worship. The City fully intends to go ahead with the removal of ancestral trees and birds that the Native American Church considers to be part of their spiritual practices. While the Native American Church can continue to worship in the area the final outcome of this suit remains murky until the summer when the suit is revisited. Until then, look for updates in *La Voz* and in-depth reports in *Deceleration News*.



As we look to the beginning of a New Year, I urge *Voz* readers to continue to keep yourselves informed and engaged in community activities. Your participation in local events will impact developments in our state, nation and globally. Do not isolate, thinking yourself protected from the outside world. We must remain vigilant and communicate with each other about any and all happenings that impact our communities. We, at Esperanza intend to thrive in 2025 and so should you!



The 2025 Esperanza International Peace Market/Mercado de Paz was a huge success thanks to our vendors, both local and international, our Buena gente and our staff. A spirit of conviviality and cooperation prevailed with everyone enjoying themselves and looking forward to the next Mercado de Paz.

Our deepest gratitude to all that were part of Peace Market: shoppers, vendors, visitors, staff and Buena gente. ¡Feliz Año Nuevo!

ATTENTION VOZ READERS: If you have a mailing address correction please send it to lavoz@esperanzacenter.org. If you want to be removed from the La Voz mailing list, for whatever reason, please let us know. La Voz is provided as a courtesy to people on the mailing list of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. The subscription rate is \$35 per year (\$100 for institutions). The cost of producing and mailing La Voz has substantially increased and we need your help to keep it afloat. To help, send in your subscriptions, sign up as a monthly donor, or send in a donation to the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Thank you. -GAR

VOZ VISION STATEMENT: La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.