



Interfaith effort fighting for affordable housing in Chandler

By: [Josh Kristianto](#)

Posted at 10:19 PM, Jan 08, 2024 and last updated 5:57 AM, Jan 09, 2024

CHANDLER, AZ — An interfaith effort is trying to bring housing to the people who need it in Chandler and other parts of the Valley.

Barb Quijada and Susan Davis come from different religious backgrounds, but that is not stopping them from working together.

“Despite our differences in theology, we have so many things in common across the different denominations,” said Quijada, who is a member of Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

One of those things in common is affordable housing in the Valley. These congregations, which include Catholics, Methodists, Episcopalians and even Muslims, are all coming together through VIP to fight for issues they believe are worth fighting for.

Davis says when she first moved to her two-bedroom apartment in Chandler, rent was only about \$1,100. Now, it is \$1,900 a month. She is now picking between paying rent or buying groceries.

“Usually the rent pays off. That’s the one that comes in first because that is the one that is most important — I don’t want to be on the street. So many

times I go without food because of it,” said Susan Davis, a member of Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church in Chandler.

VIP is setting its sights on county land off South Arizona Avenue and Ocotillo Road in Chandler. Developers want to build a 250-unit affordable housing complex for seniors and veterans, which is now a significantly smaller number after neighborhood pushback.

It is only one of Valley Interfaith Project's focuses this new year, involving 30 congregations who want to see change in their community.

By using their sheer numbers and unified voices at city council meetings, the group hopes to garner the support of elected officials for these projects.

“When someone from our group spoke, we all stand up in support of that,” said Quijada.

Residents nearby say they are concerned about what more housing will do to the traffic and their home values.

For Davis, it is a matter of changing perception.

“There may be some reasons that people feel like it's not good for people to have affordable housing in their neighborhood, but the main reason that they feel that way I think is because they misunderstand the people that will be moving there,” said Davis.