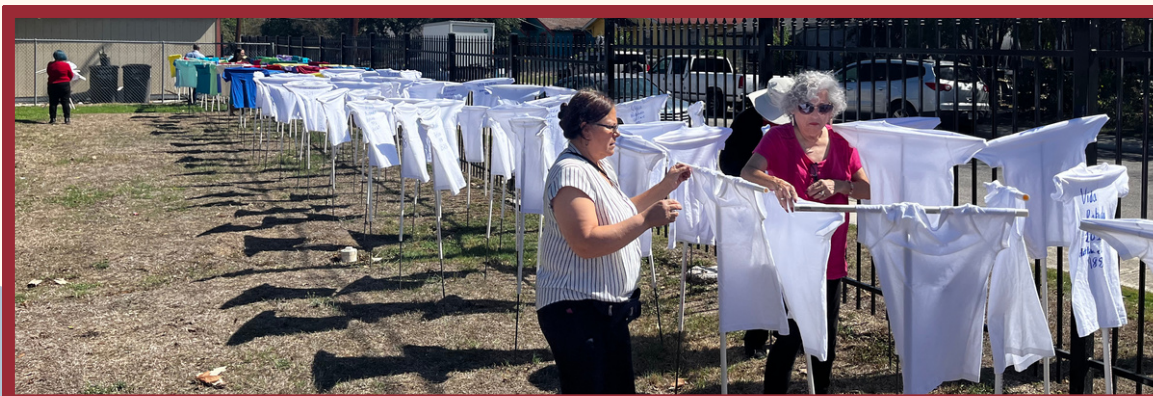


Vidas Robadas (Stolen Lives)
Gun Violence Awareness Campaign
Launch in San Antonio, TX 2023

Galvanizing Communities Through Collective Action

*"It's hard not to be impressed by passionate people of faith driven by social justice. They're bold. They're at the very grassroots. They're no-nonsense."
-Elaine Ayala, San Antonio Express News*



In 2023 Texas Impact launched Vidas Robadas (Stolen Lives) in San Antonio, Texas. Vidas Robadas is a Texas Impact project focused on reducing gun violence. Through memorializing victims of gun violence, Vidas Robadas localizes and makes visual the reality of gun violence for communities across our state. The initial rollout in San Antonio generated enthusiastic engagement from a diverse network of faith communities, advocates, and city leaders.

Vidas Robadas is a public awareness installation that makes the reality of gun violence concrete and local. Congregations, universities, and other organizations with physical locations display t-shirts that name or represent victims from their local community whose lives were stolen by gun violence. Colored shirts name victims of homicide by gun and white shirts represent victims of suicide by gun.



Vidas Robadas builds bridges between the silos of advocacy and violence prevention that exist in local communities. The project unites communities of faith and other advocates to create positive change. Participants work with local elected officials on initiatives to enact gun violence reduction measures. In San Antonio, Vidas Robadas partnered with local faith groups and city officials to hold the city's first gun buy-back program. The city of San Antonio, with the leadership of Council Member John Courage, provided HEB gift cards in exchange for voluntarily surrendered firearms. The event, which was held at the Alamodome, recovered more than 900 guns and distributed the full \$175,000 allocated for the event.

All firearms collected in the buy-back will be destroyed by the city, preventing them from going back into circulation. The event culminated in a peace march to the Alamodome, where participants set up a Vidas Robadas installation with more than 2,000 shirts. More than 100 volunteers marched from St. Michael's Catholic Church to the Alamodome, accompanied by local and state government officials.



Media Coverage

“Outside the parish building, participants got a preview of a temporary public art installation — a dramatic sequence of T-shirts, 2,800 of them, each depicting a life lost to gun violence and/or suicide in Bexar County in the past five years. Designed by the group Texas Impact, ‘Vidas Robadas,’ or ‘Stolen Lives,’ will go up Saturday morning in time for a peace march. The installation will remain in place for Sunday’s planned gun buyback program, believed to be the city’s first. Each colored shirt will show the name, age, and death date of someone in Bexar County who died of gun violence in the last five years. Every white T-shirt will represent a suicide and list the crisis hotline number, 988.”

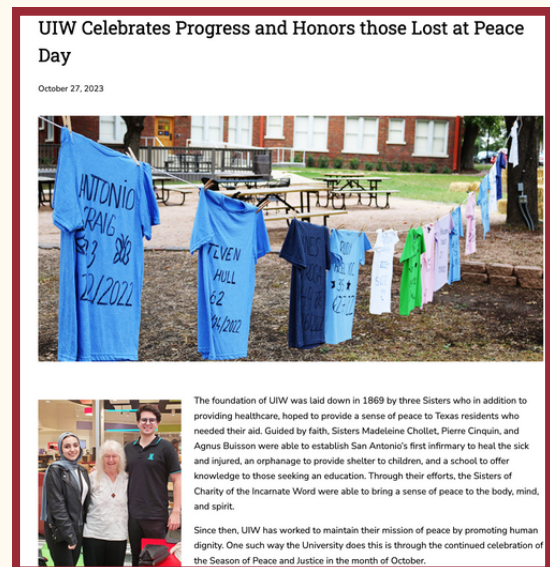
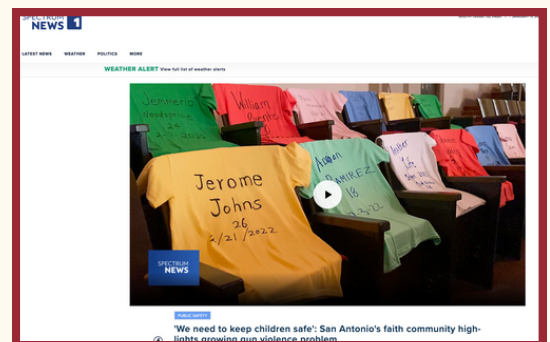
- Elaine Ayala, San Antonio Express News

“An installation, titled “Vidas Robadas, Stolen Lives,” displayed shirts hung on clothes lines on Dubuis Lawn. The shirts were hung by the UIW community in collaboration with Texas Impact and COPS/Metro Alliance to represent lives lost to gun violence and/or suicide. Each shirt bore the names of victims and the dates they lost their lives. One shirt depicted a crying eye, created by UIW student Margaret Schwegmann. ‘Her creation of the eye that cries in the face of suicide is echoed in the heavens crying and raining on our T-shirts,’ Sr. Martha Ann commented, referencing the rains that fell on campus throughout Peace Week.”

- The University of the Incarnate Word

“Each one of these T-shirts will become a memorial,’ Rev. Clark said. The Travis Park Church congregation is participating in Vidas Robadas, honoring lives stolen by gun violence. ‘For me this is a very moving, powerful statement that says ‘this is happening in our community,’ said Rev. Clark. On average, nearly 4,000 Texans die by guns every year. In the last five years, more than 2,700 Bexar County residents have been shot and killed, either by homicide or suicide.”

- Amber Hughes, Spectrum News



Media Coverage Cont.



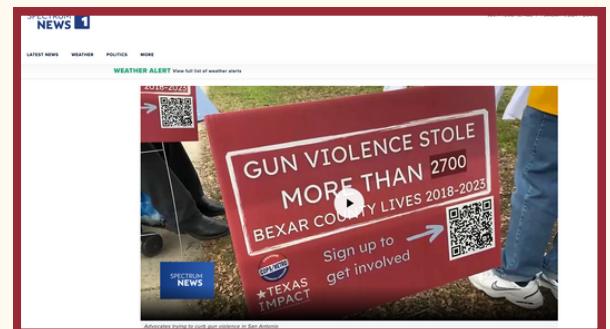
“Dixon’s son D’Anthony was just 27 when he died. ‘He was just getting his life back on track,’ she said. ‘He had a trucking company. Inspiring to do so much more.’ That’s why Dixon joined the recent march. ‘Vidas Robadas’ honors stolen lives by placing their names on shirts and displaying them for everyone to see. ‘I didn’t know how emotional I would feel with just the shirts,’ Dixon said. ‘It’s a lot of shirts. My son is one person of like thousands of people.’ In the last five years, more than 2,700 people in Bexar County have been shot and killed. Rev. Rob Mueller with COPS Metro and Texas Impact says they will continue advocating for gun reforms at the Capitol. ‘When gun owners fail to take seriously the responsibility that accompanies that right, people die,’ said Mueller. Outside the Alamodome, more than 900 guns were collected during the city’s first voluntary weapons exchange.”

- Amber Hughes, Spectrum News

“Two initiatives announced this month highlight the growing collaboration among San Antonio’s faith groups, local government and nonprofits: a voluntary gun exchange and a memorial for more 2,600 people. Both are focused on reducing the city’s prevalence of gun violence.”

- Iris Dimmick, San Antonio Report

“It’s important that congregations have opportunities to demonstrate their commitment to ending gun violence to the wider community,’ said Bobby Watson, human rights fellow with Texas Impact. ‘Vidas Robadas localizes and connects communities to the reality of gun violence, honoring gun violence victims and at the same time witnessing to the need for change,’ Organizers hope to line the streets surrounding the Alamodome with the T-shirts ahead of and during the gun buyback, Pastor Robert Mueller of Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church told the San Antonio Report last week. They also hope it will spread to other major Texas cities, and they plan to take the shirts to the state capitol to advocate for gun control legislation.”



Vidas Robadas Installations Across San Antonio

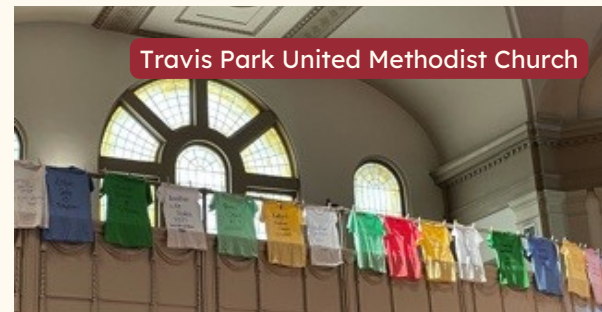
St. Margerat Mary Catholic Church



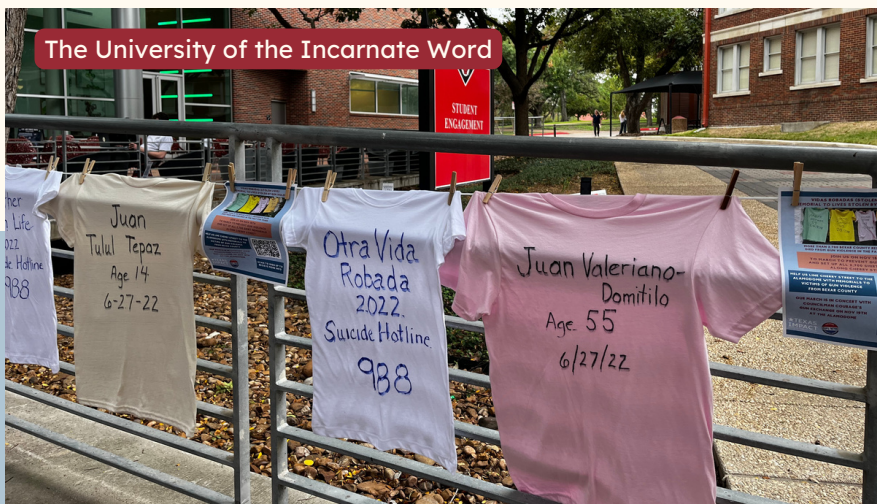
Macedonia Baptist Church



Travis Park United Methodist Church



The University of the Incarnate Word



Vidas Robadas Installations Across San Antonio



The San Antonio Alamodome Stadium



Divine Redeemer Presbyterian Church



St. Michael's Catholic Church



University Presbyterian Church

First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio



Vidas Robadas has served as a catalyst for further gun violence reduction work in the city and continues to connect faith communities to each other and to gun violence reduction campaigns.



In total, the launch of Vidas Robadas in San Antonio included nine separate installations. Three more installations already are planned for early 2024.

The San Antonio installations have been supported by more than a dozen faith-based groups; advocacy groups; and city leaders. Sponsors have included Texas Impact; the City of San Antonio; COPS Metro; the Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio; and Texas Gun Sense.

Vidas Robadas will continue in San Antonio through 2024 and is expanding to other metropolitan areas like Austin, Houston, and Dallas. The project promises further engagement with local leaders and various levels of government. The Vidas Robadas campaign will culminate at the start of 2025, when Texas Impact will lead its network built by this project to the Texas Legislature. There Texas Impact and its partners will set up a final Vidas Robadas installation with memorials to the thousands of victims of gun violence from around the state. The installation will be used as a platform to demand long overdue legislative action by Texas officials.



Reforming gun-related policies is difficult, especially in Texas. It's difficult—but not impossible. The world is watching, and lawmakers are paying attention. We have to capitalize on this moment. Lives depend on it.

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