

Olympian to Special Olympics coach: A volunteer's journey



If volunteering is a testament to the timeless truth that it “takes a village to raise a child,” a perfect case in point is Scottsdale Police Department employee Alex Sachs.

Last December, the police aide volunteered to coach the Scottsdale Bobcat's first-ever soccer team and brought the group to victory, securing a

gold medal in their debut at the Arizona Special Olympics Tournament in Chandler.

It didn't hurt that Sachs is also a former Olympian, who spent years as a professional women's soccer player and Brazilian Soccer Hall of Fame inductee. However, Sachs says the key to the team's success is embracing inclusivity and recognizing individual potential.

Most of the team had never played soccer before joining the Bobcats, some had never even kicked a ball, but what the group lacked in experience, they made up for with enthusiasm and determination.

“I had to start from scratch and break the game down, just like I would to any beginner,” Sachs said. “Everyone put in the work and the practice, but we also just had fun.”

And the practice it turned out, made perfect.

“It was a great experience to work with these kids each practice and see their excitement – and confidence – grow,” she added.

Next season, Sachs aims to expand the program's impact by fielding two teams.

Off the field, Sachs is no stranger to community service. She leads a senior walking club at the Via Linda Senior Center and organizes teambuilding events with elementary school students as part of the PAL (Police Activities League) Program.

April is National Volunteer Month, and Sachs's story is just one among Scottsdale's nearly 4,000 volunteers. From feeding seniors to shelving library books, volunteers provided almost 200,000 hours of service to the city in fiscal year 2022/23.

“Everyone has a story; everyone has potential,” she said. “And that's what motivates me to help others and make our community better – it's a great feeling.”

To learn more about volunteer opportunities with the city of Scottsdale, visit [ScottsdaleAZ.gov](https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov), search “volunteer.”

Investing in Our Scottsdale: Police Fire Training Facility



First responders in Scottsdale will soon enjoy an improved training environment thanks to a project that will modernize and expand the infrastructure at the city's Tom Hontz Police and Fire Training Facility. Improvements include a 4-5 story burn tower, a vehicle training track, indoor shooting range, and areas for training technical and aircraft rescue crews. Three separate bond projects approved by voters in 2019 fund the project. The facility is located just south of the Scottsdale border in Tempe near Miller and Curry roads. Construction is expected to be complete early in 2025.

Details: [ScottsdaleAZ.gov](https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov), search “Police and Fire Training Facility.”

Scottsdale launches Short-Term Rental Police Response Team

While Scottsdale continues its work during the 2024 session of the Arizona Legislature to give local governments additional tools to protect neighborhoods from the negative impacts of short-term/vacation rental properties, Scottsdale's Short-Term Rental Police Response Team is up and running. The specialized unit addresses issues related to short-term rental properties, like noise complaints, disturbances, nuisance parties and criminal incidents. Call the Scottsdale Police Department Non-Emergency line at 480-312-5000 for assistance. Please keep in mind, activities that are legal at a residence are legal at short-term rentals. For life-threatening emergencies and crimes in progress, dial 911.

Find resources and information about short-term/vacation rental properties at [ScottsdaleAZ.gov](https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov), search “short-term rentals.”



Celebrate Scottsdale Earth Week, April 20-27

Learn about the city's sustainability initiatives and conservation efforts.

Don't miss Earth Fest from 9 to 11

a.m. Saturday, April 20, at Cactus Park. Additional events throughout the week include guided nature walks, a tree planting ceremony and fun educational opportunities. Info: [ScottsdaleAZ.gov](https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov), search “Earth Week”



Jazz Fest takes center stage, April 27. Grammy award-winning contemporary jazz and rhythm and blues superstar Norman Brown headlines this signature event at the Scottsdale Civic Center East Bowl. Food showcasing the flavors of New Orleans will be on hand as well as a beer garden. Info: ScottsdaleJazzFest.org

Do you own a rental property but don't want short-term rental hassles? Consider partnering with the city's Housing program as a landlord. By doing so, you'll receive timely and dependable rent payments each month, receive a contract-signing incentive payment, and get support and assistance with costs should there be property damages. Call Scottsdale Housing Agency at 480-312-7156 for details.

Do you know a person or business that embodies Scottsdale's spirit? The Neighborhood Advisory Commission invites you to nominate those who strengthen our community through their commitment to and involvement in Scottsdale neighborhoods. Learn more about past winners and nominate someone special today at ScottsdaleAZ.gov, search "Spirit of Scottsdale."

Take a hike ... but know the dangers. Don't let the relatively mild temperatures and beauty of the Sonoran Desert fool you. Hiking can be risky business. Following simple, common-sense tips like making a hiking plan, having the essentials, staying on the trail and being mindful of trail etiquette. ScottsdaleAZ.gov, search "hiking safety"

Help prevent wildfires. Be on the lookout for Globe Chamomile, a fast-moving invasive plant in Arizona.

Explore your property and be diligent about pulling it now before yellow ball flowers develop mature seeds and dry out in our summer heat. Plants resemble a carrot plant with dark green leaves and a strong odor. Just one pull will prevent the spread of thousands of seeds. Invasive plants upset the sensitive and natural ecological balance of the surrounding area and can also disrupt the habitat for desert wildlife. In addition, it could become a major fire fuel source during the hot weather when these weeds dry out. Visit ScottsdaleAZ.gov, search "invasive plants" to learn more.



Scottsdale's Blue Zones transformation continues. Join Scottsdale's process of becoming a Blue Zones Community as we make Scottsdale a healthier and

happier place for current and future generations. With focus on improving well-being and creating an environment where healthy choices are easily accessible, we're translating lessons from longevity cultures into environmental changes that strengthen social ties.

A recent Blue Zone Project Scottsdale initiative created a walking moai – a social activity with exercise as a secondary focus. The weekly gathering at Mountain View Park encourages participants to connect, walk, and prioritize well-being for ten weeks.

Want to get involved? Help neighbors in need by volunteering at a food bank packing party, happening now through May at Vista del Camino.

Learn more and take the pledge at BlueZonesProjectScottsdale.com

Things To Do

For complete details, search event names in **bold** at ScottsdaleAZ.gov:

- **Scottsdale ArtWalk**, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays, year-round.
- **Old Town Farmers Market**, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays, through May.
- Get rid of old computer, office and entertainment equipment at **Electronics Recycling Collection Day**. 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, April 6, city's Corporation Yard, 9191 E. San Salvador.
- Camp out at **Tents by the Tracks**, 3 p.m.-10 a.m. April 6-7, McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park.
- **Shred** your personal documents. 7-10 a.m. Saturdays, April 13 and May 11, in the Walmart parking lot, 15355 N. Northsight Blvd. \$5 per box.
- Join the **Adopt-a-Road** citywide cleanup, Saturday, April 27. The city provides trash bags, cotton gloves and safety vests to registered groups.
- McCormick-Stillman **Railroad Park's Concert Series** runs 7-8:30 p.m. Sundays, April 28-June 3. Pack a picnic, bring a blanket or chair, and relax in the park.
- Most Scottsdale facilities are closed **Memorial Day**, May 27. Trash will be collected as scheduled.

SCOTTSDALE UPDATE is published six times per year by the City of Scottsdale.

If you have questions or suggestions, please email communications@ScottsdaleAZ.gov

General city information:
480-312-3111 or email questions@ScottsdaleAZ.gov



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