

West Valley View

The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ ♦ Phone (623) 535-8439

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A day in the life of Tolleson's Mayor Gamez

Ray Thomas
Staff Photographer

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Adolfo Gamez. Ever met him? Chances are if you have you won't soon forget him. Not only is he an Estrella Mountain Community College Lion (EMCC's mascot), but he's a lion for Tolleson, championing the working class.

As the director of EMCC's Corporate & Foundation Relations & Development Opportunities, he helps drive the college's fundraising efforts for financial resources and programs.

"I cultivate and nurture philanthropic sources to give our students the means they need to meet their educational goals," he said.

As mayor, Gamez promotes every aspect of the city to business and tourists alike.

With a smile, he recalled the 23-year-old he was when he won a seat on the City Council and said, "I've seen Tolleson grow from a Mayberry-like town to a thriving business center and community. We're a community of 8,000 who have strong ties to each other. We're committed to remembering where we came from and who is behind us."

When he was growing up, Tolleson was mostly an agricultural community.

"We didn't have the services and resources we do today," he said.

Now, the city has a Boy's & Girl's Club, industry and huge warehouses providing jobs and taxes for the city.



KARNY STEFAN, LEFT, OF PHOENIX CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL meets with Mayor Adolfo Gamez, center, and City Manager Reyes Medrano at a local restaurant to talk about what it will take for the West Valley to have a children's hospital on this side of town. View photographer Ray Thomas shadowed the mayor on July 7. To see more pictures, click [HERE](#).

"Tolleson is one of the few cities in the black," he said. "Tolleson is a great place to live and a great place to work and our character will not change in that it's a small, close-knit community."

Community involvement is important to Gamez. In high school, he and a childhood friend decided to be a part of the city government. His friend followed a different path, but Gamez stuck to his dream. After high school, he attended Glendale Community College and earned his Bachelor of Science degree from Northern Arizona University, all the while participating in several civic organizations.

He held leadership positions in Arizona Association of Chicanos for Higher Education, the Hispanic Leadership Forum del Oeste, the Western Maricopa Enterprise Zone, the Southwest Community Network, the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Council, West Valley Fine Arts Council Advisory Board, and the Tolleson Service Committee.

"I was extremely lucky while growing up," he said. "I had some very good mentors who set the example for me. They encouraged me to continue in school and go after my goals, and you know, it wasn't as hard as I thought it would be."

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