



The Flame

SHARING THE LIGHT THAT CONNECTS US...

THE SEDONA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February, 2025

Upcoming Sunday Services

2/2/25 - "Celebrating Black History Every Day"

Guest speaker Rev. Dr. Donna Cavedon with Musician, Susannah Martin

It is good to celebrate Black History Month. Yet the hard work of acknowledging the past, reflecting on the present moment and walking together into the future is our on-going challenge. Join Donna as we look at the hard and honest work that needs to continue in the midst of upholding and celebrating Black history.

2/9/25 - "Woke and Proud"

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

In today's world, the word "woke" has evolved into a rallying cry for awareness, justice, and compassion—values that resonate deeply with Unitarian Universalist principles. Yet, it has also become a term of controversy and misunderstanding. What does it truly mean to be "woke" in this moment, and why should we, as Unitarian Universalists, take pride in embodying its spirit? Join us as we affirm our identity as a community rooted in awareness, courage, and collective pride in living our faith authentically.

2/16/25 - "Of Bone and Sinew"

Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

Ellen and William Craft's daring escape from slavery is a story of extraordinary courage, ingenuity, and determination. Disguised as a white man and his servant, the Crafts risked everything for freedom, embodying the resilience and strength of the human spirit. Their journey reminds us that liberation is not just a dream but a bold act of creation, born of bone and sinew, heart and soul. Join us as we honor Ellen and William Craft's incredible journey and explore how their story calls us to live our Unitarian Universalist values with integrity, purpose, and determination.

2/23/25 - "Our African Unconscious"

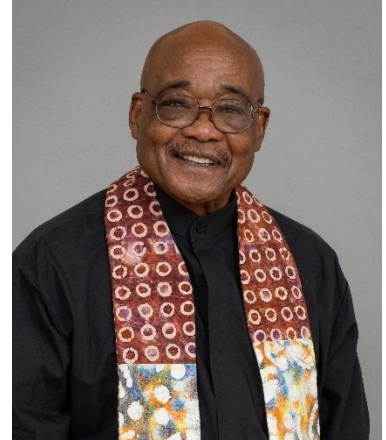
Rev. Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson with Musician, Susannah Martin

What does it mean to carry within us the echoes of our collective African origins? Whether through ancestry, culture, or the shared heritage of humanity, Africa lives in our unconscious, shaping who we are and how we connect with one another. Drawing from history, psychology, and sacred traditions, we will reflect on how this connection invites us to embrace a broader understanding of our shared humanity and to honor the profound contributions of African cultures to the world. Join us as we celebrate the richness of our roots and uncover the ways this deep, ancestral legacy can guide us in creating a more compassionate and interconnected future.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Minister Message February 2025

Reflections: Love, Justice, and Renewal



Dear Beloved Community,

February often brings thoughts of love, with Valentine's Day at its heart. Yet, as Unitarian Universalists, we are called to explore love beyond the romantic, embracing its deeper, more transformative dimensions. Love, in its fullest form, is a commitment to justice, compassion, and the interconnectedness of all beings.

This month, we honor Black History Month, a sacred time to uplift the voices, stories, and contributions of Black leaders, artists, and changemakers who have shaped history and continue to shape our world. As UUs, we recognize that true love must include an unflinching commitment to dismantling racism and oppression in all forms. Let us reflect on how we live into our UU principles—particularly the affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the pursuit of justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

February is also a time of renewal. The days are growing longer, hinting at the promise of spring. Just as nature begins its slow awakening, we, too, are invited to reflect on how we can nurture growth within ourselves and our community. Are there relationships in need of healing? Causes that stir your heart, waiting for action? Dreams lying dormant, ready to bloom? Let us use this month to recommit to love as an active, justice-seeking force in our lives.

Together, we can create a more compassionate and equitable world, one small act of love at a time.

Blessings,

Rev. Anthony



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From testimonials collected from our people, I share now as

LOVE LETTERS TO SUUF



“SUUF reminds me to be kind and good, to think of others.” MM

“UU has informed my life, the lives of my children and grandchildren to live with honesty, integrity and inclusiveness wherever we go.” CB

“SUUF speaks for me! Being a part of a community that is diverse, socially conscious, and open to my spiritual growth is meaningful.” RB

“It’s great to be a part of such a diverse and loving bunch of folks who continue to share and serve the community.” GK

“SUUF helps to better myself, to be less self-centered, to understand others, and create relationships. Its purpose is to build community; inspire action for the betterment of others; and to inspire thought and action for the betterment of one’s self.” GS

“SUUF provides a space where people can gather to openly express ideas and explore questions without the restraints of dogma or fear of judgement.” CW

“SUUF is for people who crave spiritual community and inspiration for spiritual growth without theological dogma, and who want to work together to serve ours, and the wider community’s human needs.” PK

“SUUF is a welcoming home for all to encourage a spirit of curiosity, open discussion, critical thinking, and spiritual growth.” DF

“SUUF brings out the fullness of self, offering loving relationships, and opportunities to use one’s talents and interests to serve.” TM

“SUUF provides a place to hear stirring messages, wonderful music, and provides ways to stand up for my values in the wider world.” SF

“SUUF brings me into contact and interaction with people of diverse opinions and beliefs. It provides opportunity for community action. It’s an example of a spiritual fellowship not bound by dogma and open to kind, thoughtful individuals regardless of social or economic background.” DL

“Each Sunday, our Fellowship provides positive interactions with others and thought-provoking challenges to beliefs.” RS

“Here, I have the opportunity to contribute to maintaining a group dedicated to service, social action, and spirituality.” MW

“Friendships have developed out of this community. SUUF has encouraged and supported my interest in service opportunities for our local community.” CS

 Tanya

EVENTS

Special Congregational Meeting



February 9 after service, a proposal for revising SUUF Bylaws, written by an ad hoc Bylaws Team (Gary Stewart, Debby Losse, and Mary McCaffrey) was recently sent to the board for approval. The board made minor changes, and approved the revised bylaws as amended. The bylaws state that members of SUUF for over 30 days are eligible to vote on any proposal. The proposed bylaws were emailed to all members two weeks prior to the Special Congregational meeting as required.

Thanks for familiarizing yourselves with the changes and staying after Fellowship for a few minutes to vote. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary, February 9, after Sunday’s service.

This Special Congregational Meeting is required, as some of the bylaw revisions deal with elections which will be held at our Annual Meeting on May 18, 2025. The new bylaws, if adopted, must be in effect before the Annual Meeting.

March 2 – Poetry Sunday! Submit original or well-loved poems to Cheryl.

March 11 – Aging Well, a special presentation on aging with Bonnie Shimko of AZ Care Management Solutions.



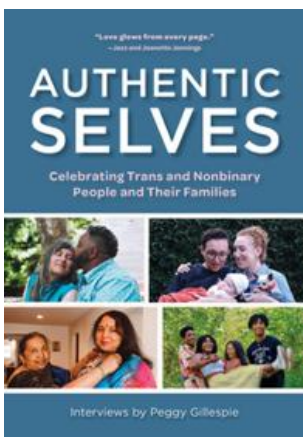
April 6 - 3rd Annual SUUF Talent Show. Plenty of time to get your act together!

April 27 - Concert FUNdraiser-details to come.

CONNECTIONS

Book Group

The January/February book selection is *Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families*. Several SUUFers enjoyed a presentation at St. Andrews Episcopal Church in which one of the featured people in the book, Joey Morelli, spoke about the book and their experiences.



Said of this book: “*Authentic Selves* celebrates trans and nonbinary people and their families in their own words. So often trans and nonbinary people’s stories are told only through the lens of their struggles and challenges...they live rich and fulfilling lives full of joy and community too. This book is a sweeping compilation of life stories of trans and nonbinary people, as well as their partners, parents, children, siblings, and chosen family members.”

The Social Justice Team’s LGBTQ+ focus group will host the 4 book discussions at 30 Bronco Drive in West Sedona at 10:30-12:00 and on Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526141760>.

Feb. 10 pp. 180-278
Feb. 24 pp. 279-375

Guest: Joey Morelli
Guests: Joey Morelli and JJ O’Brien

Patty Delp will lead the discussions this month. Books are available at UUA.org and on Amazon.

The March/April book selection is *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*

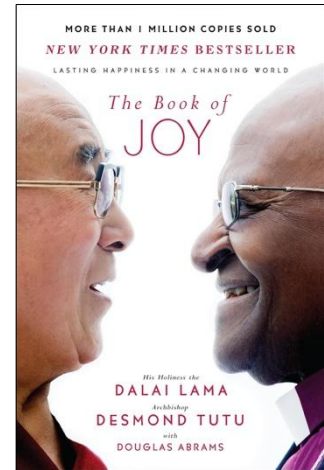
by Douglas Abrams, featuring conversations with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Two spiritual giants. Five days.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than fifty years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships—or, as they would say, because of them—they are two of the most joyful people on the planet.

In April 2015, Archbishop Tutu traveled to the Dalai Lama's home in India to celebrate His Holiness's eightieth birthday and to create what they hoped would be a gift for others. They looked back on their long lives to answer a single burning question: How do we find joy in the face of life's inevitable suffering?

Join the group at 2345 Corral Rd., home of the McCaffrey's. The 4 sessions will be facilitated by Tom Helgesen.

For **March 10, read pp. 1-80** The following meeting dates are March 24, April 14, and April 28. Signup at SUUF to join and to get personal notices!



Social Justice Interfaith Film

The SJ Team movie pick for Wednesday, **February 12**, from 10:30-12, at Church of the Red Rocks, 54 Bowstring Drive, is “**The Six Triple Eight**”. Watch the video at home, on Netflix, then join us to share your thoughts and feelings.

“**The Six Triple Eight**” is a Tyler Perry drama based on a true story and inspired by the first and only Women’s Army Corps unit of color to serve overseas in WWII. Eight hundred and fifty-five women join the war effort to address a three-year mail backlog. Given an extraordinary mission and united in their determination, these unsung heroes delivered hope and shattered barriers. Despite discrimination and war-torn conditions, they sort over seventeen million pieces of mail ahead of schedule.



Evolving Elders is a discussion group where friends share feelings and ideas, laugh and cry together, and grow closer. You’re invited to join us! Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month at 10:30, at 30 Bronco Drive.

Or join on Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4526141760>.

February 14th Topic: *How do you define spirituality and what is spiritual for you?*

February 28th Topic: *Pat Corrington, author of **Amazing Coincidences: Gifts from the Universe**, will facilitate a discussion on the coincidence or “little gifts” of our lives.*



February Birthdays

Ron Krumm – February 1

Barbara Warren – February 11

Cheryl Sinn – February 28

Alan Murray – February 3

Diane Phelps – February 27

Helen Knoll – February 9

Chuck Spence – February 28

If you have a February birthday and it isn't listed, please email the date to CherylSUUF@gmail.com

SUUF and Me - An Interview with Chris Appleton

Where did you grow up? I was born in Los Angeles in 1950. By 1955 our family had settled in Long Beach, CA where I grew up and attended school. I earned a B.S. Chemistry degree from California State University at Long Beach.



What is/was your career? I worked in chemical manufacturing for 4 years before taking a job with McDonald's Quality Assurance department where I worked for 28 years. Some of my responsibilities included supervising a laboratory for evaluating the consistency of food products, working closely with suppliers to ensure product quality, consistency and safety and transferring food processing information to new markets internationally.

When did you come to the Verde Valley and why? I moved from Flagstaff to Cornville in March, 2024. There were several reasons for moving besides the fact that I did not want to go through winter again in Flagstaff. The main reason though, was to live with Audre Gutierrez, in Cornville.

Are you involved with any volunteer activities you'd like to share? Sometimes I help Audre with projects in here essential oils business. In 2025 she is opening her new "store front" in Cornville to better serve her walk-in customers and to have new space for conducting training and workshops. I have not become involved in any additional volunteer activities, yet.

Do you have hobbies with which you're involved? For myself, the most attractive feature of Arizona is our wonderful outdoors. I like hiking and our part of the world is a hiker's paradise of deserts, mountains, rivers and forests.

What is your religious background? Participating in UU for nearly 50 years.

What brought you to SUUF? Audre and I were curious to learn about and experience SUUF. And now we love it and all of the new friends we are meeting here.

How Can I Help?

Here are a few opportunities to care and share in ways that bring joy to you and others!

- **Gary would like a volunteer to help work with sound equipment on Sunday mornings.** If you have skills and/or interest in this area, Gary and Nate welcome you! Talk to Gary or Rev. Anthony to join the team and serve your community in this way.
- **Thanks, Greeters,** for your gracious service. **We now wish to have 3 greeters each Sunday to be welcoming and attentive to all, especially to our newcomers.** Our lucky greeters enjoy the blessing of seeing all the smiling faces who enter SUUF!
- **Summer Series** – The Summer Planning Team is to meet Jan 30 at 1:00 at 30 Bronco Drive. If you didn't attend and have ideas and energy to help with the lay-led July and August services, contact Melanie at melanielansing@gmail.com. It's an exciting project. Join us!
- **Sedona Food Bank always welcomes needed volunteers.** Find info at sedonafoodbank.org. An informational handout is available after Sunday service in the lobby.



Transitions



Mary Flaisig died peacefully on December 31st followed by her husband of 60 years, Bob Flaisig, on January 6th. Mary was a beloved SUUF member and leaves many good friends in our community. Her fiber art is well-known in our area and beyond and is so uniquely hers - colorful woven sculptures on branches which Mary usually found in the Sedona area. Mary created beauty that reflected her beautiful spirit. She is missed.

A celebration of life for Mary and Bob will be Saturday, March 8, at 11am, at the United Methodist Church on Hwy 179. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to SUUF or Arizona Care Management Solutions.

CONNECTIONS & FOOD

Lunch in Cottonwood



All SUUF members are invited and space is limited to 15 participants. Please reserve your seat now by emailing Melanie Lansing at melanielansing@gmail.com

Saturday, February 8 at 11:45am

RSVP required by Monday, February 3

BV's Italian Kitchen

301 AZ-89A, Cottonwood, AZ 86326 (located in Lux Verde Hotel)

Check out their menu online at:

<https://bvsitaliankitchen.com/cottonwood-bv-s-italian-kitchen-food-menu>

Friendly Feasts

January Feasts were certainly a success – let's keep the good times rolling!

Our next scheduled Friendly Feast is **Saturday, February 15th**. We need three hosts, so please consider volunteering. Hosting involves providing a main course and asking the attendees to bring side dishes. The number of people is determined by you, and how many you are comfortable accommodating; usually between 4-6 other folks.

Friendly Feasts are such a great way to build community by getting to know other SUUF folks over food and conversation. By the way, Feasts can be breakfast, lunch, or dinner - whatever works best for you.

Is it time for you to host SUUF friends?

Contact Suzanne Burkey at Sfburkey47@gmail.com or 309-635-6681 to let her know you'd like to host and/or to ask questions as a prospective host. Everyone is welcome to sign up for Friendly Feasts.





Men's Breakfasts are the **2nd Wednesdays** of the month at **8:30** at the Sedona Golf Resort in the VOC, this month on **February 12th**. Please RSVP to Ben at benshor7@gmail.com or 928-451-4370.

Women's Lunches are the **3rd Wednesdays of each month**. Please join us this month on **February 19th** at a place to be determined. You'll receive an Evite to which you can RSVP. In case you don't get that email, know that whether or not you've made a reservation, you're always welcome to join us! It's fun to see friends and enjoy good conversation over lunch. Please reach out to Barb Malat to sign up at bbmalat@gmail.com.



SUUF RECYCLES

to create a more sustainable world!

Do you have something to SELL FOR SUUF?

In this column you can, **1) Trade** items, like jigsaw puzzles, books, tools. **2) Sell items** with all money going to SUUF. You name the price. **3) Give Away** items in really good condition. Be sure to provide a good description of each item.



Take a picture and email it with a description and price to our editor at CherylSUUF@gmail.com

BOARD, TEAM, AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Social Justice Team

Books to Read on....:

- **Surviving and Thriving in the Midst of Chaos**

Dancing in the Darkness: Spiritual Lessons for Thriving in Turbulent Times by Otis Moss III, a black Chicago pastor who speaks about how to survive chaos, and how love and justice must go hand in hand. 2023

- **Compassion for the Underprivileged and Oppressed**

The People's Hospital: Hope and Peril in American Medicine by Ricardo Nuila. Discusses our broken healthcare system and how Ben Taub, Houston's largest hospital for the poor, goes about healing by listening. 2023

Shelterwood by Lisa Wingate. Historical novel about the mistreatment and exploitation of children, especially Choctaw children of the early 1900s, who were robbed of their birthrights by greedy land barons & unscrupulous lawyers and the fight to give them a voice. 2024

Navajo Donations - February 16 and 23

The Social Justice Team and Outreach Committee are sponsoring a donation drive with the Broken Rainbow Foundation. This foundation collects supplies for 55 Navajo families living at Black Mesa on the Hopi reservation in northeast Arizona. These families live without running water or electricity because of federal policies and treaty issues that have left them destitute. The drive will collect household supplies and items for food boxes. The following are needed donation items:

Supplies:

- Cookware - pots, pans and utensils
- Bedding - sheets, pillowcases, blankets for single, double and queen beds (please mark size)
- Towels, wash cloths
- Adult clothing for large people – L XL XXL
- Fabric – cotton or velvet for making skirts
- Multi packs of matchsticks small size, gallon baggies, sponges, small bottles dish soap
- Tissues, toilet paper, paper towels and paper plates

Consumables:

- Gallon bottles of water,
- Non-expired canned goods
- Both herbal and regular tea, coffee
- Small bottles of honey, oats
- Aluminum free baking powder
- Fine grind sea salt, garlic powder
- Ramen noodles in the cup
- Peanut and other nut butters
- Dog food for sheep herding dogs

Collections will take place on Sundays, February 16 and 23 in the lobby of JCSVV.

Outreach Committee

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the December and January, "Share the Plate" offerings. We raised \$398 for the Yavapai Humane Trappers: Animal Search and Rescue and \$307 for the Sedona Area Homeless Alliance (SAHA).

February's Share the Plate offering goes to SedonaKind whose mission is to "Encourage Acts of Kindness, large & small, locally and around the world." We strive to make Sedona a place where even the simplest acts of kindness flourish, creating a ripple effect that spreads globally. Through our efforts, we recognize and celebrate the contributions of volunteers and those who serve others, ensuring they know their work is deeply appreciated.

Their community initiatives include knitting hats for schoolchildren, creating lapghans for veterans, and providing much-needed supplies for teachers. They also assemble "blessing bags" for veterans and pets in need. In addition, they collaborate with local organizations, such as the library, on joint projects that engage and uplift the community. And these are just a few examples of the many ways SedonaKind works to spread kindness and make a difference.

SUUF Volunteer Day at Manzanita Outreach is Thursday, February 27th, 9:30 to Noon!

Manzanita Outreach fills the gaps within Yavapai County food-assistance supply chain, supporting school systems and families in the community. This will be our second volunteer project for Manzanita Outreach during this SUUF calendar year.

Thanks for signing up in the lobby before or after Sunday Service this month to help pack food for families in need. Join us at 406 S 6th St., Cottonwood, AZ, 86326 (The entrance is behind the VV Christian Church building).

Should you have questions about what we do, what to wear, carpooling, or anything else, talk to Penny DeJarnette, Cora Shor or Liz Herrell.

Covid Advisory Team

Although recent Yavapai and Coconino data does not currently show a high risk of COVID infection, most local medical practitioners are reporting that they are still seeing a significant number of patients with respiratory infections including COVID.

A majority of SUUF members now seem reasonably comfortable without wearing masks at gatherings, but we will continue to provide masks for those who choose to wear them. We recommend that those with medical conditions that may cause immune compromise take precautions recommended by their medical care providers.

Besides avoidance of possible exposure, the precautions to be considered include up-to-date immunization for COVID, influenza, and possibly RSV to decrease the risk of serious illness.

The COVID variants now circulating appear to be quite contagious and may present initially with only mild flu-like or cold-like symptoms. It continues to be very important that members who have even minimal such symptoms should not attend Sunday services or other SUUF activities.

We hope that with the arrival of warmer weather the prevalence of these viral infections will decrease significantly as in past years so that we can get back to “normal” (whatever that term means these days). Until then, let's do whatever we can to protect each other and ourselves.

Board Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Board was called to order on ZOOM by President Tanya Mayer at 2:08 PM, January 17, 2025. Those present included Gary Stewart, Ben Shor, Donna Fox, Barb Malat, Mary McCaffrey, and Reverend Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson. Piya Jacob was absent. A motion was made to approve the minutes of the board meeting held on December 20, 2024. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved. Future minutes will be emailed to all board members for approval before submission to the Flame newsletter.

Written monthly reports were submitted by the minister, president and the treasurer followed by oral summaries. Highlights are as follows:

Minister's Report – Review of routine weekly and monthly meetings, continuing pastoral duties, and additional interfaith meetings. Reverend Anthony is attempting to take a regular day off every week.

President's Report – A Summer Planning Team has been formed and will begin meeting this month. Four potential new members attended the New Member Orientation and Brunch on January 11th. One person was unable to attend due to illness. Tanya and Anthony will meet with her at another time.

Treasurer's Report – Gary informed us that our bookkeeper from the Red Rock Accounting Group is moving on. He will pursue some bids to present to the board. Mary McCaffrey shared the expense report for the holiday party. The profit is approximately \$3500.

Unfinished Business – Gary presented on the extensive work that has been done to revise our bylaws. Much discussion followed. Some changes are the addition of a Vice President position, and staggered two-year board terms. Donna moved to accept the bylaws as amended. Ben seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

New Business – Reverend Anthony and Mary McCaffrey had a very productive meeting with the Pastoral Care Team of the Church of the Red Rocks. Contact information was exchanged along with a commitment to have a joint workshop on the subject of aging well to take place on March 11th.

Cheryl Sinn and Reverend Anthony are in the process of reformatting his sermon texts to make them available online.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Fox

FOCUS ON MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES



Please join us for our monthly PFLAG Sedona/Verde Valley support meeting on **Tuesday, February 11th, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.** live at the Sedona Public Library (3250 White Bear Road, Sedona) in the Quiet Study Room, and on Zoom.

PFLAG “*The Making of a Mama Bear: How marrying a man who tried to, pray away the gay, led to my reconsidering everything I thought I knew about life, love, and self-determination*” will be our presentation. Amy Marshal, our speaker, is a storyteller who believes in the power of personal narratives to breach walls built on misunderstanding and distrust. A domestic abuse survivor, an autoimmune warrior, a widowed mom to three adolescent kids and a feisty senior cat, Amy writes her own experiences into both fiction and nonfiction stories. Both the presentation at 6:30pm and the support meeting at 7:30pm will use the following zoom links:

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/92237972093?pwd=TzJuVzFsck1xQk5vcjcyWDYzMWRzZz09>
Meeting ID: 922 3797 2093 - Passcode: AZPFLAG

Sedona Area Homeless Alliance

Did you know...



that when people really feel seen and heard, amazing things happen!

Sedona Area Homeless Alliance has served hundreds of people who are experiencing homelessness. Our programs address immediate needs, secondary needs and then long-term needs which vary depending on the client.

We are so proud of the many people we have served who worked hard to make better and healthier choices in their lives ~ who are now sober, happy, and living in homes, some in relationships, others in marriages and have welcomed their first child.

That’s what happens when people are loved and trusted to make changes when they are able, at their own pace and that are best for them individually. With their permission we are highlighting some of these amazing individuals that we have the honor of knowing and loving.

We will lovingly and regularly brag about one of our clients and you will be able to find that on our website and our Facebook page. You can enjoy the current installment of *Through The Eyes of Love* here (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1da1jUZN5xXHuxqleFj2-VvPmQ4NojbB8/view?usp=drivesdk>)

**“Don’t try to drive the homeless into places we find suitable.
Help them survive in places they find suitable” — Daniel Quinn**

SAHA clients generally text (928) 978-9387 to request services
Serving the Local Homeless Community since 2015
Sedona Area Homeless Alliance • text/call 928 978 9387 • email sedonahomeless@gmail.com
PO Box 1411 Sedona AZ 86339 • www.SedonaHomeless.org
501(c)3 Nonprofit 82-0607491 • AZ tax credit Qualified Code# 22418