

**Tell me your full name**

Ramon, Ramon Quiroz

**And do you give me permission to record you for the purposes of this project, the barrios, bario anitas project?**

Yes

**Can you tell us, tell me where you're from originally**

I'm actually, I'm actually from. I'm Native Tucsonian. I was born in the Southside. I'm a southside boy but I moved around alot. I had a lot of aunts and grandmas. I used to live with them. You know

**And how old are you"**

I'm 75

Okay

**You know as we talked before, I'm doing this project on barrio anita. And um i know you worked for many many years at the aury center. Can you just tell me how you came to work there**

Okay. first I started working with the city at 65. I started working for the city parks and rec at 65 And I wasn't really full-time yet at that time, I was just part-time basis. But then all of a sudden I went at work in 30-40 hrs a week you know. I worked around recreation, buildings like Santa Rosa where they had sports facilities, like sports programs I used to run all that stuff. But I was actually a part-time. And i worked weekends and that was awful weekends So I would you know run the center. At that time, Saturdays and sundays. Compared now That was only part-time, but you know I had to pay for food for the next 8 hours in. So That made a difference, 30-40 hours

**But how old were you when you started to work for the parks?**

Well I worked for the city 38 years. And I'm 75 now. So maybe 30, 40 years. yeah About 35, 40  
Okay

Around that area

**What did u do before you worked for the city**

I used to work uh.. I had about 2, 3 childs at that time. When i got out of school. I started,. You know I graduated from tucson high at 55. And then I went to arizona western college for 2 years. And I got out. And then i, i went on a scholarship for baseball and wrestling, at arizona western community college and when I got out i got a contract for professional baseball

**Oh really?**

San francisco giants in glendale az

And I played, got a contract for 2 years. And I only played for a year. I got out, came back out I started working for the mines, didnt like it. So I wanted to go back to school. Now that time between that time I got got out, i didnt wanna go to work. They picked me up

**Was that during the vietnam war?**

Yeah. I served for 2 years. When I came back, I stayed in the group control, in the army. They can take you whenever they want to. I say okay, It's money coming. It's the time I had my first child with my wife. We've been married 56 years. So we had our first child. I had 3 girls, 2 boys.

**Oh, that's a big family**

Yeah we're all. 5 great grandkids.

So i did my part. I committed to that. But I had a few side jobs besides, when I was working the city. I worked in the city from 3-10, 3-11 sometimes. But then I had an extra job in the middle between ,I used to work for the newspaper, in the print shop

**Oh really?**

Yeah something I did in the morning cuz I to work in the evening for the city. And other than that, I remember that's the jobs that I had. I applied in a lot of places, wherever it got me, I said I'm gonna go work right now, I'm not gonna waste it.I actually think I did pretty good

**And you worked till 10 or 11 cuz they had programs into the night like that ?**

See, actually, what I used to do is run, When I started full-time, then I started putting in more programs.in my center, at that time, the money was good in the city. None of this pinching stuff yu know.you had something, you had a program, and you get it cuz You had some money.So I had worked at Santa Rita. About 3, 4 years at the rec center. I was a recreation leader there at that time, when I got in there. So they had an opening at Choreo place.They wanted to conjunction the school.They wanted to start a program, evening program for the kids at that area. Cuz there were a lot of kids who didn't have a place to go in the evening. So the city says okay we're gonna open the center over there, and they chose me to go run it. Just like a supervisor. . Conjunction was a school. With a Contract. Cities payed a contract half and half. So I stayed there for about 10 years. 10 years at the recreation at choreo elementary.

**And was this before you got into Aury or after?**

Before

**Before, okay**

And Then person at aury retired. I don't know if you know him, David herrera. He retired. Gomez.They were the ones running that center there, quite a while. And they both retired. So they told me in the office Go ahead and apply for the coordinator position which I was only a recreation leader.I said no i don't think I have a chance. So I applied and they called me and they said you start next week. Which is cool, cuz the day was gonna be 3 weeks or something like that.We got chosen to go to a reid park, by A mountain, that used to be a center.She went over there. And she gave me that job at aury so I says okay. It was kinda hard the first time cuz it was a lot of responsibility and paperwork and stuff. I used to do the budget.you name it, inventory. But i started getting a good stuff. And they worked with me.And valenzuela, I don't know if you

know him. Good people. There still was a city. They're up there. They're up there in the coordinator level now. All those years. Me in my 12 years. I don't know if you know Ruben morales, he's over there at the pueblo now. He's over there now, he works, he's up there too. The girl this run this place. Robin. She worked for me too. She retired. She was supervisor for the center. And there was a lot of people that has worked for me. Jerry worked for me. He was a young man 18, just got out of high school. Another one, Alfredo, he was a big guy. He worked for me. Most of the time, I used them were camp programs. They were in high school. They get summer jobs, like man power program, skill center. So I get those kids.

I said. This is what I want. Kids that want to grow up to be into this kinda environment. And job, communicate with other people this is what they wanted to do. I said this is where you start. They don't know you that You care for them even. There's no recreation for. How about the young generation. Like you. I had guys your age that played in my center at night. I had a league for them. I said hey, This not only for little kids, for you too. So we get together we always had a leader to help you out. Some guy, like That guy Michael, we got 30 guys, started a little league here. You're the leader for this team, and you're the leader for the other team and I get the bad kids. See if they were bad. Those 6 guys go to you. I make a schedule. You play at 6, 7:30, you play at 8:30, 9. That's how we start. Then other kids start coming and say, senior can we play.. It's not a league, it's a recreation program. You want to be part of it. Yeah I got 5 guys that wanna get involved. Bring em up. So pretty soon you had a league from Monday through Friday. The kids will play from 4-6:30. in the court, talking about 15 and under. After 6:30, Bigger guys will lead. And the kids were real good about it. Play pool, checkers, with somebody or tether ball.

### **I love tetherball**

Yeah the pole

### **Why do you think organizing these recreations important. Why do you spend so much time organizing these?**

Crime for once, discipline, respect, you know that is what I always what i wanna express to my paarticipants. You wanna be respected, you give respect. Every mind is different from yours. You wanna change, the door is open. That's what I would always tell them. Recreation is very important in a young man's life. Even an adult. NOWadays, adult. They just go. You know, How you been. You don't see that. It's all... especially La rassa, u know. I don't care what is White black, they are all the same. The back, And you don't want that That's why you gotta communicate with people. It's very important to communicate with people. I have a lot of friends, little ones, big ones, old ones, cuz i made an effort to say hey, can I help you. What can I do for you. Find out what can I do to help. In the center, Some kids almost got kicked out of school. I said, whyd you get kicked out of school. Cuz I had a cigarette in my pocket sir. Just for that, cmon. Not Ramon, not Sir. Chino. And I felt better for them to call me that. Not sir, no. With me that doesn't go. I'm not sir, I'm your friend. Call me Chino. me, that doesn't go.. If you really want me to call you sir Michael, then okay, but you call just chino. None of that sir. I've always been that way. Some of the kids I had, they were terrible. Back in the 60s, 70s. A few

guys. So they come over to my place and I say You can't be doing that here. Either you behave or go outside and think it over cuz i'm not gonna let you in. You can't do this or Im not gonna let you in. you gotta earn it, you gotta earn it, especially respect. You gotta respect that gentlemen, old man. You're tougher than him, that doesn't matter. Gotta be respectful to get respect. The come back and say, Hey Chino, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have behaved like that. I said, okay I'm gonna talk to your mom and dad. And they say no no and change. What's your problem. Okay who's your counselor. Tucson high, I knew everybody. Pueblo, Salpointe, Amphi. I knew all the teachers, counselors, principal. Not spy on the,, but I knew who they are. Something like psychology you know. I said who can you go with. I told my mom. They don't wanna go, okay I'll go with you. Who's your counselor. Sir Campbell. So I go there. I look at the kid and says Oh, you got the right man Okay what's wrong with him. He was in tucson high for year retired. Came out of the marine corps. and stayed there all those years, 30 some years. He was a military man . You know, down the line. Rules and regulations. Mr. Cameron, what did so and so did. Caught him with a cigarette in his pocket. And you kick him out of school for that Was he smoking it, no. Of course he pulled it out, that's where he messed up. Nobody can get into your pocket. Nobody. The principal kicked him out And at that time, Sam Luna, he was the principal, and i knew him too. We played ball together, baseball back in the legion day. Legion consisted of 18, 19 yr old guys. tucson guys, amphi rincon catlina, combined. Mostly chicanos. No black. Chicano. It's during high school days and stuff. He played amphi. Tucson high. I played with Coronado and all those guys way back. I say put some guidelines. Don't throw him out in the woods. Murrero.

Get involved with somebody who sells drugs. The majority, they do it for the big guys. The main man. They know this, but They wanna get somebody like me. They got a little bag or something. That's a bunch of BS, you know, well to me. Cuz i know I wouldn't use that. I dont really care about it that much. Eventually it'll cut cuz That's dirty money, you know, dirty money.

**What's some memories that stood out for you at the aury.**

Okay. People were really. They got richer. They come and say can we use it. this is your property. I wont care. If they do something against, I will put a stop to it. If they wanna do something like big a fiesta, cinco de mayo.

MArch madness and stuff. Every year I had it for 27 years. 27 years I ran that and it was more and more successful. How far could you be successful.

**Were those basketball courts the same as it is now?**

Yeah

**were you there when you built those?**

I was there when the suns donated it to us. I was the master of ceremonies. The suns of phoenix At first, we built the whole thing. Back in the 40s, 50, 60s, Nothing but dirt, baskets. They came over and redid the whole thing. And they finished the whole thing.

The suns are the ones that donated it. It's something that took quite a while. Then the city became green and brown. I don't know what happened. It's a lot more than what it is. We just don't. But it was real nice

Did the cinco de mayo,

**What kinds of food did they have?**

Cinco de mayo is what we used to do. We had our 5 de mayo festivity. Annual. 26 years.

**What kind of celebration?**

Every cinco de mayo. That was the big event there. The festivities. Had a tournament. Make sure every saturday, sunday. You know around the basketball court. Everybody would bring.