UC SANTA BARBARA

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Captured in Time

Those old photo albums in the living room and that cardboard box of home movies in the garage are more than just records of memorable life events — they're histories of families, neighborhoods and communities.

A new project spearheaded by the Special Research Collections at UC Santa Barbara Library aims to preserve those family photographs and videos for Santa Barbara's Eastside neighborhood. An inaugural community event will take place from 2–5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 5, at the Eastside Library (1102 East Montecito St.).

To participate in the Santa Barbara Community Archives Project, residents of the Eastside's predominately Latinx neighborhoods can bring family photos and videos to the Eastside Library for free scanning and digitizing. Professional staff will scan photos on site; videos will be collected and taken to UCSB Library for the more lengthy process of digitization. All originals, along with digital copies, will be returned to participants.

"The goal is to collect community histories to develop a collection available online that documents Santa Barbara's Latinx communities," said Angel Diaz, UCSB Library's curator of California Ethnic & Multicultural Archives. "It's a great history to gather, preserve, and share."

The project was recently funded by a $5,000 Humanities For All Quick Grant from California Humanities, a Bay Area-based nonprofit whose mission is "to connect Californians to ideas and one another in order to understand our shared heritage

and diverse cultures, inspire civic participation, and shape our future” according to its website.

Diaz is co-directing the project with fellow Special Research Collections curators Laura Treat and Yolanda Blue. They have also partnered with Santa Barbara Public Library.

“We love preserving local history,” said Molly Wetta, Santa Barbara Public Library’s services manager. “Who gets to tell their histories and what gets preserved can be a loaded proposition. Making this project accessible to a wider swath of the community gives them a chance to share what matters to them.”

Diaz said the collection will aim to document a range of neighborhood families, events and cultural snapshots representative of different eras — from people standing in their front yards or on a street corner next to their favorite bike or car, to families gathered for baptisms, birthdays, weddings and sporting events.

Contributors will also have access to local history and preservation efforts by the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP), which will be tabling at the Nov. 5 event.

“(We are) looking forward to sharing resources . . . about the local histories of different communities in Santa Barbara, as well as information about how to use our collections to research family and community histories,” said Dez Alaniz, a SBTHP archivist and librarian.

The libraries are planning a follow-up event next summer, featuring a screening of a selection of submitted photoand video.

“This sort of project is brand new to UCSB,” Diaz said. “We’re starting with the city’s Eastside because it’s a historic Latinx neighborhood.” But she’s not planning on turning anybody away, she added. “If you live on the Westside and have some content, come on over."

About UC Santa Barbara

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