Meanwhile, there are ancestral fruit trees, their branches drooping, waiting to be picked. A dusty and neglected parcel next to Coyote Creek could be turned into a community garden. Some neighbors have even stepped forward to lend their yards for use by nearby apartment-dwellers. If successful, the CommUniverCity teams will build a “small-town” environment in the center of San José, with rich community gardens, walkable streets and thriving retail and business corridors linked to Bay Area mass transit.

Already, the Five Wounds/Brookwood Terrace neighborhood’s concept is serving as a template for the 70 urban villages in San José’s Envision 2040 plan—and could someday be a national model for safe, clean and healthy cities.

Long before these big plans, small ideas were gestating, due to growing discontent. This community of 20,000 is a largely Spanish-speaking neighborhood that serves as a gateway for recent immigrants from Northern Mexico, yet also holds a solid core of homeowners with a long history of civic engagement.

When resident Joan Rivas-Cosby arrived in 1974, at age 16, “money was tight and this area was very affordable. You made the best of it.”
The Five Wounds/Brookwood Terrace neighborhood found solutions in its own community—on front porches and back yards—and in the classrooms and faculty offices of nearby SJSU.