



Meet Susan "Zohan" Barnett

This month, we're profiling Susan "Zohan" Barnett, one of the three founders of Tucson Roller Collective, whose work is helping reshape what skate community looks like in Tucson. What began as casual meetups has grown into a steadily expanding movement rooted in inclusion, creativity, and connection. Keep reading to learn more about her and Tucson Roller Collective, or click on the link below for the latest and greatest media news on Tucson.

[What's New](#)



In a world where skate parks are still often shaped by skateboarding culture and quietly coded as male-dominated spaces, Tucson Roller Collective is working to shift what belonging looks like on wheels.

Their mission is simple: to create safer, more inclusive spaces for women, femme, trans, non-binary, and other underrepresented skaters, while also welcoming anyone who wants to roll, and to reclaim public space as shared.

“We want to bring people together through rolling,” co-founder Susan “Zohan” Barnett said. “Whether that be roller skating, boarding, bicycling – whatever.”

While the group is still in its early stages, it’s steadily growing. What began as casual skate meetups is evolving into more structured community programming, introducing youth to skating, building confidence in public spaces, and encouraging skating as a means of exercise that’s accessible to everyone. Much of this work happens through small, consistent efforts that bring people into a shared sense of community.

At Cyclovia Tucson, held in April, the citywide open-streets event once again temporarily transformed 3.5 miles of major roads into car-free public space. Barnett

and other members hosted an interactive booth with a pop-up skate park to share the group's work and invite newcomers to skate. The response reflected Tucson's existing appetite for skating.

"We had a really good turnout of people coming and stopping by," Barnett said. "It shows that people are interested."



That same energy shows up in Barnett's weekly adult roller skating dance classes at Floor Polish in Tucson. There, she teaches "jam skating," which blends footwork, rhythm, and choreography into skating as expression rather than just movement.

However, the Collective isn't just targeting adult skaters. The group also hosts monthly youth skate workshops, designed to meet kids wherever they are, whether they're stepping onto skates for the first time or learning how to move more confidently. The goal is to teach traits "like resilience, and the ability to get back up and try again, even when you're scared," Barnett said.

Those principles come from the group's origins in Hermosillo, Mexico. In 2024, Barnett and Tucson Roller Collective co-founders Hanan Khatoun and Joyce Quevedo, traveled to Hermosillo for an interdisciplinary art project at the University of Arizona, examining how two cities only a few hours apart could feel both connected and divided by a border. Using skating as their lens, the project explored shared culture, movement, and identity in both Tucson and Hermosillo.

In Mexico, they found a deeply rooted skate culture that was inclusive of women, trans, and non-binary skaters, something they hoped they could replicate back in Tucson. That experience became the foundation for Tucson Roller Collective.

“It felt like there were people there doing what we were trying to build here,” Barnett said.



Today, while Tucson Roller Collective focuses much of its energy on building community in Tucson, its relationship with Hermosillo’s skate culture remains active. Quevedo’s relatives have a home there, allowing the Collective to stay closely connected to the skate community that helped shape its early vision.

That connection has also become reciprocal.

During the holiday season, the Collective traveled to Hermosillo to organize a binational Posada, a traditional Mexican Christmas celebration centered on community and hospitality. The event brought together members of Tucson Roller Collective, who performed for locals, as well as local organizers, and volunteers to distribute clothing, shoes, toys, food, and art materials to a community with limited access to basic infrastructure, including running water.

The gesture reflected a larger philosophy within the Collective: that ideas, culture, and support don’t just move in one direction. It’s imperative to give back.

That idea shows up in Tucson as well. Each week, the Collective brings a “community skate bin” of donated skates and protective gear sourced from thrift stores, community members, and personal contributions to skate parks. If someone shows up wanting to try skating but doesn’t have the equipment, they can often borrow what they need on the spot.

Beyond weekly gatherings, Tucson Roller Collective focuses on expanding youth programming, strengthening adult skate meetups, and building toward a potential fall skate camp. Longer term, the group hopes to advocate for more skate-friendly public infrastructure in Tucson and create permanent spaces where skating can thrive.

For Barnett, the work ultimately circles back to access and belonging.

“Adults want to have fun too,” she said. “And skating is one way to do that... I like to create spaces for communities to come together, because for a long time I was skating by myself, and it’s much more fun to skate with friends.”



Barnett's Top 5 Things to Do in Tucson (when she's not skating):

1. **Gates Pass** — a scenic lookout in the Tucson Mountains known for its sunset views and iconic Sonoran Desert scenery.
 2. **El Sur Mexican Restaurant** — a longtime South Tucson spot known for its authentic Mexican food, which Barnett says is the best in the city.
 3. **Eegees** — a Tucson-based institution known for its famous frozen fruit drinks, perfect for cooling off after a wam skate session..
 4. **La Rosa** — a downtown venue that hosts Latino events, live music, and cultural gatherings that celebrate Tucson's community and heritage.
 5. **Galeria Mitotera** — a local art gallery and community gathering space known for creative events, handmade goods, and supporting Tucson artists and culture.
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