



Small Business Spotlight

Generations X, Y, and Z shape Sedona of 2040

By Jessica MacLean for the City of Sedona



Sedona XYZ Co-Founders Marci Taylor and Omar Kenney have been getting XYZ businesses and entrepreneurs together for over a year and a half.

SEDONA, Ariz. -- “Somehow, every month for the last year, we’ve gotten 30 or 40 people from generations X, Y, and Z in the same room, at the same time, to talk and hang out with each other,” says Marci Taylor, **Sedona XYZ** co-founder and Mantra principal and marketing strategist.

In a world of smartphones and social media, this is no small task. Taylor volunteers with co-founder Omar Kenney of Bay Equity Home Loans, along with a board of directors and approximately 250 members, to shape community and plan events.

“We have a lot of fun and make great relationships and friendships. That’s what it’s about for Omar and me. We want to develop relationships here and inform people about what’s going on in the community,” says Taylor.

Sedona XYZ is a group of entrepreneurs, business owners, and professionals who strive to grow personally and professionally while influencing the policy and programs that help create the Sedona of 2040 and beyond. Although most members were born after 1960, the group’s focus is diversity, so they’re naturally open to everyone.

“We welcome new folks to town and

support each other. We’re really trying to be active, positive participants in our community together,” Taylor says as she scans the crowd of locals at the one-year anniversary celebration and monthly mixer.

“Many of our members telecommute and could choose to live anywhere but have chosen to make Sedona their home,” says Kenney. “Like many residents of Sedona and other members of Sedona XYZ, I’ve made the choice to set roots in a small town, buy a home, start a business, and raise a family. The quality of life is second to none and it’s a special thing to be a part of a place where your efforts can have such a significant impact on your friends, neighbors and community.”

In their first year, Taylor says Sedona XYZ,

“injected views from generations X, Y, and Z into the conversation of a heated election year in Sedona. We showed up to express our views on a proposed development. We’ve met with local leaders about their priorities and ours. We’ve shown up and spoken up at city council about a variety of issues that were important to us. We’ve talked to them about and gave input on zoning changes that we wanted.” Some of which became a reality. “We’ve engaged with them about a master plan for a bicycle and pedestrian path throughout Sedona and we hope to continue,” she says.

The group also reserves time at their monthly mixers for guest speakers to discuss issues like affordable housing, engaging in the political process, and creating sustainable businesses. Prospective members can stay informed of upcoming event dates and locations by joining their mailing list at sedonaxyz.com

“Sedona XYZ is a completely volunteer organization. We’re all doing this with our own time. To date, we have no membership dues at all. We really appreciate the time many have put in to support this group,” says Taylor.

Members who would like to get involved can volunteer by planning events, attending Sedona City Council meetings, or contributing in ways that match their skills and passions.

Taylor asks members to “continue to show up. Both at these meetings and in terms of everything you’re passionate about in our community. We have a great civic engagement team. If you have interest in anything that’s going on in our community and you want to be a part, contact us; please let us know how we can help you do or facilitate that.” And they continue to show up.

To build community, Sedona XYZ starts by building relationships with civic leaders, nonprofits, and each other.

Kenney says “my wife Heidi participated in the LaunchPad Business program hosted

by the city of Sedona and then opened a successful spa business that provides nearly 100 percent of its services to local clientele.”

Elaborating, Taylor explains how Sedona XYZ, “supports the efforts of entrepreneurs by partnering locally and regionally with the city and Verde Valley Regional Economic Organization (VVREO) for the various events they’ve had for entrepreneurs: one-day workshops, and there was a pitch competition that was wonderful. Twelve out of twenty-one competitors were from Sedona and four out of the five finalists were from Sedona. Several of them were members of our XYZ group.”

“We continue to meet with the city manager and talk with him about what the city’s priorities are and how we can support them and how [the city’s] interests might be aligned with ours—or maybe not—and how we can have a dialogue,” Taylor explains.

The Sedona Economic Development Department helps businesses create and keep jobs and opportunities in our community. For information on revolving loans, business education, and other business support resources, contact Director Molly Spangler at mbspangler@sedonaaz.gov.

SEDONA XYZ



From left, Sedona XYZ Director Andrew Bailor, Co-Founders Marci Taylor and Omar Kenney, and Director Heather Titus.