



## Backgrounder

The landscape of religious affiliation in America is changing. According to national research,<sup>1,2</sup> the number of people who do not identify with a religion, also called the “nones,” has grown significantly.

Representing nearly a quarter of the adult American population, individuals without a religious affiliation often have the same desire for community and a system of human values as their religious counterparts. That desire created a need for a place “the nones” can feel welcome and share common beliefs and values.

The National Oasis Network, co-founded by Helen Stringer and Mike Aus, started in Houston, Texas, in 2012. Locations in Houston, Kansas City and Boston provide a shared meeting forum that includes (but is not limited to) Agnostics, Humanists, Skeptics, Atheists, Freethinkers, Deists and questioning Theists. The mission is to bring like-minded individuals and families together in a compassionate environment, to celebrate the human experience, and to feel inspired and empowered. [Houston Oasis](#) Executive Director Mike Aus says: “We no longer need religion as an excuse to get together; we can get together for the sheer joy of human community.”

At Oasis, we think:

- People are more important than beliefs.
- Reality is known through reason.
- Meaning comes from making a difference.
- Human hands solve human problems.
- Be accepting and be accepted.

Kansas City is the second city to build an Oasis, following Houston’s model. [KC Oasis](#) Executive Director [Helen Stringer](#) shared, “We wanted to bring the secular community together so that we can do something beautiful: build relationships, impact our community and empower one another.”

The National Oasis Network has grown to include a location in Boston, Massachusetts. “Our goal is to connect, elevate and empower secular people—those who feel like they don’t necessarily fit in faith-based communities—through relationships,” Stringer said.

The Kansas City community meets for coffee, live music and a weekly program each Sunday morning at Tony Aguirre Community Center to discuss real-world principles supported by evidence, and free thought, grounded in reason.

Volunteer and social events take place regularly. Oasis also provides opportunities for children to explore developing worldviews, ask questions and make friends in an environment that’s supportive of critical thinking.

KC Oasis is the city's first alternative to faith-based communities, offering a community of compassion and reason to celebrate the human experience. For more information, visit [KCOasis.org](http://KCOasis.org) or find us on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and [Twitter](#).

*Sources:*

<sup>1</sup>Pew Research Center, Religious and Public Life, [U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious](#), November 3, 2015.

<sup>2</sup>*Time* Magazine, [Atheist "Churches" Gain Popularity—Even in the Bible Belt](#), July 24, 2014.