



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Keep Austin Housed AmeriCorps Members Working Hard to End Homelessness

*Program funding restored, members serving at 13 non-profits
recruitment for next term underway*

Austin, Texas — After overcoming an enormous funding cut last year, Keep Austin Housed 25 AmeriCorps members are serving once again as case managers to homeless adults, families, and youth at 13 area nonprofits.

As the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” widens, volunteer programs like AmeriCorps become increasingly important in helping nonprofit organizations fill crucial staff positions.

At Casa Marianella, the two AmeriCorps members are the entirety of the case management program. At LifeWorks, four members are working with teenagers and young adults in the transitional shelter, emergency shelter, and resource center. At the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH), managed by Front Steps, the member implements the Cold Weather Shelter Program, manages the blanket distribution program, and serves as a case manager.

Helen Varty, Executive Director at Front Steps, the fiscal agent for Keep Austin Housed, sees the AmeriCorps program as a vital component to social services agencies and programs.

“It’s AmeriCorps that staffs organizations that lack enough resources to provide the services that are needed. Many agencies are experiencing a reduction in contributions and resources while seeing an increase in the number of people seeking help,” Varty said.

In addition to last year’s sites, AmeriCorps has been able to send members to three new agencies: Mobile Loaves and Fishes, Family Eldercare, and Foundation Communities.

Keep Austin Housed also placed members this term at SafePlace, St. David’s Episcopal Church Trinity Center, Caritas, the City of Austin Homeless Health Clinic, A New Entry, Austin Travis County MHMR, and Foundation for the Homeless.

Recruitment for the next term is underway with the goal of having next year’s members in place by July 2008.

AmeriCorps members commit a year of their lives to service work and in return receive a living stipend, money for college, professional development opportunities, and health care and child care for full-time members.

More information is available at www.keeapaustinhoused.org or by calling the Keep Austin Housed Program Coordinator at 512-305-4138.

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ABOUT FRONT STEPS:

Front Steps is a nonprofit organization that manages the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH), the Central Texas Recuperative Care Center, and the Keep Austin Housed AmeriCorps Program, as well as transitional and permanent housing programs. Front Steps was founded in 1997 as the Capital Area Homeless Alliance. More information can be found at <http://www.frontsteps.org>.

ABOUT AMERICORPS:

Keep Austin Housed, one of Austin's AmeriCorps programs, is part of a network of local, state and national service programs started in 1993 when President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act into law.

Since that time more than 400,000 men and women have volunteered at more than 2,000 public agencies and private and faith-based organizations throughout the U.S. tutoring, improving health services, building affordable housing, teaching computer skills, cleaning parks and streams, managing after school programs, responding to disasters and in Austin, helping the community to positively impact the crises of homelessness. More information can be found at <http://www.keeapaustinhoused.org>.

ABOUT THE ARCH:

The ARCH, managed by Front Steps, is a day resource center, an emergency overnight shelter and a homeless health clinic. The day resource center provides clients access to showers, lockers, laundry facilities, clothing, telephones, mail and messaging services, community referrals, and case management. The ARCH also features ten co-located nonprofit organizations that provide a variety of vital services, including physical and mental health care, legal assistance, and job placement.