

*Everyone deserves a safe place to call home..Help us reach this goal.*

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Thank you!

**Welcome New AmeriCorps Members!**



Since 2003, Front Steps has managed the AmeriCorps Keep Austin Housed Program.

We recently welcomed 24 full-time members, serving at eight different nonprofit organizations, in a total of seventeen service sites!

These inspired young adults have specific performance measures they are striving to accomplish at each site, including direct case management in the areas of housing, healthcare, employment/training skills, and volunteer engagement for future service projects.

AmeriCorps' Keep Austin Housed is delighted to kick off the 2009-10 service year, and we are excited to welcome all the new members!

**Wondering How You Can Help?**



**How Volunteers Make a Difference!**

Ellen has been volunteering with Front Steps since November of 2008. She is a reliable, dedicated, and most importantly, friendly face, that both our clients and staff members look forward to seeing each week.

Growing up in a military family, Ellen moved often, but has lived in Austin longer than she's lived anywhere else. In Austin, she works at the UT library and is also an amazing artist. You can check out her artwork at <http://www.ellentanner.com>.

Ellen chose Front Steps because she liked the idea of meeting a wide variety of people and thought "there would never be a dull moment," which is often true! She has continued volunteering because she enjoys the company of both the staff and the clients, and says that "It's very exciting when someone I know really does make a huge and positive change for themselves, despite the odds and the difficulties they have faced."

Ellen hopes to always volunteer at a place like Front Steps (we hope so too) and loves to hike, bike, run, read, swim, paint, and cook. She would like to settle down in Colorado, but we hope she doesn't leave us too soon!

Thank you, Ellen, for your positive attitude, laughter, and commitment to Front Steps and the people we serve.

**Homeless for 12 years, Janet now has a place to call home.**

**Cold Weather Donations:**

Though it seems early, the cold weather will be here before we know it and we will be in need of cold weather items such as blankets, sleeping bags, and jackets.

If you are interested in partnering with Front Steps to collect these items, please email Dawn at [dperkins@frontsteps.org](mailto:dperkins@frontsteps.org).

**Homeless Resource Fair:**

For more information about how to help, please visit the notes section on our [Facebook Page!](#)

**Donations for Recuperative Care Program:**

- Guitar
- Restaurant gift certificates
- YMCA day passes
- Hair cut vouchers

**Financial Contributions can be made online at:**

<http://www.frontsteps.org/how-to-help/donate/donate-today.html>

- Or by mailing a check, payable to Front Steps, to the address below:  
**Front Steps**

**Development and Communications Office**

**P.O. Box 684519**

**Austin, TX 78768-4519**

Please email [dperkins@frontsteps.org](mailto:dperkins@frontsteps.org) if you have anything you would like to donate!

**Check Us Out!****Facebook - Follow us at**

<http://www.facebook.com/FrontSteps>

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**Sitting in her one room efficiency apartment, Janet, a soft spoken and shy woman, shared her struggles with alcoholism and homelessness. To understand her story, it is important to understand how her life began.**

Janet was raised by a single mother, a woman who suffered from alcoholism and who often dated other alcoholics. Before she was taken from her mother at age twelve, she would often have to wait in the car while her mom and boyfriend drank in the local bars.

Growing up, life was hard for Janet, yet she was eventually able to obtain her GED. However, in her twenties, she began a downward spiral of severe alcoholism, panic attacks, mood swings, and depression, eventually becoming homeless. She was plagued by these symptoms until 2001, when she was hospitalized with cirrhosis of the liver. It was so severe that the doctors did not think she would live.

However, she not only survived, but also managed to get herself sober, while still living on the streets. She has been sober for nine years and says she feels great. With help from the Mental Health Mental Retardation (MHMR) outreach team, she was able to transition from homelessness into housing at Safe Haven. From there, she began working with a Front Steps' Case Manager, who still meets with her on a weekly basis.

Now, when she feels a panic or anxiety attack coming on, instead of drinking, she goes for walks, exercises, and socializes with her friends. She likes to crochet, play cards and dominoes, and read. Janet says it breaks her heart to see others going through the same downward spiral that she did, and though she wants to help them, she knows there are some people she cannot associate with. She has even had to give up friends in order to maintain her sobriety, which is an everyday struggle.

She no longer depends on alcohol, and has since been diagnosed and medicated for depression and bipolar disorder. Janet has been living at Garden Terrace for a little over a year, and we are happy to have helped her find a pathway home.

**Good luck and best wishes Janet!**

**Thank you to our Supporters!**

<http://twitter.com/frontsteps>



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[www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)

It's a search engine that donates money to our organization (and many others) when you use it!

Front Steps is indebted to our many supporters, and we appreciate all that you do for us every day!

We would like to send a special thank you to **The Knights of Peter Claver Junior Division, Nationwide Insurance, and the Democratic National Committee** for their donations this month.

It is through the generosity and kindness of groups like these that we are able to restore hope to Austin's homeless. Thank you!

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