

NEWS RELEASE

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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 — 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 non-profits.

As the gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” widen, volunteer programs like AmeriCorps become increasingly more important in helping non-profits 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, the emergency shelter and the resource center. At Front Steps/ARCH, the member implements the Cold Weather Shelter Plan, 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 the 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.keepeastinhoused.org](http://www.keepeastinhoused.org) or by calling the Keep Austin Housed Program Coordinator at 512-305-4138.

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ABOUT FRONT STEPS:

Front Steps is an eleven year old not-for-profit corporation that manages the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless, co-managers of Garden Terrace Residences and is the fiscal administrator for the Austin AmeriCorps program, Keep Austin Housed. <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. <http://www.keepaustinhoused.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, A.A., community referrals and information and case management.

The overnight shelter has 100 beds and 75 mats for homeless individuals. Front Steps also implements its Cold Weather Shelter plan during freezing weather, which working with Capitol Metro and area churches, buses every person seeking shelter to participating churches.

Co-located in the ARCH, along with Front Steps, are eleven agencies that also provide services for the homeless community including MHMR ACCESS, Family ElderCare, Legal Services, House the Homeless, A New Entry, Goodwill, Austin Advocate, AmeriCorps, The Men's Clothing Closet, ART from the Streets and the Homeless Health Clinic.