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Heidi Boonzaaier • Christina Elder • Suzanne Gamewell • Jasmine Hargrave and the Austin Cosmopolitan Rotary Club • Casey Hoepner • John Mahnick • Hilda and Mike Mikan

Community Partnership for the Homeless is supported by the following local, state and federal agencies: Austin Housing Finance Corporation, City of Austin Health & Human Services Department, City of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, Travis County Health and Human Services & Veteran Services, Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FOR THE HOMELESS

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THE COMMUNITY

RESIDENT SUCCESS

For a displaced New Orleans resident and military veteran, Community Partnership is a place to re-group, re-train and re-tackle life.

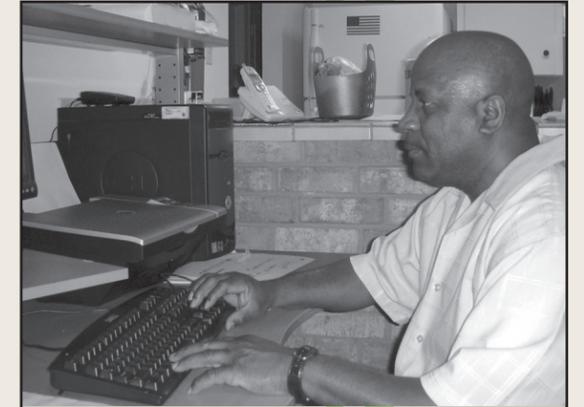
Fred's story starts in Mobile, Alabama where he joined the Air Force after completing high school. He spent four years on active duty in Thailand and the Philippines during the Vietnam War, specializing in aerospace power systems mechanics, and helping to keep U.S. planes in the air.

After his discharge from active duty, Fred entered the active reserves for the Air Force in southern California, training other reservists in airplane power systems, hydraulics, air conditioning and heating systems for 8 additional years.

At the conclusion of this duty, Fred moved back to Alabama, then on to Mississippi where he worked for several years as a hospital orderly, then on to New Orleans where he worked in a Veterans Administration (VA) hospital as a surgical orderly.

Soon after, Hurricane Katrina struck the VA hospital. Fred still recalls the winds howling, the breaking of glass. His home in the Garden District also suffered severe damage. During the storm, he gathered with several neighbors and tried to determine what to do next. "I had \$30 in my pocket," said Fred. "It seemed like the best thing to do was leave since my job was probably gone." He caught a ride with a trucker to Lake Charles.

Fred was picked up by his sister who took him to Texas. For a few weeks he worked at the VA hospital in Temple. Seeing little opportunity to use his medical skills, Fred decided to check out Austin.



Fred checks his email for routing and delivery information provided by his employer.

"I picked up a good vibe from the city when I visited the ARCH," he said. While staying in the dorm at the ARCH and at the Salvation Army, he visited the local VA office and learned about the Veterans Re-Entry Program offered by Community Partnership.

The VA case manager at Caritas of Austin helped Fred apply for and enter the program to stabilize his living situation and give him an opportunity to seek out better employment. Fred attended truck driving school and now picks up and delivers frozen and refrigerated products for a major trucking company. "I could not have done this without this program," said Fred. "I am now able to start saving money and get back on my feet."



Fred and his truck share many hours on the road serving clients.

Fred now lives with 2 other veterans in a three-bedroom single-family home. He takes advantage of the food and clothing pantries, and uses the computer in the house to check in with his employer, schedule his time and deliveries, and correspond with friends and family.

Fred is always thinking and planning ahead. "When I complete my 2 years in this program, I hope to have sufficient savings to have my own place," said Fred. "I want to take full advantage of this program. It's been a true blessing to be here."

In this article, the resident's name has been changed to protect privacy.

"I could not have done this without this program. It's been a true blessing to be here."

- Fred



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE HOMELESS
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- Thank a veteran in your life.
- Help keep over 50 veterans like Fred with a roof over their heads this year.

Donate at:
www.austinhomless.org

OUR PROGRESS



Breaking ground at Glen Oaks Corner.

From left Jennifer Kim, Kamran Shah, Frank Fernandez, Margaret Shaw, Julia Spann

GLEN OAKS CORNER

On a sunny March day in Austin, our supporters and invited guests applauded the ceremonial ground-breaking for our newest permanent supportive housing development serving single parent families with children.

Six units of housing are now under construction in East Austin with completion anticipated in August. Homes will range in size from 821 to 1,296 square feet and will be a combination of one and two story houses. All homes will be ADA accessible, and will serve single parents who have a serious disability and earn 50% or less of Austin's median family income.

Executive Director Frank Fernandez introduced each of our VIP guest speakers: Jennifer Kim, Austin City Council member; Margaret Shaw, Interim Director of Austin Neighborhood Housing and Community Development; Julia Spann, Executive Director of SafePlace (our social services partner on this project); and Kamran Shah, President of our Board of Directors. Frank also thanked Gilbert Rivera, Community Partnership and Glen Oaks Neighborhood Association Board member, for his assistance in bringing this project to fruition.

"Today's ground-breaking represents our first step toward helping address Austin's acute problem of family homelessness."

- Frank Fernandez



Honored guests gather to address the crowd.

From left Shah, Spann, Shaw, Kim and Fernandez

OUR VOLUNTEERS

GIVING BACK AT THE FOOD PANTRY

For Hilda and Mike Mikan, if it's Thursday afternoon, they are knee-deep in boxes, bags and cans of food at our food pantry. Hilda and Mike sort and store products on the display shelves, then help residents identify which items they want for the week. They know many of our residents by name and are even learning their favorite foods!

Hilda, an RN, and Mike, a former counselor at the Travis County jail, enjoy working with the residents. "We both have always been in public service," said Hilda. "So when we retired, we looked for a place where we could work together and give back to our community. We really enjoy working directly with these great guys."

Thank you, Hilda and Mike – it's wonderful volunteers like you who make a huge difference!



Our wonderful volunteers, Mike and Hilda Mikan, help out at the food pantry every Thursday.

CONTACT US

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FEEDBACK

To be added or removed from our mailing list, or to update your contact information, contact Sharon at 512.469.9130 or ssparlin@austinhomless.org.

OUR MISSION AND HISTORY

Community Partnership for the Homeless is dedicated to help end homelessness by providing safe, affordable housing for those working to achieve independent living. We acquire and develop housing, refurbish substandard housing, and partner with social service agencies to provide transitional and affordable housing for homeless and at-risk adults in Austin/Travis County. Founded in 1990 by a formerly homeless young woman, the agency has grown to serve more than 50 homeless veterans of honorable military service each year. Since our founding, we have helped more than 550 veterans find their way back into the community, with 70% successfully transitioning to permanent housing and employment.

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



HOMELESS IS NOT HOPELESS

Homeless. The word has been part of our name since we were founded almost twenty years ago. Lately, I have been thinking hard about whether it should be removed. This is not because our dedication to our community's most vulnerable children and adults has diminished. Rather, it is because of how this word is "heard" by folks in the community.

The word "homeless", we have come to find, conjures up negative, unpleasant associations for some (though not all) folks – deadbeat alcoholic, sex offender, ex-convict, victim etc. Perhaps the term "homeless" is too close to "hopeless."

This is our challenge. "Homeless" is perceived as a permanent state of non-being, as opposed to a transitory state to be overcome, albeit with hard work. It forces us into a cardboard box from which it is difficult to escape. It should not be allowed to define the whole of who you are; rather, it should be defined to allow you to move beyond where you are. The challenge, then, becomes to either reframe the language we use to talk about folks without homes or to redefine "homeless" in a way that unshackles it from the stereotypes that weigh it down. I don't know the right answer, but know that we must find it. I invite you to join this dialogue.

Fortunately, our residents inspire us daily to take on this challenge. They confound and transcend the limiting "homeless" stereotypes – whether it is the man who has made the conscious decision to return to school after more than a decade on the street, or the woman who has been able to reconnect to her family after years of alienation because she has been able to stay clean and sober. They are why we acquired two new properties this year to expand our Veterans Re-Entry Program, including serving female veterans for the first time in several years. They are also why we are expanding to serve families struggling with homelessness and disability at Glen Oaks Corner, our new supportive housing development scheduled to open up in August.

We cannot allow our homeless men, women, and children to be singularly defined by their housing circumstances. To be homeless should not be a lifelong sentence to being labeled other or undeserving. It should be a temporary state from which all of us can exit.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

VOLUNTEER

- Pick up food from the Capital Area Food Bank every Wednesday morning.
- Form a team to help clean-up, paint and landscape houses for our residents.
- 'Adopt' a needy resident to provide their holiday meal.
- Work directly with our residents distributing food from our food pantry.
- Assist staff in our office with general administration work.

MAKE OUR WISHLIST COME TRUE

Our residents are always in need of:

- New men's white socks, underwear, t-shirts
- New/gently used men's jeans and sneakers
- Nutritional drinks and foods for diabetics; low salt food
- Bikes, bike locks, helmets, lights
- Gift cards for HEB, Wal-Mart, Target, gas stations
- Gently used outdoor patio furniture

To volunteer or make an inkind donation, contact Caitlin at 469-9130 or cuzzell@austinhomless.org.

If you can't give your time or items, please consider a cash donation. Help us support our residents as they move to independence! To make a cash donation, visit www.austinhomless.org Support tab, or mail us your check today. Thank you!

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