

## Father and Daughter Share Love of Learning and New Home

When Patrick Martinez was awarded primary custody of his young daughter last year, he realized he needed to make some changes in his life. He was sharing an apartment with a friend and working part-time, but he wanted an affordable place of his own with space for his daughter to play and grow. A few months ago, Patrick and three-year-old daughter Penelope moved into Sierra Vista as part of our Children's Home Initiative (CHI), an intensive support program for extremely low-income families.

**"Once my daughter started living with me I began thinking more long-term," Patrick said. "I have to start making sacrifices now if I want the best for my daughter."**

Patrick applied to CHI because he would have access to an on-site case manager and support through our financial stability programs. He was recently hired to work part-time for Foundation Communities as an English as a Second Language and Digital Literacy teacher and he is going to ACC to earn his associate degree in Computer Science.

"I'm working part-time so I can finish school and the financial courses will help me make sure the money I earn lasts until the end of the year," Patrick said.

Patrick first got involved with us as a volunteer. He was teaching GED classes in Spanish for a fellow nonprofit and one of our program directors asked if he would be willing to offer the class to our residents too. Soon after, Patrick was hired to teach our ESL and

Digital Literacy courses. He also continues to teach the Spanish GED class once a week and attendance remains high.

Patrick's teaching career began about two years ago. Education wasn't emphasized when he was growing up and he said he didn't do well in high school. In addition, his family's limited resources and his mother's health struggles made pursuing higher education unrealistic. His perspective on education changed, though, when his daughter was born. He committed to working hard so that he could go to college and become an advocate for his daughter and fellow community members who face barriers to education.

Living at Sierra Vista has been a positive change for both Patrick and Penelope. They each have their own room and Patrick has gotten to know his neighbors and can rely on them for child care in a pinch. He is involved at his daughter's school and looks forward to picking her up each day and hearing what she learned.

One of Patrick and Penelope's fondest memories in their new home so far is throwing a Christmas party for friends and family not too long after they moved in.

"Having the party made it feel a lot more like home," Patrick said. He added, "I enjoy working here and living here. It's a close-knit group of people and a better environment for me and my daughter."



## BUILD COMMUNITY ONE MEAL AT A TIME

Are you looking for a way to make a difference with your friends, family, colleagues, or fellow church members? Sign up to be Supper Club volunteers and get to know our residents by serving warm, nutritious family-style meals. We ask groups to commit to a minimum of 4-6 meals throughout the year.

**BECOME A  
SUPPER CLUB VOLUNTEER!**

Visit the "Get Involved" section of our website  
to sign up or contact [Meghan.Hein@foundcom.org](mailto:Meghan.Hein@foundcom.org)

## Free Minds Students Explore Literature, Creative Writing

We're only two months away from celebrating our 11th year of Free Minds graduates! Free Minds is our free college humanities course run in partnership with UT and ACC. Students are currently engaged in the literature unit and enjoying reading and discussing Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*.

They recently attended a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* by the American Shakespeare Center, courtesy of UT's English Department. And soon they will begin the creative writing unit and craft their own *This I Believe* essays. We're excited to share that many of our students plan to enroll at ACC next year. We can't wait until graduation in May when we recognize our talented students and the bright futures that await them!





3036 South First Street  
Austin, TX 78704  
512.447.2026  
FoundCom.org



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Foundation Communities provides attractive, affordable homes and free on-site support services for thousands of working families with kids, as well as veterans, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. We offer an innovative, proven model that empowers our residents and neighbors to achieve educational success, financial stability, and healthier lifestyles. We own and operate 22 properties in Austin and North Texas.

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For locations and hours call 2-1-1 or visit [www.CommunityTaxCenters.org](http://www.CommunityTaxCenters.org)

## FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES UPDATES



### Three Cheers for Amplify Austin!

For the fourth year in a row, we ended Amplify Austin completely blown away by our dedicated Team Leaders and the community support we received.

**Our total of \$200,988 landed us at #5 out of 674 local nonprofits for dollars raised.**

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to everyone who supported us during this exciting citywide day of giving! We'd like to say a special thank you to our steadfast partner St. David's Foundation for providing additional match funds. These funds will help us serve more people through our proven model of housing + services and keep Austin the diverse and vibrant city we all love.

### Our New Neighborhood Teams

Last year, we created Neighborhood Teams composed of some of our very best volunteers. Their role is to invite people who live, work, or worship near our newest communities to welcome and support our residents. Our teams at Bluebonnet Studios, Homestead, and Live Oak have gathered Welcome Home Baskets, collected backpacks, raised money during Amplify Austin, and reached out to neighbors, local businesses, and faith groups to invite them to get involved.



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## APPLY NOW FOR THE MEXAUSTIN SCHOLARSHIP

First-time college students have until April 30 to apply for our MexAustin Scholarship. The \$1,000 scholarship is available to Mexican or Latino immigrants and their children who demonstrate financial need.

Learn more and apply at [www.MexAustin.com](http://www.MexAustin.com)