

Supporting Dreams in the St. Elmo Neighborhood

Jacky Quezada is working hard to shape her own destiny. The 19-year-old sophomore at Texas State University is the first in her family to attend college and serves as a role model for her younger brother and sister. Jackie and her family moved to our Sierra Ridge community in the St. Elmo neighborhood the summer before her 5th grade year, and her mom and siblings still live there. Finding Foundation Communities changed the lives of everyone in the family by offering an affordable, stable home. Jacky credits the move with helping all of them envision a brighter future.

“It’s an incredibly positive environment, with a lot of resources,” Jacky said about living at Sierra Ridge. “It definitely changed the way we look at things.”

Jacky’s parents split up when she was young and her mother had to work long hours as a nanny and cleaning houses to support her three children. When her mother was at work, Jacky took care of her younger siblings – feeding them, bathing them and putting them to bed. She had to grow up very fast.

When they moved to Sierra Ridge, Jacky and her siblings discovered a support system at the on-site Community Learning Center where they attended our after-school and summer learning programs. Jacky said going to the Learning Center made it easier for her to make friends at St. Elmo Elementary since about half of the school’s students live at our Sierra Ridge or Sierra Vista communities. She also discovered that the Learning Center staff provided encouragement

and assistance whenever she needed it, including when she was applying for college.



“The staff helped me through the whole college application process, like proofreading my essays, and making sure I was on track,” Jacky said.

Thinking of others and wanting the best for them is second nature to Jacky, who served as a Learning Center volunteer and continues to mentor her siblings. Jacky’s brother will be a freshman at Texas A&M in the fall and her sister is not too far behind.

The support and guidance Jacky received at Sierra Ridge exemplifies the importance of our efforts in the St. Elmo neighborhood. With Sierra Ridge and Sierra Vista directly across the street from

each other, we have had the unique opportunity to help uplift an entire neighborhood of parents and students. Our goal is to provide families with a pipeline of support from pre-k to college and beyond.

For now, Jacky is soaking up her time as an independent first-generation college student. She is majoring in business with a minor in fashion merchandising and hopes to attend graduate school and, one day, be her own boss. She said others who will be the first in their families to go to college should remember to set goals and stay positive.

“Don’t doubt yourself, don’t be afraid to ask questions, and keep working hard,” Jacky said.

BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE JULY 25 – 29

Help us make sure the 700 kids who attend our after-school program are ready to succeed this fall by participating in our Back to School Drive the week of July 25-29!

We will be collecting:

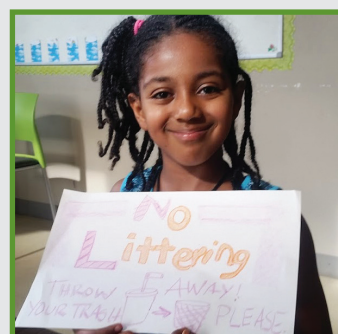
- Backpacks, male & female, ages 5-11
- Glue, white liquid, 8 oz.
- Supply boxes (cigar type)
- Pencils, No. 2
- Notebook paper (loose leaf)
- 12 inch rulers
- Crayons and markers
- Scissors, round point & regular
- Wire-bound notebooks
- Erasers
- Ballpoint pens (blue or black)

Donations can be dropped off at the Community Financial Center, 2600 West Stassney, 78745 on Friday, July 29 between 9am-5pm.

Email Jackie.Cuellar@foundcom.org to schedule a different drop-off time or visit FoundCom.org to donate funds online.



LEARNING CENTER STUDENTS GET ECO-FRIENDLY



Our Green and Healthy Kids program introduces students to eco and health literacy. This year, for the first time, the after-school curriculum was taught in 10 of our on-site Community Learning Centers, educating over 600 students in grades K-5.

Topics ranged from healthy eating to energy and transportation. This summer students will look at the food systems in their Learning Center and create action plans to increase access to healthy food in their own communities.





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 19 properties in Austin and North Texas.

Free Minds celebrates 10 years

The Free Minds Class of 2016 graduated in May as the program celebrated its 10-year anniversary. Since its inception, Free Minds has provided a free humanities college course to 150 low-income adults who faced significant barriers to higher education. Congratulations to Free Minds and all of our amazing graduates past and present!



Foundation Communities Updates

MEXAUSTIN AWARDS 140 SCHOLARSHIPS

We launched the MexAustin scholarship last year in partnership with the Consulate General of Mexico and we're very excited to announce that all 140 inaugural scholarship recipients have been chosen! Scholarship winners were recognized at a ceremony hosted by the Consulate on June 29. The MexAustin scholarship makes college more accessible to first- or second-generation Mexican or other Latino immigrants. "On the basis of their talent and hard work they have earned their place in college," Consul General Carlos González Gutiérrez said. "They know about the sacrifices their parents have made for them to get a better life. The last thing they want is for those efforts to be wasted."

Please visit www.MexAustin.com for more information.



LEARNING CENTER STAFF SHARE THEIR INSPIRATION

Each of our on-site Community Learning Centers is staffed with extremely dedicated and hard-working teachers who want to see their students shine. We asked three of our youth program assistants to share what inspires them to do their work.



"I enjoy working with the kids at the Learning Center because I get to witness them push themselves to be the best they can be each and every day."

– **Eric Ikonne, Trails at the Park Learning Center**



"Since we never really stop growing and learning, I want to be able to give students the ability to feel confident and foster a genuine understanding of true well-being."

– **Nnedi Agbaroji, Homestead Learning Center**



"I think there's so much pressure on kids to be cool that I just want to remind them that it's okay to be silly and different and to care. I want each kid to know that they are cared about and they have a future that is worth believing and investing in."

– **Thomas Ferguson, Sierra Vista Learning Center**