

## Resident Recycling Advocate Makes Daffodil Shine

Driving up to our Daffodil Apartments in southeast Austin, you immediately notice the array of plants growing on Irene Vera's front porch. Irene, a Daffodil resident for more than six years, spends her days gardening, caring for her dogs and helping her friends and neighbors keep the place where they live looking its best.

"I get along with everybody," Irene said of her fellow Daffodil residents. "Everybody knows me well."

It was Irene's friendly and outgoing spirit that moved her to take charge of the community's recycling initiative last fall. She explained that after her two grandchildren participated in a recycling program at Smith Elementary, they encouraged her to recycle too.

Last fall Foundation Communities staff visited Daffodil to demonstrate recycling protocol, but did not reach everybody at their doorstep.

That's where Irene stepped in. She reached out to her neighbors to explain the importance of recycling and offer her assistance.

Two months after these outreach efforts, our green initiatives team discovered that Daffodil residents had more than doubled their recycling rate. As a result, we plan on expanding our recycling education to more Foundation Communities properties.

Becoming the recycling champion at Daffodil provided Irene with the opportunity to stay engaged with her neighbors and take care of the home she loves.



"It keeps my mind busy and keeps me from going into the depression I get into from time to time," Irene said.

After a severe back injury and other health problems forced Irene to leave her job at a shipping and receiving warehouse nearly 10 years ago, Irene said that there have been times when she has shut herself off from the world.

But being part of the Daffodil community – where people know and care for her and the kids playing outside wave hello – has been a source of strength.

"My neighbors look out for me, like I look out for them," Irene said.

Going forward, Irene will remain a recycling advocate with the hopes that more friends and neighbors get on board.

"Recycling is part of the pride in having a clean space to live," Irene added. "I'm trying to get everybody to help and do their part as well."

Resident education, community gardens and green buildings are all ways that we demonstrate our commitment to sustainability. Our green initiatives help residents, like Irene Vera, enjoy healthier lives, contribute in meaningful ways and lessen our impact on the environment.

**To watch a short video featuring our green initiatives and hear more of Irene's story, please visit our blog at [www.FoundCom.org/blog](http://www.FoundCom.org/blog)**

## Mentor a Free Minds Graduate!

Want to make a **big** difference in the lives of local adults who have faced barriers to education? Consider becoming a Free Minds mentor.

Mentors help graduates of our Free Minds program realize their goals as they transition out of the classroom with new ambitions. This is a challenging and rewarding volunteer opportunity that requires a year-long commitment.



Interviews for mentors will begin in early April.

**For more information please contact Nick Banach at 512-610-7396 or [nick.banach@foundcom.org](mailto:nick.banach@foundcom.org)**

## Volunteer Spotlight Insure Central Texas



We are proud to report that Insure Central Texas has been a valuable source of information and action for thousands of community members since we launched last October. Dedicated volunteers, such as **Jan Hames**, have been the key to this program's success. Jan has spent about ten hours a week educating her neighbors and helping them enroll in new health insurance options through the Affordable Care Act.

**"I volunteer with Insure Central Texas because I believe that everyone has a right to affordable health insurance," Jan said. "Foundation Communities has once again identified a critical unmet need and equipped volunteers to provide superior service. I'm proud to be part of Insure Central Texas."**

Visit [www.InsureCentralTX.org](http://www.InsureCentralTX.org) for info. Deadline to enroll is March 31.



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Foundation Communities provides first class, affordable homes and free onsite 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 17 properties in Austin and North Texas.

## Free Tax Prep and Filing!

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## Foundation Communities Updates

### Join the Amplify Austin Fun!

Mark your calendars for Amplify Austin on **March 20–21**. We are participating in the citywide online fundraising campaign to support our Free Minds program. Free Minds offers local adults the chance to jumpstart their college education and a build a better life for their families.

**Get involved by visiting our website [www.FoundCom.org](http://www.FoundCom.org)**



### Keep Your Mind and Body Healthy

Residents of the St. Elmo neighborhood are invited to participate in our family health classes, known as Salud de La Familia, beginning March 19. The bilingual classes will take place weekly from 6:00–7:30pm at the Sierra Ridge Learning Center. Childcare is available. Topics to be covered in this series include addiction, domestic violence, depression/anxiety and stress management. The classes are provided in collaboration with our partner organization El Buen Samaritano.

**For more information, please contact Andrea Albalawi at [andrea.albalawi@foundcom.org](mailto:andrea.albalawi@foundcom.org) or 512-610-0828**

### Check Out Capital Studios Progress

The construction of our downtown community, Capital Studios, is progressing beautifully! This month, we expect the framing of the first two floors to be completed. We're planning to open the doors to the first affordable community in downtown Austin in over 45 years this October. Stay tuned for updates!

