



# IMPACT

MAY–JUNE 2016

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## Free Minds Inspires Capital Studios Resident to Return to College

It was a flyer on Kyle Fuqua's door at Capital Studios that piqued his interest in our Free Minds program. The 31-year-old personal trainer started but never finished college due to serious missteps that landed him in legal trouble and a struggle with substance abuse. Free Minds, a free two semester college humanities course run in partnership with UT and ACC, presented just the right opportunity for Kyle to return to school. Almost 100 people applied and Kyle was accepted into the class of 20 students. His life has already changed as a result.

**"There's a magic in that class," Kyle said about Free Minds. "We have the best professors and a glue-like bond between the classmates. We all want to see each other succeed."**

Kyle is part of Free Minds' 10th graduating class and will join his classmates as they walk across the stage in their cap and gown this month. Each of the graduates will earn six college credits at ACC.

For many students, the road to Free Minds isn't an easy one. Free Minds is intended for adults living on low to moderate incomes who have faced barriers to education.

Kyle's challenges began when he was 18. He committed a burglary and a robbery and was sent to prison for three years. Shortly after being released,

he started using drugs. Kyle felt his life spiraling out of control and turned to a supportive group of family and friends to help him get sober.



That was almost seven years ago. Now, Kyle is living a stable, healthy life as a resident at Capital Studios in downtown Austin and spends his days motivating others to achieve their fitness and nutrition goals. He works at two different gyms in the Austin area.

The can-do attitude Kyle employs at his job is also evident in the Free Minds classroom.

"Kyle takes his work seriously and has high standards for himself," Vive Griffith, the director of Free Minds, said. "In many ways, he's lifted the standards for the entire class."

Reading Frederick Douglass' autobiography and Plato's *The Republic* ultimately helped open Kyle's mind to new ways of thinking. Building on the enthusiasm and support from Free Minds, Kyle said he plans to enroll at ACC in the fall and is considering different degree options. He has set big goals for himself and is determined to successfully finish college so he can pursue a career he loves.

"I'm not content with just earning a paycheck," Kyle said. "I want to do something that I'm passionate about, something that is challenging."

For more information about Free Minds, please visit [www.FreeMindsAustin.org](http://www.FreeMindsAustin.org).

## SUMMER OF SERVICE KICK-OFF

**Want to help your neighbors?**

Join us for our annual Summer of Service Volunteer Kick-Off! You'll get the chance to learn about our 13 unique volunteer programs and how you can get involved with us year-round. We're currently recruiting volunteers for ESL classes, supper clubs, welcome home baskets, and learning centers.

**Monday, June 6 | 6:00–7:30 pm  
Sierra Vista Learning Center**

**RSVP by June 3 at [foundcom.org/get-involved](http://foundcom.org/get-involved)**



## RUNNING BUDDIES READY FOR 5K RACE



**Our Running Buddies program is celebrating its third year!** The program matches 3rd–5th grade students in our after-school program with a volunteer running buddy to train for a neighborhood 5K race.

This year we have 27 students and 19 volunteers participating—our biggest group yet! The buddies meet two times a week for eight weeks to work on strength, speed and endurance training.

The program helps students learn about good sportsmanship and strengthen their goal-setting skills. Most importantly, Running Buddies is about having fun and staying healthy! The big race is on May 21 at our Sierra Vista Fitness Camino.



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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.

### Another Amazing Tax Season in the Books

We wrapped up our 11th successful tax season last month. Thanks to **537 steadfast Community Tax Center volunteers**, we filed nearly **20,000 tax returns** for hard-working low-income families and generated over **\$33 million in refunds**. Many of the clients we serve count on this free citywide service and use their refunds to put food on the table, pay bills and save for their children's education. The Community Tax Centers truly require a team effort and we want to say a special thank you to all of you who helped make this season great!

## Foundation Communities Updates



### OUR VOLUNTEERS MAKE A HUGE IMPACT

We are constantly blown away by the 2,000+ dedicated and passionate volunteers who make our work possible. In the last year, we served thousands of families and individuals because our volunteers are deeply committed to our mission.

#### Here are some highlights of our work together:

**Supper Clubs:** 983 volunteers served 4,885 meals  
**Insure Central Texas:** 64 volunteers helped over 4,400 people enroll in health insurance  
**Learning Centers:** 154 volunteers mentored over 750 students  
**Financial Coaching:** 90 volunteers met one-on-one with 655 clients

*Thank you to each and every one of our amazing volunteers!*

**Please visit the "Get Involved" section of our website to learn more about volunteer opportunities.**

### NEW HOMESTEAD LEARNING CENTER UP AND RUNNING

It's been a busy couple of months at the Stevenson Family Learning Center at Homestead, our newest affordable housing in southwest Austin. We have almost 20 students enrolled in the after-school program and we're looking forward to a fun-filled (and academic!) summer program beginning in June. At Homestead—just like our other 10 on-site Learning Centers—students receive homework assistance and participate in enrichment activities. We can't wait to see the Learning Center at Homestead grow and become a special place for our littlest residents!

