

Finding a New Sense of Purpose Through Work

After years of struggling with substance abuse and homelessness, Sharon Ford finally feels like her life is on the upswing. She moved into our Skyline Terrace community in 2012 and since then has maintained sobriety, developed deep friendships and gone back to work part-time through our supported employment program. Four days a week, Sharon delivers healthy food to our on-site food pantries.

“I look forward to getting up every day and going to work,” Sharon said. “My job keeps me busy and I love it because I get to meet different people.”

Sharon said her life was complete turmoil before she moved into Skyline Terrace. She saw her mother suffer from alcoholism when she was a child and her ex-husband introduced her to the drug that would derail her life. Sharon ultimately experienced homelessness on three separate occasions and her chronic health issues, including damaged discs in her neck and back, worsened.

She eventually got connected with a case manager at Caritas, one of our community partners, and that’s when she found a home with us. Having a stable place to live has allowed Sharon to make progress in treating her depression and anxiety, and build lasting relationships with friends and family. One of her favorite visitors is her four-year-old granddaughter who she loves taking to church and to fun activities around town.



Sharon is one of 15 residents that currently participate in our supported employment program. The program was created three years ago for residents who have unstable incomes, are unemployed or underemployed, and are in jeopardy of losing their housing because they’re having a hard time paying rent.

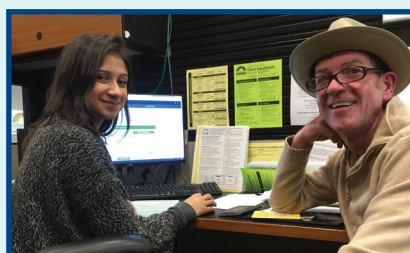
Our residents are employed in various roles. For example, some serve as drivers delivering food from the Central Texas Food Bank to our food pantries, as peer recovery coaches providing support to fellow residents through on-site recovery groups, or as community engagement specialists helping to gather resident input on health activities and community outings. The program was created in partnership with Austin Clubhouse and a grant from the City of Austin.

We’ve found that meaningful work empowers our residents not only to earn an income and stay housed, but to gain a sense of purpose, form friendships and improve their mental health and well-being. This is certainly true for Sharon, who is healthier and happier than ever.

“She takes such pride in her work, making sure that residents have fresh and healthy food to eat every week,” said Sofia Barbato, Supportive Services Program Supervisor. “The joy that she brings with her to work is infectious—she brightens our residents’ day every time she delivers food to the pantry.”

HELP YOUR NEIGHBORS ACCESS HEALTH CARE

Our Insure Central Texas program has become the area’s go-to resource for assistance with health insurance enrollment. Many of the clients we serve haven’t had health insurance or seen a doctor in years. There is a significant need for this free service, and that’s why we need your help!



Insure Central Texas volunteer and client

Insure Central Texas is a volunteer-powered program. Our dedicated volunteers have already enrolled more than 16,500 Central Texans, and we’re gearing up for the next enrollment period (Nov. 2016 – Jan. 2017). If you believe everyone deserves affordable health insurance, please consider becoming a volunteer!

For more information, contact Eliana Brant at Eliana.Brant@foundcom.org or 512-610-7375. You can also visit www.InsureCentralTX.org.

COACHING CLIENTS TO A FRESH START



Marla and Amy, one of her clients

Marla Tanimoto believes it’s never too late for someone to make a fresh start. She is a volunteer financial coach who aims to empower her clients to improve their financial future. “It’s wonderful to see when clients identify their own solutions to problems, act on them, and improve their lives on their own,”

Marla said. “We are merely guides along that process.”

Amy, one of her clients, was able to significantly reduce her \$7,000 debt to multiple payday lenders and qualified for our “Fresh Start” loan program. Now Amy doesn’t have to worry about predatory calls and can focus on saving for a house and retirement. “Seeing someone turn their life around and look forward to a stable future is one of the most rewarding things I can imagine,” Marla said.



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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.

One-Stop Financial Center Gets a Makeover

We want all of our affordable housing communities to shine, so it makes sense that our Community Financial Centers do too! We're excited to announce that our CFC North (located at 5900 Airport Blvd.) is getting a much needed remodel to better accommodate our clients and volunteers. The remodel will be completed this month, just in time for the start of the health insurance enrollment period and our next tax season. CFC North will also continue to provide our many other financial stability services. We can't wait to show off our new look!

Foundation Communities Updates

Thank You NeighborWorks!

NeighborWorks America, one of our most critical partners, helps us fund everything from building our communities to providing the programs that support our residents. But perhaps most importantly, they fund innovation. NeighborWorks was one of the first funders of our Insure Central Texas program, they have supported our green programs from the get-go, they pushed the pilot of our hugely successful Children's Home Initiative for formerly homeless families, and they shepherded the creation of our neighborhood stabilization initiatives at both Sierra Vista and Arbor Terrace. With the consistent support of a national organization like NeighborWorks, we can leverage our resources and participate in ongoing training for our staff. Thank you NeighborWorks for helping us create housing where families succeed!



Presidential Service Award Winners

We're excited to share that 87 volunteers received the President's Volunteer Service Award for giving 100–500+ hours of their time to us last year. Volunteers from all of our different programs received the award and we're tremendously grateful to each and every one of them.



New Communities Nearing Completion

One year ago, we updated you on three new communities under construction: Bluebonnet Studios, Lakeline Station and Live Oak Trails. It's hard to believe that we're actually nearing completion and soon will be welcoming our newest residents home. This year has been all about growing to keep up with the demand for affordable housing in our beloved city. We can't thank you enough for supporting us along the way. We always say that everyone knows someone who needs an affordable place to live. Well, now's the time to let them know we're opening our doors.

You can find more information at www.FoundCom.org/Housing. And to keep up-to-date on construction, move-in stories and more, be sure to like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.