

Free Minds Sparks Mom's Love of Learning

Lanna always dreamed of a life filled with adventure and learning. She was one of twelve children in a working-class family and grew up in a small town in Illinois. Getting a job as soon as she could, Lanna was proud of making her own money and being in charge of her own life. She intended to go to college but became a young mother not long after high school and her plans changed. After years of bouncing from one job to another to support herself and her daughter, Lanna is finally pursuing her college career by accessing the services offered through our College Hub program.

Lanna is one of 23 students currently enrolled in Free Minds, a free, two-semester college humanities course we run in partnership with the University of Texas and Austin Community College (ACC). Students earn six college credits from ACC in order to help them get started or return to the path of earning a college degree. Many of the students in Free Minds have faced barriers to higher education, just like Lanna, who struggled to afford college and pay for childcare.

Free Minds is part of our College Hub – a one-stop shop for nontraditional students who want to start or finish a college degree or certificate. In addition to Free Minds, College Hub includes a wide range of support services to help students consider their education options, navigate the admissions process and get the most out of financial aid assistance.

Being part of Free Minds is already changing Lanna's life.

"I feel I was meant for college," Lanna said. "People light up when you tell them you're in the class. It makes you more confident for when you go back to school."



She particularly enjoyed Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. It seemed like another language but Lanna pushed forward and loved when she and her classmates got to act out the play. She is also looking forward to the poetry unit that will begin soon.

"Poetry gives me the freedom to be me and to express myself," Lanna said.

Lanna said she learned about Free Minds at just the right time. She and her daughter live at one of our affordable housing communities and, when she saw the Free Minds flyer on her door, she knew it was the step she needed to take to get her life back on track. Not only is the class free, but there is a program offered at the same time and place through Camp Fire USA for students' children. This helps promote intergenerational learning and removes the barrier of childcare for students.

Lanna wants to set an example for her daughter and is determined to finish college. She was previously enrolled at ACC and expects to return once she completes Free Minds. She hasn't decided exactly what she wants to study, but she is considering something in the education field. Right now, Lanna works at Lamar Middle School and said she feels at home in a classroom, helping students.

Looking to the future, Lanna hopes to find a career she loves and see her daughter achieve her own educational goals. She continues to envision herself as an adventurer and is eager to soak up all the world has to offer.

"I want to go everywhere," Lanna said. "I want to meet different people, see different places and learn new things. And Free Minds is a wonderful start."

You can learn more about our College Hub program by visiting the "Financial Stability" section of our website, FoundCom.org.

Want to Make a Difference in a Child's Life?

Every child deserves the opportunity to dream big.

You can help the students in our after-school program achieve their academic goals by becoming a Learning Center volunteer. As a volunteer, you'll assist with homework or lead enrichment activities.



**A couple of hours
a week can change
a child's life!**

For more information, visit the
"Get Involved" section of our website.

INSURE CENTRAL TEXAS HELPS THOUSANDS ACCESS HEALTH INSURANCE

Our Insure Central Texas program ended 2017 on a high note, enrolling **over 5,600** people in affordable health insurance. Open enrollment was shortened to only six weeks and the federal advertising budget to promote the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare) was slashed. Despite all of this, our Insure Central Texas program and the 155 fiercely dedicated volunteers powering it managed to enroll more people this season than last season. Community partners and funders of the program, including Central Health, St. David's Foundation, the City of Austin and Seton also played an integral role in promoting open enrollment. We are extremely grateful to everyone who made this latest season a success. Since its inception, Insure Central Texas has helped enroll nearly 30,000 people in health insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

For more information, please visit www.InsureCentralTX.org.



Insure Central Texas volunteers celebrate the end of a successful season



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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 23 properties in Austin and North Texas.

NEED HELP WITH YOUR TAXES?

- Community Tax Centers free to households up to \$55K/yr
- IRS-certified volunteer preparers
- 6 convenient locations
- Appointment or walk-in
- Fast refund with e-file



For locations and hours call 2-1-1 or visit CommunityTaxCenters.org

FOUNDATION COMMUNITIES UPDATES

CARDINAL POINT OPENS ITS DOORS

Cardinal Point, our newest affordable housing community, began welcoming the first of 120 families home in December. These families have access to our on-site education, financial stability and health services that help people transform their lives. We expect to have the Community Learning Center up and running by the end of March. Cardinal Point is the first affordable housing in the Four Points area and, we're proud to say, our 23rd community. You can learn more about Cardinal Point by visiting LiveatCardinalPoint.com.



SAVE THE DATE:
Amplify Austin
March 1-2

It's almost time for Amplify Austin 2018! We look forward to participating in this citywide day of giving again, and we hope you (and your friends and colleagues!) will join us. Stay tuned for information on how you can help us support hardworking local families and their dreams for an even brighter future.



MexAustin Scholarship Accepting Applications

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. This is our third year offering the scholarship, in partnership with the Consulate General of Mexico in Austin and the Hispanic Scholarship Consortium. A total of 140 scholarships will be awarded. Learn more and apply at MexAustin.com.