

Free Minds Gives Voice to Advocate

After Sandy Wolff learned about the Free Minds college program, she almost didn't apply.

"I didn't know I could do school. I didn't think I had the smarts. Plus, I was old," Sandy, 59, said.

Poised for rejection, Sandy filled out the application, with the overwhelming feeling that life just handed her one disappointment after another.

Sandy had a rocky childhood, living through years of abuse. After becoming pregnant as a teen, she dropped out of school. She only earned her G.E.D. while in prison serving a 20-month sentence.

Once she was released, Sandy started to put her life back together, when she found herself living in the path of Hurricane Harvey. Tragically, she lost what little she had. So, she got on a bus and headed to Austin. Once here, a mentor with Truth Be Told, a nonprofit helping incarcerated women speak their truth, shared information about Free Minds, a continuing education course providing non-traditional students the chance to complete a college class in the Humanities.

Free Minds, a program of Foundation Communities, provides an opportunity to dive into art history, American history, philosophy, literature and theater. Faculty from both Austin Community College and The University of Texas at Austin work with students over nine months, culminating in a graduation ceremony filled with pride and celebration. Students who complete the program earn six college credits transferable to ACC. But just as important, students gain critical thinking and writing skills that will last a lifetime.

"When I was accepted, I broke down and cried," Sandy said. **"I'm just so grateful that I decided to go ahead and apply."**

Sandy was part of the graduating class of 2019. The course helped her build self-confidence so she can be an advocate for other women in need. "I know I'm a much better writer and public speaker because of it," Sandy said.

She plans to use these skills to continue her activism around prison reform and would like to build it into a career.

While she once thought higher education wasn't for her, Sandy said she

is now completely convinced that it is. "If I want to go on and pursue more education, I now know I can do it! I want to spread the word to others who have any hesitation about going back to school."

"I learned so much about myself and I feel so much more confident. I am ready to pursue my passions and advocate for those who are often overlooked," she said. **"If anyone is considering applying to Free Minds, please do, because it is an opportunity that could change your whole life."**

Learn more about Free Minds at foundcom.org/free-minds.



Making Money Moves

This summer, Seasoned Financial Coaches will teach our free **Money Management course**, a three-part series that covers credit, debt reduction and savings in depth.



MONEY MANAGEMENT

Free and open to the public

Wednesdays, 6:00 - 8:00 pm
July 10, 17 and 24
Community Financial Center North
5900 Airport Blvd

For more information, or to register:
MM@foundcom.org or 512-815-7184

Stay tuned for news about construction
of our new Community Financial Center

FREE MINDS APPLICATION OPEN

Help us spread the word! We are seeking students, eager to learn while earning college credits through our Free Minds program. Applications are open for the 2019-20 year.

The Foundation Communities' program provides a supportive path back into the classroom and students accepted will be exposed to literature, history, philosophy, art history and writing. Faculty from the University of Texas and Austin Community College teach the course. Students earn six college credits from ACC.

APPLICATION DEADLINE
for 2019-20: **JULY 8**
FreeMindsAustin.org

free minds
a program of Foundation Communities



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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.



Back to School DRIVE

JULY 22 - 26

BACKPACKS, PENCILS AND PAPER! OH MY!

Our Back to School Drive is being held on July 22-26. We will be collecting backpacks and much needed school supplies for students who participate in our after-school programs. Last year, with your generosity, we were able to provide backpacks and supplies to all 1,000 children!

DONATION DROP-OFF:

Friday July 26, 9 am - 5 pm
Community Financial Center
2600 West Stassney, 78745



SUMMER LEARNING, HAD ME A BLAST!

School's out! From June 17 to August 7, hundreds of students at our Learning Centers will enjoy seven weeks of hands-on experiential learning and summer enrichment. This year's theme is Venture Lab, in which kids will create a business idea culminating in a presentation, similar to "Shark Tank."

Students receive academic assistance, to prevent summer slide – the loss of key academic skills and knowledge. They have reading support and educational activities. There will also be physical activity, educational field trips and an Eco-Smarts course, which our Sustainability Department created.

SUMMERTIME AND THE VOLUNTEERING IS EASY

We are seeking volunteers who are excited to work and play with our energetic kiddos during the day, from 10 am until 3 pm. This is a great opportunity for older teens, college students and anyone who would enjoy working with our wonderful students.

Let's help our kids have a blast this summer!
foundcom.org/get-involved

