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# News

FOR EXTRAORDINARY MEMBERS

## A Message from Our Founder



Rebecca Powers

This is the time of year when I reflect on the past and look ahead to the future. Membership recruiting slows down in the first quarter, and the grant review process has settled into a nice rhythm. I am thankful for the 510 women who invested in our success for 2009--it's humbling and exciting at the same time. And, to think we have 137 members participating in the FAC (grant review) process! This is an unprecedented participation rate (27%) when compared to other collective giving organizations, and I believe the rate is high because the process is well-defined and our women in leadership positions take their roles seriously. My thanks to all of you!

This is also a time of growth and change in our organization--growth not so much in the number of members but in the sense of how we can serve each of you better and make the experience more meaningful. As an

## Discovery Day turnout tops 115

Speakers addressed the economy, educational challenges, affordable housing and more



*The large crowd showed great interest and appreciation for our line-up of well informed speakers.*

The room was a buzz as 119 women (and a few men) settled into their seats. For the next three hours, the crowd paid rapt attention as speakers representing each of our five grant categories gave us facts and information on the challenges present in our community. We learned from Jon Hockenyos, managing director at TXP, Inc., that economists predict the national economy will be flat well into 2009 and that less money from traditional philanthropic sources will be available beginning next fall. Dr. Jesus Chavez, superintendent of Round Rock ISD, gave us a picture of public schools and the growing enrollment of disadvantaged students (now around 25% in RRISD and AISD). At the same time, our growing elderly population will present enormous service challenges for local governments and non-profits, according to Glenda Rogers, director of the Capital Area Agency on Aging. Tied closely to changing population in our area is the need for affordable housing, and we learned from Heather Way, director of UT's Community Development Law Clinic, that an individual must earn a minimum of \$15 per hour to afford housing in Austin. And some 4,000 children are currently homeless or are in temporary homes in our area. Gloria Pennington, chair of the Austin Arts Commission, impressed upon us the importance of the arts not only to our quality of life, but to our local economy. Unfortunately, all of the art organizations in town are struggling-even the Long Center--due to the economy. And last but

all-volunteer organization, we count on our members to get the work done, and many of you have stepped up and given your time (sacrificially in many cases!) to take on the important work of making Impact Austin a respected funder in the community. This is an amazing feat when you consider the fact that no member has to volunteer, unless she has the time and inclination to do so.

On Thursday, March 12th, you will have the opportunity to attend Impact Austin's first Town Hall Meeting to talk about our successes, our challenges and what the future holds. Please make every effort to participate. (Time and location details are in the body of the newsletter.) While we don't expect every member to volunteer her time, we do want each member to be fully informed about our operations and our future vision for Impact Austin. The Town Hall Meeting will provide an opportunity for you to learn and ask questions. I look forward to building on our foundation of success together and hope to see you on March 12th!

### Upcoming Events

#### Board Interest Meeting

Monday, March 9  
7pm - 9pm  
Home of Debbie Johnson  
1200 Barton Creek Blvd.  
#7  
Austin, TX 78735

#### Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, March 12  
11:30am - 1:00pm  
or  
6:30pm - 8:00pm  
Congregation Agudas Achim  
Dell Jewish Community  
Campus  
7300 Hart Lane  
Austin, TX 78731

#### Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 9  
6:00pm - 9:00pm  
Congregation Agudas Achim

not least, we heard from Nan McRaven, a public affairs consultant, on an ambitious Greenprint project that is in progress now. The project has thus far identified 22,000 acres of high priority land in our area to acquire for conservation at an estimated cost of \$500 million.

Our speakers were so impressive that 88 attendees completed survey cards (a 74% response rate). Here's what we learned from your feedback:

1. Unanimous approval of the venue.
2. Attendees shared great suggestions for future topics and possible speakers. (i.e. foster care challenges, importance of early childhood education, need for mental health services for underserved, stemming childhood obesity)
3. Members really appreciated the overview of the philanthropic landscape given by Jon Hockenyos and want him to return and speak longer next year.
4. Future speakers should be sure to address two things:
  - What are the current pressing issues facing Central Texas in each focus area?
  - Where could a \$100,000 grant have the most impact in a specific focus area in Central Texas?

## Town Hall Meeting

Thursday, March 12

11:30am - 1pm\* or 6:30pm - 8pm\*

Congregation Agudas Achim  
Dell Jewish Community Campus  
7300 Hart Lane, Austin 78731

Please join Rebecca Powers and the Impact Austin Board of Directors for this very important meeting to learn:

- Summary of Dini Partners focus group results.
- Current governance and operational structures of our organization.
- Financial fitness of Impact Austin and plans for future sustainability.
- Q & A session.

This is your opportunity to understand more about Impact Austin-how we operate and what our priorities are. We hope to see you on March 12!

RSVP to [Kathy Gray](#) to reserve your spot now. Please indicate which session you plan to attend.

\* Lunch/appetizers will be served.

## Call for Board Candidates

As we build on the momentum we have gained as one of the most recognized grassroots philanthropic organizations in Central Texas, we are looking for interested and engaged women to help guide our organization to ensure our sustainability and commitment to our community. Members interested in serving on Impact Austin's Board of Directors are invited to attend an informational meeting at the home of board member, Debbie Johnson. Please note change in date and location.

Dell Jewish Community  
Campus  
7300 Hart Lane  
Austin, TX 78731

**Grant Recipient**  
**Check Presentations**  
Friday, June 12  
Time and location TBD

### Our Mission

We're a progressive leader in women's philanthropy, bringing new resources to the community and making philanthropy accessible. Through high-impact grant making, we engage, develop and inspire women to effect positive change.

### Our Vision

Our women are inspirational role models reaching their full giving potential for a better quality of life in our community.

### Our Values

**Transparency** - *We are an open book.*

**Excellence** - *We are thorough, professional and go above and beyond.*

**Inclusiveness** - *We are open to all women.*

**Democracy** - *Each member has an equal voice.*

**Integrity** - *We are honest and ethical.*

**Respect** - *We consider the impact of our words and actions on others.*

**Accountability** - *We say what we're going to do and we do it.*

**Innovation** - *We are creative, but prudent risk-takers.*

**Continuous improvement** - *Through feedback and other input, we are always improving.*

**When:** Monday, March 9, 7:00-9:00pm

**Where:** 1200 Barton Creek Boulevard #7, Austin, TX 78735

RSVP to [Meeta Kothare](#).

**If you cannot attend this session, but have an interest in serving on the Board, please send Meeta Kothare an email and she will be in touch with you.**

# The Three Faces of Grants

## Nonprofit Applicants:

We encourage all qualifying nonprofit organizations to apply for our grant funds by sharing our grant opportunity each fall through a listserve at the Center for Community Based and Nonprofit Organizations at ACC and via our own database of nonprofit organizations that have applied or shown interest in our grant opportunities in the past. After six years of using the same notification process, we are confident that we reach most, if not all, non-profits in Central Texas.

This year, 117 nonprofit organizations submitted Letters of Inquiry (LOI) to Impact Austin. These LOIs are short applications that give an overview of an organization's proposed plan for using a \$100,000 grant from Impact Austin. From these LOIs, the Focus Area Committees decide which program proposals merit further consideration. The list below shows the 30 nonprofit organizations that have been asked to submit a detailed grant application that is due at 6pm on Monday, February 23. If you want to learn more about the grant application process, please contact [Sarah Land](#).

## Culture

- Ballet East Dance Company
- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Austin Area
- Paramount and State Theatres
- Texas Folklife Resources
- The Writers' League of Texas
- Theatre Action Project

## Education

- GENaustin
- BookSpring
- Austin Children's Shelter
- UT/AmeriCorps for ACEE
- Girl Scouts of Central Texas
- Latinitas

## Environment

- Austin Carshare
- Austin Parks Foundation
- Travis Audubon Society
- Wildlife Rescue Inc.
- Youth Launch

## Family

- Austin Child Guidance Center
- Ventana Del Soul
- Family Connections
- Capital IDEA
- CASA of Travis County
- Partnerships for Children

## Health & Wellness

- Any Baby Can of Austin
- Austin Groups for the Elderly

- LifeWorks
- Mobile Loaves & Fishes
- Peoples Community Clinic
- Planned Parenthood of the Texas Capital Region
- Sustainable Food Center

**Focus Area Committees (FACs):**

FACs are the teams responsible for evaluating non-profit organization Letters of Inquiry and Grant Applications - and choosing the finalists our members vote on to receive funding. This year, 137 talented women are giving their time and energy to the FAC process. Of this number approximately 35% are first year Impact Austin members and 7% are returning members who are participating on an FAC for the first time. We welcome and thank our new FAC members as well as returning members who share their knowlege and expertise each year - both new perspectives and seasoned experience are important to the FAC process. FAC meetings began the week of January 11. FACs will conclude their work the week of May 3 as each committee selects two finalists for members to vote on at the Annual Meeting on June 9. If you want to learn more about the FAC process, contact [Nancy Sutherland](#).

**Grantee Relations:**

Did you ever wonder what happens when the excitement of the FAC process and the Annual Meeting dies down? When the check presentation ceremony ends on June 12, that's when the work of the Grantee Relations Committee starts. Our job is to manage the relationships with all of the Impact Austin grantees, from getting their funds delivered to them at the right time to receiving reports on the progress of their projects. Women on the committee act as liaisons to the grantees, meeting with them at regular intervals to check on their achievement of the grant goals, troubleshooting any issues that may arise, and providing support in any appropriate way. If you want to know more about grantee relations, contact [Sarah Swords](#).

## Personal impact

### Sonya Apodaca's experience with Impact Austin



I started a Masters program years ago in another state but got sidetracked when we moved to Texas for my husband's job. More than a decade zoomed by, and three years ago I found myself facing a career change. I had lost track of what it was I wanted to be when I grew up and was in a "seeking" stage of life. Around that time, a

friend told me about Impact Austin. I joined, signed up for committee work, and met many awesome women who are motivated, down to earth, intelligent role models. Just being part of such an empowered group of inspirational women motivated me to get back on track with life goals that had fallen by the wayside, including graduate school. It is somewhat poetic that Impact Austin, which enables women to make a positive and significant impact in our community by providing grants to non-profit organizations, also helped put me back on track toward my life goal of making a positive and significant impact on society. I am now majoring in Human Services at St. Edward's University, and I hope to soon make helping others my full-time career.

*If Impact Austin has inspired you to do something positive, please share your stories with us by emailing them to [Cathy Cabrera](mailto:Cathy.Cabrera). We will publish these in upcoming newsletters.*

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