

CENTRO URBANO

TODO Austin
VOLUME II, NUMBER 03

Publisher/Editor - Gavin Lance Garcia
contact@todoaustinonline.com

Art Director - Dave McClinton
www.dmdesigninc.com

Executive Editor - Erica Stall Wiggins

Senior Editor - Katie Walsh

Associate Editors: Brandon Ramiro Badillo, Mindy Heredia, Alexandra M. Landeros, Blake Shanley

Contributing Writers/Artists: Joseph Banks, Stefanie Behe, Deborah Alys Carter, Jennie Chen, Adrienne Clements, Harish Kotecha, Callie Langford, Julia Lee, David Marks, Brooke Maudlin, Smitha Murphy, Tom Palaima, Mary Parsamyan, Marion Sanchez, Kristina Vallejo, Kuetzpalin Vasquez, Priya Vijayaraghavan, Yvonne Lim Wilson, Kenneth Yen

Photographers:
Heather Banks, Mark Guerra, JoJo Marion, Maverick Shaw, Mohan Sridharan, Julia Walsh, Aimee Wenske, Matt Ziehr

ADVERTISING:
Kathleen Ginest, 512.669.3942;
or sales@todoaustinonline.com

TODO Austin is published by Spark Awakened Publishing. © 2010 Spark Awakened Publishing. All rights reserved. Unsolicited submissions (including, but not limited to articles, artwork, photographs) are not returned.

ON THE COVER:
Fusion, by Aimee Wenske
Food styling by Kathy Phan

Visit us at
TODOAustinOnline.com

Join us at **TODO Austin**
Multicultural Media for All of Austin

TODO Austin is a free, colorful print and online journal for all of Austin highlighting our multicultural heritage. Our mission is to promote the concept of community in an ethnically diverse city.

TODO Austin's content closely mirrors the changing demographics of Austin.

TODO Austin provides a platform that profiles Hispanic, Anglo, Asian, African American and other individuals, groups and organizations that are representing a positive vision in the community.

WRITE TO US
with stories, submissions, etc.:
Contact@TODOaustinonline.com
Editorial – 512.538.4115

El Buen Samaritano Receives Dell Foundation Grant to Promote Health Education

By Mindy Heredia

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation recently awarded a grant of \$210,000 to El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission of Austin to sustain the services provided by the mission for uninsured children and families. The money awarded will enable El Buen Samaritano to focus on promoting pediatric health through preventative methods, as well as family-based health education programs. From its inception in 1987, El Buen Samaritano has aimed to provide a "hand-up, not a hand-out" to struggling Hispanic families in need. The non-profit organization has been successful in providing services such as healthcare, job readiness skills, health education, emergency food assistance, social services and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. Al Perez, Director of Health Services at the Wallace Mallory Clinic, says that although Austin may rank as one of the healthiest cities in the United States, most Latino families, unfortunately, do not fit this role. According to research paid for by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 35%

of children from low-income homes are either overweight or obese. "Most experts believe that changes must start in a child's home life," Perez explains. Along with health education, El Buen Samaritano offers nutrition, cooking and exercise classes to promote healthy lifestyles and ultimately transform old habits. "The Health, Wellness and Disease Prevention programs have played a very important role for local Hispanic families that are at a higher risk for a variety of health issues," explained Dr. Aliya Hussaini, head of the health portfolio at the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. "We are honored to continue our work with El Buen Samaritano," Hussaini said. With the help of the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, El Buen Samaritano hopes to reach out to more than 1,300 children to "transform lives by engaging the strengths of working-poor Hispanic families to promote their successful participation in society."

FROM THE PLAZA

Impact Austin Awards Grants to Five Local Non-Profits

Impact Austin, an organization of women who aim to make positive changes in the community, awarded five grants on June 14 to CASA of Travis County, Badgerdog Literary Publishing, Communities in Schools in Central Texas, Austin Parks Foundation and Austin Groups for the Elderly. Donations from 525 members this year enabled the group to award this year's recipients a total of \$105,000. Impact Austin reviews proposals based on categories including culture, education, environment, family and health and wellness. Awards were presented to the selected organizations on June 14th.

Homeless Residents May Have a New Place to Call Home

In late June, Austin City Council began its consideration of a resolution to provide land to Mobile Loaves and Fishes. The organization, founded in Austin in 1998, provides food, clothing and shelter to homeless individuals in Austin. Currently, the organization owns 45 gently-used, fully-furnished RVs serving as homes for homeless residents. The non-profit organization hopes ultimately to house more of the growing homeless population with the new land. Some nearby residents have expressed reservations about the issue, stating that they are uncomfortable with having former homeless individuals living among their children. Nevertheless, developers argue that the park is in need of a new location. Mobile Loaves will spend over \$5 million to purchase trailers to be spread out around 14-15 acres near the Austin Bergstrom Airport, provided the city pays for the land.



AISD to "Repurpose" Reagan, Pearce

The Austin school board approved in late May a repurposing plan for Reagan High School and Pearce Middle School, two East Austin schools with histories of underperforming. A.I.S.D. Superintendent Meria Carstarphen said that preliminary TAKS test scores have indicated that the schools will rise out of the academically unacceptable category. In the event that the test scores lead the Texas Education Agency to recommend the closings of Reagan and Pearce, Carstarphen recommended to the board, and received approval, for repurposing plans that will provide students early college preparation instruction. The TEA ratings will arrive in the first weeks of August.

Margaret Shaw Dismissed from City Housing Department

In the days following last month's story by **TODO Austin** Senior Editor Katie Walsh discussing the City of Austin's municipal accountability issues within the department of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD), City Manager Marc Ott dismissed Margaret Shaw as NHCD's director, reassigning her as the senior program manager of the Economic Growth department. While an Austin American-Statesman story claims "there were no obvious signs of discontent with Shaw's work" leading up to the decision, the Texas Housers reported that "signs of trouble for Shaw have been evident to observers for several months." NHCD Assistant Director Betsy Spencer temporarily succeeds Shaw as acting director of the department.

Bank on Central Texas Helps Low-income Families

By Mindy Heredia

In early June, the United Way Capital Area launched Bank on Central Texas, a program offering financial education classes geared at helping low income families and individuals open bank accounts. Several financial institutions will participate in the program, eliminating hassle by accepting alternate forms of identification such as the Mexican Matricula card, and providing free or low-cost accounts. Those worried about past delinquent bank history need not fear. In fact, the banks will work with everyone to offer a painless process.

United Way Capital Area strives to empower the lives of people in Central Texas by helping them better their quality of life. According to Emily DeMaria, Vice President of Community Development at United Way Capital Area, too many individuals are losing out on their hard-earned money, spending between \$230 and \$918 dollars yearly just cashing their paychecks. DeMaria explained, "the Bank on Central Texas program will save them money, help them manage their finances and ensure the safety of their hard-earned dollars." For information on participating bank locations, visit www.bankoncentraltexas.org.

New Rec Center Planned for East Austin

By Mindy Heredia

East Austin residents may soon have a new place to satisfy all of their health and leisure needs. The Central Texas Sports Alliance plans to build an indoor/outdoor recreational facility between 51st Street and Manor Road just off of Springdale in the near future. The proposed \$10.5 million project aims to bring over \$2 million in annual revenue, as well as an increase in employment opportunities. The multi-use sports complex will feature several activities, including rock climbing, soccer, basketball, volleyball and an indoor, air conditioned walking track. The facility, to be named Central Texas Sportsplex Champion Center, will also be home to office space, retail shops, restaurants and meeting rooms. According to The Austin Times, the sportsplex has been guaranteed \$10 million in New Market Tax Credits, a program providing capital investment for businesses in low-income communities. Developers and local residents feel this section of Austin is in need of such a center to create positive economic impact and provide a safe place for at-risk youth in the area.