



For Immediate Release:
November 29, 2018

St. David's Foundation Announces **Health Starts at Home** Grants

Grants totaling \$2.6 million are being awarded to twelve area nonprofits to improve the health and self-sufficiency of affordable housing residents

Statement from Austin Mayor Steve Adler:

"When it comes to the affordability challenge, our community is making progress. Too often, as Austin has grown, families are forced to choose between affordability and opportunity. With the Health Starts at Home grants, St. David's Foundation is helping to show that we can develop creative solutions to the affordability challenge. For our city to thrive, we need to ensure opportunity and affordability can co-exist."

AUSTIN – Taylor Hamilton was placed in the foster care system and moved between four placements until she was adopted at the age of six. At age 17, she ran away from home. Taylor fell into homelessness and would sometimes sleep in a tent in the woods in east Austin.

With no employment, no high school diploma, and in need of mental health services to address previous childhood trauma, Taylor faced a difficult future.

Taylor's odds changed when she connected with Austin's **LifeWorks**, an agency that aids youth experiencing homelessness, including youth who have "aged out" of the foster care system. By providing temporary housing, workforce specialists, high school equivalency programs and mental health services, LifeWorks helps to keep youth and young adults off the streets and directed toward a brighter future.

Taylor is living on her own in permanent housing and is working at a full-time job as a coffee barista.

Now, with a grant from St. David's Foundation, more formerly foster youth like Taylor will receive the guidance and assistance needed to become successful adults. LifeWorks and eleven other area nonprofits who aid low-income families and individuals are receiving *Health Starts at Home* grants from St. David's Foundation, totaling \$2.6 million. This slate of grants is designed to help residents of affordable housing achieve greater health and self-sufficiency.

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The Foundation has awarded \$300,000 to LifeWorks to assist previously homeless transition-aged youth in achieving housing stability and economic mobility.

“We’re delighted to receive this grant from St. David’s Foundation to allow us to better serve young adults who have struggled with homelessness. For Taylor and so many others like her, it’s a chance to start on the road to a successful life as an independent adult,” said **Susan McDowell, Executive Director of LifeWorks.**

“While the connection between safe, stable, and affordable housing and health is well-established, less well understood are the factors and approaches critical to making housing a platform for health. Our goal in this initiative is to create a space to test ideas around the importance of social connection, resident voice and community design in developing on-site services and supports for residents of affordable housing,” said **Kim McPherson, Senior Program Officer, St. David’s Foundation.**

Health Starts at Home grants include:

*The Housing Authority of the City of Austin receives a \$315,000 grant to provide community health workers in an urgent wellness model at one HACA property.

*The Economic Growth Business Incubator receives a grant of \$130,000 to pilot an entrepreneurial approach to band HACA residents together to develop businesses for selling crafts locally and online at four HACA sites.

*A \$220,000 grant to Mobile Loaves and Fishes will allow them to expand the resident care team at Community First Village.

*Bluebonnet Mental Health Center in Williamson county receives \$100,000 to develop resident leadership in affordable housing communities in Granger and Taylor.

*A \$320,000 grant to Front Steps Inc. will provide wraparound supports to 150-200 residents living at the Palms apartment complex.

*\$292,000 has been awarded to St. Louise House to provide previously homeless low-income women-led families with affordable housing and wraparound services.

*Williamson county’s Camp Fire Central Texas organization will use a \$200,000 grant to provide families in the Taylor Square Apartments with three pilot programs to address childhood adversity and to provide housing supports.

*Integral Care is offered a grant of \$100,000 to test models to increase social connection and community participation for adults with behavioral health needs.

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*Jeremiah Program will use a grant of \$175,000 to provide support to empower single low-income mothers to pursue post-secondary education, while preparing their children for success with quality early childhood education.

*The UT School of Social Work will receive a \$245,000 grant to create a prototype of a healthy community (thinkEast) co-designed by early residents recruited from the affordable housing waitlist.

*Bastrop's Family Crisis Center receives a grant of \$189,000 to augment existing transitional housing with services to improve a sense of community.

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About St. David's Foundation:

St. David's Foundation is one of the largest health foundations in the United States, funding more than \$70 million annually in a five-county area surrounding Austin, Texas. Through a unique partnership with St. David's HealthCare, a Malcolm Baldrige award-winning hospital system in Central Texas, the Foundation reinvests proceeds from the hospital system back into the community, with a goal of building the healthiest community in the world. St. David's Foundation also operates the largest mobile dental program providing charity care in the country, and runs the largest healthcare scholarship program in Texas.

The foundation's strategic priorities include:

- Providing Central Texans with the **healthiest care** in the world,
- Creating the **healthiest places** for Central Texans to live, and
- Helping Central Texans become the **healthiest people** they can be.

Learn more about St. David's Foundation at www.stdavidsfoundation.org.

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