



Caritas of Austin IMPACT REPORT

A Young Family Rebuilds After Loss



One day LaRonda was a regular high school senior, and the next, she was the sole provider of her family and responsible for taking care of her younger brother, Randy, and sister, Patty. Two years ago, the kids' mother died suddenly of a heart attack.

Not only were they devastated by the loss of their mom, but the three siblings had no stable support system during this overwhelming time. Because LaRonda was 18 years old and considered a legal adult, she was able to take guardianship of her siblings and prevent them from going into the foster care system. They bounced around between staying with family, at a youth shelter, and in a transitional apartment.

"I didn't know if I could graduate from high school," said LaRonda. "I went from caring only about myself to putting my brother and sister first. I had to make sure the bills were paid." LaRonda did graduate from high school and began working for a local school district. "I had to be motivated and learn how to survive on my own."

When their rent increased dramatically due to LaRonda's increased income, they could no longer afford to stay in their apartment and were on the brink of eviction. LaRonda's younger sister Patty was attending a local high school where Caritas of Austin has an onsite social worker who learned about the family's situation. Caritas' services focused on homelessness prevention were a fit for what LaRonda's family needed.

Caritas of Austin was able to pay for a hotel for the three siblings to prevent them from having to stay at a shelter while they worked to find stable housing. Within two weeks, an apartment was secured that LaRonda could afford with her monthly income. "It's been amazing how fast Caritas has helped with everything." **Read more on page 3**

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7th Annual Words of Hope Dinner with featured speaker Marcus Luttrell



On September 25th, Caritas of Austin hosted its 7th Annual Words of Hope Dinner at the Hyatt Regency Austin. The theme of this year's event was *Stories of Survival*, which reflects the resilience of all families and individuals served by Caritas, including U.S. veterans.

U.S. Navy SEAL and author of *Lone Survivor* Marcus Luttrell was this year's featured speaker, and he shared his own story of surviving Operation Redwing. More than **600 guests** were in attendance, and over **\$220,000** was raised to support Caritas' services to prevent and end homelessness in Austin. Thank you to all who supported this event!



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Family Rebuilds After Loss - Continued

Her case manager's support did not stop there. Caritas was able to help provide basic furniture for the family and give LaRonda guidance on connecting to important resources for her siblings. "I knew nothing about taking kids to the doctor or enrolling them in school. Other places I tried to get help, people just told me what I needed to do. Caritas actually helped me do all the things I needed to do," said LaRonda.

The family's resilience is remarkable. "Things were especially rough for Randy. He was too young to understand what was happening, but he is finally able to talk about it now," LaRonda said. She proudly talked about how well Randy is doing in school.

"Other places I tried to get help, people just told me what I needed to do. Caritas actually helped me do all the things I needed to do."

Caritas' support is especially significant to LaRonda because she remembers years ago when her mom received assistance from Caritas of Austin: "Caritas helped my mom a few years ago. It's really cool how you work with each family's individual situation." LaRonda is working toward a promotion at work, and Patty will graduate from high school next year. She said her ultimate goal is to own a house of their own someday. These accomplishments and goals would not be possible without your support!

National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week FOOD DRIVE CHALLENGE!

National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week is **November 15-23**, and we are challenging you to help us stock the Caritas Pantry! Did you know we distribute over 1,800 pounds of food to families and individuals every week? Our Pantry provides enough groceries for **43,000 meals each year**, and the majority comes from donations (like the ones you're going to collect!).

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

- 1. Reach out to your friends, family, co-workers, or other groups and organize a food drive - big or small!**
- 2. Let Caritas know. Email Grace Alrutz at galrutz@caritasofaustin.org. We can send you our full Wish List and even drop off collection barrels for your drive.**
- 3. Collect Pantry donation items any time between now and November 23.**
- 4. Drop off donations at Caritas during Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week (November 15-23) or coordinate a pick-up with Caritas staff.**

TOP PANTRY NEEDS

Cooking oil
Canned chicken
Canned salmon
Canned fruit cocktail
Canned pears
Canned chili
Canned soups
Salt
Toothpaste
Deodorant

Visit caritasofaustin.org for full list!



OUR MISSION

Caritas of Austin provides a service continuum for those experiencing poverty that begins with a safety net and links them to resources to achieve self-sufficiency.

OUR VISION

We envision a community where there is respect for all individuals, hope for those experiencing poverty, and opportunities for self-reliance.

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Read inside about the lives being changed because of your support!

Caritas of Austin

23rd Annual Harvey Penick Award Luncheon



HONORING

Frank Denius



FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE GAME OF LIFE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12
11:30AM - 1:00PM
WESTWOOD COUNTRY CLUB

TICKETS AND TABLES AVAILABLE NOW
AT WWW.CARITASOFAUSTIN.ORG



2014 ThunderCloud Subs Turkey Trot benefiting Caritas of Austin

Austin's favorite Thanksgiving tradition is just around the corner! Last year, we had more than 20,000 participants and over 600 volunteers! Since 1991, the ThunderCloud Subs Turkey Trot has raised over \$2.1 million for Caritas of Austin.

Register or sign up to volunteer at:
thundercloud.com/turkey-trot



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