



Caritas of Austin IMPACT REPORT

A Single Mom Finds Stability Again



Lashanya, a single mother, has lived in Austin her entire life. And until last year, she had never known anything other than stability. “I always had a steady job and lived in the same apartment for nearly eight years,” she said.

Pregnant with her son, Aiden, last summer, Lashanya was employed through a temporary staffing agency. She was put on bed rest when she was around seven months pregnant due to high blood pressure and was unable to work for the remaining two months of her pregnancy.

With no income, Lashanya and her children became homeless and spent the next seven months bouncing around staying with family members and sleeping in her car. She remembers the cold, rainy nights being the hardest. Lashanya continued having health issues after she gave birth, which delayed her ability to find work again. She had no one to turn to for support.

Someone finally mentioned Caritas’ housing programs that assist people experiencing homelessness. Desperate to end her instability, she called for help. “It was such a good feeling to hear from Rachel, who became my Caritas case manager. She is amazing. From the moment I first spoke with her, I felt like I wasn’t even homeless anymore. She gave me hope that everything was going to be okay.”

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Thanks to a strong relationship with a local landlord who believes in Caritas’ work, the landlord mentioned having a home available for rent that would meet Lashanya and her family’s needs. Within just a few weeks, they moved in.

“Being able to have a home that we can call our own felt so good,” said Lashanya. “The kids were so excited they wanted to miss school on the day we moved in! They didn’t even care that we had no furniture yet; they just loved running around in the house.” ***Story continued on page 3***

8th Annual Words of Hope Recap

Over **1,400 sponsors and attendees** were present at ACL Live at The Moody Theater to help raise a **record-breaking \$323,000** at Caritas of Austin's 8th Annual Words of Hope Dinner on September 10.

Radio personality Bobby Bones served as the featured speaker along with a special performance by his band, The Raging Idiots. Bobby shared personal life stories about growing up in poverty and the struggles he overcame to get where he is today:

"I wouldn't be standing here today if it wasn't for organizations like Caritas... We all need second chances. Sometimes we need a second chance to have a roof over our head... Sometimes we need a second chance to eat. Everyone deserves a second chance."

Caritas of Austin Executive Director Jo Kathryn Quinn added:

"Bobby's story represents the struggles of so many of the families we serve. They are the true face of poverty and homelessness in our community. Bobby's resilience and commitment to give back to those in need are inspiring for us all."

The evening also featured a live **'Fund The Mission'** auction where attendees had the opportunity to help underwrite various programs and services provided by Caritas of Austin. **Over \$85,000 was raised in just 15 minutes** during this portion of the evening.

"My life didn't become homelessness and constant struggle thanks to Caritas. We get to be a family unit because of Caritas. The burden that was so heavy has been lifted, and we can actually live," said former client, Sonia, during Fund The Mission.

Thank you again to our 2015 lead sponsors: **John and Waleska Lavorato, Stratus Properties, Texas Capital Bank, First Texas Honda, Alori Properties,** and **Silicon Labs**, and to all who supported this year's event!



Family Finds Stability - *Continued*

With your support, Caritas was able to provide the family with household furniture for the home. Rachel also helped Lashanya get groceries from the Caritas Pantry and connected her to important mental health services.

Most importantly, Lashanya now had the stability needed to seek employment. She recently found a job and is on the path to self-sufficiency. "I am so excited to work again," she said. "I am ready to be the parent that can do all the things I want for my children."



Lashanya has a hard time even thinking back on how much they have struggled over the past year. "The hardest part was not knowing where we were going to sleep each night."

She can't express enough gratitude for Caritas' help during her time of greatest need. "This program helps you become the person you were before, and that's priceless." Because of you, Lashanya is now looking toward the future with hope. Over the next year, her biggest goal is to maintain stability and happiness for her family. Thank you for empowering families like Lashanya's toward self-sufficiency!



2015 Food Drive Challenge

Caritas of Austin's Food Drive Challenge is back again this year! Last year, generous supporters like you helped contribute **15,815 pounds** of food and hygiene items around Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week, which is November 14-22 this year. That's enough to provide **3,954 meals!**

How Do I Participate in the Food Drive Challenge?

It's easy - you can collect food items with friends, family, co-workers, or other groups. Big or small, all donations help!

Sign up on our website, set a goal, promote your food drive, and start collecting items from our Pantry Wish List. Our full Pantry Wish List can be found at www.caritasofaustin.org.

Our most needed items:

Tomato Sauce • Canned Beets • Cooking Oil • Canned Mixed Fruit • Canned Pineapple
Peanut Butter • Salt • Deodorant • Shampoo and Conditioner

To participate in the Food Drive Challenge or to learn more, contact **Grace Alrutz** at galrutz@caritasofaustin.org.

ABOUT US

Caritas of Austin supports people on their journey out of crisis toward self-sufficiency through housing, food, education, and employment services. Each year, our services intersect with thousands of individuals and families to help empower people toward the life they want.

OUR VISION

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

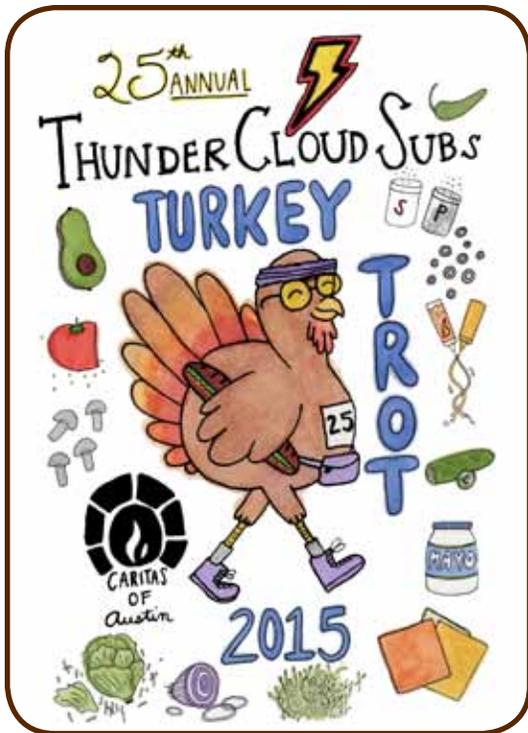
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Read inside about the lives being changed because of your support!



25th Annual ThunderCloud Subs Turkey Trot

Austin's favorite Thanksgiving Day tradition is just around the corner! Join in celebrating 25 years of this great event, which has raised a total of \$2.5 million to support Caritas of Austin's work in the community.

VOLUNTEER

There are over **500 volunteer slots** to help with packet pick-up, registration, and event set up and clean up. Sign up at caritasofaustin.org!

RUN / WALK

Join over 20,000 participants and sign up for the **5-mile run**, **1-mile walk**, or **Kids K**. Be sure to sign up in October before prices increase at thundercloud.com!

FUNDRAISE

Raise money for Caritas of Austin as part of ThunderCloud Subs Turkey Trot registration, and you'll be eligible for **special apparel** and **prize packages**!

RAFFLE

First Texas Honda presents the ThunderCloud Subs Turkey Trot raffle, and you can win a **NEW Honda Accord**! Tickets: **1/\$25** or **5/\$100** at thundercloud.com.



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