

THANK YOU



RecognizeGood[®] NEWS

2014 Legends Class Completed

From: *John*

... to **my wife** for always inspiring me to be a nicer person.

From: *Suleica*

... to my wonderful family!

From: *Lupita*

... to **Maria** for the wise words when I started working for you: "Don't be scared and do it." Gracias Maria!

From: *Sally*

... to **John** for blessing us - you don't know how much it means to me.

From: *Ronniece*

... to **Keith**, my mentor. I look forward to much more learning - thank you for giving me this opportunity.

From: *Matt*

... to **my parents** for teaching me to go after my dreams and get them!

From: *Maria*

... **Yolanda** - quiero darte las gracias por ser la persona más buena onda. Dios te dio un corazón de oro. Te quiero muchísimo y que Dios te bendiga siempre.

From: *Anonymous*

... to my **beautiful and amazing wife** for thirty years of making me a better person.

From: *Anonymous*

... **Will Jefts** - keep up the great work for the Go Mitch Go Foundation!



The Class of 2014 RecognizeGood Legend award winners was finalized in November, as **Joseph de Leon** of Keep Austin Fed was presented with the final award of the year, along with a \$1,000 pay-it-forward donation, in a ceremony held at Threadgill's in south Austin.

Once Joseph first began volunteering with Keep Austin Fed (KAF), he quickly became hooked. The organization's mission was simple: rescue healthy surplus food from area restaurants and get it to hungry neighbors in need. After all, one out of every seven people in Austin is hungry. But Joseph took KAF to the next level, says founder Randy Rosens. "Joseph was instrumental in raising us from a few people saving a little food into a bona fide Food Rescue Movement." Under Joseph's leadership, KAF currently saves over 11,000 meals each week.

Donors like Whole Foods, Snap Kitchen, My Fit Foods, Tacodeli, and Trader Joe's all contribute to the food rescue movement launched by Keep Austin Fed and championed by Joseph and over 225

registered volunteers. Recipients include Easter Seals, SafePlace, Foundation Communities, Caritas, and many others.

"Feeding every hungry person feels like such an impossible problem," said Joseph at his presentation ceremony, "But if you look at the impact that we've had in this short time, those things are doable."

Success stories like 1200 meals rescued in June 2014, or the rescue of 10,000 pounds of food from Whole Foods' Gateway store in one hour, have earned Keep Austin Fed a reputation around town. "This food would have otherwise ended up in a dumpster," says Rosens. "Now it feeds our hungry neighbors. Joseph is a leader in our community's commitment to change for the better. He makes Austin a better city – he changes the lives of thousands of people every week. I am now proud to call him my friend. He is a hero!"

Ethics in Business & Community

In 2014, more and more Austin organizations have supported the Ethics in Business & Community movement, and the idea that **doing the right thing is good business**. 2015 award nominees had the opportunity to find out more about the program, ask questions and receive feedback at the EiBC nomination seminar, held at City Hall.

Andrew Cooper spoke to the group about the importance of the award, followed by a detailed overview of the nomination process by Dr. Lynette Gillis of Concordia University. A special thanks to EiBC Director Scholley Bubenik for coordinating such a successful event!

A new program called Ethics in Youth Education also launched, with an initial presentation to students at McNeil High School. This program focuses on teaching students about the importance of ethics in the business community they are preparing to join. The program will provide an ethics certification for future employers to see on the students' resumé. Stay tuned!



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Legends For Life Updates



Steve & Tracey Brown

The Austin Miracle League, a baseball league launched by 2013 Legends Steve and Tracey Brown for children with special needs, kicked off their fall season in September with record numbers of both players and volunteers. Steve and Tracey finished first in the 2014 Say Thanks, Austin campaign and used the \$10,000 pay-it-forward donation to ease the operational costs of running the league, which now has over 550 players and volunteers.

Steve Barclay

Steve, a 2011 Legend, was honored for his amazing dedication to donating blood through the Blood & Tissue Center of Central Texas. At the time of his presentation, Steve had donated an unbelievable 30 gallons of blood over many, many years - and he didn't stop there. In 2014 Steve passed the 40-gallon benchmark, showing no signs of slowing down. Thank you to Steve for showing us what dedication truly looks like!



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Recent RecognizeGood® Legends



For many years, **Terri Sue Bettis** has served her Leander community in roles ranging from volunteer to leader, from homeschool teacher to board member to director. Throughout it all, one thing has remained the same – her strong belief that she is called to serve her neighbors. Led by Terri Sue for the past three years, the Brighter Days Food Pantry has served an estimated 195,000 meals to over 34,000 people – in a town of less than 30,000 people.

“Terri is a master at empowering people and providing them the tools they need to succeed,” says Ezra Bettis, Terri Sue’s proud husband and a deacon at Leander Church of Christ. Ezra remembers when the church first launched the food pantry, recalling, “There were only a handful of volunteers. As Terri Sue’s vision grew along with the need, many people were caught up in her vision.”

\$1,000 was donated to **Brighter Days Food Pantry** in Terri Sue’s name.

WOW!

Terri Sue has helped serve over 195,000 meals to more than 34,000 people.



When **Tressie Seegers** first incorporated art and music into a life skills class serving high school-age students with developmental disabilities, she noticed something – the students’ behavior improved, self-esteem increased, and perhaps most significantly, their talents were recognized and encouraged. From that point forward, she worked to build an organization, now known as the Austin Harmony Project, enriching lives through art, music and a sense of community. Behind Tressie’s entrepreneurial spirit, these young men and women now perform regularly as members of the Sweet Harmony Band, delighting parents, supporters and each other as they sing and dance along with some of Austin’s most popular professional musicians.

“As a parent of a 21-year-old with intellectual disabilities who has been with her since the beginning, I am in constant admiration of her determination in accomplishing her mission,” says Austin Harmony Project board president Pat Alvarez.

\$1,000 was donated to **The Austin Harmony Project** in Tressie’s name.

WOW!

Tressie helps bring students with special needs to the stage; building their self-confidence as they perform with professional musicians.



In 2009, Wiley Middle School registrar **Karen Faulkner** saw that several children in her school district were eating little to nothing on the weekends, and decided to do something about it. She began to organize and gather food to be sent home in backpacks to children on the school’s free and reduced lunch program, starting small with just a handful of backpacks. Over the past five years, the program has blossomed into what is now called Student Charities – and has sent home over 22,000 backpacks.

“Some people see someone that is hungry and they think, ‘That is so sad,’” says Student Charities volunteer Kathy Groom. “Karen Faulkner is the kind of person that sees hungry people and gives them her food. That is her passion – helping others and trying to ease their burdens. Her legacy is making life a little bit better for so many in our community.”

\$1,000 was donated to **Student Charities** in Karen’s name.

WOW!

Karen has sent out over 22,000 backpacks filled with food to families in need.



Board Updates



John Bosch, Jr.

Co-Founder & President
RecognizeGood®

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Did you look for the GOOD in our community today? I'm regularly asked how our RecognizeGood organization find the incredible individuals who become our Legends. The answer to this question is somewhat remarkable, but my response is always short and simple: if you look for the GOOD in our communities, you are certain to find it - not only as an isolated incident, but in bunches. There are acts of kindness and generosity happening all the time, creating future Legends in just about any place in our community you can imagine.

Many times, individuals who give their heart and hard work are humble individuals who do not seek the spotlight. It's true that issues of fear and concern, issues that threaten us or our families, often dominate the airwaves and attempt to block the light and illumination that comes from doing GOOD. However, it is an absolute truism that if you are able to focus on the GOOD that surrounds you, it

About Us

We are a local nonprofit that provides a means for individuals, businesses and other nonprofits to illuminate selfless volunteers, charitable acts and community service throughout the greater Austin area. Our mission is to elevate the spirit of community by catalyzing a movement of good deeds and unselfish charity through recognizing, rewarding and promoting good in our businesses and the communities in which they reside. RecognizeGood® has several active programs that work toward this mission from different angles, but the common theme is simple – illuminating GOOD in our community and encouraging others to contribute.

There's plenty of good happening all around us, right here in the Austin area - all you have to do is shine a light! Go out of your way to say thank you to a courteous driver, salute the volunteerism of a co-worker or give kudos to a local business for their corporate citizenship. Opportunities to show both large and small acts of gratitude are endless, but by making your thank you public at recognizegood.org you have the chance to inspire others. To learn more about us and our programs, log on to recognizegood.org, sign up for our e-mail newsletter or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest or Instagram.

Recognizing good in your daily life is easy and only costs a few moments of your time – help us illuminate the GOOD in our community by joining our “Community Reporters” and reporting the GOOD you see at recognizegood.org.

is guaranteed to change your life in a positive way. First, you will be humbled by the effort and energy contributed by others. Searching for GOOD will, in short order, become addictive. You will find yourself needing to feel the warmth generated by acts of kindness. The more GOOD you absorb, the more likely you are to disregard an unkind act or negativity that may come your way.

The bottom line? The longer you can stay focused on GOOD, the shorter your emotional down times become. By this self-direction, you can not only enhance your life, but it can become contagious to friends, family, and co-workers. Heck, you may be inspired to commit a random act of kindness for a complete stranger! Publicly recognizing Good in your daily life via RecognizeGood.org not only honors and acknowledges the recipient, but also inspires and encourages others to join in.

In closing, there is something new at RecognizeGood - when someone says THANK YOU for your generosity, the proper RecognizeGood response is YOU'RE WELCOME. So THANK YOU for taking your valuable time to read this edition of the RecognizeGood Newsletter. And your response is ...



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