



*Beth Atherton, Executive Director of Caritas, City Council Member Sheryl Cole and Jo Kathryn Quinn, Director of Housing Services for Caritas of Austin.*



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **TEXAS HOMELESS NETWORK ANNOUNCES TWO MAJOR AWARDS GIVEN TO AUSTINITES... CITY COUNCIL MEMBER SHERYL COLE AND CARITAS HOUSING DIRECTOR JO KATHRYN QUINN**

Texas Homeless Network (THN) is a non-profit membership-based organization helping Texas communities end homelessness. THN's mission is to provide solutions to end homelessness in Texas communities through education, resources and advocacy.

Each year, THN conducts an annual conference in the state of Texas to provide a forum for homeless service providers, educators, community leaders and government officials to network and gain information on how to better serve the homeless population in their community. Improving homeless services in Texas communities benefits the entire state.

This week, during the conference, two prestigious awards were given to Austin City Council Member Sheryl Cole and to Caritas Housing Services Director Jo Kathryn Quinn.

City Council Member Sheryl Cole was awarded the Outstanding Community Service Award. This award recognizes an individual who has advanced policies that affect the homeless population or created innovative solutions to homelessness in their community.

Caritas nominated City Council member Sheryl Cole because of her vision to make permanent supportive housing a priority in our city. Cole was a risk-taker—she used her leadership and collaborative skills to bring together what are often disparate interests in Austin—homeless advocates and the downtown business community. Most impressive is her willingness to meet with anyone who is a stakeholder for this issue regardless of existing differences and conflicts.

Council Member Cole is an unprecedented voice at the council table that encourages and demands that the Austin community look beyond the surface issues of homelessness. Sheryl Cole's leadership was pivotal in the Austin City Council's passage of a resolution that gives priority to funding for permanent supportive housing that targets the most vulnerable populations, those residents with annual income at or below 30% Median Family Income (MFI). This is the first time in the City's history that the City Council has established a funding priority for this population.

Council Member Cole is the first African American woman elected to the Austin City Council. First elected in May, 2006 and re-elected in 2009, Council Member Cole is a mother, an attorney, and a Certified Public Accountant.

“Sheryl is a public champion for the most vulnerable citizens of our community—the homeless. As more permanent supportive housing becomes available to this population in Austin, it will be a direct result of Council member Cole’s persistent work and effective leadership,” said Beth Atherton, Executive Director of Caritas of Austin.

The Kathy Reid award was given to Jo Kathryn Quinn, Director of Housing Services for Caritas of Austin. The Kathy Reid award is awarded to those persons whose work has a positive impact on the lives of homeless people and those who show great dedication to the notion that no person should be excluded from having safe, decent and affordable housing.

Jo Kathryn Quinn is not only an advocate for the homeless; she is a pioneer. Throughout her career she has navigated issues surrounding our state’s most vulnerable populations with poise and perseverance.

Jo Kathryn Quinn has been involved with Texas Homeless Network (THN) for 12 years. She joined the THN Board of Directors in Victoria, Texas in 1998 and served for six years. After taking a break, Jo Kathryn was asked back to the board on which she currently sits.

Today, Jo Kathryn is the Director of Housing Services for Caritas of Austin where she assists thousands living in and facing homelessness access services ranging from rent and utility assistance to permanent supportive housing. A leader in her community, she lends her expertise and rallies community support for homeless prevention through her active role with the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition, or ECHO. Her peers consider Jo Kathryn the “go to” person for permanent supportive housing issues.

Beth Atherton, Executive Director at Caritas of Austin says, “With Jo Kathryn’s knowledge about homelessness, Caritas has been able to create a leading community model for permanent supportive housing.”

### **About Caritas of Austin**

Founded in 1964, Caritas of Austin is a non-profit organization that serves 20,000 homeless, working poor and documented refugees in Travis County. Caritas’ services feed, house, educate and employ thousands. Help us build a community where there is respect for all individuals and hope for those experiencing poverty. For more information, visit [www.caritasofaustin.org](http://www.caritasofaustin.org).

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