

Caritas of Austin raises over \$600,000 at 2019 Words of Hope Dinner

Jan and Bobby Jenkins were honored with Harvey Penick Award

On September 12, more than 500 *sponsors and attendees* were present for Caritas of Austin's 12th Annual *Words of Hope* dinner presented by Austin Subaru, held at the JW Marriott Austin. This year's event raised over **\$600,000** to support the organization's work and mission to prevent and end homelessness in Austin. Co-Chaired by 2018 *Words of Hope* honorees, Lynn and Tom Meredith, the evening was filled with heartfelt and compassionate messages for our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness by each of the speakers.

The evening began with the 28th annual Harvey Penick Award for *Excellence in the Game of Life* presented to Jan and Bobby Jenkins. As owners of ABC Home & Commercial Services they have successfully instilled a culture of philanthropy among their employees and their family; a culture that impacts programs on a state and national level. Honorary remarks highlighted the couples' significant community contributions to organizations like Caritas of Austin, Helping Hand Society, Good Shepherd Episcopal School, American Heart Association, United Way, Alzheimer's Texas, College for All Texans Foundation and many others. Closest to their heart is the Moss Pieratt Foundation, created in honor of their beloved grandson, Moss. The Foundation raises funds for research and awareness to support the Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) Foundation.

Later in program, special guest John Kirven, a client of Caritas of Austin, gave emotional remarks saying, "Having a home changes everything. You often don't know how important it is until it's taken away from you." He ended with "We all need second chances in life, and I am determined to make the most of my second chance. I will be grateful forever, and it wouldn't be possible without people like you."

This year's event also featured both a live auction and Fund the Mission, led by Heath Hale Auctioneers. Hale's lively team of cowboys helped the organization raise a record \$293,925, thanks to the generosity of attendees.

Following the Fund the Mission, Caritas of Austin CEO Jo Kathryn Quinn gave an emotional thank you to the guests. She then announced the organization's 2025 Vision saying, "Tonight I am thrilled to announce that we have developed a vision for the next five years to dramatically expand all of Caritas' proven practices – from supportive housing to employment. To help us reach that goal, we plan to operate our own housing so more people experiencing homelessness no longer have barriers to a home of their own. So they have real choices for a home like the rest of us." Quinn ended her remarks with "We know what to do, we know what works. Follow our lead and together we will end homelessness in our beloved Austin."

Texas singer-songwriter Robert Earl Keen and his band wrapped up the evening on a high note with guests singing along to well-loved songs.

The top sponsors for *Words of Hope* included: Austin Subaru, Austin Health Partners, Alori Properties, ABC Home & Commercial Services, Ascension Seton, Silicon Labs, Stratus Properties, Tracy and Ken Snodgrass, Texas Capital Bank, Workplace Resource and Howard and Mary Garwood Yancy.

Words of Hope is Caritas of Austin's largest annual fundraising event. Each year, the event features powerful stories that reflect the mission and work of Caritas of Austin. The Harvey Penick Award is also presented during the evening's program to someone whose leadership exemplifies "Excellence in the Game of Life," and whose good works inspire lasting change in Central Texas. Past honorees include Lady Bird Johnson, Sally and Mack Brown, Susan and Gary Farmer, Barbara Jordan, Susan and Michael Dell and Lynn and Tom Meredith.

About Caritas of Austin: Caritas of Austin believes that when people have a stable place to call home, they can reach their full potential and contribute to the community. They build wellbeing for hundreds experiencing homelessness each year by making sure they have a stable home, healthy food, jobs, and the life skills to thrive. Learn more at www.caritasofaustin.org.

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