

# Impact Austin Recognized for Innovative Programs and Philanthropic Commitment



Impact Austin grant recipients receive their awards during a ceremony at City Hall in June 2016.



Impact Austin offers a Speakers Bureau to talk with local groups about the power of philanthropy. Pictured above are presenters Diana Maldonada and Jacquie Shillis.



Impact Austin members cast their vote for new nonprofit partners during their Annual Meeting. Each member's vote counts equally towards awarding high-impact grants of roughly \$100,000.

Impact Austin, one of the country's largest collective giving organizations, was just selected as the Outstanding Philanthropic Organization of the Year by the Greater Austin Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP). The award, founded more than 20 years ago, recognizes outstanding philanthropic commitment and encouragement of others to take leadership roles in philanthropy and community involvement.

"We are honored to be recognized with this award," said Sharon Francia, President of the Board of Directors of Impact Austin. "Impact Austin is committed to helping our members and the young women of Austin grow as philanthropists and to being leaders and innovators in the philanthropic world."

Impact Austin was founded in 2003 by Rebecca Powers who, after reading an article about collective giving organizations, decided to bring the concept to Austin. She gathered 126 women together who provided the first Impact Austin grant of \$126,000 in 2004. The organization has continued to

grow ever since.

Each year, Impact Austin brings together hundreds of women who pool their donations to make five high-impact grant awards to local nonprofit organizations. Since its founding, Impact Austin members have given more than \$5.5 million to worthy causes, supporting nearly 60 organizations in the greater Austin area.

Impact Austin provides program grants as well as Catalyst Grants that support nonprofits' operational needs. The Catalyst Grants were developed based on feedback from nonprofits that were unable to grow and strengthen their infrastructure due to lack of funding. These innovative grants are a unique offering and one of many ways in which Impact Austin strives to stay at the leading edge of philanthropy.

"Impact Austin regularly provides educational seminars for our members to help them to develop skills to fulfill their philanthropic potential," said Donna Benson-Chan, Executive Director of Impact Austin. "We also have a program called

Girls Giving Grants, or g3, which helps young women become thoughtful and discerning philanthropists."

Girls Giving Grants includes girls in grades 8-12 who each give \$100 of their own money and learn how to evaluate their own pool of grant applications. The goal of the program is to instill a commitment to lifelong giving in participants. Since it's founding, g3 members have given more than \$50,000 to local nonprofits.

Impact Austin continues to focus on the basic principles on which it was founded: a focus on educated giving, accountability for donated funds, a rigorous and unbiased process for reviewing grant applications and the principle that every woman who joins has an equal voice. Members each donate \$1,250 per year and their resources are pooled to award grants of \$50,000 - \$100,000 each.

To learn how to get involved with Impact Austin, visit [www.ImpactAustin.org](http://www.ImpactAustin.org).



In 2016, Impact Austin awarded \$94,000 to TreeFolks to restore riparian forest on more than 1,000 properties in Hays County devastated by the 2015 floods.



Drive a Senior Executive Director Serita Lacasse (left) is all smiles as she presents a replica of the bus Impact Austin's grant will fund to board member Lorene Phillips (center) and Executive Director Donna Benson-Chan.



Impact Austin's youth initiative Girls Giving Grants, open to girls in grades 8-12, presents its grant to Casa Marianella.

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**"Impact Austin is committed to helping our members and the young women of Austin grow as philanthropists and to being leaders and innovators in the philanthropic world."**  
 - Board President Sharon Francia



Impact Austin board members include president Sharon Francia (left), Val Kirk, Jacquie Shillis, Sara Pantin, Lorene Phillips and Connie Lawyer.