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Contact: Anne Lasseigne Tiedt, APR
anne@momentum-pr.com, 512.784.3805

Impact Austin Awards \$450,000 to Six Community Partners

*Check presentations to be made at Austin City Hall Plaza on Wednesday, June 17, at 10 a.m.
by Impact Austin's 450 women philanthropists committed to effecting positive change for Central Texas*

AUSTIN, TEXAS – June 11, 2015 – [Impact Austin](#), one of the largest women's philanthropy organizations in the United States, today announced the recipients of its first-ever \$50,000 catalyst grant and its five, traditional \$80,000 high-impact program grants. The six 2015 Community Partner grants total more than \$450,000, bringing the organization's total investment in Central Texas past the \$5 million dollar mark and representing the sum of more than 51 grants awarded by Impact Austin's members since 2003.

On Tuesday, June 23, at 10 a.m., Impact Austin will host a public Check Presentation Ceremony at Austin City Hall Plaza. All six of its Community Partners will be present to receive their respective grant checks.

Chosen from more than 100 applicants, the five \$80,000 Focus Area Program Grants recipients include:

- 1. Culture** – [VSA Texas](#), formerly known as Very Special Arts, is an affiliate of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This grant will expand VSA's Body Shift classes for Austin's mixed-ability dancers, offering people with and without disabilities the opportunity to experience the freedom of dance through additional classes, workshops and performances.
- 2. Environment** – [Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center](#) leads the Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin, which has more than 30 organizational members and hundreds of individual participants. The Roadrunner Outdoor Adventure Bus will provide transportation to nature experiences for children visiting Westcave and those served by its member organizations.
- 3. Education** – [Council on At-Risk Youth](#) (CARY) will expand their PeaceRox Aggression Replacement Training Program at Paredes Middle School and also pilot a summer camp at the same school. The programs will focus on the students with the highest emotional and behavioral needs and who would not otherwise receive services.
- 4. Health & Wellness** – [Drive a Senior](#)'s expanded van program will benefit from funding for staff drivers and van maintenance, as well as the modifications needed to make the vehicles accessible to all. Additionally, the grant will be used to market the expanded services which reach seven Central Texas service areas plus Elgin and Georgetown and serve more than 60 ZIP codes.
- 5. Family** – [Catholic Charities of Central Texas](#) (CCCT) – Central Texas has one of the fastest growing immigrant populations in the United States. CCCT's Immigration Legal Services program will be expanded, providing families in Central Texas' rural areas with access to qualified immigration attorneys and Board of Immigration Appeals accredited representatives.

The new \$50,000 Catalyst Grant was awarded to a well-qualified nonprofit organization that previously achieved finalist status during Impact Austin's diligent grant review process.

- 6. Catalyst Grant - [Texas Advocacy Project](#)** is the recipient of the first-ever \$50,000 Catalyst Grant, a grant created to strengthen or grow a nonprofit organization in order to improve its future performance, impact and sustainability. The Texas Advocacy Project intends to fund a system-wide technology upgrade, which includes new hardware and software for attorneys and staff, improving efficiency and allowing the organization to serve a larger number of Central Texans in need.

"On behalf of our 450 members, we congratulate all six of our 2015 Community Partners, who share a vision for effecting positive change in Central Texas," says Rebekah Bonde, board president, Impact Austin. "We deeply appreciate the opportunity to partner with these organizations to expand their services and their reach. Together we are helping to improve the quality of life for thousands of Central Texans in every phase of life, from our children to our seniors."

"Not only does the Impact Austin process make positive change in our community, we also effect positive change in our members, who are closely involved in the process of reviewing and selecting our community partners," says Donna Benson-Chan, executive director, Impact Austin. "Working together, we cultivate a deeper understanding of the great opportunities in our community. Through Impact Austin, we have a voice that carries and a powerful way to respond to our community needs."

National research supports the idea that women will give more when they know the impact of their dollars. More than 80 percent of women philanthropists (n=911) surveyed by Brown University reported that they donate to giving networks because they understand how their gift can make a difference. And, 78 percent said their reason for giving was to make a difference in their community.

The 2015 Impact Austin membership deadline is November 30, 2015. Impact Austin will host informational meetings for prospective members this summer and fall. Membership is open to all women for an annual donation of \$1,250. Members may participate in the grant selection process including reviewing grant applications and making site visits. Other volunteer opportunities are available. Information is available on the Impact Austin website.

About Impact Austin

Impact Austin is a 501 (c) (3) public charity comprised of women seeking to transform lives in the Greater Austin area through high-impact and lifelong giving. Its only membership requirements are to be female and donate \$1,250 each year. Impact Austin combines the annual donations from members and awards large grants each year to local worthy causes selected by its members. Grant applications are accepted in each of the following areas: culture, environment, education, family, and health and wellness. Learn more at www.impactaustin.org.

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