

Nominee Details

Person making the nomination	
Nominator:	Hugh Simonich
Street Address:	
City:	Austin
State:	TX
Zip Code:	
Phone:	
Email:	
What is your affiliation with the person or organization you are nominating?	I've worked with Richard Troxell on his various projects, including the annual Thermal Underwear Drive, Universal Living Wage campaign, ECHO and, most recently, the Let's Get To Work Form and Initiative. I have known Richard for over 3 years.
Nominee	
Award category:	Community Leader
Individual or organization/collaboration nominated:	Richard Troxell
Contact Name (for Spirit of Collaboration Award only):	
Street Address:	
City:	Austin
State:	TX
Zip Code:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Details:	Richard has been striving to end homelessness since he first saw it come into existence as a self-designed mortgage foreclosure preventionist in the 1980s. In response, he created the Philadelphia Stabilization Program to preserve millions of dollars of housing stock from destruction in Philadelphia and then worked with the banking system to bring hundreds of homes back into the market. Richard's work was subsequently recognized by the United Nations during the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. In 1989, Richard came to Austin and convinced Legal Aid to hire him to create Legal Aid for the Homeless where even today, he continues to help the most down trodden in our society...the disabled homeless. He collaborated with Helping Our Brothers Out, HOBO to establish the outreach project which exists today. He then co-founded House the Homeless, and established what is now the

oldest grassroots, all volunteer, non-profit organization made up of homeless and formerly homeless people in the state of Texas. This has resulted in giving people experiencing homelessness self-empowerment and an active voice in resolving their situation. Richard went on to create Project Fresh Start, the first concrete Continuum of Care system bringing all of Austin's homeless service providers together under one roof and encouraged collaboration among the various providers. The result was a \$100,000 contribution from then Governor George Bush. The model project received the Community Legacy Award from the Austin Chamber of Commerce and the United Way Capital Area in 1998. The model later became the basis for the Caritas Re-Entry Program. Richard's passion can be seen in the actions of his everyday life as he works one-on-one with individuals experiencing homelessness. But it was never so clearly evidenced as when he became a certified, state licensed massage therapist in order to create Heart and Sole This involved scores of local massage therapists and Lauterstein-Conway School of Massage in providing foot massages, conversation, dignity, and new sneakers (courtesy of RunTex) for Austin's homeless citizens. This was the pre-cursor of Shoes for Austin.

What is special or special about what the nominee has accomplished to improve community conditions or promote community collaboration?

Richard created the critical Jobs Plus program, administered by Front Steps, known as Hands up to Housing where homeless individuals are provided the economic assistance to transition into housing. A graduate of the Austin Citizens' Police Academy, Richard created the Mobile Mini Police Station designed as an emergency impact mobile police station created to establish a beach-head in areas of the city where violence occurs, the first of these being funded by Senator John Heinz. Rather than create limited mini-police stations, this movable program stretches scarce resources. It is now in multiple cities, including Austin, and first introduced here under Code Blue. Richard developed the Kids for Kids Sake project which involved Austin and Round Rock school children in creating Christmas cards and giving the proceeds to Austin/Travis County MHMR so homeless children could have playscapes. He collaborated with Laurie Reinteria who had identified large numbers of mothers and children living in motels and wrote the Children's Housed with Parents proposal; adopted by the Austin ISD. It continues today as Project HELP. Working with Austin's Executive Directors of Homeless Services, Richard created the Plastic Pocket Guide, now in its 10th printing at 10,000 copies per run. This homeless resource guide benefits service recipients

and providers. In 2008, Richard, in conjunction with Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid and Texas C-Bar, produced the Know Your Rights guide informing citizens of their lawful rights. In 2008 and 2009, Richard has focused on the panhandling problem of Austin. He surveyed 526 people experiencing homelessness regarding this issue. This caused the city to conduct its on survey of 103 individuals. The City of Houston also conducted a similar survey. Richard read their findings to mean that people experiencing homelessness want to work! He became Chairman of the ECHO Low Wage Prevention sub-committee and created the Let's Get To Work Forum and Initiative involving the Community Action Network, the Texas Homeless Network, Mobile Loaves and Fishes and House the Homeless to call for a city-wide best practices forum on job creation for people experiencing homelessness. Four Austin mayors were involved as committee members and presenters. Other participants included: Travis County Commissioner Judge Sam Biscoe, Austin Area Interreligious Ministries, the NAACP, Basic Needs Coalition, Downtown Austin Business Alliance, Child Protective Services, Downtown Cluster of Churches, Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, Seton Family of Hospitals, MICAH 6, Austin City Council members and many others. One hundred of the right people came to the forum and applauded its efforts to create a Pathway for homeless individuals to transition out of homelessness. Richard causes us to focus on the current Continuum of Care system and helps us understand that the existing system has serious problems that prevent these individuals from escaping homelessness under the current system. Richard has now launched and is leading a Task Force to help us build that pathway with expectations of launching by 2010. This will enable homeless individuals to secure a little education, and find employment at a Living Wage job!

Is there any other information that you would like to include to highlight why this nominee should be considered for this award?

Richard's entire career has been looking at problems and creating practical solutions. The test of success of these programs has been in their viability and functionality born from community collaboration. Once he has given life to the constructs, he is more than willing to pass them to community implementers. He is an original creative thinker, a visionary. He conceives the ideas, formulates the concepts, and then works collaboratively to demonstrate each initiative's potential. Some programs remain with House the Homeless, such as the Thermal Underwear Drive protecting Austin's homeless from winter death, which has outgrown

ARCH and now involves the First Baptist Church. Stemming from Richard's work to get disability benefits into the hands of disabled homeless individuals, Richard realized that the Supplemental Security Income stipend of \$674.00 is insufficient to get anyone into housing. Upon closer examination, he realized that the Federal Minimum Wage (according to the last several U.S. Conferences of Mayors Reports) is also insufficient to afford housing to even full-time workers. Remarkably, he then set out to Washington to fix the Federal Minimum Wage so that folks here in Austin who work 40 hours in a week will be able to put a roof over their head other than a bridge. He's devised a single national formula, based on existing government guidelines, that ensures that if a person works 40 hours in a week, they will be able to afford basic food, clothing, shelter (including utilities), wherever that work is done throughout the U.S.! Richard is now the National Chairman of the Universal Living Wage Campaign with volunteers operating in all 50 states and touting an active base of support for his concept of over 1,000,000 people. These include: businesses, faith-based organizations, unions, and non-profits. Richard's work has been recognized by the Pennsylvania Senate, the Philadelphia Bar Association, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, La Salle University, Texas governor Ann Richards, and the United Nations. He has received the National Jefferson Service Award, the Beverly MA Curtis Award from the National Coalition for the Homeless, and been honored by the Texas Civil Rights Commission. He has also received the Five Who Care Award, the JC Penny Golden Rule Award, and the Texas Homeless Network Advocate of the Year award among others. Finally, it was 17 years ago this November that Richard held the first Homeless Memorial on Lady Bird Lake. He planted a Tree of Remembrance and placed a Memorial Plaque on Auditorium Shores. Each year he invites the citizens of Austin to join him for a sunrise service, hold hands, sing and read the names of those who have died on the streets of Austin the previous year. Richard asks only that they join him in a single refraining prayer that they will work together and work harder in the year to come so they won't have to return to read the names of anyone else dying on the streets of Austin the following year.