



# NEWS RELEASE

TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

P.O. Box 1748, Austin, Texas 78767

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 15, 2007

## **Sheriff Greg Hamilton Works With Austin Entrepreneur As She Reaches Back To Help Launch Youth Forward Onto Right Path**

The day begins on Saturday with a 7:30 a.m. Pep Rally and brief program at the Elm Ridge Apartments, located at 1161 Harvey Lane, and will conclude at 2 p.m. Simultaneous school supply distributions will take place between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Mason Manor Apartments (1137 Gunter Street), Grant Villa Apartments (3706 Goodwin Drive) and Springdale Gardens Apartments (3701 Oak Springs Drive).

Sheriff Hamilton is working with local small business owner, Alysia Friday, who grew up in the East Austin low-income housing of Elm Ridge Apartments, as she returns to her childhood community Saturday, August 18th, bringing with her one hundred volunteers with school supplies for free distribution.

This event is open to the general public. Popcorn, ice cream and face painting will be provided.

### **About Launch Forward**

The event started in 2005 when Friday, along with her sister-in-law Cheryl Williams of Golden Touch Enrichment Academy, decided to return to her childhood home and 'reach back' to her community by distributing backpacks and school supplies. In the inaugural year of the Reach Back Program, the two were able to successfully serve 40 children. In 2006, with the personal support of her business partners, Austin Foam Plastics and her company Business Assets Enterprises (BAE), Friday was able to expand the Reach Back effort to serve 100 children and three additional complexes in the vicinity — Mason Manor, Springdale Garden and Grant Villa.

This year, in addition to an expanded school supply distribution, Friday will introduce the Launch Forward initiative — a comprehensive program designed to offer life-building skills to the residents of the East Austin community. "Our school supply giveaway was only the beginning of a long term community enrichment vision. Launch Forward will allow us to provide educational tools and support that will enhance and empower the lives of those who reside where I once lived. Our intention is to help launch community residents forward to new levels of personal and professional growth," stated Friday.

As Launch Forwards continues to grow, Friday will target local minority owned businesses to join her in funding and supporting the program and its work. “I believe it’s crucial that families in the neighborhood see success stories of people who look like them and share cultural history with them come back to offer assistance and a way out,” continued Friday. “Growing up — we felt like no one cared because no one ever came back to provide us with different options from what we saw everyday. It’s my personal commitment to not only go back and help out – but to also go back with strong support from Austin’s minority business community.”

Launch Forward is a community empowerment program designed to provide educational tools through mentoring, homework and study nights, life coaching as well as sports and music outlets. Beginning with Elm Ridge Apartments in September 2007, Launch Forward will extend services to Mason Manor, Grant Villa and the Springdale Gardens Apartments in the near future. Launch Forward has captured the attention of several BAE and Business Assets Resources, LLC business partners. The program’s expansion to three additional apartment communities is made possible by the generous contributions of her companies, Austin Foam Plastics, GTECH Corporation, Relationship Fitness Center of Houston, Texas, Temple Inland and the Travis County Sheriff’s Office.

Note: Interview requests for Alysia Friday or for additional information, please contact Christine Perrault by email at [cperrault@melanincreative.com](mailto:cperrault@melanincreative.com) or phone 512-809-5316.

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