



***Ballet Austin Guild Announces Honorees:
Outstanding Volunteers from 10 Area Non-Profits to be honored***

**Women on Their Toes 16th Annual Spring Luncheon Event
Honoring Volunteer Excellence**

“Dance Comes Alive”

April 6, 2010, 10 a.m-1 p.m.

Renaissance Austin Hotel

Guest Speaker: Cynthia Gregory

Guest Emcees: Tyler Sieswerda and Terri Gruca

TICKETS: Start at \$85; Sponsorships available starting at \$1000 (includes 10 tickets)

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EVENT INFO: Please visit the Ballet Austin Guild website at balletaustinguild.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUSTIN, TX-- The Ballet Austin Guild has selected 10 outstanding volunteers, from nominations submitted by area non-profit organizations, who will be honored at “Women on Their Toes,” on April 6 at the Renaissance Austin Hotel at the Arboretum from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. All proceeds to be donated to Ballet Austin. This annual event, the Guild’s largest fundraiser, helps the all-volunteer organization achieve its mission to promote and support Ballet Austin in providing exceptional artistic programming as well as arts education and access for the entire Central Texas community.

This year’s theme, “Dance Comes Alive!” reflects both the spirit of the Guild’s work on behalf of Ballet Austin and the crucial role volunteers play in our community. The Guild welcomes as guest speaker the famed ballerina, Cynthia Gregory, who personifies the spirit of excellence, dedication, and caring celebrated at this event. The talented KVUE News team, Tyler Sieswerda and Terri Gruca, will act as event guest emcees.

These are the 10 outstanding individuals selected as event honorees:

Bill Bastas, The Smile Never Fades; B.J. Gerstner, Hospice Austin; Martha Hoflich, Capital Area Food Bank of Texas; Patty Huffines, the Long Center for the Performing Arts; Dina Mavridis, Impact Austin; Nancy Mueller, Seton Medical Center Austin; Sandy Perkins, New Milestones Foundation; Chas Studor, Austin Children’s Shelter; Sonia Wilson; The Women’s Symphony League of Austin and Rufus Woody, Meals on Wheels and More.

About the Honorees

Bill Bastas, founder and President of **The Smile Never Fades**, has taken devastating loss and channeled it into a positive project: raising money and awareness for breast cancer and its cure. Bill's own beloved wife lost her life to breast cancer in April of 2006. Utilizing his talents as a photographer, he has completed three books, filled with essays written by survivors and photos taken by him. All proceeds are donated to breast cancer research and to organizations helping cancer victims, including Komen Austin and the Breast Cancer Research Center. He has played a crucial role in bringing about awareness regarding early detection and assistance with breast cancer. He is friend, advocate, and inspiring example to all who know him and whose lives he touches with his boundless energy and compassionate, unflagging commitment.

B.J. Gerstner is a very special, giving person, serving those in our community, as a **Hospice Austin** volunteer, who are the most vulnerable: the terminally ill, older adults, people living with HIV and AIDS, and children as well as their families. She compassionately and tirelessly gives her time, offering each individual she serves dignity, kindness, and support. She is also 2010 Volunteer Chair of the St. David's Foundation's Health Angels. Besides her impact on the people she serves directly, BJ also has a tremendous impact on other Hospice Austin volunteers as well as staff. Her example and attitude help others reach within themselves to find the strength and compassion they need to reach out to the neediest patients and their families.

Martha Hoflich, primarily a "behind-the-scenes" volunteer at Austin's **Capital Area Food Bank of Texas**, has transformed the tracking and recording of information and hours for the 13,500 Food Bank volunteers. She has also attracted a strong team of engaged and skilled volunteers, and now oversees an entirely volunteer-run tracking team. In addition, she volunteers at Food Bank events such as Reggae Fest, Scouting for Food, CROP Hunger Walk, and the Austin Empty Bowl Project, assisting with event set-up, welcoming the public and event direction. She is a committed volunteer and amazing role model, who leads by example and motivates others to get involved.

Patty Huffines has proven to be one of the **Long Center for the Performing Arts'** most valued and celebrated volunteers since accepting their invitation to serve on the fledgling Board of Trustees in 2004. Her efforts have literally help build the Long Center from the ground up, as she has played an integral role on the fundraising team that raised over \$87 million to build the Long Center. She has served the Long Center in numerous other capacities as well, including Chair of the Annual Giving Campaign and also Chair of the trustees' Development Committee for the inaugural year in 2008-2009 and again in 2009-2010. Notably, she also stepped in at a key transition time to serve as Interim Director of Development, a full-time job she took on an entirely volunteer basis and performed with marked dedication and excellence. In addition, she has an extensive history of volunteerism in our community going back over more than 20 years.

Dina Mavridis, who joined **Impact Austin** in 2004 as a 20-something-year-old, is a dynamite volunteer: 3-year board member, grant review committee leader, and leader since 2007 of the Girls Giving Grants (G3) program for young women in grades 8- 12. Impact Austin is an all-volunteer, grant-making organization. Membership requirements are to be female and to donate \$1000 **annually**. Past grant recipients from 2009 and 2008 include Ballet East Dance Company, GENaustin, Captial IDEA, Youth Launch, People's Community Clinic, Breakthrough, Ecology Action, Goodwill Industries, Safe Place, and Southwest Key Programs.

Nancy Mueller came to the volunteer program of **Seton Medical Center Austin** almost ten years ago after retiring just one month earlier from the paid labor force. The SMCA Volunteers are a service and fundraising organization that Nancy has now served in a wide variety of key leadership positions. As volunteer President, she has helped implement a new Customer Service Volunteer program, awarded \$15,000 in scholarships to Seton employees, opened a new Gift Shop, staffed a new Information Desk, and recruited 141 new volunteers. Her generosity and commitment are inspirational. She has volunteered over 10,600 hours of her time single-handedly at Seton and has given generously of her time and talents to many other non-profits in our community. An interesting distinction she possesses is being the first female elder, first congregational secretary, and the first congregational president of Austin's St. Martins Evangelical Lutheran Church.

As a long-standing volunteer, **Sandy Perkins** has played an integral role in numerous Austin area organizations. **New Milestones Foundation** nominated her for recognition as an outstanding volunteer for her work on behalf of New Milestones as well as the many other organizations she has served over the past 30 years. New Milestones Foundation is the fundraising arm for the Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC) and works to build community awareness and reduce stigma about mental health issues in our community. Sandy has served on the Champions Event Committee every year for the past five years, and her efforts made a major impact on the successfulness of the Building Productive Lives Luncheon and New Milestone's Capital Campaign to refurbish two Crisis Respite facilities.

Chas Studor is truly a volunteer extraordinaire, working as a full-time volunteer in 2008 and 2009 on behalf of the **Austin Children's Shelter**. Chas oversaw all aspects of building on the Austin Children's Shelter new 13-acre campus, located on the site of the former airport. Construction totals 51,974 square feet in eight buildings, including five cottages where children live and three support buildings, one of which is an education building where children will attend school. In addition he served as Chair of the Board of Directors during this same time frame.

Sonia Wilson could easily be nominated as an outstanding volunteer for any number of civic organizations. **The Women's Symphony League of Austin** nominated her in recognition of this as well her dedicated, long-standing commitment to WSL. She has served in countless leadership positions on local, state, and national levels, and has been recognized as a top fundraiser for the symphony for the past several years. Her

involvement has been instrumental in helping raise over ten million dollars for the Austin Symphony Orchestra and reach out to over 90,000 Central Texas children each year. She is an ambassador extraordinaire for ASO and the arts. This talented woman also has the distinction of being the first female to serve on various boards and councils, including first chairwoman of UT Austin's College of Natural Sciences Foundation Advisory Council and first female president of the Austin Community Foundation Board of Governors.

Rufus Woody has been a volunteer with **Meals on Wheels and More** for over 25 years. As a member of our nation's armed forces, Rufus served in the military for 31 years, and was awarded two Silver Stars, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and 11 Air Medals. Next came a career in public service working for the Department of Public Safety until retiring to dedicate himself fully to volunteering with Meals on Wheels and More. He has consistently logged the most volunteer hours annually and was selected to deliver the Millionth Meal in 2009, the first time this mark had been reached in a single year's time. He is an exemplary person in every respect and unparalleled volunteer.

About the Ballet Austin Guild

The Ballet Austin Guild is a volunteer organization whose mission is to work together to support and promote the interests of Ballet Austin in Greater Austin and surrounding communities through educational programs, fundraising and special events.

For more information on *Women On Their Toes*, or to purchase tickets or ask about sponsorships, please go to the Ballet Austin Guild's website: www.balletaustinguild.org.