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**MAYOR LEFFINGWELL CHALLENGES AUSTIN CITIZENS TO
RECOGNIZE GOOD THROUGHOUT COMMUNITY**

**Free “iWitness Goodness” Online Contest Could Earn You an iPrize Package Worth \$5,000,
Make Austin the City with Most Recorded Good Deeds in the World**

AUSTIN, TX – Aug. 18, 2009 – The challenge is on to crown Austin the number one city in the world for recorded acts of goodness. Today, Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell launched a six-week contest called “iWitness Goodness,” encouraging Central Texans to recognize and record extraordinary and everyday acts of kindness, regardless of the size, on a new online public forum called www.RecognizeGood.org.

“Today, I’m proud to help kick off an initiative in Austin that strengthens and improves the identity and character of our community,” said Mayor Leffingwell. “RecognizeGood.org gives Central Texas an opportunity to enhance our regional self-image as a kind, charitable and appreciative community that embraces new technologies for the betterment of the entire community in bold, creative ways.”

RecognizeGood.org is an online public forum where anyone can reward, acknowledge and promote others for their acts of kindness and unselfish charity. Developed in partnership with Austin-based [TyRex Group](#), the site helps honor the good deeds of others while supporting and promoting charitable giving to organizations.

The site allows a user to immediately post a recognition on the public, online bulletin board to honor a family member, teacher, firefighter, neighbor, co-worker, even a complete stranger for a recent good deed. At the RecognizeGood level, the easy process is free and provides a small donation through sponsorships to the Samaritan Center. Users can upgrade to a RecognizeGreat level and make a contribution to the Samaritan Center that will be shared with another local nonprofit. Sponsoring companies match the donation and the honoree chooses a partnering nonprofit organization to benefit.

“RecognizeGood.org combines the opportunity to acknowledge everyday and special deeds with the ability to provide small, yet meaningful financial contributions that help nonprofit organizations support their missions,” said Nancy Blauch, Executive Director of the Samaritan Center. “Everyone can appreciate a little public recognition for performing a simple act of kindness now and then, and, especially in this economy, every nonprofit organization can appreciate the funding it needs to sustain its efforts. It’s the little things we do that often have the greatest impact on someone else’s life.”

To encourage usage of the site, the Samaritan Center has created the iWitness Goodness contest, presented by [H-E-B](#). The contest begins today and lasts approximately six weeks until September 30, 2009. Anyone may enter the contest at no charge by visiting the public recognition forum, www.RecognizeGood.org, quickly registering once and then recognizing daily acts of kindness from which they’ve benefited or witnessed for others. Each day of the contest, those who recognize a good deed will be automatically entered into the grand prize drawing – an “iPrize Package” containing a new iMac computer, iPhone 3GS, iPod and iTunes gift cards, all valued at approximately \$5,000. Visit www.iWitnessGoodness.org for contest rules and details.

“H-E-B recognizes the power a simple ‘thank you’ can have on someone’s life, and to be able to multiply that power with the volume of recognitions this public online forum can generate for an entire community is inspiring,” said H-E-B Director of Public Affairs Leslie Lockett. “That’s why H-E-B is so pleased to be a part of this initiative, one we think has great potential to start an entire movement of gratefulness and goodwill throughout Central Texas and beyond.”

In addition to the grand prize portion of the contest, the Samaritan Center is encouraging video postings and personal photographs as part of each recognition. Through YouTube.com and Flickr.com respectfully, users can post short videos and images to enhance the stories that are shared with each public recognition. Also, between August 18 and September 30, 2009, all videos and photos posted on RecognizeGood.org will be eligible for a video prize package valued at approximately \$1,500 or photo prize package valued at approximately \$500. Videos and photographs will be evaluated based on authenticity, creativity and appropriateness to the corresponding recognition story.

Austin television news anchors Gustavo Monsante of KAKW, Judy Maggio of KEYE, Mike Warren of KTBC, Paul Brown of News 8 Austin, Tyler Sieswerda of KVUE and Leslie Rhode of KXAN will serve as celebrity and professional judges for the video and photo portions of the contest.

“Random acts of kindness happen every day, but sometimes they go needlessly unnoticed. We want people to use the site often to recognize that special someone who made a real difference,” said RecognizeGood.org founder and TyRex Group Principal John Bosch, Jr. “Imagine what it would feel like coming home from a tough day at work or school and logging on to read the day’s entries and view their related videos that tell the incredible stories of good deeds. Regardless of your mood or situation, you couldn’t help but feel a sense of pride and hope for your community, for your circle of friends and family, for your fellow man.”

About the Samaritan Counseling Center of Austin (www.samaritan-center.org)

The Samaritan Counseling Center is a nonprofit organization that has been saving lives, healing emotional wounds and giving hope to Central Texas families for more than 35 years. The nonprofit center offers a range of affordable and accessible counseling services from early childhood to elder years to prevent and treat abuse, develop healthy life skill and strengthen individuals and families. The Samaritan Center works with adults, couples, families, older adults, veterans, military families and the clergy. The Samaritan Center serves a 12-county region with locations in Central Austin, East Austin, Georgetown, Round Rock and San Marcos. It is affiliated with the Samaritan Institute of Denver as part of an international network of more than 500 counseling centers serving more than 35 states and Japan.

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