

# Join the builders association as it makes a strike against hunger, homelessness

On Tuesday, October 24, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., the Sales and Marketing Council (SMC) of the Home Builders Association (HBA) of Greater Austin will host the first annual "Strike Against Hunger" charity bowling tournament at 500 Austin (the old Showplace Lanes) at 9504 N Interstate 35.

All net proceeds from the bowling tournament will benefit Mobile Loaves & Fishes, a social outreach group that nourishes, clothes, and supports the homeless and indigent working poor.

Austin's home-building community will offer time and money to support our city and its people at this event. Austin residents can show their compassion by making individual donations to the cause on online at [austinhomebuilders.com](http://austinhomebuilders.com) — under the "Strike Against Hunger" button.

Mobile Loaves and Fishes is run by more than 6,000 volunteers and owns eight catering trucks that grace the streets of Austin, San Antonio and New Orleans on a nightly basis. The Habitat on Wheels (HOW) program places homeless people in gently used, fully furnished travel trailers.

Another important program is the Mobile Loaves and Fishes Disaster Relief Response. This program offers immediate assistance after a disaster to cities within driving distance. This service includes supplying meals, cleaning supplies, water and other necessities after tornadoes, floods, and hurricanes. The organization is growing and will continue to expand to communities within the Uni-



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ed States.

Mobile Loaves and Fishes Shares is a voucher program that provides the community a constructive method for offering assistance. The vouchers are available in \$1 increments, redeemable for food, clothing and personal care items at area merchants who display the Shares logo.

Some of these merchants include Dollar General, Hickory Street Bar & Grill, Walgreen's, The Austin Shoe Hospital, Goodwill Industries of Central Texas and the St. Vincent de Paul Store.

"Strike Against Hunger is an important fundraiser because it shows that the community is taking the initiative to face the homeless issue and is willing to give their own time and money to make a difference," said Alan Graham, Mobile Loaves and Fishes' president. "It also is great because we are not required to spend time organizing the effort. We can focus our attention on what we do best — helping our fellow brothers and sisters."

Graham also shared his insight into the homeless community.

"I call these people 'beached humans' because they are stranded on our sidewalks, under our bridges, and in our parks and it is our duty to rescue them," he said. "Many people are under the misconception that we are simply giving these

people a handout. Everyone needs a purpose and it is our intention to help re-instill hope and help them to live out their lives more productively."

Mobile Loaves and Fishes is realistic about its mission and realizes that change varies in every individual.

"We have no expectations from the homeless population and so they cannot disappoint us," said Graham. "I don't expect to choose a homeless man, to clean him up, train him to be a 40-hour a week call center employee, and to rent an apartment in Pflugerville. If these people could actually go out and get a job, don't you think they would just do it?"

"Most of them don't enjoy their station in life and suffer ongoing profound problems; they still deserve dignity and basic human rights," he continued. "We all have a story to tell, it is just a matter of whether you are willing to listen."

The SMC invites the community to show their support for Mobile Loaves and Fishes at the upcoming bowling tournament, where the HBA aims to raise at least \$10,000. Four-person teams are currently forming, at a cost of \$125 per person.

Join a team, make a donation, make a difference. Visit [www.AustinHomeBuilders.com](http://www.AustinHomeBuilders.com) and click, Strike Against Hunger.

To learn more about how to choose a builder or buy a new home, visit the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin's Web site, then click on consumer resources.