

A collage of numerous hands, some open and some with fingers curled, all featuring red heart-shaped paint designs. The hands are arranged in a circular pattern, creating a sense of unity and collective action. The background is dark, making the red paint stand out.

# **CENTRAL TEXAS BUSINESSES STEP UP FOR HEALTHY HEARTS**

Written by Michael Vybiral





Austin's commitment to community well-being has never been stronger. Cardiovascular disease and stroke are Travis County's #1 and #4 killers, respectively, but local leaders, healthcare partners, and businesses are leading the way to build a healthier Central Texas. Education and outreach are powerful. Currently, nearly 3 out of 4 cardiac arrests happen at home, and less than 40% of people receive CPR. Local organizations have incredible direct outreach, from workplace wellness programs to community-based CPR trainings that reach thousands of residents each year. Some of the most powerful ways organizations can have a direct, positive impact is by getting workplace certified, using the tools and resources available to them. The American Heart Association's Well-Being Works Better program provides a way for organizations to become nationally certified by prioritizing comprehensive employee well-being in mind, heart, and body. At the same time, the Mayor's Health Council is working to locally certify organizations for their health efforts in

Austin.

"Many organizations want to see national and local certification, which helps with employee well-being and objectives," said Brad Wisdom, executive director of the American Heart Association in Austin and a member of the Mayor's Health Council. "By getting nationally recognized by the American Heart Association and locally recognized by the mayor, organizations are able to achieve and surpass their health and well-being goals."

The Council aligns city leadership, local businesses, and evidence-based strategies from the American Heart Association to create a powerful culture of health advocacy in Austin that supports nutrition security, active living, and equitable access to preventive care – while also recognizing the organizations leading the way.

As the nation's most trusted health and science organization, after personal physicians, the American Heart Association knows that lasting change comes through education, research, and community investment. Well-Being Works Better allows businesses to align with the Association's efforts. This year, many different Austin organizations have committed to training their staff in Hands-Only CPR. CPR is a lifesaving skill that anybody can learn – and can double or even triple the chances of survival from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, which normally is 90% fatal. These organizations have joined the Nation of Lifesavers and committed to changing the health of their employees, customers, and the broader community. ABC Home and Commercial, inspired by the heart health experiences of multiple staff members, is building a company of lifesavers, ensuring that their staff of over 1,000 are trained and ready to act, whether they are in their office or on a home visitation. ABC is also encouraging their newly-trained employees to train others, strengthening the chain of survival.

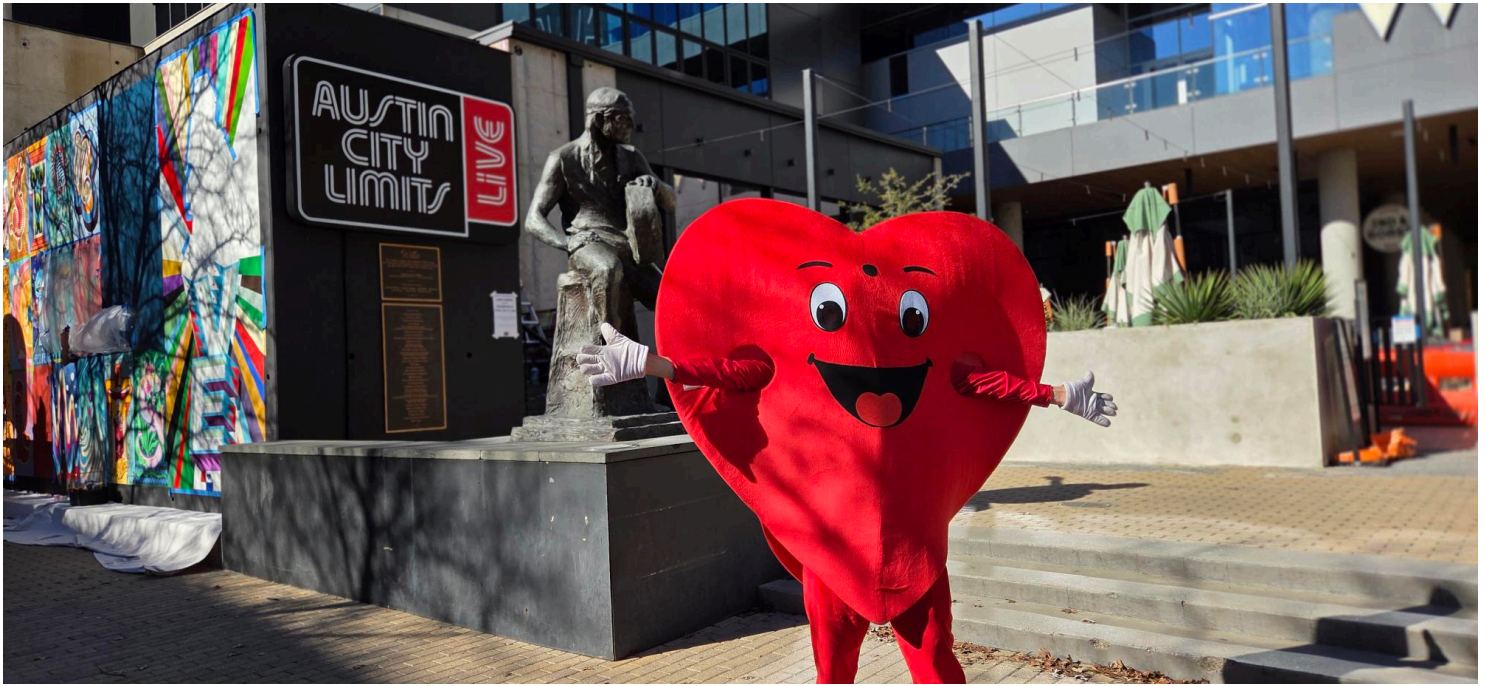
Salute Mission Critical has also emerged as a standout leader in Austin's lifesaving movement. Erich Sanchack, CEO, was personally moved to action after his daughter survived a life-saving heart surgery. That experience sparked his commitment to expanding CPR readiness across the global data center industry. Under

Sanchack's leadership, Salute has launched a worldwide CPR training initiative, ensuring that its 1,800+ employees from Austin and internationally are equipped with the skills to respond in emergencies.

"If I'm able to lead the charge to create a healthier world at Salute, other companies can, too," said Sanchack. "I call on all of my fellow executive leaders to reach out to your networks, speak to your friends and develop a plan to make your companies 100% trained in CPR as well. With your help, we can make Austin the safest place in America to have a cardiac arrest."







Many different segments of the Austin business market have taken charge of the mission. Dell Technologies hosted a series of CPR, blood pressure, and AED awareness trainings on National Wear Red Day for over 100 key staff members. Companies like City Limits Subaru, Toyota of Cedar Park, and Austin Telco have also expanded their wellness initiatives to include CPR experiences, blood pressure screenings, and employee education on stroke warning signs, strengthening the safety net across Austin's business community. Community organizations, like the Black Men's Health Clinic, Healing Hands ATX, and many more have also embraced heart health in their outreach, providing CPR kits and blood pressure stations so people can take charge of their own health.

Each of these organizations, and many more across the city, have embraced the responsibility of creating safer workplaces and healthier

communities. Year-round wellness initiatives and lifesaving skills affect businesses and individuals alike. Well-Being Works Better encourages organizations to support their staff's physical and mental health through holistic wellness strategies. Health is not only a key component to manage outside of work, but it is also an important factor throughout the day.

While the large-scale effects are impactful, individual change is where the effects of CPR, lifestyle adjustments, and health efforts really shine. When every teen and adult in Austin is able and willing to be a lifesaver when necessary, Austin can become the healthiest city in the world. The city is full of lifesaver stories like Mark Johnston's, Business Development Manager with ABC Home & Commercial Services, who saved a man's life with CPR as he was leaving the gym after work.



Johnston had just finished his workout when he noticed a man slumped over in his car. He immediately pulled the man from the vehicle, called 911, and began Hands-Only CPR, continuing compressions until EMS arrived. Doctors later confirmed that without Johnston's quick action, the man would not have survived. This experience inspired Mark to spearhead ABC's CPR training initiative.

"That man's family, his little boy – they came and visited me afterward," said Mark. "The boy told me, 'Thank you for saving my dad!' Even today, I still think about that as my greatest accomplishment I've ever achieved in my life."

This kind of lifesaving action powers the American Heart Association's mission of being a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. You can support this mission at several of the Association's upcoming Austin events.

CycleNation brings the community together to fight stroke and heart disease through movement and fundraising. 80% of strokes are preventable, and cycling is the best type of physical activity to support your brain health. The 2026 Austin CycleNation, held May 13 at Assembly Hall, invites teams to pedal with a purpose and support local heart and brain health programs. Learn more at [www.CycleNation.org/Austin](http://www.CycleNation.org/Austin).

Stroke and cardiovascular disease do not discriminate. In fact, both have become more common in young adults. The Austin Young Professionals with Heart campaign is highlighting this through advocacy, community engagement, and direct outreach. Their work will culminate at Red Hot Summer Night, an electrifying celebration, coming up on June 5. For more information, visit [www.heart.org/AustinRedHot](http://www.heart.org/AustinRedHot).

