

**YouthLaunch**

[www.youthlaunch.org](http://www.youthlaunch.org)

7756 Northcross Drive, Suite 203

Austin, TX 78757

**Contact:**

Donna Williams

[dwilliams@youthlaunch.org](mailto:dwilliams@youthlaunch.org)

512-342-0424

**YouthLaunch Earns \$75,000 Challenge Grant  
Emergent Local Nonprofit Lays Foundation for the Future**

YouthLaunch, the Austin-based youth empowerment non-profit, has attracted a \$75,000 challenge grant to help the organization build its strategic reserves. Founded in 1994, YouthLaunch is dedicated to the full realization of the transformative power of meaningful service opportunities for young people in our schools and communities. A recent flurry of awards and national media attention, along with significant long-term federal funding, has allowed YouthLaunch to create new programs, serve more young people, and capture the attention and support of a steadily growing base of private donors.

Inspired by this progress, long-time supporters of YouthLaunch have pledged to donate \$75,000 to the agency, if that sum can be matched, for a total of \$150,000, by July 2009.

“This is an exciting time of growth for YouthLaunch,” said YouthLaunch Executive Director Russell Smith. “Our ‘No Kidding: Straight Talk From Teen Parents’ peer education program has earned national recognition, and we’ve been awarded a five-year, \$1.2 million grant from the US Department of Health & Human Services to facilitate growth of the program. Meanwhile, our Urban Roots program, engaging young people in service in an urban farm, is poised for liftoff.”

YouthLaunch is working to get the word out that every dollar donated during this two-year fundraising campaign will be matched. “We have the potential to raise \$150,000 in private donations, in a relatively short period of time,” Smith continued. “This would have a huge impact the number of young people we can reach with our programs.”

Throughout its history, YouthLaunch has facilitated the engagement of young people in long-term community service directed at issues such as teen parenting, substance abuse and environmental and health concerns. The organization's work is a sound investment, as research shows that young people involved in service are 50% less likely to abuse alcohol or other drugs, or engage in destructive behavior. They are also more likely to succeed in school, and to become engaged and productive citizens.