



Proposal for Consideration – Urban Forestry Board
Sponsorship Request for Forklift Danceworks' *The Trees of Govalle*

The Trees of Govalle

Forklift Danceworks, one of Austin's most celebrated arts organizations, will present in partnership with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department, Urban Forestry Division, *The Trees of Govalle*, April 11-12, 2015 in Austin's Govalle Park.

Based on Forklift's nearly 15 year history of creating unique, community-based civic events, *The Trees of Govalle* will be a free, outdoor performance featuring the employees of the Urban Forestry Division. The performances will highlight the hard and often hidden work of Urban Forestry employees who maintain and nurture our vital green spaces, educating the public about their day-to-day work and the indispensable role of parks in all of our daily lives. Involving Austin artists and Govalle-Johnston Terrace community members, *The Trees of Govalle* will reveal stories about these employees and the neighborhood community members who care deeply about this park and our public green spaces. Based on the tremendous success of over twenty Forklift productions, this collaborative project will increase pride and morale among Urban Forestry employees, while creating rich and lasting connections between neighborhood residents, other Austinites, the city employees, and this city park.

About Forklift Danceworks

Founded in 2001 by Artistic Director Allison Orr, Forklift Danceworks has produced dances with over 20 various communities, using the movement of everyday life as the choreographic starting point and casting the respective community members as the primary performers. Past performances have featured Austin Energy power linemen and technicians, City of Austin sanitation workers, City of Austin firefighters, Venetian gondoliers, 200 two-steppers on the steps of the Texas Capitol, Austin Symphony Conductor Peter Bay, a City of Austin Police Officer, the Huston-Tillotson University baseball team, visually impaired people and their guide dogs, and most recently, Japan's Women's Baseball League. Forklift has garnered national attention with features in Dance Magazine, The New York Times, Texas Highways, The Washington Post, Austin Woman Magazine, and many other publications.

The Trash Project, the company's large scale-production with the City of Austin Sanitation Department, is the subject of a feature-length award-winning documentary film, *Trash Dance*. *PowerUP*, the company's recent large-scale collaboration with Austin Energy is featured in a KLRU/PBS documentary, broadcast in over 85 million homes. See highlights from *The Trash Project*, *PowerUP*, and an overview of the company's other programs.

The Official Trash Dance trailer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfpnUTY22dg>

PowerUP on KLRU Arts in Context

<http://www.klr.org/episode/arts-in-context/powerup/>

Play Ball Kyoto Project Page

<http://www.forkliftdanceworks.org/play-ball-kyoto-1>

More info on our website

<http://www.forkliftdanceworks.org>

Demonstrated Success

Over the last 15 years, Forklift has honed a unique model of creative community engagement. 100% of the performing employees from *The Trash Project* reported in a survey that the dance improved morale and pride in their job, while 97% agreed that it improved the image of city sanitation workers held by the general Austin public. Over 90% of audience members who attended *PowerUP* reported that the dance improved their appreciation of the work of Austin Energy employees, while 95% of participating employees stated that the dance improved morale, pride and the public's understanding of their daily work.

Value to the Urban Forestry Division and the Urban Forestry Board

Providing, protecting and preserving the highest quality care of Austin's urban forest to support a sustainable and livable Austin, the Urban Forestry Division plays an integral role in how Austinites experience their urban environment. For 15 years, Forklift Danceworks has honed a creative approach that brings together an organization and its community for a transformative event. Using storytelling and arresting visual imagery, Forklift's performance events harness the power of live, personal connections to shift public perspective and build meaningful relationships between an organization and the people it serves. Partnering with Forklift will showcase the Urban Forestry Division and Board's commitment to community engagement, public education, and contributing to Austin's rich civic life.

Media Value

Forklift Danceworks performances are known to create extraordinary media, branding and PR opportunities—generating extensive publicity and press, as well as authentic and meaningful connections between an organization and its stakeholders and customers. Based on the media impressions and value of past projects, Forklift anticipates that this collaboration would create between 500,000 - 10 million in media impressions and an estimated media value of over \$200,000.

Accolades from Past Project Partners

“The Trash Project showcased our employees in a way that had never been done before. [It] helped boost employee pride and morale and garnered lots of positive media attention for the department.”

- Bob Gedert, Director Austin Resource Recover (formerly Solid Waste Services)

“The Trash Project is one of the most unique and inspirational productions I have seen. Allison Orr, with Forklift Danceworks, produced a creative ballet on a grand scale that introduced the audience to the real beauty in the work of our Solid Waste Services employees.”

- Laura Morrison, Austin City Council Member

“The [Trash Project] took the day-to-day work of an unappreciated and unrecognized city department and made it into an art form that won several awards. As the men and women in collections now pick up trash, recycling, brush and bulky items, and clean the streets we have a sense of pride. The public now comes up, saying they saw The Trash Project, and asks our employees for their autographs.”

- Jermaine Defreeze, a Maintenance Worker Leader, Austin Resource Recovery

“It was an impactful experience to work with Forklift Danceworks for everybody involved. They transformed what we do into entertainment. PowerUP was a unique opportunity to show how great our team is to the community and our customers – an opportunity for them to see us in a new way. Our clients and customers now have a personal connection to the people who work here and, more than that, an appreciation for the people who do the work. It created a fan base for us.”

- Cheryl Mele, Chief Operating Officer, Austin Energy