



House the Homeless, HTH, founded in 1989, is the oldest, all volunteer, action organization fighting to *combat, end and prevent* homelessness in Texas and all across North America.

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May 2018

An Open Letter to Friends of the **Home Coming** statue

House the Homeless is searching for *a home* for the Home Coming statue, and *we need your help*.

As you know, the Home Coming statue has been in development for several years. Starting with the initial concept of a homeless Veteran and his daughter sharing the warmth of their fire with a stranger, a homeless African-American woman, who happens upon them. This vignette illustrates, what those of us who work with the poor know, people with nothing are happy to give.

We reported several months ago that Timothy P. Schmalz, the sculptor, had sent the final clay sculpture and mold to the foundry to be bronzed. Thanks to you and everyone involved, we have raised all of the funds to complete this entire project. We are about to receive word that the life-sized sculpture has arrived in Austin, and yet we do not have a installation location. Why?

Well, certainly not because of poor planning. Throughout the artistic process of creating the statue from sketches to models to miniatures to be used to raise funds, House the Homeless has worked within the City's processes to have the site approved and readied to receive the sculpture. But now we may find that the Home Coming is homeless.

Three years ago, with 100 signatures from individuals, organizations and businesses supporting the Home Coming statue, HTH submitted an application to install the statue at the current Homeless Memorial on Lady Bird Lake, where for 25 years, we have remembered the people who have died in poverty in Austin in our November memorial service. HTH was denied. We reapplied. But, in the middle of that process, the City of Austin passed a ruling that prohibits erecting any structures on Auditorium Shores (now Vic Mathias Shores) flood plain. This is in spite of the fact that Gary Jaster, our engineer, who also placed the Steve Ray Vaughn statue just 75 yards to the west, sees no problems.

Friends of the Home Coming
May 2018
Page 2

Remarkably, after that ruling, the COA spent well over 1.5 million dollars to build structures, retaining walls, and agricultural bedding in the area surrounding our Homeless Memorial, Tree of Remembrance, bench, and bronze plaques. All of which have withstood the weather, floods, and droughts since 1993, unscathed.

The COA Parks Department then presented HTH with an alternative site, that on the face of it, sounds great. The location is on park land at the corner of Congress Avenue and Cesar Chavez Street. While the site is highly visible, it receives almost no foot traffic, and the automobile noise level is unacceptable as the volume precludes one's ability to think.

The past year has been spent working with Mayor Steve Adler's office in an effort to secure a nearby alternative site. However, his overtures have proven successful, and so ***now we reach out to you***, our friends of the Home Coming statue, for your ideas for an *alternative site*. Again, we need a site that is highly visible, heavily foot-trafficked, and relatively quiet for a memorial statue. Please feel free to reach me directly at rrtroxell@aol.com or preferably by phone at 512.796.4366 with your thoughts or legal remedy.

Thank you!

Richard R. Troxell