

## **House the Homeless, Inc. Annual Report 2004**

House the Homeless, Inc. (HtH) is an educational and advocacy group, founded in 1989 as a grassroots organization in Austin, Texas. Since then, its work has become increasingly broad sweeping and diverse, reaching across the nation and beyond. HtH considers all homeless and formerly homeless individuals to be members of this 501(c)(3) tax-exempt not for profit corporation. At no time does the make up of our Board ever fall below 60% of homeless and formerly homeless people.

The mission of this all volunteer nonprofit organization is to “provide education and advocacy around issues of homelessness and homelessness prevention.” HtH strives for pragmatic solutions that will result in ending homelessness in our lifetime.

The greatest accomplishments during this period relate to the House the Homeless-sponsored **Universal Living Wage (ULW)** initiative. The GOAL is to fix the federal minimum wage. The unique mechanism used is a single national formula that will ensure anyone working a 40-hour week will be able to afford housing in whatever city or rural area that work is done. This builds upon a growing national movement to create the national debate, and ultimately, the political will to ensure living wages.

In March 2004, HtH held a fundraiser in a private family home, complete with a live and silent auction and which was attended by close to 100 supporters.

For the third year, HtH coordinated and co-participated with 80 cities across the nation on a “tax day” action. Later HtH was instrumental in registering 200 folks during the Homeless Taskforce “Stand Down” and Voter Registration Drive held at the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH).

HtH participated in the Veteran’s Day parade. Then the annual Sunrise Memorial Service remembered more than 80 individuals who died while living on the streets of Austin in 2004. **The impact of the fifth annual Thermal Underwear Drive more than doubled, with 500 thermals, 500 pairs of gloves, and 500 pairs of socks divided among the nearly 900 needy attendees at the Christmas day celebration at ARCH.**

Following the December 26, 2004 Tsunami tragedy, HtH gathered donations of no more than fifty cents each from homeless persons wanting to give. HtH matched the \$58.46 and sent a \$116.78 check to Samaritan’s Purse for the victims working to re-build their lives.

Richard Troxell, President of HtH continued to serve on the board of National Coalition for the Homeless which produced a Hate Crimes report. It chronicled numerous hate crimes and led, in part, to HtH’s protest at Best Buy and which resulted in their discontinuing the sell of the cruel Bum video, including internet sales.

## **Other regular services continued throughout 2003-2004:**

### **Organization Information - Scope of Services and Activities**

**1. Elimination of barriers.** Year-round services provided to homeless individuals and families, including paying for identification documents necessary to accessing community social services.

For the past several years, we have prepared and printed an updated plastic pocket guide to local services.

**2. Nurturing Programs.** House the Homeless continues to conceive and incubate programs to help and empower the homeless, such as the Heart and Sole project which had joined forces with the Lauterstein-Conway Massage School to provide massage and foot care. It resulted in hundreds of new tennis shoes being donated by area merchants. In a continuing effort to promote the concept of a “hand-up” not a hand-out, a \$5 contribution was required from each participant.

**3. Self Help Opportunities.** House the Homeless also sponsored the 42<sup>nd</sup> national street newspaper, the *Homeless Advocate*. Austin’s homeless citizens are encouraged to write and distribute their own newspaper locally. This initiative enables them to education others about their economic and social conditions while providing with them a first-hand entrepreneurial opportunity.

**4. Annual Memorial.** Since 1992, House the Homeless, Inc. has recognized the men and women who have died on the streets of Austin in an annual memorial service. Area dignitaries, including two past mayors, various city council members and local citizens have joined with Austin’s homeless community to mourn the loss of the young and old which numbered 40 last year alone. The sunrise service takes place every November on Auditorium Shores, where in 1993 House the Homeless first placed a memorial plaque and planted a Live Oak tree as a living memorial. The 2003 and 2004 memorials were well attended and publicized, however sobering in that more than 80 men and women lost their lives on the streets of Austin.

There are numerous other projects that have been created and can be seen by going to our websites: [www.HousetheHomeless.org](http://www.HousetheHomeless.org) or [www.UniversalLivingWage.org](http://www.UniversalLivingWage.org). Please call Richard Troxell at 796-4366 with any questions.

House the Homeless, Inc. – There is an annual Board Meeting plus monthly phone meetings.
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Annual Board Meeting: June 19, 2004
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