

## House the Homeless, Inc.

### Annual Report 2006

House the Homeless, Inc. (HtH) is an educational and advocacy group, founded in 1989 as a grassroots organization in Austin, Texas. 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 nonprofit corporation. We strive to keep our board composition of homeless or formerly homeless people at a constant 50%. The mission of this volunteer-based 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 accomplishment to date relates to the HtH created and sponsored **Universal Living Wage** (ULW) initiative. The GOAL is to fix the federal minimum wage using existing government guidelines. The unique mechanism used is a single national formula that will ensure anyone working 40 hours in a week will be able to afford basic rental housing wherever that work is done throughout the United States.

HtH and advocates for a Universal Living Wage, join forces for two separate National Days of Action. For the third year, HtH coordinated and co-participated with 80 cities across the nation on a “Tax Day” action in April 2006. As an example of local outcomes, HtH has registered over 2000 people to vote over the years in a non partisan fashion.

Then during its third annual “Bridge the Economic Gap Day” in 2006, ULW supporters were on at least one bridge in every state in the Union, flying a banner and drawing the public to a high trafficked website ([www.UniversalLivingWage.org](http://www.UniversalLivingWage.org)). In some states like Wyoming, we were on bridges in three cities, Cheyenne, Laramie, and Casper. In Texas, we were in five cities and on ten bridges.

We also issued a National Press Release that could be down loaded and which yielded 55,000 more people who were able to read and hear about Bridge the Economic Gap Day. Additionally more than 557 credentialed media people joined them. We are getting the word out about the Universal Living Wage. House the Homeless founder, Richard Troxell’s new book, Looking Up at the Bottom Line, is being made available to grassroots organizations across the nation. It has just been released to every member of the US Congress on CD.

House the Homeless has fought tirelessly both in the courts and in the court of public opinion to protect the civil rights and promote the needs of people experiencing homelessness. For nearly two decades, HtH has rallied the homeless in the capital city of Austin Texas, in an effort to encourage and enable them to stand up and work themselves off the streets.

Richard Troxell, President of HtH continues to serve on the board of the National Coalition for the Homeless which produces an annual Hate Crimes report. In 2006 this was coupled in part, with HtH's educational protest directed at Best Buy's sale of the hate video, Bum Fights which resulted in their discontinuing the sale both in store and on the internet nationwide.

This past November marked the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Sunrise Memorial Service held by HtH in memory of 93 individuals who died while living on Austin's streets in 2006. The event began in 1992 and continued in 1993 when House the Homeless placed a memorial plaque and planted a Live Oak tree as a living memorial on Austin's Auditorium Shores.

Also during 2006, our 7th annual Thermal Underwear Drive more than doubled, when HtH provided more than 750 sets of thermal underwear, insulated gloves, thick socks, knit caps, and durable rain ponchos at our Christmas day celebration in an effort to reduce the number of deaths resulting from exposure to extreme winter weather conditions. More than 1,500 people who were in attendance were also feed.

**Regular Services:**

Provided year-round assistance to homeless individuals and families, including paying for identification documents necessary to access social services. Again in 2006, as for the past several years, HtH prepared and printed an updated plastic pocket guide (10,000 each printing) directing homeless persons and providers to local services,

House the Homeless also sponsors the 42<sup>nd</sup> national street newspaper, the *Homeless Advocate*. Austin's homeless citizens are encouraged to write and sell their own newspaper as opposed to panhandling. This initiative continues to enable them to educate others about their economic and social conditions while providing with them a first-hand entrepreneurial opportunity.

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).