



## **2019 Year in Review: Major Accomplishments & Next Up with YOUR Help!**

All volunteer with less than 5% operating costs, House the Homeless (HtH), formed in 1989, is a national leader in groundbreaking solutions, education, and advocacy. After a decade, the **HtH Home Coming Statue now stands at Community First! Village**. Dedicated in May 2019, the three-piece, life size statue uses art to humanize the 1/3 of all homeless who are Veterans, one million homeless children with an average age of nine, and the disproportionately represented persons of color, including women and the elderly. Conceived by Richard R. Troxell and sculpted by Timothy P. Schmalz, world renowned bronze sculptor, recently commissioned by Pope Francis to sculpt “Angels Unaware” representing immigrants.

**Big changes at HtH!** P.J. Liles became our new board president early this year, joining forces with our co-founder Cecilia Blanford, plus Will Hyatt, Greg Gibson, long-time board member Blythe Plunkett, and dedicated others – including of course Richard Troxell who has stepped into the role of **National Education Director (NED)** to focus on putting a second Home Coming statue in Washington, D.C. It will contain a QR code to tell the back story of The Home Coming characters and point back to Community First! Village as a national best practice. Knowing that half of the homeless can work and half are disabled, he is actively promoting Livable Incomes; i.e. Universal Living Wages and changes in Social Security Disability Benefits. He and his wife, Sylvia, are now based in North Carolina nearer their daughter. Yet, **Richard continues to drive action in Austin and nationally through HtH and the National Homeless Coalition.**

We engaged many in our “Days of Action” encouraging housing and livable incomes. Richard led our Tax Day action, replicated at post offices around the nation. P.J. Liles and Will Hyatt led our “Bridge the Economic Gap” action around Labor Day, displaying our banner over the 12<sup>th</sup> Street bridge, pointing to [www.UniversalLivingWage.org](http://www.UniversalLivingWage.org). Other activities include Marching for Peace on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and with Veterans for Peace on Veterans' Day.

With HtH assistance, Jo Kathryn Quinn, Executive Director of Caritas Austin, is taking responsibility for maintenance of the HtH Memorial site and Annual Sunrise Memorial Service (6:57 am) – set for Sunday, November 17, 2019 – again, at Lady Bird Lake. Caritas is also taking on the Plastic Pocket Resource Guide updating and printing – consistent with HtH’s history of incubating then handing off many solutions and projects.

Last year, 2018, closed with our Annual Memorial Service where the names of 147 men, women, and children who died while homeless in Austin and this year began with our annual Thermal Underwear Giveaway Party where over 500 individuals were gifted with Winter survival clothes. **A contribution of \$35 pays for a complete set HUGSS: Hat, Underwear (thermal tops & bottoms), Gloves, Socks, Scarves and Safety Whistles.** HtH is 100 percent supported by your generous donations. Thank you!

May God bless each and every one of you and help the homeless help themselves. Our local vision for the future is to focus on housing and crafts training to keep the homeless off the street. ***We, the named below, offer this letter with our deep appreciation.***

***Richard R. Troxell***, Founder & National Education Director (NED), organized HtH after coming to Austin where he worked 30 years as Director of Legal Aid for the Homeless. He devised the Universal Living Wage (ULA) formula indexed on the cost of housing wherever one works. With many supporters, he is now advocating Living Wages for those who can work (fix the Federal Minimum Wage) and fix the SSI stipend for those who cannot work, Richard is the author of *Looking Up at the Bottom Line & Livable Incomes: Real Solutions that Stimulate the Economy*.

***P.J. Liles***, President, moved to Austin in 1998 where he started the Poet's Pantry with Tom the World Poet, monthly donating to Safe Place and Casa Marianella over 200 lbs. of canned goods to Open Mics and as an entry to poetry events. He started *Operation Warm* in 2010 to collect jackets and recyclable household goods for HtH and SafePlace. He began working with HtH in 2006 as bandleader with Rockin' Gospel Project at our annual Thermal Giveaway. He became President and Co-director with Will Hyatt in June as Richard transitioned into his role as NED. P.J. has worked 11 years at Austin State Hospital (ASH) in Maintenance and now Canteen Director, while doing poetry and music at All Faiths Chapel for ASH clients and patients.

***Will Hyatt***, Chaplain and Ministry Coordinator, graduated Southwestern University in Georgetown and, for over 30 years, has been an arborist working with trees and land design. He also became the Coordinator of Open-Door Ministry at University Methodist Church and began volunteering with the homeless and veterans at several university area churches, networking with many. He currently helps with Hungry for God, a church for orphans in Garfield, and is planting a small church in San Marcos. Will has represented HtH at recent City Council and other timely meetings.

***Cecilia Blanford***, Co-Founder and Treasurer, has a "servant's heart" and works directly with homeless individuals, including through her church. She and her son, Kevin Blanford, helped Richard to establish HtH in 1989. She received her Master's in her mid-forties the same year Richard completed his degree at St. Edward's University. Her "paid" job is that of Grants Specialist for Ascension Seton.

***Greg Gibson***, Advocate, has 30 years of experience working with local, state and national organizations that focus on the development, implementation, and operation of health and human services. He has exceptional expertise and experience with populations that are without a regular means of shelter who also cope with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders.

***Blythe Plunkett***, Officer and Webmaster, works with a local nonprofit as volunteer and facilities manager. Members-at-Large include ***Jo Ann Koepke, Kevyn Meagher, and Samuel Washington***. At least 60% of our board is homeless or formerly homeless.

*Save the Date: Jan. 1, 2020 – 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Underwear Party (volunteers welcome, 512-565-1388)*