

# Palm Springs AIDS Memorial Task Force

## NEWS RELEASE

MEDIA Contact: O'Bayley Communications – Bob Bogard 760/464-0182 • bob@obayley.net

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### **Palm Springs AIDS Memorial Task Force to Hold “Town Hall-Style” Community Listening Session on March 20**

*Session is open to all community members to gather input on proposed memorial*

PALM SPRINGS, CA (February 29, 2024) – The Palm Springs AIDS Memorial Task Force announced that it will hold a free community listening session to gather input about the proposed memorial. The listening session will be held at Temple Isaiah on Wednesday March 20 from 6 – 7 pm and the event is open to all. Reservations to attend are not required. Temple Isaiah is located at 332 West Alejo Road in Palm Springs.

Following challenges and public discussion around the memorial's first design, the Task Force decided the original memorial design would not move forward. In an effort to reopen the design process and engage the public more directly, the Task Force recently conducted a series of small-scale listening sessions to solicit community input about the proposed memorial that the Task Force will donate to the City of Palm Springs. These listening sessions focused on ideas, emotions, and general thoughts regarding what the next iteration of the memorial should evoke. After the listening sessions and Town Hall, the Task Force and the artist will reimagine the memorial's design and re-engage with the City's approval process.

By incorporating this important feedback and thoughts, the Task Force hopes to ensure that the memorial fully reflects the diversity and sensitivities of the Palm Springs community. The Task Force will present a new design for the memorial that embodies the feelings and sentiments of the community. It will be prominently located in the Downtown Park and will be a lasting tribute to the lives of those lost to HIV/AIDS so that they may never be forgotten.

The Town Hall forum will be moderated by Ellen Goodman, Foundation Director at Palm Springs Unified School District. A masterful facilitator, Goodman has assisted organizations with strategic development, integrated planning, and innovative and creative initiatives. She also has been an active participant on many non-profit boards.

“It is our responsibility to remember the lives of loved ones lost to the AIDS epidemic and to continue to tell the stories of those lost so that they are never forgotten,” said Mike Richey, Co-Chair National AIDS Memorial and Task Force member. “AIDS has affected every community across the world, and it is for this reason that AIDS Memorials should be established to honor and remember those lost. We hope that the community takes the time to convey their feelings about this important topic.”

The memorial will be designed by internationally renowned Palm Springs artist Phillip K. Smith III and will be gifted to the city and people of Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley. The memorial will have maximum impact in the Downtown Park by adding great beauty and providing the opportunity for reflection and remembrance. Adjacent signage near the memorial will provide access to a companion website will allow people to record a remembrance and link to the National AIDS Memorial and the AIDS Memorial Quilt. It will also provide additional information about the AIDS pandemic and HIV prevention, diagnosis and treatment options and local resources.

Once given the approval to place the memorial in the Downtown City Park by city council, it is the goal of the Palm Springs AIDS Memorial Task Force to continue to raise the funds necessary to create and install the memorial.

**About The Palm Springs AIDS Memorial Task Force:**

It is the mission of the Palm Springs AIDS Memorial task force to ensure the lives of those lost to HIV and AIDS are never forgotten and that their stories are remembered into the future.