



Travis County Commissioners Court Voting Session Agenda Request

Meeting Date: February 11, 2020

Agenda Language:

Consider and take appropriate action regarding a request to display Heart Gallery portraits in the Hall of Government at 700 Lavaca Building for the month of April 2020.

Prepared By/Phone Number: Roger A El Khoury, 512-854-4579

Elected/Appointed Official or Department Head: Roger A. El Khoury, M.S., P.E.,
Director, FMD

Commissioners Court Sponsor(s): Commissioner Margaret Gómez

Background/Summary of Request and Attachments:

The Facilities Management Department (FMD) has been working with Health and Human Resources Services (HHS) regarding the display of Heart gallery portraits in the Hall of Government for the month of April 2020. The portraits will be exhibited on easels in addition to literature and contact information to further community engagement.

April 2020 is Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness month and HHS requesting that Travis County hosts the Heart Gallery and displays portraits of children awaiting their forever homes. The requested space in the Hall of Government is available to display the requested 15 portraits where each portrait takes up to about 2.5 feet. The 15 portraits display would be set-up and managed by Partnerships for Children along with support from the Child Protective Services Board and HHS.

Staff Recommendations:

The Facilities Management Department recommends approval of the request to display Heart Gallery portraits in the Hall of Government at 700 Lavaca Building for the month of April 2020.

Issues and Opportunities:

Refer to the attached memorandum from HHS.

Fiscal Impact and Source of Funding:

None

Attachments

Memorandum from HHS regarding Heart Gallery portraits.

Required Authorizations:

Commissioner Margaret Gómez



TRAVIS COUNTY

Health and Human Services and AgriLife Extension Services

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County Executive for HHS

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M E M O R A N D U M

Date: February 11, 2020

To: TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

From: *Sherri E. Fleming*
Sherri E. Fleming, County Executive for
Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service

Subject: Heart Gallery

The Heart Gallery of Central Texas is a portrait exhibit and community education/outreach initiative featuring children in the foster care system who are waiting for adoption. A local non-profit, Partnerships for Children that offers resources, support and comfort for foster children and families, manages the Heart Gallery program. The gallery works to find forever families for children through direct recruitment and outreach opportunities and education of potential foster and adoptive families. At the core of this outreach effort, is a portrait of a child waiting for adoption. Through the work of the volunteer photographers, a child's spirit is captured in every shot, bringing to life their beautiful personalities in ways that words cannot. These portraits say, "I'm here. And I'm special." The Heart Gallery features approximately 200 children annually; a majority of the children featured are older, sibling groups or children with special needs. The children are often referred to as the "forgotten children" those who might need a bit of extra effort to find their forever family.

The child awaiting adoption is photographed and their portrait is exhibited around Central Texas in local business, churches and public spaces to bring attention to their need for a loving forever home. This recruitment method has been very successful in finding forever homes. A few years ago, nationwide, the chance of these harder-to-place children finding a forever family was less than 1%; but today in Central Texas, that number has surpassed 60% and continues to grow.

April 2020 is Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness month and HHS is requesting that during that month the lobby outside the Commissioner's Court host the Heart Gallery and display the portraits of those children awaiting their forever homes. This display would promote awareness and further understanding regarding the complexities of abuse/neglect of children in our community and the need for forever (adoptive) homes for these children.

The portrait display would be set-up and managed by Partnerships for Children along with support from the Child Protective Services Board and HHS. It would include the portraits displayed on easels, literature and contact information to further community engagement.

The Heart Gallery promotes community awareness regarding child abuse. It shares beautiful portraits of children awaiting adoption with the community in the hope that these children will find their forever home. The gallery alerts the community to the need for loving families to provide forever homes for children who are awaiting adoption. The Heart Gallery will be a visible reminder of April as Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness month.

The link to the <https://partnershipsforchildren.org/heart-gallery/>