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COMMUNITY-DRIVEN, COMMUNITY-FUNDED EFFORT TO RE-DESIGN SF'S HARVEY MILK PLAZA AS LGBT, CIVIL RIGHTS MEMORIAL

(SAN FRANCISCO, CA) MARCH 21, 2017 | When San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk took his bullhorn and rallied crowds at the intersection of Market and Castro Streets in San Francisco, he inspired a generation and helped forge the LGBT civil rights movement, and now steps are underway to make this hallowed ground a fitting tribute to both Milk and the gay rights movement with a major reimaging of Harvey Milk Plaza, including an international competition to design the space.

The project has gained the support of those who knew Supervisor Milk best. Author and activist Cleve Jones, who stood with Milk at rallies in the same plaza 40 years ago, expressed his enthusiasm and said, "Harvey understood that the LGBT community was part of something larger, and creating something special here will inspire others to carry on the global movement for peace and social justice."

The Harvey Milk Plaza Competition is a partnership of the Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza, the American Institute of Architects San Francisco Chapter (AIASF), the Center for Architecture + Design, San Francisco Department of Public Works, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and the San Francisco Art Commission. Initial funding of \$500,000 from an anonymous donor will support the design competition and subsequent plaza development. Additional fundraising efforts are underway to secure the additional \$10 million USD required for full funding of design, construction, and maintenance of the plaza.

"The city must redesign Harvey Milk Plaza and the Muni Metro station to comply with accessibility mandates," Andrea Aiello, chair of Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza, stated. "With such substantial work already underway, a coalition of local residents, community groups and stakeholders asked city leaders if the same construction project could reimagine the space as a fitting tribute to Milk and LGBT rights, and the city agreed, however we still have a substantial amount of fundraising to do in order to ensure the success of the project."

"Harvey Milk was always pushing what is possible, bringing people together, and focusing on what we can do collectively to create change," said Jennifer Jones, AIASF Executive Director. "That's really what we're doing with the design competition: sourcing ideas from architects and design teams who comprehend the challenges of the space, but, like Harvey, recognize that no challenge is insurmountable or outweighs the importance of creating a gathering space for a community."

For more information or to donate, visit friendsofharveymilkplaza.org.

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