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# Habitation Markers get a makeover

Cindy Stephen  
for the Federation of  
Calgary Communities

The Richmond Knob Hill Community Association (RKHCA) has received a \$2,500 grant from The Friends of the Federation of Calgary Communities and The Calgary Foundation. The community was awarded the funds through the Neighbour Grants Program which supports projects that "create and strengthen the ordinary bonds of neighbourliness."

This funding will be used to refurbish three Habitation Markers that were installed in community parks throughout the neighbourhood in 1997 and to install a fourth Habitation Marker on the RKHCA community hall site, says Brian Brandon, who spearheaded the initial project more than ten years ago.

Inspired by Calgary Parks and Recreation's Artist in Residence concept, a committee was established to invite and evaluate artistic proposals in early 1996. Interested artists met with community members and were provided with an opportunity to learn more about Richmond Knob Hill and the four objectives of the project: identifying the community, enhancing community life, involving community members in the project and sustainability.

After short listing and interviewing three artists, Ruth and Steve Helton were selected for their bird Habitation Marker proposal.

The proposal focused on establishing community identity by "Establishing a theme and developing sites to repeat the theme [and creating] a network of identifying factors."

The birds and bird house theme symbolize many aspects of the community, explains Brandon.

"Many bird species are drawn to our community by the mature trees; similarly, people and families from broad demographical backgrounds call Richmond Knob Hill home. The bird houses represent the diverse architecture within our community. Locating the Habitation Markers in the three parks creates a common identifier for the community."

After further refinement of the project throughout the winter, Ruth's company Studio Luna was formally contracted April 9, 1997 to proceed with the project. Community members gathered at each of the parks to help install the Habitation Markers and celebrate the community.

Liz Lunney, President of Richmond Knob Hill Community Association says it is interesting that the themes upon which the markers were first established still hold true for the community.

"Even as the character of the community evolves, I'm noticing as we go through our planning process, we are still focused on diversity, sustainability, [preserving] our tree canopy, and making sure there are green spaces for our community members to gather. These themes run throughout our programs."

Three Habitation Markers are located at the intersections of 20 Street and 22 Avenue, 25A Street and 30 Avenue, and 22 Street and 30 Avenue in the southwest.

Over time, these original markers required repairs which have inspired the refurbishment project and grant application.

The community is looking to its residents to help with the project by donating time to coordinate the project and supplies



**Habitation Markers created by Ruth and Steve Helton in the southwest symbolize many aspects of community life.**

*Photo courtesy FCC*

such as lumber and fence materials.

Following the refurbishing and installation of the fourth marker, community members will be encouraged to participate in the Watch Guard Program, says Brandon. Those residing near the markers can volunteer to observe and photograph their marker then report to the RKHCA board once a month.

Brandon says this will not only increase awareness and a tighter connection with the Markers across a broader range of community members, it will also

encourage small groups of neighbours to go for a walk together around their park at least once a month.

To become involved, please contact Brian Brandon at 403-240-0974 or [bbrandon@shaw.ca](mailto:bbrandon@shaw.ca)



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