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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **FRIENDS OF FRIENDSHIP PARK LAMENTS RE-DESIGN OF SAN DIEGO BORDER PARK**

*New fence still prohibits human touch*

*Local coalition to hold vigil on anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall*  
***VIGIL: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2009, 12 NOON at FRIENDSHIP PARK***  
*Join us on your lunch hour. [More information here.](#)*

*San Diego, CA* – Border Patrol construction crews have created a limited “public access area” inside Friendship Park that would prevent visitors on the U.S. side from drawing closer than five feet to the international boundary. A sign posted at the entrance to the park lists “rules for entry,” among them, “Physical contact with individuals in Mexico is not permitted.” Local coalition leaders are calling for a new design allowing visitors easily to see, hear and touch each other at the historic border park.

While engaged in on-going meetings with Border Patrol officials in San Diego and Washington, D.C. regarding public access, leaders of the local coalition were disappointed to see that the newly-implemented design does little to restore the spirit of friendship that has defined Friendship Park for decades.

In response, members of the coalition will hold a vigil at Friendship Park at 12 noon on Monday, November 9, 2009, the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

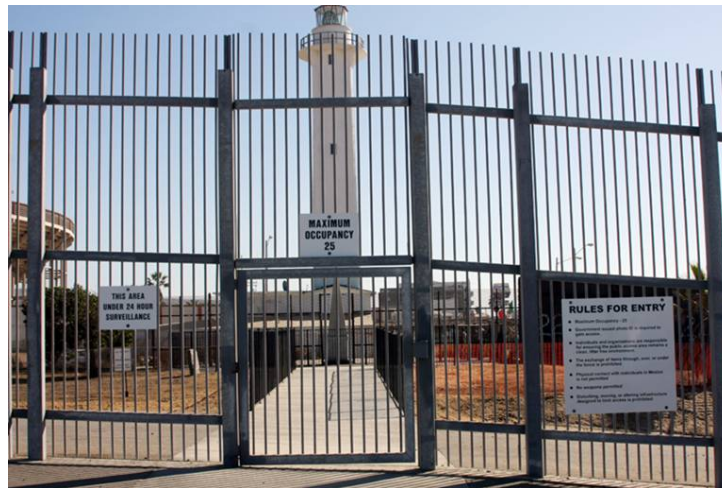
“While the rest of the world is celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall and the restoration of relationships shattered by that wall,” said Seisen Saunders, a member of the local coalition, “people here at Friendship Park can’t even touch each other. This kind of human contact is essential to creating friendships on which the true security of our region depends. Border Patrol is not taking friendship into account.”



What locals call “Friendship Park” is a small bi-national plaza, at the center of which stands a monument marking the spot where in 1849 representatives from both nations first met at the end of the U.S.-Mexico War to begin marking the new international boundary. For over one hundred and sixty years, residents from both nations have been able to approach the monument, share a picnic with family and shake hands with new friends on the other side of the border.

The park has also been the celebrated location for bi-national gatherings featuring everything from yoga classes to salsa dancing lessons to religious services, including the sharing of communion. Since 1994 hundreds of residents from both nations have gathered at Friendship Park for “La Posada Sin Fronteras,” a Christmastime celebration in which residents of Mexico and the United States re-enact Mary and Joseph’s search for a dwelling place (“posada” in Spanish) on the night of Jesus’ birth.

“I’m not sure how you can celebrate “La Posada” at Friendship Park if people are unable to touch each other and exchange gifts,” said Rosemary Johnston, a long-time organizer of the annual event.



**Friends of Friendship Park – [www.friendshipark.org](http://www.friendshipark.org)**



*Photo credit: Maria Teresa Fernandez*