

What are the obstacles to involving volunteers in outreach and some ways we might better support that work?

Group Discussion Summary • Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness • 8.18.23

A Story of We

The
story of who we, as people, might be
when we
dare to belong
is the
story of a brick
that
dreams of becoming a waterfall

the
story of who we might be
when we
dare to belong to each other
is a
name difficult on the tongue

when we
dare to belong
we
become
the
hyphen that bridges
all
that is human and heaven
self
and other

when we
see the humor and heartbreak
in the
eyes of the one who lives
across
the myth of the dividing line
we poke a hole in that sky of stories
that
says we are better off divided

when we
dare to belong to each other
we

disrupt the mythical parable
that
promises safety in our separateness

like
the radical love & friendship of
Grace
and Jimmy
Luz
and Jesse
Malcolm
and Martin_
Marsha
and Sylvia_

when we
dare to belong
we
reveal deep traditions
colliding
with unlikely friendships

coming
together,
across
dividing lines,
across
dividing lines,
across
dividing lines,
(cross dividing lines)
to
create
to heal
to
empower
us all

— Michelle Mush Lee

AND NOW, An important message from the street:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-JFbAl3KYEz4XtTRflbli6JvNf-FUCi/view>

Barriers to Outreach

- Organizing and knowing how to get connected.
- Due to the sweeps, it's difficult to find people.
- Online signup would be great.
- Organizations have paid volunteer managers, to support volunteers. We are a coalition, with no paid positions.
- Concerns about volunteer coordination contributing to sweeps in divulging location of homeless folks.
- St VdeP Resource Center supplies people doing outreach. They hear a lot from women volunteers who want support to not go out on their own.
- People are saying they've been swept 15-20 times in the past year. Trauma of sweeps makes people want to hide from everyone.
- Sweeps have decentralized campers and made outreach more more difficult. When TRM is saying sweeps is making their work much harder, it's that much more difficult for less trained outreach volunteers.

Some Solutions

- Pro tip: never go alone. Helps reduce heartbreak.
- The city should not be disposing of people's possessions.
- Recognize that outreach is needed at all times of day.
- Assign outreach workers to specific areas since people move often.
- Need at least two people to do outreach and no more than 5. Three is optimum.
- Debrief after a period of extreme weather to share what we've learned.
- There's Burlington Northern land that could be used for tiny homes or other community-sponsored efforts.
- Why is there not more opportunity for rentals on farm land?
- Need to remember that unhoused populations are different and outreach needed will also be different.
- The Friday morning coalition meeting are one the the better places for volunteers to plug in.
- Working to help sanctioned campsites like FOB Hope with things like meals, etc, is a valuable activity for people with less experience. Best to approach site manager.
- Perhaps we can make a presentation on "Volunteer Street Outreach 101"?
- Offer an orientation for new volunteers, with a link on the website to information new volunteers will need.
- There is a church that's starting to do trainings in outreach. The Resource center might be a place where trainings like that could be offered.

- Address volunteer bias (give the water, not the sermon), and use certified peer workers & LEC folks.
- There needs to be more conversation about negative impacts of sweeps and a strategy to address the harm.

Other Comments

- Economic development is getting in the way.
- We need large intake communities.
- Issues of fear and mob pressure can prevent the will to assist strangers.
- As a society, we can't let this continue - this whole situation is costing us our collective humanity.
- Pierce County Coalition does a great job of coordinating supplies and connecting people to volunteer.
- King and Snohomish counties in breakout-they don't have a network coordinating supplies, not sure where to start to volunteer, no way to connect with other.

Notes and Resources List

New and Notable

ACP: federal connectivity resources: Terrell Taylor 206-209-8001
acptabletsandphones@gmail.com

Tacoma Recovery Center is hosting OVERDOSE AWARENESS RESOURCE DAY-food, beverages, community resources, support, phones for those who qualify, free fun, and music, AUGUST 23RD (11AM-3PM). My number for more information 971-246-7076

HOMEstart is a ministry of First Lutheran Church. We serve families in transition by providing them with household items to set up their homes free of charge. For more information, please contact church office at 253-272-1538.

More information here: <https://flctacoma.org/get-involved/>

More Info on Associated Ministries Home Sharing

<https://associatedministries.org/supportive-services/home-sharing/>

Wildfire info:

<https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-homes/outdoor-air-quality/wildfire-smoke>

The Root Causes of Homelessness in King County

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0APR7dt-uZ8>

Do you have any outreach items you need or to share? Post them in the chat and I'll grab them, or enter them here: Outreach Supply Need and Share form:

<https://forms.gle/2zfK8Y5JvC1K5eXLA>

Here is the link to the PC Select Committee on Homelessness:

<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/8125/Select-Committee-on-Homelessness>

Community Spotlight Opportunity: Tell the coalition about your organization's good work. Contact tpdrutis@nctacoma.org to schedule a brief presentation. 😊

Recent Press

ACP, the federal connectivity plan, recently hit 20 million participants

<https://www.fcc.gov/consumer-governmental-affairs/fcc-announces-more-20-million-households-enrolled-affordable-connectivity-program>

Employment Opportunities

Arlington Apartments is a partnership between the YMCA of Greater Seattle and the Tacoma Housing Authority. We are a housing program for young adults experiencing homelessness 18-24 in Tacoma. We have 58 units and house about 60-70 young adults as well as about 30 children in our building under 7. We are currently hiring for 2 case managers. If you know anybody that may be interested, please have them apply at the link below.

<https://external-seattleyymca.icims.com/jobs/15136/case-manager-ii%2c-arlington-drive-housing-program/job>

Ongoing Resources and Needs

More information on inclement weather response is available at

https://www.cityoftacoma.org/inclement_weather

Everyone should connect with Isiah to get masks for air quality. Email him at:

icocroft@tpchd.org As you know, masks help with poor air as well helping reduce the transmission of cough cough, COVID and other diseases.

Outreach Supply Need and Share form: <https://forms.gle/2zfK8Y5JvC1K5eXLA>

How to sign up for Coalition listserv:

You can sign up for the email lists here: <http://pchomeless.org/Home/Listserv>

Pierce County Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness can be found here:

<https://www.piercecountywa.gov/7309/Comprehensive-Plan-to-End-Homelessness>

Please sign up to the inclement weather listserv at

<https://www.pchomeless.org/Home/Listserv>