The Role of Faith-Based Groups in Ending Homelessness

NAEH Conference Workshop 2.13
Faith-Based Social Services Have a Long History
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BUT IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT HISTORY.
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Points to Ponder

• In many cities/towns, faith-based organizations are by far the largest (only) social services providers.

• The vast majority of faith-based organizations are heavily (totally) privately funded.

• Many (most) faith-based organizations are staffed with M.D.s, Ph.Ds., and experienced clinical social workers.

• Gen-Y/Millennials are embracing (managing) faith-based social services like no previous generation has done.
Benefits of Collaborating

• Have an extremely wide “front door”

• Do not rely heavily on government funds

• Are whole-community minded and focused
Benefits of Collaborating

- Flexibility to change, add, and experiment
- Can quickly rally scores of volunteers
- Can easily coordinate the work of c/s/m
Benefits of Collaborating

• Do not give up on those who “mess up”

• Provide long-lasting post-program care

• Are uniquely suited to provide spiritual and relational healing
THE ROLE OF FAITH GROUPS IN ENDING HOMELESSNESS
In 2005, Fredericksburg, VA had:

- A 90-day emergency shelter
- A transitional housing program for women with children
- A lot of downtown churches trying to help the street homeless survive

Micah Ministries was formed after the biblical call of Micah 6:8 to combine efforts of the faith community in addressing the needs of the street homeless.
THE EVOLUTION TO RAPID REHOUSING

• Initial Services
  • Hospitality Center- combined all the basic need services, previously being offered by the churches.
  • Winter Shelter- kept people from freezing to death between November and February

• Realization
  • We were seeing the same faces year after year
  • Basic need services (food, clothing, showers, etc.) are MARKETING
  • It’s a missed opportunity not to try and assist with long-term needs, while addressing the short-term
OUTCOMES

• Micah started housing people before anyone ever spoke the words “housing first” or “rapid re-housing” in our community
• Today, we have housed 256 people since 2008, with only 10% returning to homelessness
• Fredericksburg has realized a 49% decline in chronic homelessness in the last 4 years.
• Fewer vulnerable homeless on the street
THE VIEW FROM THE BOTTOM
FAITH-BASED APPROACHES

- Extremely structured
- Overly focused on saving souls
- No structure what-so-ever
- Claim to be faith-based because they are supported by churches, but principles and practices don’t mirror religious philosophies

Micah adopted several key concepts:
- The definition of success varies
- Idea that everyone is homeless because they lack support network
- Our job was to be the face of Christ, not require the acceptance of Christ
WHY FAITH ORGANIZATIONS DON’T PARTICIPATE IN HOMELESS SYSTEMS

- Fear of institutionalization and restrictions that will be imposed by government funding
- Not wanting to be a part of a system that is perceived as overly-restrictive and non-loving and the cause of many of the problems showing up at their door steps.
- Belief that belonging to a system will require them to offer structure that will limit their ability to be relational
- Systems are perceived as something that don’t work. (i.e. they refer people and they come back or they have to get overly involved in helping someone succeed at working through the required process)
MOTIVATING FACTORS

- Ask not what your faith community can do for you, but what you can do for your faith community
  - Speak in worship and small groups
  - Offer projects
  - Help congregations in their education about the plight of the least.
- Show faith communities how the system can help their ministries be more effective
  - Churches don’t want and aren’t set up to be social services
  - Church definition of impact is usually serving more people a little than a few people well because they don’t know about alternatives
  - They are not going to research it; take the research to them
MICAH’S TOOLBOX

• Board made of appointed church members
• Monthly engagement of participating clergy
• Participating churches are our partners in ministry, not just organizations that make a line item in their budget
• Recruiting churches usually requires finding a champion in the congregation that will convince church leaders that they need to be involved
• Help church ministry have a larger community impact by coordinating their efforts and giving them targeted responsibilities in that impact.
• Be inclusive, relational and Christ-like!
Everybody’s meeting
Every night the year round
Don’t fix up.
Come in you working clothes
Man or woman, boy or girl
Rich or poor, black or white
Large or small, short or tall
Come one… Come all.
Share HOPE
END Hunger & Homelessness
CHANGE Lives
Strengthen communities ONE PERSON at a time
Syracuse
Offers shelter, meals, affordable permanent housing and an adult home.

273,384 meals served
80,128 overnight stays
512 found permanent housing
155 found employment

Binghamton
Provides a supportive residence for men who have experienced homelessness.

10,587 overnight stays
19,839 meals served
14 found permanent housing
7 found employment

Ithaca
Provides 10-beds, a shared living space and kitchen to men who have experienced homelessness.

11 found employment
1,627 overnight stays
4 found permanent housing
25 individuals served

Auburn
Provides permanent and transitional housing for homeless families.

25 families served
15,572 overnight stays
14 families found permanent housing
3 found employment

TOTALS
293,223 meals served
97,327 overnight stays
530 found permanent housing
165 found employment
My life was a stony path...
financial information
YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

Total Fiscal 2013 Revenue: $20,434,013

SOURCES OF REVENUE
- 58% Stores, salvage and bottle & can redemptions
- 19% General contributions
- 8% Government agencies
- 7% Investments
- 5% Program fees
- 2% Legacies/bequests
- 1% Other

ASSETS
- Net Assets at September 30, 2012: $18,582,163
- Increase in Net Assets in Fiscal 2013: $147,610
- Net Assets at September 30, 2013: $18,729,773

WHERE YOUR DONATIONS GO
- 85% Program services
- 9% Management and general
- 6% Fund development

For complete copies of our audited financial statements and IRS Form 990, please visit our website rmlifechanging.org
Manlius church passes the plate, raises $143,000 for Rescue Mission
Family & Senior Homeless Initiative
(One Congregation/One Family)
Denver, Colorado
The Salvation Army
History - Family & Senior Homeless Initiative

City-wide Initiative, started in 2006 by the then Mayor of Denver - Has helped over 1100 people secure housing in the City and County of Denver with a 87% success rate while participating with various congregations, businesses and other organizations.

Replication – One Congregation/One Family

State-wide Initiative, growing since 2012, was replicated from the city model and has helped 43 families in communities statewide with a 96% success rate while partnering with 20 different organizations.

Collaboration with our Continuum of Care community:

- Referrals come from service agencies, Denver’s Road Home and the general public

Funding

- Private funds come from congregations, businesses, grants and other sources outside of government funding streams to support the efforts and work of ending homelessness.
Qualifying Criteria

- Either a senior (age 60+) or a family (must have at least one child, age 17 or younger, in their legal custody)
- Currently homeless (cannot be in a lease or have permanent housing)
- Documented and verifiable source of income
- No felony with the past 12 months
- Willing to meet with a mentor team for a minimum of 6 months
Application Process

1 Initial Contact
- Call Center, service agencies, public
- Pre-screening with immediate response

2 Intake Procedure – takes 2-4 weeks
- Case Worker interview
- Complete paperwork
  - Identification (ID, SS cards)
  - Check stubs
  - Personal and employment references
  - Personal Budget plan
  - Herth Hope Index
  - Client Sufficiency Matrix

3 Acceptance into the program
- Begin looking for home
- Rental verification
- Matched with mentor team
MENTOR PROCESS

1 Learn about program
   - Congregation
   - Business associates
   - Community group

2 Form a mentor team
   - 2-5 people
   - Able to meet monthly with family or senior
   - Complete paperwork
     - Background check
     - Confidentiality

3 Financial support of $1500
   - Church budget
   - Fundraiser
   - Special Offering
   - Individual donors

4 Orientation Training
   - Attend 3 hour training
     - Logistics of program
     - Culture of Homelessness
     - What mentoring is and is not

5 Mentor/Client Match
   - First team meeting at our offices
   - Get acquainted
   - Strengths Assessment Tool
   - Create first 3 goals
MENTOR MEETINGS

- Every 3-4 weeks
- In client’s home
- Guided resources
  - Finances
  - Literacy
  - Parenting
  - Nutrition
- Always review budget and goals
- Have activities for kids
- Report to Facilitator after every meeting
- Incentives
  - After completing 3rd, 5th and 7th meetings, gift cards are given
- Celebration!
Material is available to all
Train the Trainer model
Able to involve anyone in the community who is interested
www.fshi.org
Brochures available