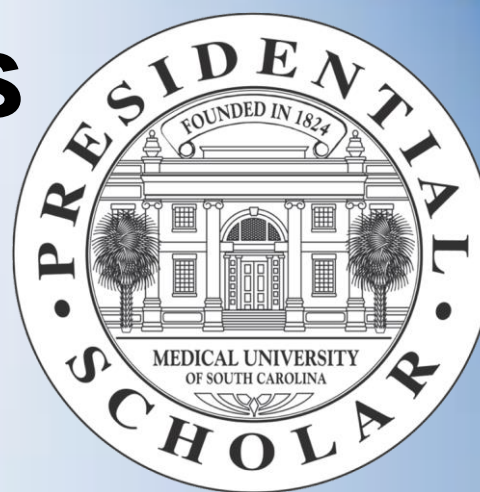


The Development of an Advocacy Video to Promote Awareness about the Homeless Population in the Charleston Community



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Background

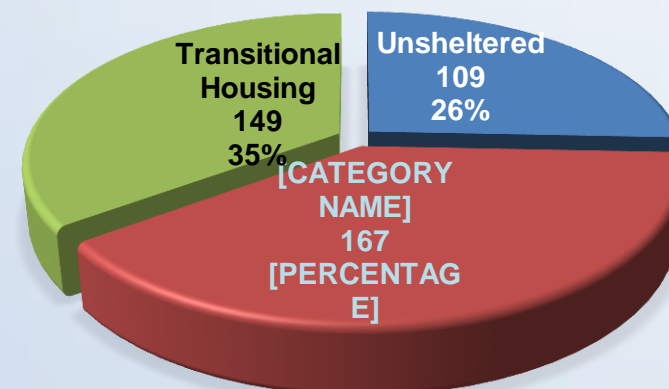
Charleston County



- 2nd** Highest rate of individuals reporting > 3 episodes of homelessness
- 3rd** Highest rate of first-time homelessness
- 4th** Highest rate of homelessness in SC

Homelessness is a major problem in downtown Charleston. According to the 2014 Point In Time count, Charleston County had 425 homeless individuals. The estimated per capita healthcare costs for the homeless for SC is \$73,000 annually (more than 11 times the average cost for all other individuals).

Distribution of Homeless Population in Charleston



Community Organizations Serving the Homeless

One80 Place is one such organization that provides temporary shelter to individuals seeking aid. Furthermore, the shelter has available a comprehensive list of services to help stop the cycle of homelessness and promote self sufficiency. However, currently the shelter only has room for approximately 40% of Charleston's homeless population.

Hot Dog Ministry is an interfaith ministry that serves a hot meal each evening, under the bridge on Huger Street between King Street and Meeting Street in downtown Charleston. Each night, a different group provides the meal and anyone is welcome. Hot Dog Ministry began in 2008 serving 60 hot dogs a night. Today, Hot Dog Ministry serves over 320 persons per night.

In recent years, an increasing number of the unsheltered homeless resorted to camping out in tents under the I-26 overpass, thus forming an informal community called Tent City. In early February 2016, Mayor John Tecklenburg announced plans to clear Tent City; in late March, a deadline of April 4, 2016 was set.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a video that can be used by advocates to raise awareness of homelessness in Charleston, South Carolina.

Methods



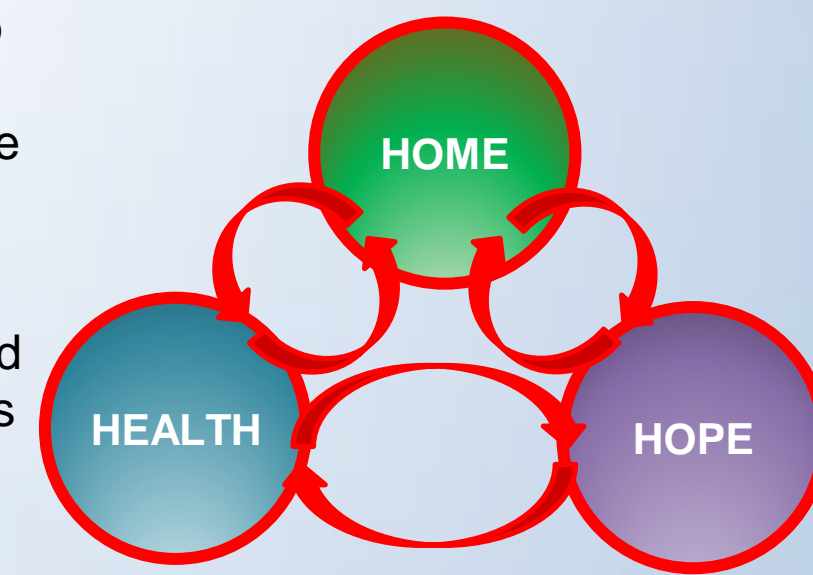
This project is designed to explain to the Charleston community the current state of Tent City and its homeless population, to highlight what Hot Dog Ministry is doing to provide assistance and how we can increase awareness about the situation.

1. We attended Hot Dog Ministry events under the bridge on Huger Street between King Street and Meeting Street to observe the work being done and interview volunteers as well as Tent City residents.
2. After obtaining proper written consent, we used video footage, photos, and information gained from the Hot Dog Ministry interviews to develop a 3-4 minute video and to discover any major issues/themes related to the homeless population in the Charleston community. Questions addressed the needs for the homeless population, the major obstacles preventing their transition out of their current situation, and the major initiatives that have contributed to better assimilation of the homeless population in the community.
3. We shared the video with Hot Dog Ministry and will share with additional potential community partners.

Impact: Identifying the homelessness Loop

Through our interactions with community partners and interviews with homeless individuals, we identified three areas which must be addressed by any potential intervention in order to maximize success: **HOME, HEALTH, and HOPE.**

- **HOME** - The community needs to find a way to address where these individuals should spend the night;
- **HEALTH** - We would like to think of ways to help these persons attain healthcare; and
- **HOPE** - Our group hopes we can provide resources and support to these people to assist them in changing their lives to eventually move from the streets to permanent housing.



It is our hope that increased awareness of organizations helping the homeless, such as Hot Dog Ministry, will attract more community partners, especially within the medical community, to bring about change to this issue.

Next Steps

Future groups can conduct

- a social network analysis to determine the diffusion of information from our video in 1-3 years.
- Systemic impact studies by examining the policy changes regarding the homeless, the homelessness rate, and increase in the number of programs supporting the homeless or funding in programs supporting the homeless.

References

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