**Keeping our distance doesn’t solve the problem: It’s time to house our community’s homeless.**

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**Introduction**

- In 2015 Modesto, California, 1,408 individuals reported to be food and shelter insecure.
- Five homeless shelters in the city can’t handle the demand for overnight housing and assistance.
- In fact, out of the five organizations, only three offer housing: 60 days for women and children escaping domestic violence (23 total people).
- Nightly food and bed on a first come, first serve basis, no shelter.
- 100 individuals housed at the Salvation Army shelter with a waiting list.

- The nearest overnight housing assistance is 15 miles in either direction, Patterson and Turlock.

**Methods**

- Study will be conducted in three separate parts: compiling past research on effective homeless sheltering and treatment, determining needs and wants of homeless in my community, and drumming donations & investment to build a sustainable facility.
- Research conducted through the California State University, Stanislaus library, and consulting Professor Cirtlam and Jackie Popp, Unite Samaritans, Hughson site manager for guidance.
- Surveys will consist of one page of questions, including days/week spent doing an activity, scale of 1-5 assessing opinions of effectiveness, availability, and thoughts of self, with a free response. Surveys offered at brick and mortar assistance organizations in English and Spanish, 20 mile radius with center in downtown Modesto, Beard Brook Park.
- Survey period of one week survey, one week off, and two more weeks of survey quantify one survey period. Survey period can repeat 11 times for a full year of data collection to identify seasonal needs. If less than 100 responses are received in survey period one, accessibility, survey difficulty, and locations surveyed will be reconsidered.
- Reintegration is evaluated on a multi-level scale as each individual has different social roles and capabilities.
- Facility made of recycled Intermodal Steel Building Units (ISBU) (low cost, easy to convert, abundance of containers, safe and portable).
- Community space to house 40-45 individuals, 40-50 ISBUs. Target participants include veterans, families, and motivated individuals entering a legal agreement, with a max stay of two years.
- Land survey for best access to solar, wind energy, and community gardens for sustainable food supply and employment/education opportunity.
- The organization will apply for 503-c non-profit status to operate, hiring medical personnel, teachers, cooks, etc. Motivated staff act as friends, family, mentors and references to reintegrate individuals to society, and assist them in acclimating to social norms. Technical training and vocational education offer doors to other parts of the community, while offering education for children at parents discretion.
- Three strike system for accountability, legal education and representation prior to

**Research Question**

- What is the optimum environment for insecure individuals to willingly change their living situation to assist them in stabilizing their lifestyle, reducing or eliminating their insecurity, and reintegrating them into Modesto’s society?
- How effective would a sustainable living community be in feeding, sheltering, educating, training, motivating and maintaining their health, compared to existing methods?

**How will we end Modesto’s growing homelessness crisis?**

**Expected Results**

- I suspect that of the homeless who visit the assistance programs around town, ideally around 50% would be articulate, able to read, and would care to respond to the survey. The premise behind the survey is giving the homeless, who are so often brushed away, a chance to have their voice heard and their concerns represented, demonstrating that the community recognizes societal obligations owed to our homeless. However, due to drug addiction and mental illnesses, many homeless will not have anything helpful to say, or have the cognitive ability to respond efficiently to the survey. Using the survey could be repeated throughout different times of the year to gather data, identifying any trends that may occur seasonally.

- I believe that the survey will prove most effective in the actual locations the participants travel to for assistance, and on the food delivery vehicles that go into the communities themselves. Regarding speaking to the homeless directly, I can’t honestly say that interviewing them as they approach the dandelion is as straightforward as surveys. Even if donors or investors are not interested, quantifying the demand for sustainable intermittently-housing will

**Background and Literature Review**

- Environment plays a key factor in homelessness and effective treatment, including variables like people, community, health, and overall motivation. Risky, defined by Miriam Webster’s Dictionary as “attended with risk or danger,” environment heavily influence lifestyle choices.
- A study by researchers publishing in the “San Francisco takes first-hand accounts via participant-led interviews to determine dimensions of homelessness; one factor is their background: the more unstable the childhood, the higher the chance of an insecure individual...” (Chang, 2017).
- Centralized drug markets further endanger homeless individuals, in conjunction with high mental illness rates among the homeless in Modesto (Fauroe, 2016).
- A three year observational study revealed those offered permanent housing vouchers consistently lived higher value of life (education, health & moving permanently) (Semies, 2013).
- A medical conference determined veterans have increased importance on activity as services; many of whom suffer from PTSD and isolate themselves (Remnik et al., 2012).
- Burns’ 2012-2015 Montreal, Quebec study revealed those in shelters connect better than with society due to trauma.
- A sustainable community report recognizes an effective outline as planning the vision, employing proactive government legislation, and applying the community’s voice in the decision process (Hildan, 2012).

**Significance**

- Stanislaus County Action Plan AP-65 Homeless and Other Special Needs Activities - 91.220(e) has 4 goals: ending chronic homelessness in 5 years, prevent Veteran’s homelessness in 5 years, prevent end homelessness for families, youth and children in 10 years, aiming at ending homelessness.
- Ideal housing dimensions of ISBUs are 8’x8’x20’, or 8’x8’x40’, totaling 160 and 320 square feet respectively. Sonoma County code determines 120 square feet minimum for living space, 70 square feet for a bedroom, and 50 square feet for a kitchen (Niederman, 2017).
- Although homeless prevention and assistance has been around for years, my study will provide valuable research as to the effectiveness of assistance; just because we can put a homeless person in a bed, shower, and feed them for a day does not mean we are effectively combating homelessness. Where will they go if the shelter fills up, or if they rescue a dog on the street to fight loneliness? My research is applied, aimed at combating the homelessness in the City of Modesto, for which there is a board of businessmen and community members who actively look for a solution.

**REFERENCES**


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