Decade to Doorways (D2D)

“Hearing The Voice of People Who Have Lived It”

Presentation
January 29, 2018

Agenda

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Survey Results
- Stories, Recommendations, and Response to Submitted Questions
- Q&A
- Wrap-up

Voice & Vision, Inc., D2D Advisory Team Results - LE Present 1-17-18
2017 – Survey Purpose

...gather the voice of individuals and families who have been homeless and used services in Chester County regarding ...

- experience with the outreach network, and
- assessment process, and their
- interest in being part of an advisory team moving forward

A survey of agency directors was also conducted to learn from them about the challenges and their recommendations for serving people on the verge of homeless or homeless.

2017 D2D Survey Number of People

- 59 interviews with people who have experienced homelessness
- Of these, 49 expressed interest in being part of an advisory effort in some capacity to share experience, feedback, and help make recommendations
2017 D2D Survey
Where People Were Homeless

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Chester</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coatesville area</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenixville</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern ChesCo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of County</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downingtown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malvern/Frazer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2017 D2D Survey
Factors that led to homelessness

Comment Chart: ...factors that led to you/your family’s homelessness? (59 Respondents)

- Job loss, rent increase (19): 34%
- Relationship issue, divorce, separation,... (20)
- Drug or Alcohol abuse (11): 18%
- Injury or illness (10): 16%
- Depression or mental illness (9): 16%
- Money issues (5): 16%
- Damage to home (4): 9%
- Criminal, legal involvement (4): 7%
- Other (3): 7%
- Eviction/Landlord issues (3): 6%
- Immigration issues (3): 6%
- Home foreclosure, bankruptcy (3): 5%
2017 D2D Survey
What could have helped prevent?

Comment Chart: What could have helped prevent you/your family from becoming homeless multiple times? (31 respondents)

- Addiction/mental health help (10) 26%
- Help with medical/medical bills (8) 19%
- Rental assistance/Affordable housing... 19%
- Better choices on my part (6) 16%
- Finding work/income (5) 16%
- Dependable family/support system (4) 13%
- Life Skills (budgeting, advocating...) (3) 10%
- Help for Fam/child w/addiction/mental.. 10%
- Transportation for work (2) 6%

2017 D2D Survey
Challenges or Barriers

Comment Chart: ...most difficult challenges or barriers you faced in homelessness? (59 respondents)

- Mtg basic needs* (17) 30%
- Housing issues/conditions* (13) 23%
- Lack of transporation (10) 18%
- Lack of medical ins. or medical/MH/SA... 16%
- People treating you badly (6) 11%
- Communal living* (6) 11%
- Staying clean, find healthy... 9%
- Lack of child care (2) 4%
- Feeling low / low-self esteem (1) 2%
2017 D2D Survey
Highlights from Results - Strengths

- There are many outreach services and supports in Chester County
  
  AND

- They communicate well across the County

2017 D2D Survey
Highlights from Results - Considerations

1. 32% of respondents indicate help with addiction/mental illness would have helped prevent multiple homeless experiences

2. There is a clustering of outreach services in major towns and a lack in other towns, complicated by and a lack of affordable public transportation

3. Need hot meals; difficult to store food and you can’t cook in a tent. Food pantries -- often the food is unhealthy (all carbs / sugars).
4. To get/maintain housing people say they need **basics** that are hard to come by when homeless (30% or 17 people indicate access to basics as biggest challenge when homeless):

Shower, Clothing to interview, place to do Laundry, Haircut, Cell phone with email & text

5. Not enough **affordable, safe housing**

6. Some people shared comments around a wish for community and staff to have **empathy** when working with them. *It can happen to you, and we don’t choose this.*
Let’s Hop to our panel…

Panel

• These are a few of the 49 people who said Yes! to helping give back through an advisory
• On January 17, we had a meeting to discuss the survey results to get their take
• This team will now share:
  • Priorities (for their Top 3 ‘Considerations’)
  • Clarification through stories
  • Recommendations
  • And Answers to Questions You Submitted
NOT ENOUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- We need landlords to hear our story and to be more acceptable of Section 8
- Need more options than Coatesville that accept vouchers
- The prices of vouchers need to keep up to the area ($1206 to cover a 3 BR after utilities??)
- Need landlords to keep up the property conditions. People living in Section 8 make less waves and accept poorer conditions. Section 8 tenants need to know their rights

HELP PEOPLE WITH THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

- One difficult situation leads to another
- Offer education/treatment for people struggling with mental illness and addiction that are homeless
- Help people to identify they have mental illness/addiction. Education about mental illness and addictions to help people identify.
- More positive case managers
- Follow through and check in with me. I might fall back but still need the help.
WE NEED A NETWORK OF OUTREACH

- Mentoring, corporate volunteers, volunteer coordinators to help with the need
- Send more volunteers in the field knocking on doors and calling to check in with people
- Transportation to get people to services and community agencies
- An entire system of appreciation and empathy for the professionals, volunteers, AND the people that need the help

Q1: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

- Let us call direct to shelters and explain our own situation
- Expand the criteria for ‘homeless’
- Identify unique needs and connect us to care (veteran, mental illness, children, domestic violence, addiction) or the right shelter for our needs
- Need a place to call to be referred to resources – any resources not just “system” resources
Comment chart: What did you discover in your journey that you wish you would have known sooner that might help people currently experiencing homelessness? (30 respondents)

- Resources (18%)
- To ask for and listen to help sooner (6%)
- Money management (5%)
- To foster healthy relationships (4%)
- What I was capable of / there is hope (2%)
- Check out a place before renting (1%)

Q2: RESOURCES YOU WISH YOU KNEW SOONER?

- Applying for welfare
- Section 8
- Help when you get evicted or job loss (who to call)
- Help for women in domestic violence. A shelter. If it’s full, refer to a safe place!
- Human Services agency
- The Ones From the Report Are Good: furniture, money assistance, education opportunities, mental health /addiction services, bus tokens, shelters, domestic violence help, and help finding a job
Q3: THOUGHTS ON ADVISORY TEAM?

- Reasonable time to serve: 6 months to a year
- Keep it casual and fluid (allow people to come in and out based on what’s going on in their life)
- Have meetings at local restaurants (“instead of here”) 
- Let people virtually attend from their phone
- Provide transportation or arrange carpool
- Make it a “Think Tank”

2017 D2D Survey
Two handouts

Services you found most helped with regaining stability in your life?

What do YOU want the community, County, or service providers to know to help people who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness?

Attached in your handout.

Voice & Vision, Inc., D2D Advisory Team Results - LE Present 1-17-18
Thank you!

Voice & Vision thanks all of the people who graciously offered their time to interview and to come and talk about their experience and recommendations to help improve services for everyone!