



Homelessness Resource Kit

Introduction

"He served his country and did three tours in Iraq. He experienced death, war and battle. He came home with an honorable discharge, post-traumatic stress disorder and few employment opportunities. One piece of bad luck followed another until he found himself sleeping in the alleyway of a shopping center. He just wants a job and the chance to get his life together again." - United Way ¹

"She is a woman of a certain age, a homemaker married for 30 years before her husband left her. The last thing she would ever do is to become a burden to her grown children who live in different states. They think Mom is doing OK, but Mom is not OK. She lost the house eight months ago and has been sleeping in the car every night since and visiting libraries in the daytime hours trying her best to blend in." - United Way ¹

Sometimes things in life snowball and the consequences can leave us without stable housing. Getting a library card or certain government services often require a verifiable address. Not having a home and things like bathing facilities, kitchens, or a sense of being normal can leave people feeling a lack of self worth, or embarrassment that can foster a mindset where the ability to locate and obtain help is simply out of reach.

The Colorado State Library (CSL) has launched the *Let's talk about it! : CSL Big Red Resource Kits* initiative to help public library staff within the state better understand and serve traditionally underserved populations, and to provide the tools needed to host and facilitate critical community conversations.

- Libraries provide a necessary component in our communities.
- Curating resources and providing information and access to locally available aid/assistance can be vital.
- Libraries can be trusted places for our community to share opinions and questions with librarians facilitating a civil process.

- Part of the way we come together as a community is by fostering the understanding and availability of information. Libraries are the institutions that bring these practices to their local communities.
- Libraries can help expand a person's worldview beyond their immediate circumstances

Here are four things to consider for your library:

- Do you have a list of resources for families on the brink of homelessness available without the library user having to ask?
- Do you provide a map to the locations of these services?
- Is there a list of bookmarked addresses on the computers for applications and services online?
- Has your library partnered with local organizations and businesses (hospitals, utilities dept, women's shelter, food banks, laundromats) to address the needs of the homeless in your community?

Who is this kit for?

This kit is created to be a starting point to help libraries reach and support those without stable housing within their communities. It includes activities for:

People experiencing homelessness

Programs and activities for those experiencing homelessness including telling their story, dialoguing with the community, and receiving resource lists and information about local assistance services.

People learning about homelessness

- Participate in a facilitated homeless simulation game
- Take part in a community conversation
- Create Care Kits for distribution to people who are homeless
- Participate in a book club event to read related works and discuss with others.

Internal staff

Learn how to create an environment that feels welcoming, informative and supportive, including ideas for reducing policy barriers. Learn how to host conversations that explore public perceptions, help to debunk myths around homelessness, and strengthen community ties. Library staff can

- participate in a facilitated homeless simulation game
- review best practices for serving the homeless
- establish partnerships with community service providers
- research local services for the homeless

- create resource lists and maps for takeaway
- organize, promote and facilitate a community conversation
- organize and facilitate a book club event to read related works and discuss with the public.

Inside this binder


- Activities & Programs
 - Making Care Kits
 - Experiencing Homelessness
 - Tell Your Story
 - Facilitate a book club event
 - Have and Have Nots
 - Fly Away Home
- Community Resources Worksheet Template
- Facilitating Community Conversations How To Guide
- Additional Resources
- Kit Contents List (on clipboard)
- Feedback Form (on clipboard)

Feedback and Sharing

Please help us improve this kit by sharing your comments, experiences, and suggestions. You can contact Kieran Hixon (Basch_M@cde.state.co.us) for guidance at any point along your journey. When you return the kit, please fill out and include the Feedback Form found on the clipboard. With your permission, we will update this kit's Online Resources page <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/> with the ideas and activities your library shares. Help us learn from your experiences and share those learnings with others.

Loan period

The loan period for the Homelessness Resource Kit is 2 months. If you would like to keep it longer, please contact Maddie Basch (Basch_m@cde.state.co.us) to make arrangements before the loan period



expires. If it is not on hold for another institution, we will do our best to extend the loan by another month.

Returning the kit

As you prepare to return the kit, please verify that it is complete using the *Kit Contents* checklist on the clipboard. Also, be sure to include your completed Feedback Form so that we can improve the experience for everyone.



Worksheet: Facilitating a Community Conversation on Homelessness

Introduction

This worksheet is intended to help your library plan a facilitated community conversation about homelessness and people experiencing homelessness in your community. While we present different approaches to holding a *community conversation*, all communities are different, so you may feel more comfortable relying on your own intuition. If this is the case, you'll want to explore the variety of options offered in this kit. Perhaps you'll use some of our suggested questions and formats; perhaps you'll develop your own. Just remember to stay attuned to the character and mood of your group. Decide what's working and be prepared to adjust to fit your community's needs.

Why Host a Community Conversation at the Library?

- Libraries are trusted institutions in their communities. Therefore, it is a natural fit for them to host impartial conversations about important issues.
- Facilitated conversations give library staff the opportunity to learn directly from community members about their needs, hopes, and fears/concerns.
- By engaging in thoughtful dialogue, community members can begin to find common ground and understanding about divisive issues.

Structuring Your Community Conversation

This conversation will give your community a chance to learn more about homelessness and discuss individuals' perceived issues and potential solutions regarding homelessness in your community. It provides a forum for everyone involved to have a chance to tell their story and share their perspective on homelessness. This helps build trust and enables people to be open to listening to perspectives that may be very different from their own. The structure for this conversation is important to reach these objectives. Setting up the conversation structure and communicating it clearly to the participants is crucial for success. Consider the formats provided in the "Learn More" section of this document.

The four key aspects for facilitating a Community Conversation are to:

1. Introduce the conversation goals and structure
2. Establish behavior expectations
3. Work through the questions
4. Communicate your follow-up plan

It will be helpful to create a team of individuals who help organize your community conversation. This team would be responsible for

- Building diverse partnerships with community groups and individuals,
- Planning for how the conversations will happen,
- Recruiting community members for the conversations,
- Recruiting facilitators for the conversations, and
- Thinking about how to support ideas that result from the conversations.

When building a leadership team, consider the variety of diversity in your community:

- Racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Religious or philosophical views
- Political views
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Disability
- Profession
- Neighborhood
- Viewpoints on homelessness
- Education level
- Gender
- Socio-economics

Also consider how you could include:

Young people

- People experiencing homelessness
- Parents, caregivers, and guardians
- Teachers, school administrators, and other educators
- Health care and wellness professionals
- Law enforcement professionals
- Public officials
- Human and social service providers
- Mental health professionals

Once the team is in place, you can work together to define your goals, clarify your purpose, and create a plan for the work to follow. Think about the outcomes you want to see from working together as well as from the conversation. Consider:

- How your team will work together;
- The kinds of change you want to see in your community as a result of this effort;
- How many people you want to participate; and
- If and how you want to implement the ideas generated as a result of the conversation

Planning Your Community Conversation

Who will you invite?

- Your entire community
 - Identify how and when you will communicate this event:
- A specific group:
- Other: _____

Will you bring in an outside expert to facilitate?

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

Which facilitation model will you use? (see *Learn More* section)

- Aspen Institute
- Harwood Institute
- Public Conversations Project
- National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation
- Other: _____

Identify Roles

- Facilitator(s):
- Note taker(s):
- Small group discussion leader(s):
- Community liaison(s):
- Other: _____

How will you follow up?

- Review conversation summary with internal staff
- Share conversation summary with group participants
- Share conversation highlights with other community partners
- Other: _____

Learn more

Aspen Institute - Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library, version 2.0

http://www.libraryvision.org/download_action_guide

Harwood Institute

<https://theharwoodinstitute.org/tools/>

National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation - Resource Guide on Public Engagement

http://www.ncdd.org/files/NCDD2010_Resource_Guide.pdf (Available for download on <http://cslkits.cvlisites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness/> and the Red USB "Flash" drive.)

Fostering Dialogue Across Divides: A Nuts and Bolts Guide from the Public Conversations Project

www.publicconversations.org (Website)

<http://bit.ly/fosteringdialogue> (Available on Red USB "Flash" drive & in a spiral bound book)

Organizing Community-Wide Dialogue for Action & Change Everyday Democracy

www.everyday-democracy.org/en/Resource.39.aspx

Café to Go! A Quick Reference Guide for Putting Conversations to Work, World Café

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/tools-store/hosting-tool-kit/>

The Homeless: 39 Questions for Your Reflection

<http://bit.ly/39questions>



Worksheet: Identifying Community Resources

Introduction

Librarians, by profession, are information providers. Having an easily accessible list of local, county, state, and national resources to use as a source of ready reference for those who are experiencing homelessness can make it easier to help patrons who are looking for a place to sleep, eat or bathe. Not only can folks experiencing homelessness benefit from referrals to places supporting these activities, it can also help the library form partnerships with service agencies in the local community. Formalizing, standardizing, and promoting the availability of community services at the library has a benefit for the patron, library and community service agency. Library staff can focus on promoting and delivering library services while making appropriate and respectful referrals for services not available in the library. By training staff and connecting users to resources, the library is not just helping individuals, but its community at large.


One example of a library working creatively in their community to offer a necessary resource to their patrons experiencing homeless was developed at The Carnegie Library in Trinidad, Colorado. This library was able to create a partnership with a local laundromat. Now the library can issue a voucher for a free load of laundry to patrons in need.

Instructions

Use this worksheet to document any people, programs, entities, or other resources that are relevant to the specific issues faced by those experiencing homelessness in your community. The data fields in this worksheet are suggestions only; you may wish to create your own worksheet based on your library's needs.

To maximize its usefulness, be sure to update the worksheet regularly and make it accessible to relevant library staff. A template of this worksheet can be found on the website at <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness/> and on the included USB 'flash' drive.

Contact Name, Title, & Organization	Contact info	Notes
Ex: Jane Doe, Community Liaison, CO Dept. of Local Affairs	jane.doe@domain.org 720-333-3333	Contacted 11/21/17
Ex: Jane Doe, Community Liaison, CO Dept. of Local Affairs	jane.doe@domain.org 720-333-3333	Contacted 11/21/17
Ex: Jane Doe, Community Liaison, CO Dept. of Local Affairs	jane.doe@domain.org 720-333-3333	Contacted 11/21/17
Ex: Jane Doe, Community Liaison, CO Dept. of Local Affairs	jane.doe@domain.org 720-333-3333	Contacted 11/21/17
Program or Entity	URL	Notes
Ex: Office of Homeless Youth Services	https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/office-homeless-youth-services-ohys	Add to our online community resources page.
Ex: Office of Homeless Youth Services	https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/office-homeless-youth-services-ohys	Add to our online community resources page.
Ex: Office of Homeless Youth Services	https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/office-homeless-youth-services-ohys	Add to our online community resources page.
Ex: Office of Homeless Youth Services	https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/office-homeless-youth-services-ohys	Add to our online community resources page.
Other Resource	URL	Notes
Ex: Spent (online poverty simulation activity)	http://playspent.org/	Use as a staff orientation activity.
Ex: Spent (online poverty simulation activity)	http://playspent.org/	Use as a staff orientation activity.
Ex: Spent (online poverty simulation activity)	http://playspent.org/	Use as a staff orientation activity.
Ex: Spent (online poverty simulation activity)	http://playspent.org/	Use as a staff orientation activity.



Activity: Simulation

Experiencing Homelessness

Introduction

By using the Home Sweet Homelessness game, players take part in a homelessness simulation. All of the scenarios in the game came from actual situations and decisions made by people experiencing homelessness. Experiencing the choices, even in game play, helps participants better understand and develop empathy for the decisions faced by people experiencing homelessness.

Directions for the game are included in the separate white binder in this kit. Make sure to read the instructions completely to prepare yourself in advance for the experience!

Intended Audience

The game is meant to be played by people who have not experienced homelessness and people who have... together!

Activity Goals

- Understanding the homeless experience
- Building connections
- Removing barriers to conversation and understanding
- Dispelling myths and stereotypes about homeless living

Description

An easy to play, engaging board game designed by guests in a homeless shelter, it is intended to serve as a "simulator" for those who have never experienced what the designers lived through every day.

Materials Needed

- Pizza box game board (included)
- Pouch of pieces (included)
- User-guide (white-binder , included)

Promotion

Make a plan for promoting this activity or program within your library. Your plan doesn't have to be extensive, but it should address:

- The people involved in the activity and their roles;
- Budget; (will you be providing snacks, prizes, takeaways?).
- The overall message (what are you hoping to achieve with this activity)
- Any existing library marketing or branding guidelines;
- How you will promote the activity, which could include:
 - Social media
 - Website
 - Email newsletter
 - Printed materials like posters or bookmarks
 - Cross-promoting with partner organizations
 - Local news media
- Creating promotional materials, such as graphics, press releases, or printed materials
- Timeline

Additional Resources

Spent – <http://playspent.org>

Spent is an interactive game that challenges you to manage your money, raise a child and make it through the month getting paid minimum wage after a stretch of unemployment. It is a poverty simulator that can be played by one person that is similar to the Home Sweet Homelessness board game

Activity: Simulation

The Haves & Have Nots

Introduction

In this hands-on group engineering activity, tweens and teens will experience what it's like for some to have more and better resources than others. Through thoughtful conversation after the activity, they'll be able to translate their experiences into larger themes of societal inequity.

Adapted from a lesson In What's It Like To Be Homeless? An education curriculum for children and youth, presented by Bridge Communities, www.bridgecommunities.org/.

Intended Audience

This activity is designed for tweens and teens, though it could be adapted for adults as well.

Activity Goals

- Participants will experience inequity through a hands-on engineering activity.
- Participants will be able to translate their experiences into larger themes of societal inequity.
- Participants will be able to redesign the activity to make it fair for all participants.

Description

The main activity should take about 1 hour; the extension activity may take an additional 30 minutes.

Divide the group into teams, with 2-5 people per team depending on the size of the larger group. Give each team one type of paper (tissue paper, cardstock or cardboard, newspaper, printer paper)*, along with their goal:

Using only this paper, work together as a team to build the tallest structure you can. You'll have 15 minutes. There should be a prize at the end for the winning team.

Present each group with their paper as if all materials are equal and fair.

*Another option is to give 2 teams the same type of paper but differing amounts of it.

Time the activity and stick to a strict 15 minute limit. After the time is over, see which team built the tallest structure.

Gather the whole group together for a discussion of the activity. Here are some sample discussion questions:

- How did it feel to be on the team with the lesser (or fewer) building materials? What was it like to watch the team with “better” building materials? Did it make you want to give up or try harder and be more creative?
- How did it feel to be on the team with the best materials or the better ideas for building a strong structure?
- What about the members of the teams with the so-so building materials? Did you wish you had more/better materials, or were you glad you didn’t have worse/fewer materials?
- Did any team with seemingly worse materials build a taller or stronger structure than a team with seemingly better materials?
- Did any team help another team, or share ideas? Why or why not? Did it help?
- Re-create this activity so that it’s fair to all groups. What would it look like?
- How does this activity relate to real life? What resources does your family have that make life easier for you? Which resources do you take for granted? (Do your parents own a house? A car? Did they go to college? Do you always have enough to eat? To wear?)
- Think about those who don’t have as many resources as your family does. How might life be more difficult for them?
- How would it affect you if you shared some of what you have with those who have less?
- What could you do to help others with less in your community?
- What could your library do to help those with less in your community?
- Is having more always better? Why or why not?

Materials Needed

All materials may be used/scrap and may be of various sizes and colors.

- Newspapers
- Tissue paper
- Cardstock or cardboard
- Printer paper

Promotion

Involve your teen/youth services staff in promoting this program, along with those that work on promotion for all library services.

Ask your regular teen and tween library users and your teen advisory board members to promote this program to their friends via word of mouth and their own social media accounts.

Post it on your library's main social media and social media channels specifically for teens if you have those, and post it on your website (including teen page and event calendar), and print and e-newsletters.

Ask teacher librarians and social studies teachers in middle and high schools to tell their students about the program and distribute flyers.

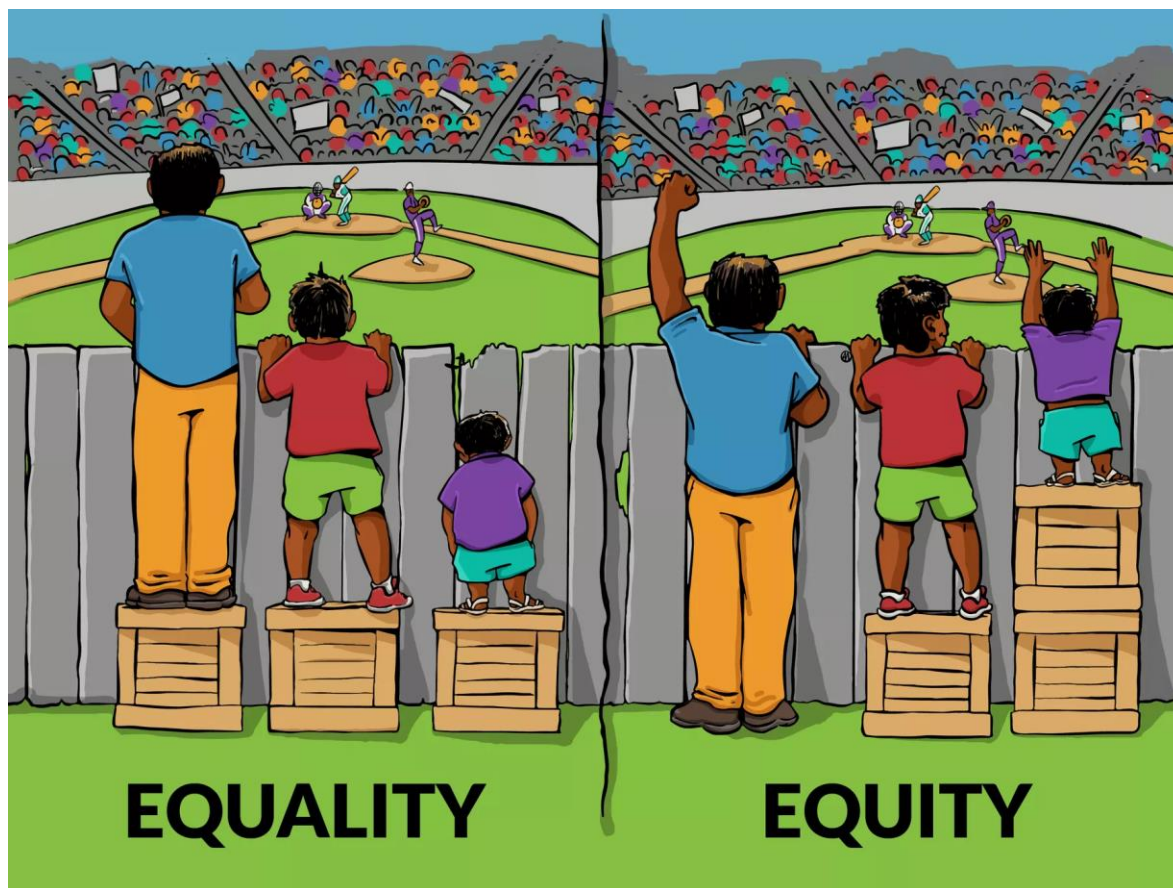
Begin promoting the program at least 2 months in advance.

Extending the Activity

Discuss the difference between equality and equity with the group.

- Equality: Treating everyone the same, and providing the same resources for all.
- Equity: Providing the resources that everyone needs to be successful.

Equality assumes everyone is starting from the same place and has the same needs. Equity takes into account that people are starting at many different levels and so they need different resources to be successful. This difference is illustrated in the graphic on the next page.



Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire. <http://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/>

Though this illustration is popular, some feel it doesn't adequately address the concepts of equality and equity. One criticism is that the illustration is based on the individual's own shortcomings (height)--and thus blame the individual--while many reasons that people may need more resources are societal and beyond their control.

Sample discussion questions:

- In your own words, what is the difference between equality and equity?
- What do you think of the illustration? Is it adequate and complete enough to explain the concepts of equality and equity?
- What other illustrations can you find online to explain these terms? Do you think they explain the terms better or not as well?
- Draw your own illustration to explain these terms.
- Think about equality and equity in relation to the building activity. Can you give examples of how to make the game more equal? How about to make the game more equitable?

Activity: Discussion

Fly Away Home - Storytime Activity

Introduction

FLY AWAY HOME by Eve Bunting is a moving story of a homeless boy and his father who move from terminal to terminal in an airport, trying not to be noticed and discovered. The boy expresses frustration about being homeless, yet he has hope for the future. The book is included in this Kit.

In the Reading Rainbow video, (<http://bit.ly/rflyawayhome>) children whose families have been homeless share how this happened and how it felt. The narrator encourages us to make a difference in our communities. Viewers meet a boy who volunteers at City Harvest, an organization which gathers prepared food for distribution to the homeless, and the girl who began Common Cents, an organization whose members collect pennies and use them to buy items for homeless shelters.

Intended Audience

Primary and middle school children

Activity Goals

- Create awareness and empathy for children experiencing homelessness
- Children will identify reasons why people become homeless
- Children will be able to identify why homelessness can be dangerous and embarrassing.

Description

Using the provided video and book, talk with children about homeless children and families.

Topics for Discussion

Before viewing the video, explore the concept of “What is ‘home’?” with the children. - What is needed in order to have a home? Who makes up a home?

Read *Fly Away Home* (included in this Kit) to the children.

The story presents opportunities for children to engage in some critical thinking. Ask the children questions to spark their thinking.

Here are some sample discussion questions:

- What do we know about large airports that makes them possible living space for homeless persons? Would all airports serve equally as well for the homeless? Why or why not? Why do the boy and his father dress in blue? What new problems will be created when it is time for Andrew to start school? What is the significance of the bird in the story?
- The boy and his father try to make themselves as inconspicuous as possible in the story. Ask the children what other places, besides an airport, could be a “home” for a homeless person; places where large groups of people pass through who are preoccupied with their own lives? What would that person have to do in order to remain unnoticed in that setting?
- Discuss the variety of situations that might cause a family to become homeless. Include in the discussion the understanding that living without a home is short term for some people, but may be long lasting for others.
- After viewing the video, discuss different emotions that the homeless young people on the video were experiencing (e.g., fear, anger, sadness, joy, envy, etc.) Have the children identify circumstances under which these emotions might surface.

Adapted from READING RAINBOW TEACHER'S GUIDE Program #116 – Fly Away Home 2005GPN/University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Promotion

Make a plan for promoting this activity or program. Your plan doesn't have to be extensive, but it should address:

- The people involved and their roles
- Budget
- The overall message
- Any existing library marketing or branding guidelines
- How you will promote the activity, which could include:
 - Social media

- Website
- Email newsletter
- Printed materials like posters or bookmarks
- Cross-promoting with partner organizations
- Local news media
- Creating promotional materials, such as graphics, press releases, or printed materials;
- Timeline

Extending the Activity

1. Create a semantic map of the word "home."
 - Begin with "home" as the center of the map.
 - Brainstorm words connected with home and write them on lines radiating from the center.
 - Have children justify their choice of words by explaining why certain words come to mind when they think of "home." You can collect the words and make a Wordle for the library
2. Organize a food collecting drive for the local food bank; collect mittens, hats, new underwear for children; collect quarters for using at the laundromat; have children collect pennies as a donation to a homeless organization.
3. Have older children research what types of agencies exist in your community to help the homeless. Invite an administrator from a homeless shelter to speak to the group about regulations, facilities, and needs of the shelter. Organize a fundraiser to collect money or items that the shelter can use to assist clients.
4. Use the Reading Rainbow video as a model for your own storytime activity using a different book about a similar topic (ie: Maddi's Fridge).
 - Read the book aloud to the group
 - Discuss a time when you or someone you know may not have had enough to eat
 - Talk about Sofia and Maddi's friendship. Was it ok for Sofia to break her promise to Maddi and tell her mom about her friend's fridge?
 - Use the book as an opportunity to talk about what kinds of food are good to share/donate to others and try to organize a canned food drive at your library.

Activity: Discussion

Starting a YA Book Club

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Introduction

The community of people who are chronically and visibly homeless only accounts for 15% of the total population of people actually experiencing homelessness in Colorado while the other 85% experience temporary or transitional homelessness. Many of those experiencing transitional homelessness are families, single parents, or even unaccompanied young people who may be staying with friends or relatives or living in hotels, shelters, or out of a vehicle. This instability can take a harsh toll on children and young adults, many of whom are still attending school after sleepless nights and on empty stomachs. For these young people, school and public libraries may be their only source of stability. However, being surrounded by classmates who do not understand their situations can be isolating.

Starting a book club for young people to not only read about a character in a similar transitional situation, but also to discuss that situation with their peers can offer an emotional outlet as well as a source of support. Furthermore, educating children who may not be experiencing homelessness themselves can help instill empathy and understanding for their peers who are experiencing homelessness. This activity allows the library to check out multiple copies of a YA book about a child in a transitional housing situation through the State Library's Book Club Resource.

Intended Audience

Children and young adults who may be experiencing homelessness, who may have peers experiencing homelessness, or who want to better understand the struggles of those around them experiencing homelessness.

Activity Goals

- Education about less visible kinds of homelessness
- Open a dialogue about the emotional effects of homelessness
- Foster understanding and community between young people affected by homelessness
- Offer a consistent activity in a safe space for children and young adults experiencing homelessness
- Encourage literacy and conversation in children and young adults

Description

Librarians register to be a patron of the Colorado State Library's Book Club Resource by contacting Maddie Basch at basch_m@cde.state.co.us. Request a set (12 copies) of the book, *Crenshaw* by Katherine Applegate, for a 2-month loan period. Once the book is sent out (a hold request may need it be made if the set is currently on loan elsewhere), the library can register patrons for the book club to meet on a regular basis with a library facilitator to discuss the book at intervals. Discussion Questions can be found on the Colorado Virtual Library website with the State Library's Book Club Resource at <http://bit.ly/discussionquestions>.

Materials Needed

- Access to the Colorado State Library's Book Club Resource through the Colorado Virtual Library
- Book Club set (12 copies) of *Crenshaw* by Katherine Applegate, discussion questions from Colorado Virtual Library website
- Meeting space for book club members
- Any additional book club comforts such as snacks/drinks/bookmarks

Promotion

Make a plan for promoting this activity or program. Your plan doesn't have to be extensive, but it should address:

- The people involved and their roles; (Youth/Family staff to facilitate discussion)
- Budget; (Consider including healthy snacks/drinks)
- The overall message;
- Any existing library marketing or branding guidelines;
- How you will promote the activity, which could include:
 - Social media
 - Website
 - Email newsletter
 - Printed materials like posters or bookmarks
 - Cross-promoting with partner organizations
 - Local news media
- Creating promotional materials, such as graphics, press releases, or printed materials;
- Timeline (Check the availability of your book club title before you set the dates for your activity, as the book may be on loan to another library. If you need to extend the load period, contact Maddie Basch at the State Library at Basch_m@cde.state.co.us)

Resources

<https://www.coloradovirtuallibrary.org/resource-sharing/co-book-clubs/>

Extending the activity

1. Use each meeting as an opportunity to do an activity relating to homelessness in your community:
 - Facilitate the play of Home Sweet Homelessness game included in the Resource Kit
 - Take up a collection of donated items at the library throughout the week and have book club members organize them into Homeless Care Kits for those experiencing homelessness in your community
 - Have book club members interview each other using StoryCorps app to practice opening a dialogue with their peers.
2. Use Colorado Virtual Library discussion questions as a model for members to create their own discussion questions for each session.
3. Use this as an opportunity to start a permanent YA book club at your branch to create a stable community and support system for children and young adults. Discuss other issues that your book club members may face in their communities. Allow them to browse the book club selections and choose their own books relating to those issues for the next sessions. Offer them more leadership going forward while promoting literacy and community.

Activity: Communication

Telling Your Story

Introduction

In this activity, the library provides an outlet or means for patrons experiencing homelessness to create biographical narratives.

Emotional, autobiographical storytelling can be a powerful path for people to truly own their own story. Emotional, autobiographical storytelling means narrating events and people that have mattered to you in your own life - not just describing the facts of your life. Several research studies show that even a short activity using autobiographical storytelling can have tremendous impact on psychological and physical health. Surprisingly, the evidence from many studies suggests that it is not necessary to "keep" a journal, as people say. Even writing about just one or two days, if you really put yourself into it, can have significant psychological benefits.

While telling one's stories can be an end in itself, it has also been shown to broaden perspectives. Autobiographical storytelling is about sharing the emotions and life experiences so others can understand, relate, and share in those experiences and histories as if they were also part of these stories.

You can use this activity in several ways; as an individual writing exercise, as the beginning of your library's own collection of personal stories, as a workshop to assist folks seeking the publication of their writings, as part of the story of our country in the StoryCorp App, or on the Colorado State Library's storytelling website. Contact Maddie Basch at Basch_M@cde.state.co.us for more information on this website.

This can be done in several ways - in text, audio or visual.

Intended Audience

Those who are or have been homeless, or worked with people experiencing homelessness.

Activity Goals

- Self-reflection for the storyteller.
- Empowerment through story-telling and self-actualization.
- Creating awareness and empathy for the underserved community.

Description

Using, text, audio recording, video recording, or even the StoryCorp app, those who are or have been homeless can share their experiences. Decide what format (audio, video, written, performed, etc.) would best suit your library, community and the individuals experiencing homelessness. There are many options to take this activity to the next level. While the capturing of the story is the most important part, there are several options for sharing it. We have included resources to help you use the StoryCorp App which allows audio publishing at the National and local levels. The State Library has also created a dedicated space to publish stories on the Statewide level. Please look at <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness/> for more information, or contact Maddie Basch at Basch_M@cde.state.co.us.

Materials Needed

- Word processing, or digital recorder, or paper and pen, or StoryCorps App and device, or video camera/phone.
 - The Colorado State Library now offers recording and scanning equipment kit rentals for use in partnership with our Stories of Colorado site. Contact Maddie Basch Basch_M@cde.state.co.us for more information on how to check out these kits.
- Colorado State Library Resource Kits Informed Consent and Copyright Permission for Oral History Interviews (<http://bit.ly/cslinformedconsent>)

Promotion

Make a plan for promoting this activity or program. Your plan doesn't have to be extensive, but it should address:

- The people involved and their roles
- Budget
- The overall message
- Any existing library marketing or branding guidelines

- How you will promote the activity, which could include:
 - Social media
 - Website
 - Email newsletter
 - Printed materials like posters or bookmarks
 - Cross-promoting with partner organizations
 - Local news media
- Creating promotional materials, such as graphics, press releases, or printed materials
- Timeline

Resources

StoryCorps – <https://storycorps.org/participate/storycorps-app/>

StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.

The Colorado State Library Resource Kit on Homelessness - <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness> -

Extending the activity


1. Create an anthology of written biographies and make them available to your community.
2. Create an online exhibit of recorded stories.
3. Help authors submit their stories for publication.
4. Using the StoryCorp App you can store your stories locally and/or upload them to the Library of Congress.

NOTE: Make sure to have participants sign a release form giving you permission to use their story. You are welcome to print and use our Informed Consent and Copyright Permission form.

<http://bit.ly/cslinformedconsent>

TIP:

What are you planning to do with the stories captured? How will you share them? Will they be made available electronically? Will they be gathered together into a publication? Those who participate will



want to know what will happen to their story. You need to have a plan in place beforehand. For ideas and options, contact Maddie Basch (Basch M@cde.state.co.us) at the Colorado State Library.

“Stories of Colorado” Informed Consent and Copyright Permission for Oral History Interviews, Images, and Personal Documents

Participant’s name:

Mailing address: (optional)

Phone and/or email: (optional)

I voluntarily agree to be interviewed for this community resource collection of the experiences of people experiencing homelessness within the state of Colorado. I understand that the following items may be created from my interview/writing submission:

- an audio and/or video recording
- an edited transcript and summary
- a photograph of me
- personal written story or narrative
- copies of any personal documents or additional photos that I wish to share

I understand that my interview (and other items above) may be distributed to the public for educational purposes, including formats such as print, public programming, and the Internet.

Also, I agree to freely share my interview (and other items above) under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. This means that I retain the copyright, but that the public may freely copy, modify, and share these items for noncommercial purposes under the same terms, if they include the original source information.

In return, the interviewer promises to send one free copy of the interview recording, transcript, and related items to my address above.

Any exceptions to this agreement must be listed below:

Permission granted:

Participant’s signature

date

Interviewer’s signature

date

Questions? Contact Madison Basch, 303-866-6900; basch_m@cde.state.co.us

Reminder: Sign TWO copies: one stays with the participant, and the other returns to the Colorado State Library, 201 East Colfax Ave, Denver CO 80203.

Activity: Creation

Making Care Kits for the Homeless

Introduction

There are people experiencing homelessness everywhere - in large cities and rural areas, but sometimes you just don't see them. The folks you see only account for 15% of the total population of people actually experiencing homelessness in Colorado. Sometimes people in trouble have to go to a more urban area to access services to help them.

In the struggle to find food and a safe place to sleep, homeless people can find it difficult to acquire basic hygiene items. Without the right supplies, seemingly simple things like brushing their teeth or washing their hands can prove to be a challenge. An extra water bottle or pair of warm socks could be the lifesaver that a homeless person needs at the time. By giving these basic supplies to the homeless, you can help them avoid physical and dental health problems. Even more importantly, you can help them retain their dignity during a trying time in their lives.

Intended Audience

Community members

Activity Goals

- Creating Care Kits for distribution
- Increasing awareness of issues and conditions surrounding homelessness

Description

Have a Care Kit party! Gather your community, library partner organizations, and service organizations to collect and purchase supplies and assemble Care Kits together.

Materials to Consider

- Gallon size resealable bags to hold the items
- Hand warmers
- Sunblock
- Bug repellent
- Travel size shampoo, conditioner, soap, etc
- Hand wipes / sanitizing wipes
- Small notebook and pencil
- Socks
- Band-aids
- Snacks
- Water or water bottle
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Brushes and combs
- Resource lists and service provider map

Promotion

Make a plan for promoting this activity or program to your community. Your plan doesn't have to be extensive, but it should address:

- The people involved and their roles
- Budget; (are you expecting the contents to be donated - or will you be purchasing. If purchasing, see the additional page for shopping ideas)
- The overall message;
- Any existing library marketing or branding guidelines
- How you will promote the activity, which could include:
 - Social media
 - Website
 - Email newsletter
 - Printed materials like posters or bookmarks
 - Cross-promoting with partner organizations
 - Local news media
- Creating promotional materials, such as graphics, press releases, or printed materials; (marketing template available)
- Timeline

Resources

Sample Care Kit (in Resource Kit box)

Kit creation guidelines - Available for download <http://cslkits.cvlisites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness/> or on red USB flash drive. Laminated copy available in the red binder pocket.

TIP: Consider providing an ongoing drop off point for community members to donate items that can be used in care kits. You will be surprised at how fast the needed supplies will grow when there is an opportunity for community members to share.

Tips & Suggestions for Care Kit Items

Fragranced items such as soap, hand lotion or deodorant can negatively affect the taste of food items if placed in the same bag. Pack these separately if you choose to give them.

Avoid items such as mouthwash or hand sanitizer that contain alcohol. People with addiction issues might try drinking it.

Care Kits are useful both in warm and cold weather. In summer, include sunblock or frozen bottles of water. In winter, include gloves, hats or heat packs.

Buying in bulk can save you money on the cost per item. Several stores will let you bulk order supplies at a discount. Ask your local vendors about discounts.

Asking the community to donate travel sized toiletries from hotel stays can be very useful

The two most sought after items are socks, and feminine hygiene pads.

NOT cheap socks. Socks are not available at most thrift stores, but keeping your feet clean and healthy is important when they are your primary means of transportation.

Articles on where to order bulk supplies and cost saving ideas

- Ordering in Bulk
<http://bit.ly/orderhygienekits>
- Under \$10 from local Chain Stores
<http://bit.ly/homelesscarepackage>

Our recommendations

Gallon size resealable bags to hold the items
Hand warmers
Sunblock
Bug repellent
Travel size shampoo, conditioner, soap, etc
Feminine hygiene products
Hand wipes / sanitizing wipes
Small notebook and pencil

Socks
Band-aids
Snacks
Water or water bottle
Deodorant
Toothbrush and toothpaste
Brushes and combs
Resource lists and service provider map

Additional Resources

Online Homelessness Kit Resources

We have included a red USB flash drive key with this resource kit containing these pages from the binder and other resources. Updated resources can be found at <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness/>. You can also create a list of local resources to distribute at your library. See the Worksheet: *Identifying Community Resources* included in this kit.

National Homelessness Resources

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

<http://nche.ed.gov/>

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program. The NCHE works with stakeholders to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness can enroll and succeed in school.

The State of Homelessness in America

An examination of trends in homelessness, homeless assistance, and at-risk populations at the national and state levels. This is the Annual Report of the National Alliance to End Homelessness working to end homelessness by building and disseminating knowledge. Available for download on <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness/> and the red USB "Flash" drive.

VIDEO: "The Librarian's Guide to homelessness"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYiEEhhrFh4>

This video is by Ryan Dowd who also created www.HomelessLibrary.com. He talks about how to work compassionately with difficult homeless individuals.

WEBINAR: Effective Responses to Homeless Issues

<http://www.nicheacademy.com/blog/effective-responses-to-homelessness>

Originally presented September 8, 2016

"The challenges surrounding homelessness can seem overwhelming. The homeless people taking refuge in your library have intractable problems, maybe mental illness, maybe an addiction... Homelessness itself has deep societal causes ranging from affordable housing to income disparity... What can a library possibly do, right? Actually, a lot."

Colorado Homelessness Resources

Hunger Free Colorado

<https://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/>

Hunger Free Colorado connects families and individuals to food resources. They have services to increase access and a hotline referral program

2-1-1 Colorado

<https://211colorado.communityos.org/cms/home>

Statewide database of local community resources. 2-1-1 Colorado helps Colorado citizens connect with the services they need. Whether by phone or internet, 2-1-1 Colorado's goal is to present accurate, well-organized and easy-to-find information from state and local health and human services programs. No matter where you live in Colorado, you can find information about resources like food or housing, child care, crisis counseling or substance abuse treatment in your local community.

Office of Homeless Initiatives

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/programs-0>

Working in partnership with local, state and federal stakeholders to build, promote and support collaborative approaches to connect Colorado's most vulnerable citizens with housing and services.

Homeless Shelter Directory

<https://www.homelesshelterdirectory.org/colorado.html>

Database directory of Colorado Homeless Shelters along with other homeless resources.

Provides listings for affordable, transitional housing, clinics and low cost affordable treatment centers.

Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS)

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dola/office-homeless-youth-services-ohys>

Provides information, coordination, and support services for infrastructure around homeless youth resources in Colorado.

CSL-In-Session - Webinar - Reaching Out: Creating Meaningful Library Services for Patrons Experiencing Homelessness

<http://bit.ly/homelessnesswebinar>

With Amelia Shelley, Elissa Hardy, Dana Scott, Zac Schaffner, and Jacqueline Murphy

Facilitation Resources

Aspen Institute - Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library, version 2.0

http://www.libraryvision.org/download_action_guide

Harwood Institute

<https://theharwoodinstitute.org/tools/>

National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation - Resource Guide on Public Engagement

http://www.ncdd.org/files/NCDD2010_Resource_Guide.pdf (Available for download on <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness/> and the Red USB "Flash" drive.)

Fostering Dialogue Across Divides: A Nuts and Bolts Guide from the Public Conversations Project

www.publicconversations.org (Website)

<http://bit.ly/fosteringdialogue> (Available on Red USB flash drive & in a spiral bound book)

Organizing Community-Wide Dialogue for Action & Change Everyday Democracy

www.everyday-democracy.org/en/Resource.39.aspx

Café to Go! A Quick Reference Guide for Putting Conversations to Work, World Café

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/tools-store/hosting-tool-kit/>

The Homeless: 39 Questions for Your Reflection

<http://bit.ly/39questions>

Best Practices

American Library Association - Tools - Poor and/or Homeless Library Patrons

<http://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/poor-andor-homeless-library-patrons>

People experiencing poverty or homelessness constitute a significant portion of users in many libraries today and this population provides libraries with an important opportunity to change lives. As the numbers of poor children, adults, and families in America rises, so does the urgent need for libraries to effectively respond to their needs.

Access to library and information resources, services, and technologies is essential for all people, especially the economically disadvantaged, who may experience isolation, discrimination and prejudice or barriers to education, employment, and housing.

Librarian's Guide to HomelessnessTM : Ryan's Quick Advice

<http://www.homelesslibrary.com/start-here.html>

Reduce problems and conflict while still being inclusive. 5-Step strategies for several common issues.

Top 10 Things Every Librarian Should Know - Librarian's Guide to HomelessnessTM : Compassionate Tools for Reducing Problems

Available on <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/lets-talk-about-it/homelessness/> and the red USB "Flash" drive

Other Homelessness Resources

Books - Children

Shoebox Sam by Mary Brigid Barrett. 2011. Grades 1–4.

Delia and Jessie spend Saturdays with Shoebox Sam, who teaches them about making old shoes new again and helping those in need.

The Lunch Thief by Anne C. Bromley. 2010. Grades 1-4.

Rafael notices the new kid stealing lunches (including his), and uses his mom's advice to use his voice & not his fists to resolve the problem.

December by Eve Bunting. 1997. Grades 1–4.

Simon and his mom live in the tiny cardboard house they've built for themselves. On Christmas Eve they don't have much, but it's more than the woman who comes knocking on their door has. Does their generosity bring them a miracle?

A Shelter in Our Car by Monica Gunning. 2004. Grades K–3.

Since moving to America from Jamaica after her father died, Zettie and her mom live in their car while they both go to school and plan for a real home.

Sélavi: That is Life: A Haitian Story of Hope by Youme Landowne. 2005. Grades 1–4.

Haitian street children band together and work to create a life for themselves.

The Lady in the Box by Ann McGovern. 1997. Grades K–4.

When two siblings discover a homeless woman living in their neighborhood, they discover how easy it can be to make a difference in someone's life.

I Can Hear the Sun by Patricia Polacco. 1999. Grades 2–5.

A boy without a real home, Fondo feels lonely and unwanted. Then he meets Stephanie Michele, who takes care of the waterfowl at the pond and shares his sensitivity for nature. She teaches

him how to help take care of the geese, especially one with special needs. When Fondo finds out he's to be taken away, he looks to the geese for a miracle.

The Can Man by Laura E. Williams. 2010. Grades 2–5.

Tim's family doesn't have a lot of money, but he really wants a skateboard for his birthday. When he sees Mr. Peters, "The Can Man," who is homeless, collecting cans, Tim gets the idea to collect enough cans to pay for his skateboard, even though that means Mr. Peters gets less ... it's only until Tim's birthday, after all. Tim really wants that skateboard, but a couple of encounters with Mr. Peters give him pause about what to do with the money he's earned.

Books - Adult


Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City by Matthew Desmond. 2016.

Chronicling the experiences shared by eight families in Milwaukee, Matthew Desmond shows the ways in which every day Americans struggle to pay rent. Facing the reality that the majority of poor renters devote over half of their income to housing, Desmond exposes the desperate means by which these families struggle to avoid eviction while also eking out a life of dignity. While Desmond captures strong personal stories, *Eviction* is backed up by years of deliberate research and fieldwork. Offering solutions as well, Desmond drives home the fact that it's almost impossible to combat other social problems without first addressing the issue of affordable housing.

Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women by Elliot Liebow. 1993.

Through this searing study of women in homeless shelters, Elliott Liebow disabuses us of the myth that the homeless are generally lazy and disinterested in altering their condition. *Tell Them Who I Am* places the reader squarely in the shoes of the inhabitants of a Washington, D.C. homeless shelter for women. Walking the reader through a day in the life of a homeless person, hour by hour, Liebow presents the obstacles placed in front of women who ache to regain the dignity they once possessed.

Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America by Jonathan Kozol. 1988.



As one of America's foremost education scholars, Jonathan Kozol (known for *Death at an Early Age* and *Savage Inequalities*) also recognizes the challenges that homelessness brings to bear on American families. This 1988 title remains sadly relevant almost thirty years later. Pulling from his months he spent interacting with homeless men, women, and children, Kozol paints a stark portrait of life on the streets. The immediacy of his writing brings an unflinching eye to the issue of homelessness as a nightmare that cannot be ignored.

Another Bullshit Night in Suck City by Nick Flynn. 2005.

This 2005 memoir (which went on to be adapted into the 2012 film "Being Flynn" starring Robert DeNiro, Julianne Moore, and Paul Dano) offers another look at the personal fallout surrounding the epidemic of homelessness. Working in Boston as a caseworker at a shelter, Nick Flynn met his father for the first time. Throughout his life, he'd periodically receive letters from his absent father — a poet, but also a con artist who'd served time in a federal prison for bank robbery — yet this odd twist of fate brought these two men together. This sensitive, honest, and darkly funny book provides a humane and hellish look at the ways in which people fall through the cracks, affecting their families as well as themselves.

Street People and the Contested Realms of Public Space by Randall Amster. 2004

The author examines the loss of public space as a consequence of increasing commercialization and privatization, resulting in the criminalization of homelessness, such as by the enactment of anti-homeless ordinances and regulations.