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Help For the Community at the Marina Library

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Sr. Field Placement - CHHS 496A

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Abstract

Homelessness is a product of a complicated interaction between social and structural forces, and it is currently one of the most important problems that our society must address. This report analyzes the links between the Marina Branch library, the patrons who are homeless, and the local community agencies that provide support for them. 56 people took part in a structured survey that was carried out earlier. According to the findings of the investigation, there is a significant relationship between the library and its patrons who are homeless. This is due to the fact that the services available from the local community agencies are quite limited. I have come to the conclusion that a connection needs to be made between the bridge that connects the Marina Branch library and the local community agencies in order for the patrons who are homeless to benefit from the resources that those agencies can provide.

Keywords: Marina Branch, homelessness, local community agencies, survey, library

Agency and Communities Served

The mission of Monterey County Free Libraries is to bring ideas, inspiration, information, and enjoyment to our community. Monterey County is a community where everyone can achieve their potential and pursue happiness (*Marina Branch - Monterey County Free Library*, n.d.) The Marina branch was set up on April 24, 1916. The Marina Library opened in its present location in September 2007, and the new building included a wing to house the administrative headquarters for the Monterey County Free Libraries System, anchoring a countywide system of neighborhood branches (*Marina Branch - Monterey County Free Library*, n.d.)

The Marina Branch has two main funding resources. The Foundation for Monterey County Free Libraries (FMCFL) is an independent 501(c)(3) formed to help fund the programs of the 17 Monterey County Free Libraries, including those found in the most rural sections of our county. Sending requests for library materials to outside organizations via email (*The Foundation for Monterey County Free Libraries*, 2022).

Funding from FMCFL helps make library programs possible, from early childhood literacy support and homework centers and adult reading, book drives, online tutoring, and technology centers. The Foundation has contributed over \$3.2 million dollars to literacy programs since 1990. Monterey County Free Libraries serves 3,321 square miles in Monterey County, California. The county has a population of more than 415,000, including nearly 121,000 children under the age of 18. More than 39% of students in local public schools are English learners (*The Foundation for Monterey County Free Libraries*, 2022).

The Friends of the Marina Library has been a non-profit, public benefit corporation since 1990.

They sell used books to raise funds to support programming and maintenance at the Marina Library and

to purchase new books, e-books, and videos for library collections that are available for the entire County library system (*The Friends of the Marina Library*, n.d.).

In addition to providing free health consultations, free COVID testing, and free COVID masks, the Marina Branch has also created partnerships with Virus Integrated Distribution of Aid (VIDA) of Monterey County to further serve the community. They also have a Veterans Resource Center that is funded through the State Library of California. In the past, members of the local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) would set up a table in the lobby to spread awareness about mental health issues. Workshops supplying crisis support are provided free of charge by the Monterey County Rape Crisis Center. Alliance on Aging offers free healthcare training and tax preparation help to seniors each Spring. These are just a few examples of how the library has partnered with other agencies already and has seen the benefit of supplying these services to the community.

It has been reported to the 2021 Census Bureau, in Monterey County the estimated population is 437,249. In the city of Marina, there was a population of an estimated 22,507. ("U.S. Census Bureau Quick facts: Marina City, California," 2021)

According to The Coalition of Homeless Services Provider Point-in-Time (2022), The 2022 Monterey and San Benito Counties Point-in-Time Count was a community-wide effort conducted on January 27 and 28, 2022. In the weeks following the street count, a survey (see Appendix A) was administered to 399 unsheltered and sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness to profile their experiences and characteristics. It was also reported that there were 744 chronically homeless individuals. 35% sheltered and 65% unsheltered (*Monterey & San Benito Counties Homeless Census Survey*, 2022)

Social Problem

Contributing Factors	Social Problem	Consequences
Increase in the cost of living, especially in California.	Homelessness	Early mortality rates, poor health, and more easily susceptible to abuse and assault.
Poverty		Low quality of life
Evictions		Mental health conditions

Homelessness

The forces which affect homelessness are complex and often interactive in nature. Social forces such as addictions, family breakdown, and mental illness are compounded by structural forces such as lack of available low-cost housing, poor economic conditions, and insufficient mental health services.

Together these factors affect levels of homelessness through their dynamic relations.

In Monterey and San Benito Counties, there were 2,683 people homeless on a given night in 2020. There are 54.0 homeless per 10,000 people in the general population (*SOH: State and COC dashboards*, 2021). Historical models, which are static in nature, have only been marginally successful in capturing these relationships (*SOH: State and COC Dashboards*, 2021).

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a chronically homeless person as "an unaccompanied individual with a disability who has either been con-tinuously homeless for one year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years." More than 610,000 people are homeless in the United States on any given night. Nearly two- thirds live in shelters or transitional housing, and the rest are unsheltered (Martin, E.J., 2015).

Contributing factors.

Homelessness experts mostly attribute the rise to precipitous drops in earnings during the pandemic among Californians already teetering on the edge. They also point to a worsening housing affordability crisis that is decades in the making (Tobias, 2022). When people are trying to find help, housing aid is a major issue. In fact, 41% said they themselves can barely or cannot afford to pay their rent or mortgage and then we had 69% of residents citing homelessness as their top concern. came out were the cost of housing and homelessness (Milne, 2022). About 68% of residents cited the cost of housing as A few other things that came up include environmental disasters that are increasingly becoming a regular part of Californian's lives like wildfires and floods. About half of the residents said that was a top concern for them (Milne, 2022).

The connection between poverty and homelessness cannot be severed. The inability to pay for essentials such as housing, food, childcare, medical care, and education is a communal problem among the poor. When only a part of these fundamental requirements can be met with the available resources, tough decisions must be taken. Most of the time, it is housing, which takes up a significant percentage of one's salary, which must be reduced. If you are poor, you are literally just one illness, one accident, or one missed salary away from having to live on the streets (Stevens, 2023). According to the National Coalition for the Homeless (2017), the national poverty rate in 2016 was 12.7%. There were 40.6 million people in poverty.

One of the leading causes of homelessness in the United States is substance abuse. Most statistics prove that substance abuse is much more common among homeless people than in the general population. HUD's 2013 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report states approximately 257,000 homeless people have a severe mental illness or a chronic substance abuse issue. The Substance Abuse

and Mental Health Services Administration (2003) estimates, 38% of homeless people were dependent on alcohol and 26% abused other drugs. According to the 2015 National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), only 10.1% of people above the age of 12 reported using drugs within the past month. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA) found that 8.4% of adults had a substance abuse issue within the last year. Alcohol abuse is more common in older generations, while drug abuse is more common in homeless youth and young adults (Substance Abuse and Homelessness, 2017).

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that 546,566 people experienced homelessness in 2017, based on counts collected at local levels and reported nationally. But prior research shows those counts to be imprecise and, likely, far too low. A new analysis by Glynn, Byrne, and Culhane (2020) estimates that far more people – 660,996 – likely experienced homelessness in 2017.

The National Bureau of Economic Research released a new paper, "Eviction and Poverty in American Cities," evaluating the consequences of evictions for tenants in two urban areas: Cook County, IL, and New York City, NY. The report finds that prior to a tenant's involvement in housing court, they face a decline in earnings and employment and an increase in financial distress and hospital visits (Collinson et al., 2022).

In the two years following an eviction order, tenants face an increase in residential mobility, homelessness, and hospital use while also experiencing a decrease in earnings and employment. Evicted tenants also experience worsened financial health beyond the first two-year period. Female and Black tenants face particularly significant negative impacts, which drive the observed effects on labor market outcomes, residential mobility, and homelessness (Collinson et al., 2022).

Tenants who have been evicted have a greater possibility of making use of homeless services in comparison to tenants who have not been evicted. The report finds that while homelessness is still rare for tenants involved in housing court, evictions resulted in more than 3,600 adults staying in emergency shelters in the year after filing and 2,500 adults using homelessness services the following year across the two evaluated locations (Collinson et al., 2022).

Consequences.

Problems such as early death, poor health, and increased vulnerability to abuse and assault plague the homeless population. There is abundant evidence about the health consequences of homelessness. At a fundamental level, the homeless have higher premature mortality than those who are appropriately housed, with injuries, unintentional overdose, and extreme weather events being important drivers of this mortality (McInnes, 2016).

Homelessness has a negative effect on health status. People experiencing homelessness may have worse health even than those who are precariously housed. Individuals experiencing homelessness meet many barriers to proper care for medical and mental health needs, including overuse of the emergency room, lack of preventative health services, fragmentation of services, and lack of follow-up. Exacerbations of chronic disease and cancers often contribute to early-onset disability and more protracted hospitalizations (Dill et al., 2022).

International studies say that the homeless population may die 16–28 years earlier than comparison populations (Romaszko et al., 2017). A study of marginalized populations that included the homeless population found all-cause standardized mortality ratios of 11.86 in women and 7.88 in men. In the international literature, substance abuse consistently has been found to be a key determinant in premature mortality among the homeless population (Dill et al., 2022).

When there are obstacles in one's way, life can be challenging. Homelessness constitutes a traumatic period that hurts health and quality of life outcomes. The potential mitigating effects of resilience on quality-of-life levels in people experiencing homelessness are under-researched (Mejia-Lancheros et al., 2021). The homeless also have an inadequate quality of life, characterized, as noted in assorted studies, by chronic pain associated with poor sleeping conditions and limited access to medications and other salutary resources. Skin and foot problems, dental problems, and chronic infectious diseases are also well-described among homeless populations (McInnes, 2016).

The result of mental health disorders suffered by the severely mentally ill (SMI). People with untreated psychiatric illnesses make up one-third, or 250,000, of the estimated 744,000 homeless population in the United States (Martin, E.J., 2015). According to a 2015 assessment by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 564,708 people were homeless on a given night in the United States. At a minimum, 140,000 or 25 percent of these people were seriously mentally ill, and 250,000 or 45 percent had any mental illness. By comparison, a 2016 study found that 2 percent of U.S. adults have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness. Affective disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse disorders are among the most common types of mental illness in the homeless population (Martin, E.J., 2015).

Project Description and Justification

Project Description

There has been an increase in the number of homeless people visiting the Marina Library. It is not uncommon for homeless people to use public libraries as day shelters, and when they come in, they often ask for guidance in finding permanent housing, employment, and food. While librarians have long excelled at assisting users in gaining access to library materials like books, movies, and computers, they

are now challenged to aid with challenges that go beyond these traditional areas of expertise. To meet this demand, an internship in social services was set up. My responsibility as a social services intern is to investigate the connection that exists between social services and library services and to show a working relationship between the two. According to an article written in Social Work Today Magazine, Lambert (2022) has quoted "Librarians bring research and information to social problems, and social workers can help with navigating the helping environment—making it as simple as possible in a complex service landscape (Baldamenti)."

As a democratic and democratizing institution, libraries have a mission to connect the public with the necessary information, as well as supply free and unrestricted access to the library for all citizens. As disadvantaged people such as homeless individuals, economically disadvantaged people, or those suffering from addiction or mental illness become a core user base for libraries, some libraries have begun programs to connect these people with needed social services, which ties in with librarianship's value of promoting social justice (Hines, 2017).

The goal of this project is to put people in touch with various helpful resources that are found within the community. The process of figuring out which organizations are applicable to this situation is still in the planning stages. It is the responsibility of the social work intern to design and carry out a brief questionnaire that will provide the library with information about the kind of resources that may be required in the foreseeable future. As part of my assignment, I will be designing a flyer (see APPENDIX B) to distribute to library patrons to get them to take part in a survey on future resources. After that, I will collect, put together, and organize helpful community resources for usage by both customers and staff. Collaboration between the library and other community organizations is facilitated by the publication of this guide.

Project Justification

The primary purpose of this project is to supply free social service and referrals to the community through the Marina Branch of Monterey County Free Libraries. As a result of this work, both Marina Library employees and the public will have access to information that will help them become familiar with the range of social services that are accessible to them in the local community. In addition, it will allow the library to forge collaborations with organizations that share its commitment to the community. The success of the introduction of social services at the Santa Cruz Public Library and the San Francisco Public Library was taken into consideration to draw this conclusion.

This initiative contributes to community outreach by advertising library services to people who need them. For instance, helping an older person with the Social Security application and providing the homeless population with resources like a place to take a shower, wash their clothes, a food pantry, and shelter from the cold. The agency hopes that by having a social worker present at the library, people will be aware that resources are available and that patrons will be aware that help is available when needed. This project will also help empower library staff to become more knowledgeable on resources available locally so that they can feel more comfortable providing this type of support to library patrons.

The five-year "Lead Me Home plan" will guide the region in finding more solutions to the housing shortage. The number of unaccompanied youths experiencing homelessness in Monterey County has dropped from 324 in 2019 to 233 in this year's count. \$5.8 million in funding and a 100-day challenge have helped reduce youth homelessness by 100 people, a summit was announced. Transition motels could be converted into affordable housing for the homeless for \$150,000 per unit. The converted motels also have staff to connect residents with services. California has made \$700 million available in encampment resolution funds over the next two years (Hughes, 2022).

Benefits

If the library can establish social services at its branch, it will be easier for homeless users and people of the local community to access the resources they need. It will be possible for community organizations in the area to supply the services that they already give to the community.

Implementation Narrative

Access to social services, especially for the homeless, is one of the main motivations behind Marina Library's decision to bring social services into the library. Created a questionnaire to gauge interest in the library's social service offerings and gather suggestions from patrons. I set up a table in the library's foyer and asked patrons if they would fill out a survey. The results will be uploaded to Google Forms. After that, a map of sixty-six community organizations that supply social support services in the area will be compiled. Approximately twenty community organizations will be contacted to arrange in-person or online meetings. Ten community organizations will be visited in person, while the other ten will be seen online. The final product will be a comprehensive binder listing twenty different community organizations in the area with information on the services they provide. The library staff and volunteers will be given a presentation about the resources available in Monterey County in preparation for the possibility of encountering patrons looking for these resources.

Expected Outcomes

During the presentation of the resource binder, there are going to be a total of six people in the room. At the very least fifty percent of the people who attend will obtain the latest information about community organization resources and the times at which the organization can visit the library to organize a tabling event.

Assessment Plan

To collect the attendees' input on the presentation that was given, as well as any concerns that they may have had and suggestions for future workshops, I will prepare and send handout a post meeting feedback survey (see APPENDIX D) questionnaire to the participants in the workshop.

Implementation Process

Melissa Mejia, the manager of the library's branch, helped create a survey to gauge library patrons' interest in social services and gather ideas. The plan is to create a map with locations for sixty-six community organizations, and then reach out to twenty of those organizations to schedule meetings. All the vital details about the services they supply will be collected in one convenient binder.

Results

A new policy change went into effect before the project was brought to a successful conclusion in the library. According to the recently implemented policy at the library, any organization that wishes to host a tabling event must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) arrangement in place with the library first. As a result, the goal of encouraging community organizations to host tabling events could not happen. Although the tabling was not only a small part of the project, the rest of the project also continued as planned. While ten different organizations send their resources through the mail. For the other ten community agencies who sent their resources via email went into a binder. Just to get things started, the binder was divided into three parts labeled "mental health," "food pantries," and "shelters." The number of sections and resources will continue to increase in the future.

At a meeting with the library staff, the binder was introduced. I had estimated the attendance to be six instead there were ten in attendance. The library staff was given a post-meeting feedback survey before they took their seats, and the survey was returned and filled out after the meeting.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the ever-increasing cost of living, along with other causes such as poverty and evictions, are contributors to the larger issue of people who are homeless and in homeless shelters. This holds especially true in the state of California. The lives of those who are homeless can be difficult since a number of circumstances contributed to them being in that position, in addition to the hurdles that stand in their way. Because of this, their life may become more difficult. The conclusion is that we as a nation might not be able to address the problem of homelessness overnight. Still, by placing a social worker at the Marina Branch library and collaborating with other community organizations, there will be resources that are easily available to the homeless people in Marina.

Based on the findings, my recommendation for the Monterey County Free Libraries, Marina

Branch that even with the new policy changing and some of the events could not happen, keep

continuing to be a safe haven for those in need, who knows maybe the policy could go back to the way it

was. The binder is just the beginning, I foresee that it will turn into multiple binders.

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Appendix A

Marina Branch Library Community Survey

The Marina Branch Library is surveying library users to find out if implementing a social worker information and referral service would help the community. The intent of the program would be to link people with useful social service resources in the community.

Please fill out this brief survey to aid us in finding community interest in this type of service.

1.		en do you visit the library?		
		-7 times a week		
		-3 times a week		
		Once a week		
	_	-3 times a month		
		ess than once a month		
	0 N	lever. Why not?		
2.	Why do	you usually visit the library? (Check all that	apı	oly)
		o get books, DVDs, other material		
		o get information		
	o T	o use the computer, printer, or Wi-Fi		
	o T	o attend library programs		
	o T	o bring/pick-up my children		
	o T	o sit and read newspapers or magazines.		
	o T	o meet someone		
	o T	o relax		
	o 0	Other		
3.	Do you t	hink the Public Library should be a source os?	of re	eferral to social services and support
	o Y	es		Not sure
	0 N	lo		
4.	anyone i all that a	• • •	rvic	es or support listed below? Please check
0		Meal Assistance	0	Educational Services o Social Security
0		or Laundry Services		Assistance
0	Clothing	Assistance	0	Mental Health and Counseling Services
0	_	o Emergency Shelter	0	Substance Use Services
 Transitional Housing o 		_	0	Rape Crisis
	Employn	nent/Training Services	0	General Wellness
			0	LGBTQ Support Services

- Suicide Crisis
- Teen Support Group
- Caregiver Resources
- Healthcare o Childcare
- Welfare Benefits
- Parenting

- Legal Assistance
- Utility/Rent Assistance
- Mortgage Assistance
- o General Financial Assistance
- o None of the Above
- 5. Would you feel comfortable talking to a social worker at the library about your needs for support or aid?
 - o Yes
 - o No
- 6. What is the zip code of where you live? _____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.



APPENDIX B

MONTEREY COUNTY FREE LIBRARIES MARINA BRANCH

2022 Library Social Services Survey



The Marina Branch is surveying library users about the value of social services in the public library. Please complete this 2-5 minute survey and let your voice be heard.



Complete the survey at the library starting October 20 or online at bit.ly/3EMSJ8. QR code to the left also takes you to the online version of the survey.





MARINA BRANCH HOURS: TUES & WEDS: 11 am - 7 pm





APPENDIX C

Post Meeting Feedback Survey

Please fill out this brief survey to measure the effectiveness of toda	ay's mee	ting.
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On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rate today's meeting?
On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how useful was today's meeting for you?
How much did you enjoy today's meeting?
On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how relevant/interesting/enjoyable was today's content for you?
Was this a valuable use of your time? (1-not really, 10-absolutely)
Do you have any suggestions or comments as to how to improve the presentations?
What content resonated with you the most today?
Any other feedback?

APPENDIX D

Implementation Table

Task	Timeline	Parties Involved	Materials/Services Needed	Completed Product
Meet with mentor to Follow-up on the Project	January 21, 2022 – May 12, 2023	Mentor	_	Meeting minutes, Task assignments
Make Flyers Promoting Survey	September 5, 2022	Mentor	Laptop, Desk, Canva Program	Flyers
Create Spanish/English Surveys	September 6, 2022	Mentor	Laptop, Desk, Google Forms	Surveys
Brief Questionnaire Regarding the Kind of Resources the Library Community Would Like to See in the Foreseeable Future	October 20 – 27, 2022	Mentor, Library Patrons	Surveys, Flyers, Clipboards, Table, Chair, Library Pencils	55 completed surveys
Input Survey Data' Collected from Library Patrons	November 2, 2022	Mentor	Laptop, Desk, Google Forms, Completed Surveys	Tallied Data
Mapping of 66 Local Community Organization of Monterey County	By end of February, 2023	Mentor	Laptop, Desk, Google Sheets	20 Local Community Organizations to Call
Call 20 Local Community Organizations	By the Second Week in March, 2023	Mentor	Laptop, Desk, Phone (Landline & Cell)	10 Local Community Organizations to Visit
Visit 10 Local Community Organizations from the Phone Calls Made	By Second Week in March, 2023	Mentor, Organization Visiting	Laptop, Tablet, Google Maps, Car, Notebook, Pens	Getting the Organizations to Table at the Library about their Resources Offered
10 Local Community Organizations Scheduled to Meet Virtually	By Third Week in March, 2023	Mentor, Organization Virtual	Desktop, Laptop, Desk, Notebook, Pens, Chairs	Getting the Organizations to Table at the Library about their Resources Offered

Compiled a	By End of March	Mentor	Laptop, Tablet,	Organized
Detailed List of	2023 – Beginning		Google Sheets,	Detailed Binder
the 20 Local	of April 2023		Notebook, Pens	
Organizations				
Resources				
Meet With Library	By Mid-April	Mentor, Library	Laptop, Tablet,	Library Staff More
Staff to Share a	2023	Staff and	Binder, Comments	Knowledgeable
Binder of		Volunteers (6)	Notecards	About the Local
Monterey County				Community
Local Community				Organization
Organizations of				Resources to Refer
Provide Comment				the Patrons
Notecards				Looking for Those
				Resources
Meet with Seaside	By End of April.	Mentor, Seaside		
Library to Assist	First Week in	Library Staff, and		
with Starting Their	May 2023	Volunteers		
Social Services				
Project				