



IMPACT STORIES

February 2018

Combating homelessness among families and individuals takes strong partnerships, effective programs, and numerous committed staff, volunteers, and community members. Here are a few success stories where the Homeless Initiative made a difference.

Strategy B3 – Partner with Cities to Expand Rapid Re-housing

SHARED SOLUTION

“L” was living with her boyfriend, “G”, his two brothers, and their dog when they were all evicted from their apartment. For over a year, they couch-surfed, bounced from motel to motel, and slept in a car. “L” and her boyfriend sought assistance from People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), where case managers provided help with employment search, housing location, and goal-setting. Initially, it was difficult to find housing as they each wanted individual 1-bedroom apartments and needed pet accommodation. Through motivational interviewing, the case managers persuaded them to give shared housing another try. They found a landlord who would take the household of four and their dog. They are now permanently housed and are actively looking for employment with the help of PATH Employment Specialists.

“We are doing great...I have not been in such good spirits, since we have moved in and “G” as well. Thank you so much again for everything. We feel human again!”

Strategy B8 – Housing Choice Vouchers for Permanent Supportive Housing

VET FINDS SECURITY

Ms. Itzel B. is a service veteran who became homeless after receiving a 90-day notice from her landlord who wanted to sell the apartment complex. She was not able to secure a new home in time and ended up on the streets for one year. Through a collaborative effort between Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSFV) and the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles’ (HACoLA) Homeless Incentive Program (HIP), Ms. Itzel received a housing voucher about a month after connecting with HACoLA. She was determined to find a place; however, she called landlord after landlord, who all said “No”. Finally, she found a landlord who was willing to rent to her and moved into a one-bedroom apartment where she now feels safe and secure. Ms. Itzel wants to tell other people in this situation, *“Be persistent. It’s only the squeaky wheel that gets the grease.”*



Strategy B8 – Housing Choice Vouchers for Permanent Supportive Housing

HELP OUT OF THE CANYONS

Paulette W. struggled with depression and substance abuse after separating from her husband, which led her down a path to homelessness. She lived on and off for the past couple of years in the canyons of Azusa. Case managers found Ms. Paulette in the canyons one day when they were doing outreach, and she asked them if they could help her. A team from PATH guided her from that point forward, assisting her with obtaining a housing certificate and housing navigation. Within four months of meeting the case managers from PATH, Ms. Paulette moved into a place of her own. She tells others experiencing homelessness, *“Don’t give up!”*

Strategy C4, C5, C6 – Countywide Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Income and Veterans Benefits Advocacy

FAMILY MATTERS

A 63-year-old client was living on his sister’s couch after years of living in his car and couch surfing. Due to several challenging life events, the client suffered from major depression and anxiety, which were only treated periodically. The client had a volatile relationship with his sister, who was at risk of losing her home. When they approached Special Services for Groups-Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System (SSG-HOPICS) for help, they were both unemployed and in danger of becoming homeless.

A Benefits Specialist assisted the client with his Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Income (SSI/SSDI) application, linked him to the Department of Mental Health (DMH) for ongoing mental health treatment, and linked his sister to a mortgage support program and employment services. SSG-HOPICS also provided family mediation to help facilitate a better relationship between the client and his sister.

The client’s SSI application was approved a few months later and his mental health issues have stabilized. The client’s sister is completing employment training and still owns her home. The client still lives with his sister and says that life had turned around. He also says that he and his sister have a much better relationship now.

Strategy D2 – Expansion of Jail In-Reach

MAN GETS THE SUPPORT HE NEEDS

A 40-year-old Hispanic man was seen by Strategy D2 clinical social workers at Twin Towers Correctional Facility. He had been homeless for over five years with no social support or connection to medical or mental health services. The client had multiple conditions including schizoaffective disorder; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; and a history of substance abuse and aggressive behavior. In addition, he was at risk of suicide and was unable to care for his basic needs.

The clinical social workers completed their assessment and client-centered care plan, which included connecting him to the Department of Health Services Housing for Health (HFH) program. HFH arranged interim/bridge housing through B7 funding (Interim/Bridge Housing for those Exiting Institutions), and secured a bed for him within hours. The client was also assigned to The People Concern to assist him with mental health and medical treatment.

Upon release, the client entered bridge housing and was provided with in-house case management services. Through the collaboration and coordination between D2 social workers, HFH, and The People Concern, the client is now connected to full-scope services that will provide him with the support needed to reduce the risk of recidivism and improve his medical and mental health prognosis. He is currently working with a housing navigator to find supportive housing.

Partnerships with Cities – City of Monrovia

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

Ms. R.L. has been seen sleeping in front of Monrovia's Community Center planter area or camping out across the street next to the Library. At one time, she lived on Fifth Avenue in a yellow house that burned down years ago, forcing her into her motorhome. Recently, she had been living in her run-down motorhome in the Albertsons' parking lot on Huntington Drive until it was towed by the property owner.

Officer Leon, a new Community Policing Officer, tracked down R.L.'s 87-year-old mother who lives in Seattle, Washington. It turned out that R.L.'s mother was willing to buy a \$500 one-way plane ticket for R.L. to fly up to Seattle, where she would be cared for. Officer Leon quickly began to set the plan in motion, but first he had to convince R.L. to go. She wanted to go; however, R.L. had no identification to board a plane. Luckily, she had recently gone to the Department of Motor Vehicles with a field worker from the Pasadena Union Station and was waiting for the identification card to be mailed to the Monrovia Foothill Unity Center. The plane ticket was emailed to Officer Leon and R.L. was set to fly to Seattle the morning of December 21, 2017. Officer Leon and School Resource Officer Ruano went to Walmart the day before to buy R.L. new clothes, shoes, and a beanie, so she could be presentable to fly and upon seeing her mother for the first time in many, many years.

On the morning of the flight, R.L. went to the police station, where she was able to take a shower. A female officer, Officer Ortiz, helped R.L. into her new clothes and drove her to the Ontario Airport. She was greeted by the friendly staff of Alaska Airlines with a wheelchair. With the assistance of all these caring people, she made it home to her mother in time for Christmas.



Strategy E6 – Countywide Outreach System

HOME AFTER 10 YEARS

For over ten years, this 52-year-old client has struggled with homelessness and mental health issues. She was initially engaged at an outreach event by an E6-funded multidisciplinary outreach team (MDT). At the time, she lived in an encampment with her emotional support dog. The E6-MDT regularly provided the client with food, transported her to medical appointments, and coordinated with the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles to find housing for her. Her case manager also assisted her with obtaining an emotional support certification for her dog.

She was connected to placement at Bixel House and was supported through the application and move-in process by the E6-MDT. She is now permanently housed with her support dog and is grateful to be off the streets. *“You all are my angels. I don’t know what I would’ve done without you.”*

Strategy E6 – Coordinated Outreach System

NEW START FOR A NEW LIFE

This client was pregnant and living in an RV adjacent to Mar Vista Park when she was engaged by an E6-MDT. The MDT linked her to St. Joseph Center and provided transportation to and from appointments at the Department of Public Social Services and the doctor's office. She was also provided with food, baby clothes, diapers, and bus passes. The client is currently in temporary housing at a motel and will remain there until permanent housing is available.

"You guys do great work and helped me out so much...I am very grateful because it's more and better than I would have ever imagined for my new baby girl. It's truly beyond thankful what I really feel inside...to put in that time and love for me is truly amazing and each and every one of you are in my hearts. I'm still very emotional and very grateful and that surprise was a personal baby shower that tops any baby shower I worried I would never have. No one can take this joy away from me!"

