Homeless Outreach Team

2010 POP Conference
Arlington, Texas
Our City and Home
Safeguarding our community as our family
Safeguarding our community as our family

46th Largest City in United States

Population: 418,076

Area: 194 Square Miles

Parks: 102 City Parks 15,266 Acres

Urban Trails: Over 120 Miles
US Olympic Training Center

US Air Force Academy

Pikes Peak
and
Garden of the Gods

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Colorado Springs Police Department

643 Sworn Officers

274 Civilian Employees

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Scanning

Analysis

Response

Assessment
Neighborhood Policing Unit (N.P.U.)

Enforcement of trespassing and camping laws

Keep Colorado Springs Beautiful (K.C.S.B.) clean-ups
Trash removed from the camps between 2001 and 2008

260 thirty cubic yard roll off trash containers

1,040 tons of trash removed
American Civil Liberties Union (A.C.L.U.) demands halt to clean ups
Influx of Homeless

Migrated closer to service providers
Public Outcry

Community Vs. Advocates

- Unsightly
- Unsanitary
- Fire Hazards
- Safety Concerns
- Poor Image

- Heavy Handed Police
- Homeless Rights
- Lack of Shelter

Safeguarding our community as our family
Larry Vestal’s eyes light up as he talks about a dream that’s getting closer to reality: a permanent village in Colorado Springs where up to 400 transients could camp, grow vegetables, watch movies, take educational classes and work odd jobs.

Vestal, known as “K.C.,” has lived on the streets for three years. His current home is dubbed Ezekiel’s Meadows, a popular transient stomping ground along Fountain Creek, where 10 to 20 tents are set up on any day.

But he wants more for himself and his colleagues, so he’s helping push to create Dignity Village of Colorado Springs, a designated site for transients that would provide oversight and amenities such as toilets and showers, activities, ways to earn money and rules more lenient than those at the local homeless shelter.
Economic Impacts on the City

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Considerations

Underlying causes of homelessness

Understanding the individual

Role of police and community

Move toward solutions
The Right Fit

Hand selected three officer team

Extensive background in Problem Oriented Policing (POP)

Familiar with complexity of homelessness

Each officer has 8 years experience in POP and homeless issues

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Information Gathering

Extent of the issue

Best practices

Litigation

Permissible tent cities

Local service providers
Homeward Pikes Peak

A 10-year blueprint to serve every homeless citizen in the Pikes Peak region

Community Homeless Assistance Providers (CHAP) meetings
One example:

174 sites located along public trails and major thoroughfares

Over 500 living in tents on public lands
Associated

Calls for

Service

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Thinking “outside”

Breaking down barriers with socks!

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Surveys of the Homeless

Over 100 surveyed in a one month period

Why homeless?

Why not in shelters?

Knowledge about resources available?

Why Colorado Springs?
What Works?

Denver, CO

Pinellas Park, FL
Pinellas Hope

Pinellas H.O.T.

Safeguarding our community as our family
What’s Missing in our Community?

- Funding
- Organization
- Case management
- Street level outreach
- Collaboration between service providers
- Dedicated team of police officers
“...the Colorado Springs Police Department, under the direction of Chief Richard Myers, courageously stepped "out of the box" and created the Homeless Outreach Team, better known as H.O.T.”

Colorado Springs Homelessness Examiner
Safeguarding our community as our family
Moving in the Right Direction

Open community forums

Media coverage

Community involvement

Building relationships
Scanning

Analysis

Response

Assessment
PARTNERSHIPS

Community collaboration is essential
Moving Toward a Lasting Solution

More than just a temporary fix

Welfare of the homeless

Environment

Safety of all citizens

Protect the civil rights of everyone
Community’s Misguided Generosity

Helping or Enabling

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Social worker

Community forums

Sanctioned camp site

No camping ordinance

Continued clean-ups

Shelter
Key Strategies to Building a Successful Program

Develop and maintain a multi-agency partnership

Ongoing personal contact and trust building between HOT and the homeless

Collaborative efforts to transition homeless into housing

Importance of focused efforts
Community Partners

- Homeward Pikes Peak
- Catholic Charities
- Keep Colorado Springs Beautiful
- A.C.L.U.
- The Black Pastor’s Union
- TLC Pharmacy
- Harbor House and Haven House
- Interfaith Hospitality Network
- Peak Vista Homeless Clinic
- Liza’s Place
- Ecumenical Social Ministries
- Resource Advocacy Program
Community Partners

- Pikes Peace Justice and Peace Commission
- The Salvation Army
- The Veteran’s Administration
- Urban Peak
- The Social Security Administration
- Westside Cares
- Springs Rescue Mission
- Partners in Housing
- Pikes Peak Mental Health
- Harvest Time Redeeming Ministries
- El Paso County Detoxification Facility
Foundations of Trust

Individual Relationships

Help

Respect

Listen

Refer

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Community Gets Involved

Laundry

Outreach

Storage

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A Change In Clean Up Protocols

Clean up notice posted at least 72 hours in advance

Personal papers are turned over to police

Many homeless individuals are now volunteering and helping
Trash removed from the camps
February 2009 to August 2010

69 thirty cubic yard roll off containers

276 tons of trash
Agencies Working in Concert on Proposed Ordinance

City Attorney’s Office

Homeless Advocacy Groups

A.C.L.U.

C.S.P.D. (H.O.T.)
Colorado Springs City Council hears proposal and approves "No Camping" ordinance on February 9th, 2010.
9.6.109: CAMPING ON PUBLIC PROPERTY PROHIBITED:
A. It is unlawful for any person to camp on any public property, except as may be specifically authorized by the appropriate governmental authority.
B. For purposes of this section camp or camping means to use the public area for living accommodation including, but not limited to, the activities and circumstances listed below. These activities and circumstances may be considered in determining whether reasonable grounds for belief have arisen that a person has camped or is camping in violation of this ordinance.
1. Sleeping or making preparations to sleep, including the lying down of bedding for the purpose of sleeping.
2. Occupying a shelter out-of-doors. Shelter shall mean any cover or protection from the elements other than clothing, such as a tent, shack, sleeping bag, or other structure or material.
3. The presence or use of a camp fire, camp stove or other heating source or cooking device.
4. Keeping or storing personal property.
Procedure

H.O.T. only unit to enforce ordinance

Written warning with specific referral

48 hours to move or citation issued

24 hours later, may be jailed

No shelter = no charges

H.O.T. has discretion
There was no high drama Thursday as the Colorado Springs Police Department’s Homeless Outreach Team began enforcing the city’s new no-camping ordinance. In fact, there was no drama at all.

BARBARA COTTER
THE GAZETTE

Cops begin enforcing no-camp ordinance with a soft touch

March 11, 2010
Providing a Way Home

$5,000 grant for transportation home

Locate family and verify support system

Reuniting families

Additional $25,000 in funds
EL POMAR FOUNDATION

CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

FUNDING IN A RECESSION

PIKES PEAK UNITED WAY

DANIELS FUND

FAITH BASED PARTNERS

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Homeward Pikes Peak Phase I Goals

Reach out to all homeless campers

Assist at least 2/3

Continuous move toward self-sufficiency

Collaborative effort for funding and service

Cost effective

Open communication

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Keys to Success
Scanning

Analysis

Response

Assessment
Phase I

Nearly 610 homeless offered assistance

- 159 reunited with family
- 85 subsidized housing
- 27 voluntary rehab
- 88 voluntary move-outs
- 75 still in program
Phase I (total)

People assisted: 434

+ Dismissed for infractions: 176

Total offered assistance: 610
Homeward Pikes Peak Phase II Goals

• Reach out to the 176 dismissed as well as remaining and newly homeless

• Hire trained mental health outreach worker to accompany HOT

• Very slow outreach process

• Never “close the door” on anyone
Thinking Through Good Intentions or Caring Versus Enabling

- Realistic Goals
  Client must want it

- Collaboration
  Everyone works toward **SAME** goals

- Candor
  Remain impartial and focused
  Keep community informed

- Caring
  Clients know
Overall Success

Initiative and innovation

Always available

Homeless appreciative and trusting

Lasting relationships built
Citizens express satisfaction

Homeless advocates pleased

Civil rights groups satisfied
RESULTS

(AUGUST 2009 – AUGUST 2010)

399 CALLS FOR SERVICE
193 COVER CALLS
2932 CONTACTS
1288 REFERRALS
1056 SPECIFIC REFERRALS
361 VERBAL WARNINGS
44 FELONY ARREST
116 MISDEMEANOR ARREST
RESULTS
(AUGUST 2009 – AUGUST 2010)

77 HOSPITALIZATIONS
104 REFUSALS
30 REPORTS
269 HOUSINGS
157 BUS TICKETS
51 WRITTEN WARNINGS
18 CASES CLEARED
183 REQUESTS FROM PATROL
Homeless Related Calls For Service

CALLS FOR SERVICE
(AUG 2008 – AUG 2009)

PATROL
(AUG 2009 – AUG 2010)

HOT
NOT ONE

CITATION ISSUED

FOR VIOLATION OF THE

“NO CAMPING” ORDINANCE!
Paving the Way...

• Manitou Springs, CO Police Department
• El Paso County, CO Sheriffs Office
• Fountain, CO Police Department
• Douglas County, CO Sheriffs Office
• Grand Junction, CO Police Department
• Houston, TX Police Department
What’s Next?

Continue HOT program

Train CSPD officers

Create a Metro HOT

Provide assistance and training to outside agencies
Before

After
Safeguarding our community as our family
Safeguarding our community as our family
Before

After

Safeguarding our community as our family
Before

After

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Thank You!

CSPD
Homeless Outreach Team

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Officer Dan McCormack
Officer M.J. Thomson

Safeguarding our community as our family
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