



**A Psychiatrist,
A Social Worker
and a Consumer
Walk Into a Library**

**National Health Care for the Homeless
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Leah Esguerra, MFT

Kathleen Lee

Rajesh Parekh, MD

San Francisco Department of Public Health



Setting

San Francisco Public Library –
Main Branch

Old Main Library damaged in
the 1989 SF earthquake

New building constructed
from 1993-95, opened
April 1996

6 floors, 300 computers,
children's wing

Cost: \$140 million

Visitation doubled to 2.1
million; 5x the seating area
376,000 sq. ft., 2x as large

“Areas to Avoid”



- According to [virtualltourist.com](http://www.virtualltourist.com) - the Tenderloin and parts of SoMa neighborhoods
- Central City is a confluence of population, poverty, public services, transportation and public spaces
- SFPL Main Branch is just about the center of this area

http://www.virtualltourist.com/travel/North_America/United_States_of_America/California/San_Francisco-755471/Warnings_or_Dangers-San_Francisco-Areas_to_Avoid-BR-1.html

San Francisco Homeless Count 2005 (Street Population)

The San Francisco Department of Human Services prepared a report entitled *San Francisco Homeless Count 2005 Final Report*, released on March 18, 2005. A homeless count was conducted on January 25, 2005 in San Francisco of the street population and homeless persons residing in shelters, resource centers, transitional housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment beds, San Francisco General Hospital and the County Jail.

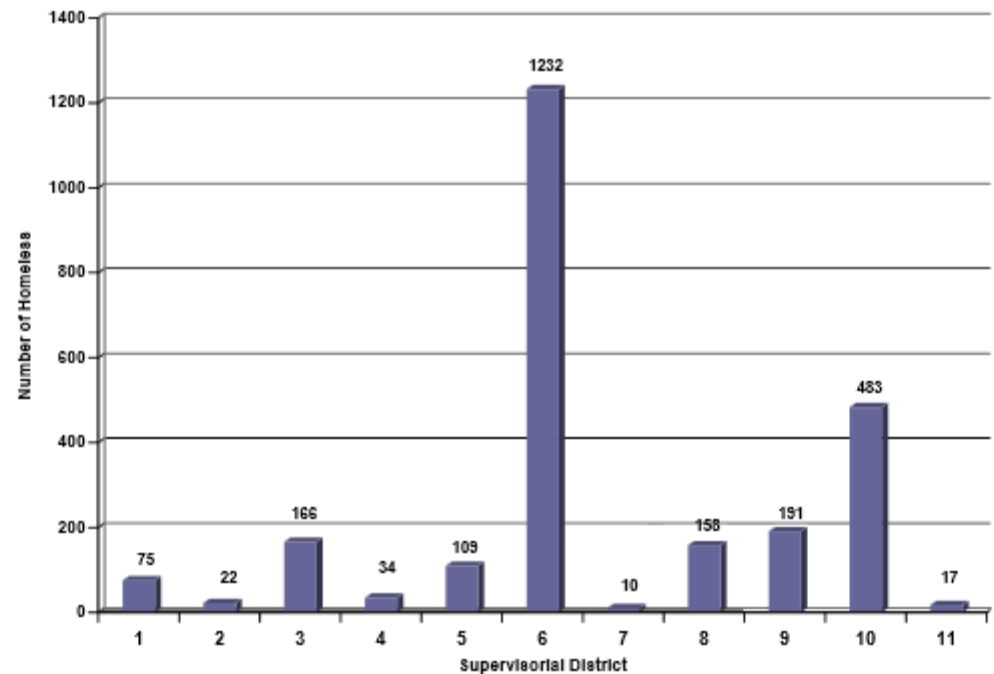
The homeless count for the street population in San Francisco was the only data that provided a number count for the homeless by supervisory districts. The total number for the street population on January 25, 2005 was reported as 2,497. A significant number of homeless people indicated their residency as district #6, and the race/ethnicity breakdown indicated were as follows: 36 percent for African American, 32 percent for White, 23 percent Unknown, 7 percent for Hispanic/Latino, 1 percent for Asian/Pacific, and 1 percent for Other.

2005 Homeless Count, by District

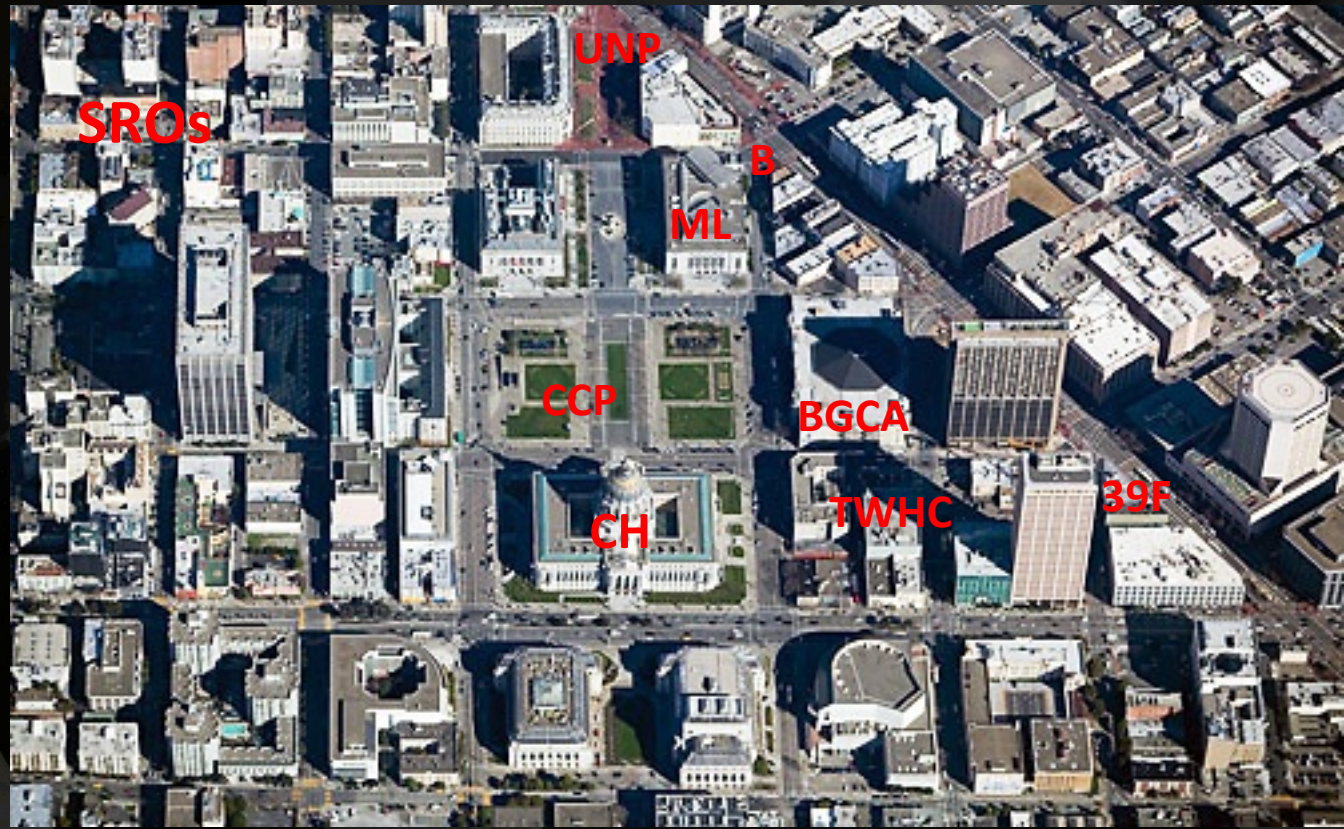
District 6: Tenderloin accounted for 50%

*(Tenderloin generally
overrepresented in
biannual homeless
counts)*

Chart 14- San Francisco Homeless Count 2005



The Tenderloin



Karen Strauss, Asst. Chief of the Main



2006

SFPL approached DPH
and SFPD for assistance

Sought expertise on
security, homelessness
and mental illness

Through engagements
with SFPD and DPH,
Library sought to leverage
additional department
resources



Vision



In 2005, newly appointed City Librarian Luis Herrera “heard how [Main Branch staff] felt ‘a little under siege’”

He went on to say, “It is not about the homeless; it is really about anyone who may need some housing or mental health referrals...We didn’t have the skills to deal with them. We’re not social workers”

Vision: the Main Branch accessible to all members of the public, in the context of enforcement of behavior codes, while reaching out to patrons in need of health and social services

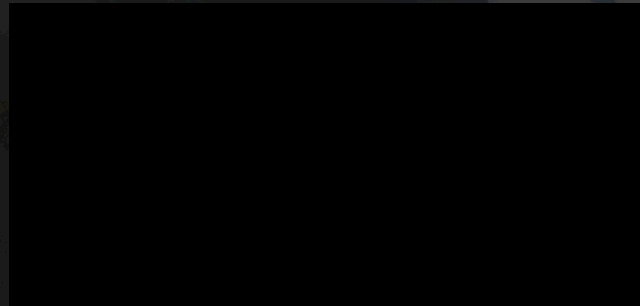
San Francisco Homeless Outreach Team (SF HOT)

- Multi-agency 40-member team consisting of outreach workers, case managers, social workers, voc/rec rehab counselors, primary care NP, psychiatrist and administrators
- Largely general fund-based; preserves flexibility of operations: “find solutions, as long as they are legal and ethical”
- Main goals: help chronically homeless individuals access benefits, health care services, temporary and permanent housing
- Collaborations with other City departments – SFPD, SFFD, DPW, Rec and Park, Mayor’s Office, Board of Supervisors
- Access to 40 shelter beds, 330 stabilization rooms



SF HOT

Sgt. Pat Kwan, SFPD / Outreach Detail



Initial Efforts

- Patron and staff survey
- Results:
 - many patrons using the Library for its bathrooms, to spend time after shelters closed
 - staff unhappy about violence, patron belongings, hygiene, and use of bathroom as a shower, recent overdoses
- Met with SFPL administration and SFPD Sgt. Kwan on a weekly basis to discuss plans & operations
- Discussed ways to better enforce SFPL behavior codes, and structural changes

Initial Efforts

- Two 0.5 FTE Outreach workers to do “in-reach”
- Offer voluntary access to services
- Ran into difficulties:
 - Encountered negative attitude toward homeless patrons from some staff
 - Homeless patrons wanted to be left alone...Library as Sanctuary
- Some successes – but SFPL wanted more

Initial Efforts

- Budget: \$62K
- 15 clients signed up for case management from SF HOT the first year
- Tried different outreach workers
- But, response remained tepid
- Structural changes enacted in the bathroom
- Training of SFPL staff initiated

Change of plans

- Consideration of full-time presence
- Joint idea of involving a psychiatric social worker to reflect complexity of reaching out to patrons in a non-traditional setting, and of working alongside non-mental health staff
- Budget increase to \$100K

A Social Worker in a Public Library (Really?!!)



Country's First Full-Time Psychiatric Worker Stationed in a Public Library

- Library Journal
- San Francisco Chronicle
- Associated Press

*Has garnered national and international attention. The article has been translated into many different languages and has been picked up by newspapers as far as Eastern Europe and Asia.

- Local news
- National People's Radio (NPR News)
- The Examiner

SFPL as the National Model

- Library Employing a Full-Time Social Worker
- Interests from other US libraries
- Visits from a researcher from Japan and educator from England
- SFPL has paved the way
- More and more other libraries are hiring social worker and outreach worker.
- NOT A “ONE – PERSON ENDEAVOR” but many dedicated people behind the success such as the HOT TEAM.



Library nurses look after those in need

“Local library officials had been wanting to address social service needs among patrons for several years but weren't quite certain how.

Then in 2010, when the San Francisco Public Library took the unprecedented step of hiring a social worker, Pima County officials were inspired to take similar action.”



Why A Social Worker at a Library?

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!



“It is disheartening to see underserved people day in and day out at the library knowing that they need help but we are not equipped to serve them.”

-Library Staff

What Do I Do Now?

- ❖ Build relationships with the staff.
- ❖ Build relationships with outside agencies.
- ❖ Identify what the staff needs through focus groups.
- ❖ Clarifying my role and addressing expectations.
- ❖ Assessing, engaging, referring.

Clients and Challenges

STAFF

Varying levels of:

- Compassion
- Understanding of mental illness and substance abuse
- Fear and mistrust of homeless people

PATRONS

- Chronic homeless
- Severely mentally-ill
- Chronic substance abuse
- Newly homeless

More clients

- Community in general
 - * e.g. Legal advice for Korean-speaking parents
 - * Veterans
 - * People facing eviction
 - * Looking for a therapist
 - * Just wants to talk

Additional Challenges:

- Limited housing resources
- No one is turned away from services but keeping the housing resources for the regular library patrons only.
- Outreach-based services.

Trainings



- Mental Health 101
- Substance Abuse 101
- When & how to implement 5150s
- Hollywood movies to illustrate MH dx
- How to appropriately set limits
- State of the City / Homelessness

2010-11 Social Worker Service Stats

- Number of:

Patron contacts	621
New patrons assessed for services	206
Patrons referred to non-SF HOT services with concerns resolved	144
Patrons referred to SF HOT	63
Patrons placed into stabilization rooms	48
Patrons placed into permanent housing	15
Patrons newly employed	3

Staff Surveys – 2010 vs. 2009

	2009 (percentages)	2010
How informed do you feel about resources available for the public?	87.1	95.1
How informed do you feel about resources available for the staff?	92.7	98.6
How safe do you feel in and around the Main Library?	94.8	92.8
How comfortable do you feel in and around the Main Library?	69.0	64.1
How much improvement have you seen in how incidents are handled	63.2	71.7



Health and Safety Associates

- *Monitor the bathrooms for inappropriate activities.
- *Report these activities to security staff.
- *Provide resources (free eats, shelter, free showers, etc.)



“Check-in” and “Check-out” with the HaSA

Who are the HaSAs?

- HaSAs are individuals who themselves have experienced homelessness and issues that could be associated with homelessness.
- They have first-hand experiences of using the San Francisco system relating to obtaining public benefits, accessing the shelters and free eats, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment.
- Former or client of the SF Homeless Outreach Team.
- Overcome homelessness and other issues.

HaSA Contributions

- Paid internship position (15 hours a week)
- Except for 1 part-time permanent employed position
- Monitor the bathrooms for inappropriate activities and report to security.
- Provide free resources.
- Outreach patrons on the floors
- Use behaviors (sleeping/eating) as opportunities to connect with people. (**NOT ACT AS SECURITY!**)
- Use their experience/knowledge to refer people to GA, SSI, Westside Crisis, St. Anthony for clothing, etc.
- Refer patrons to the Social Worker for housing or patrons needs more assistance (further referral, assess for 5150, APS/CPS)

The HaSAs put a face to homelessness and introduced the notion that homelessness has many faces. And they might be looking at you right now.

HaSA as Vocational Training Model: From Homelessness to Work

With the assistance of DPH's Vocational Coordinator, Russell Berman:

- DPH Counselor (full-time)
- City Wide (UCSF) Counselor (part-time)
- A Woman's Place Counselor (full-time)
- Completed C.H.E.F.S program (culinary training program for the homeless.)

Kathleen Lee

- Personal story
- A day in the life of a HASA at the Main
- Contributions
- Success stories

Questions?

