

Community Educators

St. Stephen's Human Services
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Anyone who is
homeless or has been
formerly homeless

Who are Community Educators?

- Sharing their stories and perspectives creates a compassion for homelessness
- Ability, as an agency and community, to be rooted in social justice
- Time and energy
- Creativity and knowledge about the best ways to educate the homeless community

What do Educators give?

- Learn about issues that affect them politically and civically.
- Learn skills to speak before elected officials or people of influence, work with the media and provide public presentations.
- Learn self-advocacy and outreach to peers

What do Educators gain?

A Day in the Life

offers opportunities to share conversation with people experiencing homelessness and extreme poverty.

Homeless Against Homelessness

provides education and self-advocacy opportunities for people who have experienced homelessness.

Where are Community Educators utilized?

Offers a unique opportunity to engage with & be educated by people who have experienced homelessness.

Highly Experiential
Focus on Personal Experiences
Individual yet Systemic

A Day in the Life

A program of St. Stephen's Community Engagement Division

Open weekly meeting for those who have been or are homeless

Meal provided as well as some form of transportation

Stipend for day care

Advocate supported

Facilitated and organized by community educators

Homeless Against Homelessness

A Program of St. Stephen's Community Engagement Division



Initiatives:

2012 Voter registration

Defeat of the Voter ID amendment in MN

Retain General Assistance Medical benefits

History – MN is 1 of 11 states to offer General Assistance Medical Care, but it was on the legislative agenda to cut it from the state's budget.

What that would mean - 70,000 single, poor adults would lose health care

Goal – To engage as many people in the process of being effected by this change as possible to rally support

The Impact of Community Educators

The General Assistance Medical Care Project

What Community Educators Achieved:

Targeted consumers through shelter and drop-in center visits

Learned and gathered individuals' stories

Made "man on the street" videos for with media & legislators.

Organized military veterans without VA health care to gather at Capitol

Met with legislators.

Strategies Used by Community Educators

The General Assistance Medical Care Project



HAH member with State Senator and State Rep (openly GLBT and first Native American female legislators in Minnesota history).

How the model could collaborate with Medicaid Application Assistance staff?

- Cross training – training Community Educators about Medicaid and having Community Educators train Medicaid staff about engagement
- Education – Community Educators are mobile in the community and are good resources for spreading the word
- Organization – Community Educators establishing events and staffing resource tables at drop in centers and shelters that could bring Medicaid Application Assistance staff to those sites.

Community Educators and the Affordable Care Act

Things to consider:

- Agency belief that organizing, education and advocacy are as important as direct service to homeless households. Staff or full-time interns to facilitate/coordinate
- Budget: transportation, stipends, food, child care, ideally agency staff to teach organizing, advocacy skills and educate
- Understanding of alternative outreach to people without phones or bus tokens or computer access
- Staff skill and understanding of how to work with media and elected officials

Creating Community Educators

- Identity Changing – homeless to “housed”
- Promotes Stability
- Credibility among peers

**Why Community Educators are
Crucial**



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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