

Community First! Village Project Proposal

Who

Mobile Loaves and Fishes began when Alan Graham and some of his friends were at church on a Sunday. The pastor called them to “Love your neighbors as yourself”, and these five men wanted to find a way to really play that out in their lives. The organization is called Mobile Loaves and Fishes because they literally started with five men, feeding the homeless, out of a minivan. Ever since that day, the organization has grown exponentially with volunteers and the homeless themselves. Community First! Village is a branch of Mobile Loaves and Fishes where they provide small cottage-looking houses or heavy-duty tents for the homeless. The village is on Capital of Texas Highway just past the airport. Because the main goal is to love these men and women, draw them closer to God, and to raise them out of poverty, the organization requires these people to have jobs and to pay a monthly rent (a very feasible cost). However, having a background of homelessness makes finding jobs very difficult sometimes. So, the village provides many small jobs until the people are hired. For example, they have a garden, art houses, a kitchen, and food trailers for the homeless to work. The purpose of the village is not just to provide homes for the homeless, but the community of the village is the focus of the project. Over many years, they realized that the only way to truly help the homeless is to provide community and friends for them, something they probably never had. This village has proven as a major blessing for all of the people living there.

What

The AP Statistics class’ role is to come up with a well-written survey and to present it to the homeless living in the village. The survey asks many questions about the state of mind, health, and overall situation of the people when they were on the streets compared to living in the village. The questions involve topics like drug/alcohol addiction, family situation, jail/prison time, crimes, food/health, hospital visits, and much more. The questions are formatted in a way for there to be several possible answers to make it easier for the people to answer. This reflects our learning and actual lessons in Statistics class because now we are able to see how difficult it actually is to conduct a non-bias, ethical, and engaging survey for people that may or may not be sensitive about their past. As a class we settled on the following main question to address in this project: *Is MLF’s approach to treating homelessness successfully improving the quality of life of the people it serves, as compared to their life on the streets?*

Why

The questions we asked and our results are worth viewing and using because we will have used everything we learned in stats to ensure that the replies are as accurate as possible. This question is not only important for us as students to understand how to actually perform and give a survey, but it is important for those that are involved in Community First! to have evidence of the impact they have made on the homeless. They

get to reap the rewards for their efforts, while using the evidence to further the improvements and impacts they have made on these people.

How

First, the Grahams came to our class and talked about their mission at Community First! Village. We learned how it began, what they are doing now, and the reason most people become chronically homeless. The initial job that they gave us was to make a survey for the homeless. The Grahams provided questions that we individually organized and reworded onto a document. Then, as groups, we put some questions together, separated some of them, reworded them, and created a method for the possible answers underneath each question. They also wanted us to organize it so that the “easy” questions, ones that asked about food, income, hospital visits, etc. were towards the beginning, while the harder questions, like family life, mental health, relationships, etc. were towards the end. Then, those were edited even further, and the Grahams chose the best questions and combined them into one document for us to use as the survey.

We will go to Community First! Village and begin surveying. It will be a convenience sample because it is early on in the development of this village, and only 20-25 out of the 200 people are living there currently. Because this is a small sample, we will make sure to survey as many as possible. The main concern is if our sample will actually reflect the population. We think it will because the 25 people have been chronically homeless, and have been connected to MLF for a period of time either through the food trucks, RV park, or just being involved in a different way. When we visit, it will be Hamburger Friday, so we expect many people to be drawn to the site because there is free food. There will be 2 students assigned to each person because of safety, but also to create ease during the process. Because some residents may have issues filling the surveys out on their own, we will read the questions and answer them for the residents depending on what they say. These are the plans so far, but we will probably need additional information about how to approach the residents without seeming ignorant or insensitive, which hopefully won't be a major issue.

In unit 1, we learned about the approach to surveys and the bias that can appear if you aren't careful. One of the concerns about the convenience sample would be selection bias. Although we are pretty sure the sample represents the whole population, we have to make sure that a part of the population isn't somehow underrepresented in this survey. The fix would be a random sample, but this is not an option because there aren't enough residents, so we will just have to trust that this sample is representative. Response bias is another potential problem. This is why we need to present ourselves well, so that the people trust that they can give their real opinion. If not, they may want to try to impress us or avoid embarrassing answers by lying. Another way response bias could occur is in the wording of a question. This is why we were so careful in crafting our survey so that it was easily understood. Lastly, there is a nonresponse bias that could occur if someone refuses to answer a question. Hopefully this won't happen, as I assume they will be informed beforehand about our visit.

When

We will go to Mobile Loaves and Fishes' Community First! Village on Friday, April 8, 2016. In case the weather is bad, we have Friday, April 15, 2016 as a backup.

We will arrive around 10 am and stay until 2 pm, or until all the data available to us is gathered. The times are approximations because it depends on what the residents are doing, and when they will be available.

The analysis will be presented to MLF on Friday, May 5.