Helping The Homeless Communities

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Abstract

In my community, I have talked to stakeholders about doing a donation drive. For my project, I decided to collect donations for The Valley House Homeless Shelter in Twin Falls, Idaho. As part of my project, I aimed to collect donations that would be beneficial and helpful for families in need. The main focus of my project was collecting donations such as household items. There are a number of items I would like to get for the children, including bedding, bathroom supplies, boxed foods, baby supplies, and educational materials. In addition to creating flyers to post around the community, I posted this flier on a local Facebook page, talked to community members, and spoke to Valley House Homeless Shelter stakeholders who were involved in my project. My flier provides a short overview of the community project I am doing and what I wanted to collect. This service learning project consists of researching what the Valley House Homeless Shelter is, what their purpose is, how they can assist others who may be struggling, and the resources that they provide.

Keywords: Helping the homeless community. The Valley House Homeless Shelter.
Introduction

I had several projects in mind when thinking about a capstone project. Boise State University was an important part of my college experience. I wanted to do a project that showed all of the skills I have acquired throughout my college experience at Boise State University. I am very passionate about teaching children. From a young age, I always wanted to go to college and obtain my degree in Early Childhood Education. The first thing I thought of when thinking about a project was to show what skills I had in Early Childhood Education. My first thought was to do a service learning project helping out the College of Southern Idaho Refugee Center in Twin Falls, Idaho. There is only one refugee center in Twin Falls, Idaho. With a donation drive for the refugee center, I would be able to help out the children and families without having to worry about getting the items that they need. The project that I was planning on doing fell through but I had a thought about doing a donation drive for the Valley House Homeless Shelter. Over the past two years, The Valley House Homeless Shelter has provided 74,000 nights of shelter, an increase of 7,000 nights over the period of 2022. The Valley House Homeless Shelter provides services for the community, from food to blankets, and the shelter provides beds for single men, single women, and families.

As part of this project, I spoke with the main owner of The Valley House Homeless Shelter about my main purpose and what my goal was at the end. As I discussed my ideas for donations, I also discussed what the shelter needed in terms of donations. After discussing my project and having a plan, I created a flier and posted it on the Kimberly, Idaho News & Info Facebook page and hung up my flier around community grocery stores. With this project, the shelter will be able to provide more items to those in need.
**Elements coming together**

This project has been approached from different perspectives in order to achieve the goal. At the beginning of this project, I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted to accomplish, collecting donations for the College of Southern Idaho Refugee Center and collecting items for the refugees’ families. I was pretty excited to do this project because I had connections with the center and some of the children. I had a whole plan for what I wanted to do but my plans changed and I had decided to do a donation drive for the homeless shelter. It had been my expectation that I would receive more donations from the community, but one community member had donated bedding. I was hoping that more people would see the flier around where I had hung it up and more people would have seen the Facebook post. I have gotten likes on the post and one comment but only had one person reach out to me locally. Most of the donations I have received have been from family members. Thanks to my family members, I will be able to get donations for the shelter that will be very helpful. Due to my lack of involvement in the community, I am helping out the homeless in Twin Falls, Idaho because by doing a project that helps the community, I get out of my comfort zone by talking to community members, explaining my project, and what I expect it to accomplish. When talking to the owner at the shelter both of us decided to keep the donations simple. In our discussions, we discussed what the families and children need and not just what I listed on the flier. In addition, my innovative approach to this project was to post my flier on social media platforms, hang the fliers up at local businesses, and finally ask my family for contributions.
My work completed with the help of my stakeholders has demonstrated self-awareness by doing a project that was new to me. As a result of the donation drive for The Valley House Homeless Shelter I have decided to do, I have realized how much I can contribute to the community and how I can help others. As I considered the emotional intelligence of my audience, I made sure to make sure the resources were accessible to others, and easy to use. By thinking about how I could reach a wider audience in the community, I used my creative framework to approach this. I learned that I needed to post my flier on different community pages, hang it up at businesses with a lot of customers, and talk to friends and family members about how they can help. The first time I made a flier, I printed it out and realized there were a few typos, and since it was a flier, I wanted to make it stand out to the community. Online information is easier for people to find than going out to find articles on bulletin boards these days because people can upload articles on Facebook and other social media platforms.

**Results**

There were a few ways that I measured the impact and outcomes of this project. These included:

a) how many comments and likes I have gotten on the local community Facebook page, b) measuring the donations that I have received, and c) feedback that I got from local community members that have donated to my project. A member of the community was willing to donate some bedding, and she told me how KMVT broadcasts how the community can contribute. The positive impact of my project on stakeholders was that I was able to talk to the shelter and learn what services they provide, the circumstances, and the stories that make people seek shelter.
Conclusion

What would I do differently? As a student, one thing I would change would be to start working on my project earlier before class begins. If I had started the project I would have gotten a different outcome than I anticipated. I had only one local person reach out to me for donations, and I expected more local community members to do the same. In addition to the flyers I posted on the local community Facebook page, I have also posted them around town.
References


Interview: When I was discussing my project to the stakeholders at The Valley Homeless I asked the main owner about their business. One of the questions I have asked was how many daily donations they get on a daily basis. The response that I got was that it varies on the day. If you go to the Valley House Website you can actually do an Amazon Gift card, or donate online through Venmo or PayPal, and another way you can donate is by doing a cash donation.

Interview from Community Member: When I met with a community member to donate bedding she told me about how she has donated to the shelter in the past. When talking to her about my project and how I got involved she mentioned to me about how the homeless
shelter broadcast their business on the news and that is when I started researching more about The Valley House and how they promote people to donate.
Appendix

https://www.facebook.com/groups/kimberlynewsandinfo/permalink/3116078075195027/?mibextid=QwDbR1&rdid=LEEMAMSmdlRNaeTT

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