



Homeless & Highly Mobile Community Design Group

February to May, 2015

A Project of the Mission Impact Council

DESIGN GROUPS: The Mission Impact Council and Homeless and Highly Mobile community leaders and youth held a series of five monthly design meetings.

GOAL: The goal was to begin identifying needs and *co-creating* initiatives that would increase life opportunity and equity for all Homeless and Highly Mobile youth.

CONTENT: Monthly discussions focused on six topics: youth development and leadership, employability, diversity, health and wellness, education and support services.

RESULTS: Community members, including youth, identified key gaps and obstacles in each of the above areas that could increase life opportunities and equity for their youth. Their comments and ideas are presented on the following pages in three sections:

1. **Access:** Do Homeless and Highly Mobile youth have equal *access* to youth programs and opportunities?
2. **Quality:** Are the programs that Homeless and Highly Mobile youth access *high quality*?
3. **Purpose:** Do existing programs serve the most important *purposes and needs* of Homeless and Highly Mobile youth and their community?

The Mission Impact Council

The Mission Impact Council convenes diverse organizations and communities to work together for positive social change through developing innovative and community-based solutions that change life opportunities for and with urban and underserved youth in the Twin Cities. The co-chairs of the collective impact initiative are:

- Wokie Weah, President of Youthprise
- Todd Tibbits, Chief Operating Officer of the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities
- Meghan Barp, Senior Vice President, Community Impact, at Greater Twin Cities United Way

For more information, contact Hedy Walls, the Vice-President of Social Responsibility at the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities: hedy.walls@ymcatwincities.org.

Homeless & Highly Mobile (HHM) Youth Development & Leadership

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Awareness	Put schedules of leadership development opportunities on radio, TV, social media, app, etc.	HHM often not aware of the leadership programs and services available to them.
	Filters	Some programs only take “cream of the crop” youth for programs.	Youth rejected by how they look, crime records, tattoos, piercings.
	Logistics	Multiple obstacles faced by HHM even if aware of opportunities (so many other life demands).	Need transportation, child care, flexible time, and programs open to those 18 years+; stipends help.
	Database	Create or update a database of options for HHM youth involved in the criminal justice system.	HHM are not aware of the leadership programs and services available to them
	Technology	Use technology to offer leadership opportunities and development (e.g. web-based meetings, public forums, blogs).	Program exists now for adults, but not for youth; could tie in learning about leadership and employment initiatives too.
Quality	Criminal Justice	Encourage empowerment classes for youth who have been in criminal justice system —help with self esteem, lose stigma.	Once in the criminal justice system, many HHM youth adopt that label and don’t see themselves as leaders.
	Mentoring	More job programs for 18+ age that include leadership and mentorship component.	Need support system and opportunities to develop in job.
	Creative Participation	Find different ways for youth to be involved in leadership — promoting an event, volunteering just one time, social media, etc.	Some youth don’t define “leadership” in a traditional way or may have barriers to being involved in traditional programs.
Purpose	Youth Educators	Youth learn leadership by teaching other youth and adults skills about their passions.	Reciprocal helping—benefits youth and those receiving help (e.g. teach computer skills to older adults).
	Innovation (e.g. Youth as App Developers)	Need new & different creative options (e.g. Teach youth programming skills to write code and design apps for non-profits.	Tap into local technology scene as mentors/ buddies to promote HHM leadership and technical skills that can lead to employment
	Mimic Model Programs	Mimic “Leadership Twin Cities” classes; meet city officials, business leaders; tour business and organizations.	Program exists now for adults, but not for youth; could tie in learning about leadership and employment initiatives too

Homeless & Highly Mobile Employability Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Career Education	Develop opportunities for youth to shadow people from various careers.	Need to be well supported to allow youth to succeed.
	Internships	Create internships specially that target homeless and highly mobile youth.	Will need to have extra support and education to navigate unique challenges of HHM youth.
	References	Allow teachers and other case managers/ professionals to be references to get a job.	Removes another barrier to getting a good job.
	Prejudice	HHM may face prejudice in the workplace from managers and co-workers.	Need to create safe spaces for HHM youth to test the job market.
Quality	Funding	Provide funding for innovative programs that work with the “tough kids.”	Without taking money from current programs and allowing for “failure” as a stepping stone to success.
	Educational Experiences for Employability	Provide educational experiences that are relevant and targeted to youth gaining employment.	May need help to make the connection between the educational experiences and how they translate to the work world.
	School Credit	Offer educational credits for “experiential” learning, service-learning and other activities	These experiences are education-rich and fit the learning style of many HHM youth.
Purpose	Educate Businesses	Develop education for employers through Chamber of Commerce.	Need to break down the stigma and stereotypes of homeless youth.
	Job Coach	Provide youth with a job coach for 40 to 120 hours.	Many need that type of intensive mentoring to succeed.

Homeless & Highly Mobile Educational Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Child Care Support	Find a way to have child care costs covered while youth are in school.	Child care can be subsidized while working but not while in school.
	Special Needs	Increase resources for HHM youth with special ed needs	HHM group that is not always getting needed ed services.
	Independent Status	Change policy so youth accessing Homeless Youth Act funded programs can qualify for independent status.	The barriers for HHM youth to access independent status and get financial aid are significant.
	Criminal Histories	Criminal history can prevent HHM youth getting into certain school programs.	Need to coordinate juvenile justice and correctional system to remove criminal histories for HHM youth that prohibit working in human/ social services, law enforcement.
	Transportation	Change rules to allow students to be dropped off at work	Lack of transport to work later can interfere with getting to school.
	College Credit	Offer more PSEO (Post Secondary Enrollment Options) at all schools.	Help connect more HHM youth to gaining college credits while still in high school.
Quality	Practical Education	Provide more opportunity for education that is practical and relevant to HHM needs.	Offer more alternative ways to get school credit for work and service, and more vocational education.
	Life Skills	Teach more life skill such as money management, dress for success, resume, etc.	HHM want life skills that will help them succeed right now.
	Educational Outreach	Hire homeless outreach person to educate families about their rights and advocate where need.	It's not enough to have good resources available; need an advocate & system navigator.
	Relationships	Find more ways for educators to know build personal relationships with HHM students.	Authentic relationships with teachers is a key ingredient in HHM student success.
Purpose	Bridge Education & Employment	Build stronger connections between high schools and colleges/ post-secondary opportunities.	There is a critical link needed to bridge services to youth as they transition out of K-12 school.
	Entrepreneur	Provide training on how to be an entrepreneur.	When there are barriers to entering the job market, entrepreneurship is always an option.

Homeless & Highly Mobile Health & Wellness Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Healthy Food	Have traveling food shelves or mobile food trucks with healthy options.	Youth face multiple barriers accessing traditional food shelves and getting healthy options.
	Physical Activity	Missing access to gym memberships (with childcare).	Expand present options; YMCA give passes to Youthlink to share; restart Y horse program; offer camp opportunities.
	Mental Health	Accessible, quality mental health services including medications with no stigma.	Important issue with HHM population; need PR campaign to reduce mental health stigma.
Quality	Alternative Healing	Educate service providers and HHM youth on alternative medicines.	Find way to cover more holistic options.
	Substance Abuse	Help for HHM youth with drug problems with no strings.	Need to target youth specifically.
	Primary Doctor	Create way to for HHM youth to have a primary doctor.	Difficult at free clinic because doctors rotate.
Purpose	Health Advocates	Provide advocates to help navigate access to health care and insurance.	Need to especially bridge services to youth as they transition out of K-12 school.
	Community Garden	Develop a community garden for HHM service providers with educational component (e.g. how to grow, store, sell and cook).	Would provide multifaceted purposes—good food, learning, sell extras in farmer’s market
	Sex Education	Provide way to get sex education and counseling.	Some HHM youth exposed to more risk.

Homeless & Highly Mobile Diversity Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host community resource fairs for all students —raise awareness about school and community resources for ALL Advertise creatively in schools. 	Many HHM youth are not aware of the resources available; not getting information they need on mental health, food shelf, etc. Use text alerts, Twitter, Facebook.
	Stigma	HHM continue to have stigma around access to programs and services. For jobs, housing and others, hold blind interviews like they do on “The Voice.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of youth, especially in downtown Assumptions about HHM youth: lazy, run aways, drug addict, criminal, from divorced home.
	General Public Education	Raise awareness among the general population about issues HHM are facing.	Media campaign needed about HHM youth; how people can really help.
Quality	Support	People and organizations often don’t know what to do to really help HHM youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some get into “saving” mentality (help that is enabling rather than solving issues) Be clear about short-term versus long-term help needed
	Defintion	Varying definitions of “homeless” and youth may not identify with any	Need to be clear about who we are talking about and designing programs for.
	GLBTQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create more awareness and expand programs about homeless and GLBTQ youth Expand resources to this group (e.g. clinics, support groups) 	Many programs not set up to meet their needs; perhaps instead of a physical building have a traveling organization that uses other space like the YMCA or public libraries.
	Poverty and Racial Disparities	Take a hard look at our current systems and laws and how they keep people in poverty or encourage racial disparities.	Systemic issues must be addressed for any of the other individual programs to work well.
Purpose	Criminal Backgrounds	Provide incentives for landlords to house and employers to hire former felons.	Criminal backgrounds and histories create barriers to getting ahead (affect housing, hiring, financial aid, education, everything).
	Mental Health	Have more funding for youth mental health; first aid to train youth mentors.	Mental health issues create additional barriers and challenges for HHM.

Homeless & Highly Mobile Support Services Opportunities

How can the Mission Impact Council Act as a Supportive Ally?

	Issue	Opportunity	Insights
Access	Transportation	Remove barriers to HHM youth obtaining drivers licenses.	Current & proposed process create particular barriers to HHM youth.
	Transportation	Expand bus and rail services to the suburban areas	Being done, but pressing need for more and faster
	Information	Create an online database of available support services.	Youth often not aware of what is available (may be in process through Youth Service Network)
	Police Relationships	Provide for regular meetings between youth & police	Need for more communication and more understanding.
	Housing	Provide for more affordable housing buildings.	Need for housing plus to fund services too.
Quality	Funding	Encourage innovation by funding pilot programs to test new ideas to improve systems.	Without taking money from current programs and allowing for “failure” as an inevitable part or change.
	Leadership	Increase the level and quality of leadership in support agencies.	Need for leaders to better reflect community they serve
	Shelter Options	More shelter options especially for 18 to 24 year olds	More shelters in own community; better align options and services
	Paperwork	Have less paperwork	Streamline programs
	Teach Navigation Skills	Teach youth to navigate the various systems themselves	Create opportunities to become more independent and then to mentor others.
Purpose	Youth Voice	Engage youth in more areas of community leadership	Need HHM voice on councils, boards, coalitions.
	Youth to Youth Mentors	Create opportunities for successful HHM youth to mentor others.	Youth that have learned to navigate systems could mentor those that are struggling.
	Housing Model	Replicate Housing First model and duplicate superior case management service.	Need to elevate the role of the case manager
	Mental Health	Create or modify mental health services that are not attached to agencies.	Allows the mental health professionals to follow youth into different settings.
	Community Access	Conduct study about cultural communities ability to access available support services	Certain populations not accessing services that are available. Cultural norms may be an obstacle.