Social Work in the Library

Molly Ellson & Kathryn Bennett
San Francisco Public Library:

- 15% of 5,000 of the population are homeless
- Leah Esguerra is the nation’s first full-time library social worker
  - Esguerra provides information for people, but with individuals there is clinical assessment, case management, and outreach involved.
  - Esguerra trains library staff on what to do when they witness unpleasant behavior
- 150 individuals received permanent housing and 800 benefited from other social services since the program started in 2009.
- Three former homeless individuals work at the library
- Staff patrons have noticed fewer incidents of negative behavior since the social worker arrived.
  
  (Wise, 2015)
Homeless and underemployed line up to use the public access computers.

Community Technology Center (CTC) has the most interaction with the homeless.

Twice a year the CTC show women’s shelter residents how they can use computers to search for jobs and sign up for library cards.

On average the SW meets with about 5 patrons a day.

There is a librarian who provides guidance on anything from writing a resume to signing onto Facebook.

(Fox, 2015)
Dallas Public Library

- Twice a month the staff has “Coffee and Conversation” with the homeless and others in need of services.
- Mission - to give the library staff a better understanding for some of the regulars in order to empathize with them.
- Due to an HIV awareness topic, 15 attendees got tested

(Fox, 2015)
A public health nurse comes once a week or once a month

Benefit – patron can receive basic first aid and can be referred to county clinics for follow-up.

Benefit – helps people back into insurance so they can get healthcare

(Jenkins, 2014)
Portland, Oregon’s Street Books

- “Street Librarians” deliver books to homeless with no set return date
- Three people work one day a week for three hour shifts with the two or three homeless dense areas.
- Book inventory gets replenished with donations
San Jose Public Library & the Free Library of Philadelphia

- Volunteer social workers go twice a month for free twenty minute consultations and referrals.
- Full-time social worker
- Houses HOME café whose employees were once homeless

(Luo et al., 2012)
ETSU Internship History

Purpose: to help underserved/at-risk and expand field internship location

Summer 2015 – Community by the Book
- Kingsport, Bristol, Elizabethton, and Johnson City libraries.
- Summer 2015: Donny Brock
- Fall 2015: Masters intern - only served one month
- Spring 2016: Anna Wood
- Fall 2016 – Spring 2017 – Molly Ellson and Kathryn Bennett
  - Blountville, Gray, Jonesborough, Erwin

(D. Brock, personal communication, October, 25, 2016)
(N. Roark, personal communication, October, 19, 2016)
ETSU Internship History

- How has the agency changed through time?

- 2015: Donny was based in research
  - Coffee and Conversation
  - Agency Conference

- 2016: Anna did research and started expanding on resources
  - Housing Fair
  - Adult coloring

- 2016 – 2017: New libraries: Blountville, Gray, Jonesborough, and Erwin
  - Kathryn and I are doing some research, but focusing more on community outreach.
    - Hygiene closet
    - Resource tables
    - Google number
Agency Mission Statement and Goals

* The internship’s mission is to provide services to those in need through the library system.

* Strengths:
  * People are being provided service for free because the internship is through the school
  * Non-traditional agencies
    * Expanding field program
    * Can expand to other areas
  * Micro, mezzo, and macro practice

* Challenges
  * Rural Libraries
  * Sustainability
  * Proudful Patrons
  * Consistency
  * Staff
  * Education

NASW (2008)
Population Served

Type of population:
- Summer 2015 – Spring 2016: Local homeless
- Fall 2016 – Spring 2017: Anyone in need

Anyone is eligible as long as they are willing to communicate

People who seek our help are those who are:
- Unemployed
- Homeless
- Disabled
- Elderly
- Lacking internet
- And more

Social work Ethics and Values?
- Empowerment
- No discrimination
- This internship brings the community together
- Developing a reliable list of resources
References


D. Brock, personal communication, October, 25, 2016.

Fox, S. (2015, April 15). From nurses to social workers, see how public libraries are serving the homeless. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/see-libraries-across-country-serving-homeless/


N. Roark, personal communication, October, 19, 2016.