

LIBRARY SERVICE TO PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

International Federation of Library
Associations Conference

Columbus, OH

August 16, 2016

Forsyth County Public Library

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE



“That all might find welcome”





Public
Libraries...free
and open to
everyone





The elephant in the room— and at the door...



Grant Objectives

- ▣ Hire a Peer Support Specialist to work directly with Central Library customers who are experiencing homelessness
- ▣ Conduct sensitivity training for Library staff and the general public
- ▣ Provide library services and programs to meet the needs of the target population
- ▣ Determine best practices that can be shared with library professionals in North Carolina and nationwide

“Grant helps library better lives of the homeless”



From *The Chronicle*, Winston-Salem, December 13, 2012

“It is no secret that the Central Library has become sort of a safe haven for members of the local homeless population. Now, library officials are looking to better serve these patrons. The library wants to become a more valued resource for local homeless men and women by connecting them with the resources and services that could help change or improve their lives.”

“I think it’s a really great idea that sometimes we have to meet people where they are, and if they’re homeless and they’re at the library, let’s bring some services to them.”

Sonya Kurosky, Samaritan Ministries



The Library hires a Peer Support Specialist



Assistant Library Director Elizabeth Skinner with Peer Support Specialist Jose Perez Jr.

“Love and concern about the community”



Sprinkle-Hamlin

Forsyth County Public Library Director Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin said the Library is ready to stand at the forefront of an issue that can help shape the future of the broader community. “I’m just really happy to let everyone know that we are about more than books; we have a love and concern about the community.”

From *The Chronicle*, Winston-Salem, December 13, 2012

Outcomes

Best practice you can take away today –

- ▣ Identifying and collaborating with the homelessness service providers in your community does not cost a dime.

Who are they?

- ▣ Homeless shelters, United Way, Salvation Army, Rescue Mission, churches, Veteran's Administration, service organizations, non-profits

Partnerships & Collaboration

LSTA Homelessness Grant Steering Committee

- Anthony's Plot
- Bethesda Center
- Department of Library and Information Studies, UNCG
- Downtown Churches
- Partnership for a Drug-Free NC
- Rescue Mission
- Salvation Army
- Samaritan Ministries
- United Way, Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness
- Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center

Surprises

Do not assume you can identify who is homeless in your library.

- ▣ People experiencing homelessness can be all ages including children.
- ▣ Appearance is misleading.
- ▣ People whom we thought were homeless are actually working but do not make a living wage.
- ▣ Many people are desperate for our services — computer access and training, job searching, GED, etc.

Families with Children— the Children’s Department as Safe Haven



More Surprises

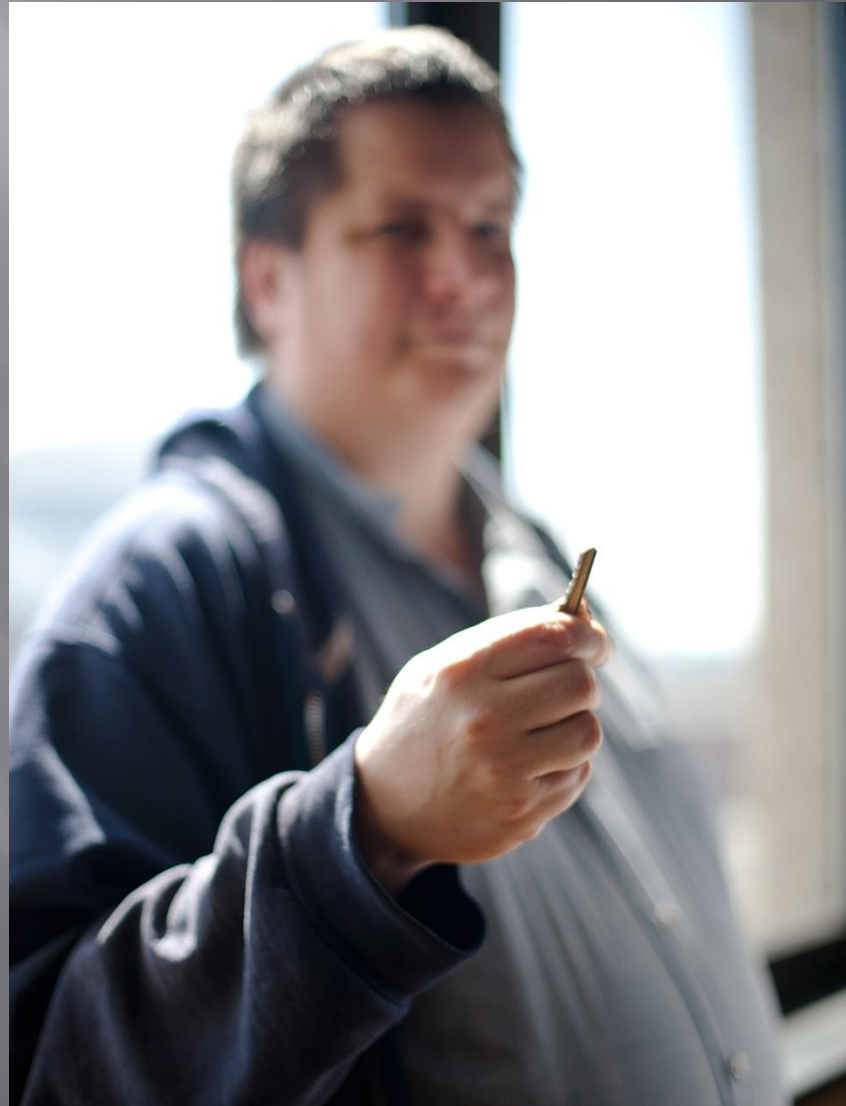
People experiencing homelessness, and those at the poverty level value the public library as —

- ▣ A safe, neutral place where they can feel normal (& they are motivated to be good customers so they can stay in the Library)
- ▣ A place where they can enjoy recreational programs such as movie series, book clubs, gaming (electronic & traditional), etc.

Challenges & Delayed Timeline

- ▣ Justification of LSTA grant to Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, June-August 2012
- ▣ Partial reallocation of grant funds, August 2012
- ▣ Recruitment of third party non-profit to administer/hire Peer Support Specialist, September-October 2012
- ▣ Advertising and interviewing Peer Support Specialist candidates, November 2012
- ▣ Peer Specialist hired, December 2012
- ▣ Back on schedule with Staff Training Day, December 2012

Housing First



Sensitivity Training for Staff

Katie Volk

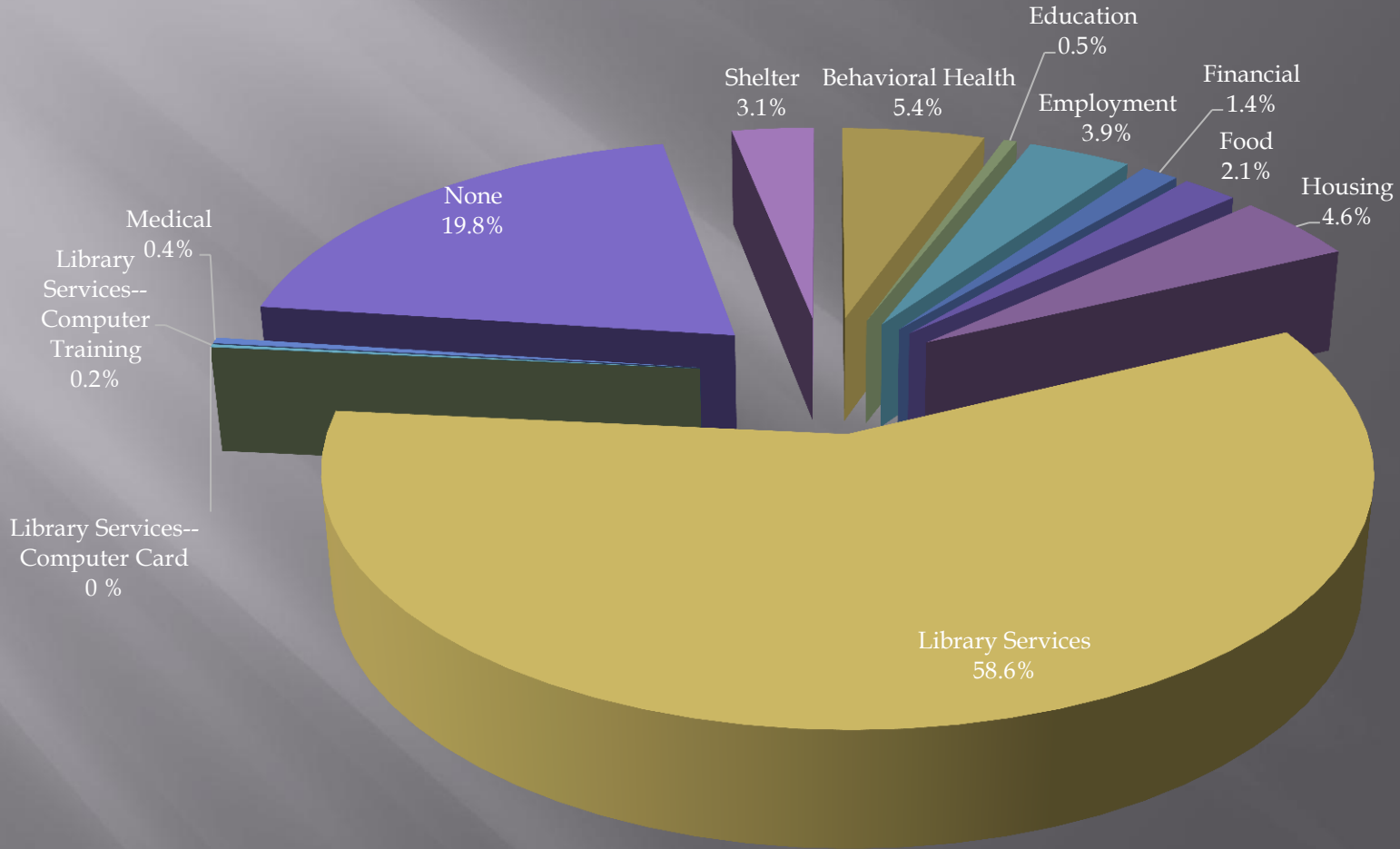
Managing Director, t3, Center for Social Innovation

- ▣ Why libraries break down barriers
- ▣ “Each of us ‘resides’ in three homes: body, house, and community.”
- ▣ “Homelessness is a state, not a trait.”
- ▣ Triggers, Trauma, Why people experience homelessness?
- ▣ Housing First & Rapid Re-Housing
- ▣ “There is no such thing as THE homeless.”
- ▣ Words matter. Helping staff be self-aware. Learning how to manage conflict.
- ▣ Person-centered engagement. Be pro-active. Be consistent. De-escalation.
- ▣ Suggestions for relating to a person experiencing Intoxication/Mental Illness

Inside the Numbers

- 25 Average estimated daily population of people experiencing homelessness
- 17 Average daily contacts by Peer Specialist
- 4420 Total Peer Specialist contacts for FY 2012-2013
- 967 Referrals to community services (18.6 per week)
- 60 Average attendance at 2nd Run Cinema

Referrals by Peer Support Specialist



Homeless Caucus



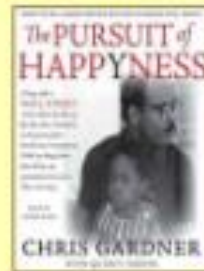
Resources
& Refuge
on the Journey

**A directory of agencies, ministries and friends
who offer services and support**

Compassionate Winston-Salem

Interfaith Book Clubs

Register by Sunday, July 28



For more information contact:

jmcleese1@yahoo.com or

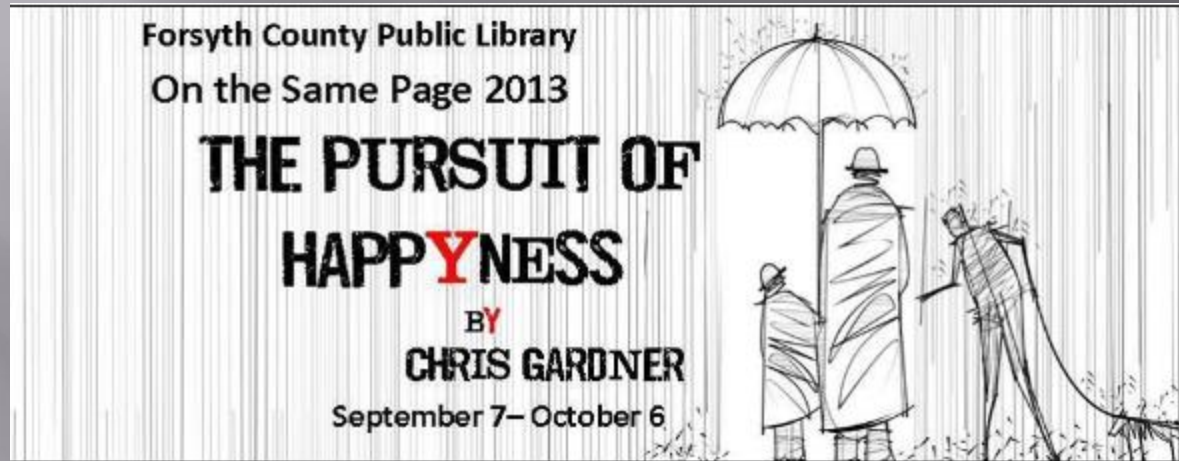
faiznr0@wfu.edu



understanding then respect... justice then peace

Sponsored by Interfaith Winston-Salem (<http://www.if-ws.org/>) in partnership with the Forsyth County Public Library (www.co.forsyth.nc.us/library/). Funded by the Winston-Salem Foundation.

On the Same Page 2013



The community read project as a vehicle for sensitivity training for the community.

- ▣ Featured book: *The Pursuit of Happyness* by Chris Gardner
- ▣ Poverty Simulation
- ▣ Documentary film series (American Winter, Innocente, Without a Home)
- ▣ Chris Gardner
- ▣ Book discussions

Public Programming



Entertainment

- 2nd Run Cinema Café
- FCPL Chess Club
- Books for Dudes Book Club (Winston-Salem Foundation ECHO Award 2014)
- Family Game Night

Public Programming

Computer Skills

- Drop-In Job Seeker's Lab
- Computer ABC's
- Computer Basics for Seniors



Life Skills

- GED Preparation
- Personal Budgeting and Credit
- Ways to Save



Public Programming

Health Questions?



Get your answers from trusted sources.

 www.forsyth.cc/library/healthwellness   MedlinePlus[®]
Trusted Health Information for You

Medical and Health

- Stress? Who Needs It?
- Dental Health
- Eating Right to Feel Great
- Ask the Pediatricians: A Panel Discussion
- Long-Term Care Insurance: The Missing Link in Retirement Planning
- Walking Grief and Community Mental Health Resources
- What's On Your Mind? Men's Rap Session

Documentation

Statistics

- ▣ Peer Support Specialist log and data intake
- ▣ FCPL statistics

Photo/Video

- ▣ Public Information Officer and Peer Support Specialist trained in use
- ▣ Incorporate equipment into programming
- ▣ Document outcomes through individual interviews with customers, service providers, library staff, etc.
- ▣ Produced a training video on the project

Sustainability

The Peer Support Specialist position is funded by Forsyth County.



Opening in 2017

Designing a new Central Library for all citizens of Forsyth County

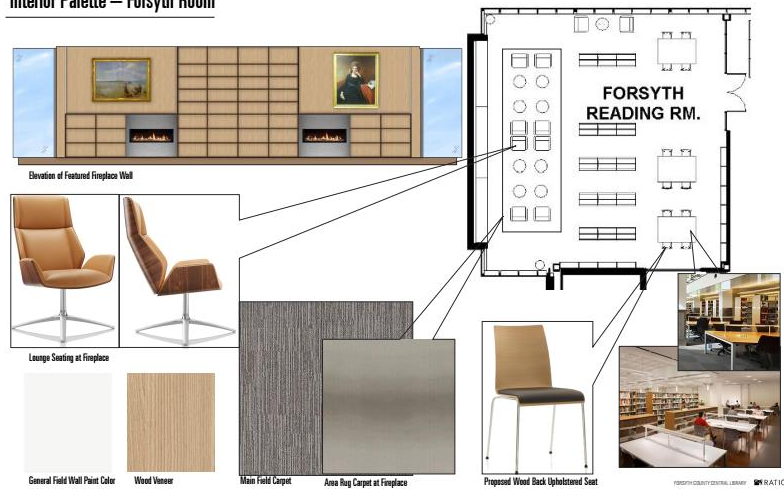


Design Considerations

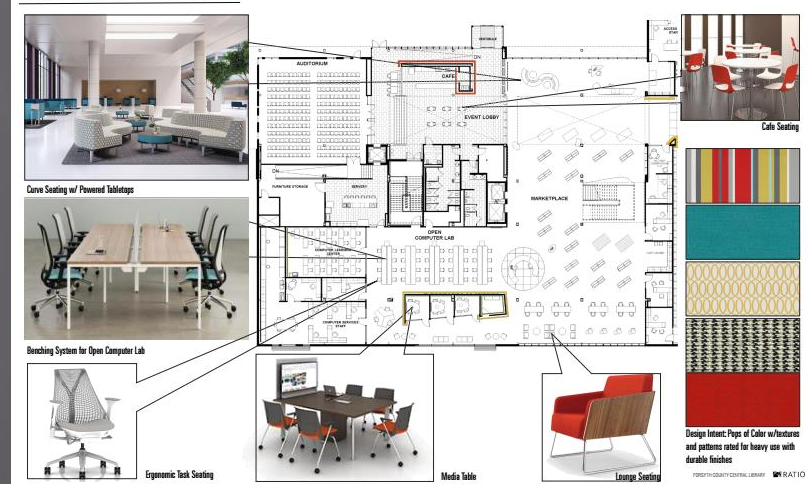
- Site lines, visibility and proactive staff
- Restroom location
- Security centrally located
- Public computer placement
- Location of the Children's Room
- Flow throughout the building
- Outdoor spaces
- Smoke-free campus



Interior Palette – Forsyth Room



Proposed Furniture - Marketplace



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?



For more information

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