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# Innovating Against Assumptions: Responding to Issues of Homelessness in Grand Rapids through Design Thinking

Terrell Couch

*Grand Valley State University, coucht@mail.gvsu.edu*

Hannah Klein

*Grand Valley State University*

Lucas Kohlmeyer

*Grand Valley State University*

Sami Klann

*Grand Valley State University*

Sage Hyatt

*Grand Valley State University, hyatts@mail.gvsu.edu*

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# **Innovating Against Assumptions**

A design portfolio brought to you by

## **The 'A' Team**

Of

Grand Valley State University

Design Thinking to Meet Real World Needs (HNR 313 03)

Winter 2016



**Terrell Couch**  
(Dialogue Leader, Designer)

**Hannah Klein**  
(Secretary, Editor)

**Lucas Kohlmeyer**  
(Team Leader)

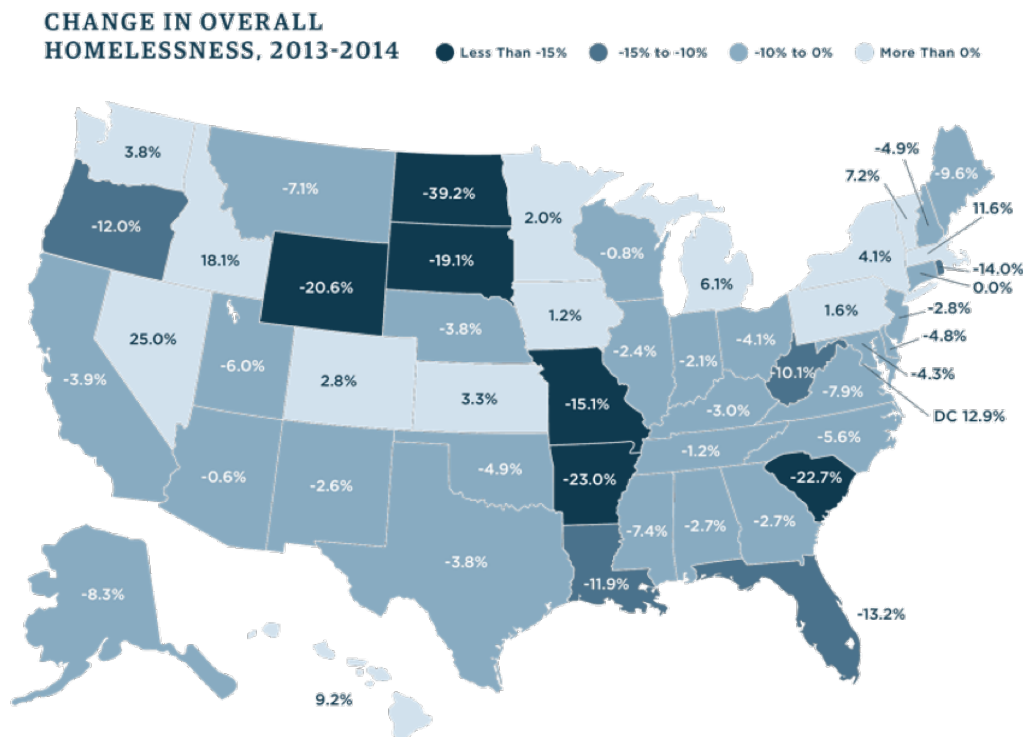
**Sami Klann** (Researcher, Presentation Coordinator) **Sage Hyatt** (Communications Liaison)

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## Background

More than 560,000 individuals in the United States were without a home in January of 2015. As depicted in the graphic below, the amount of people facing homelessness decreased in most states, but the improvement margins for much of the country were rather slim. In Michigan, the rate actually increased by six percent (*The State of Homelessness*). Looking at the Grand Rapids area specifically, there are up to 800 people on a given night sleeping on the streets in Kent County (*Vision to End Homelessness*). Being homeless means potentially walking miles for every meal, having little or no privacy, being questioned by police for your identification at least once a week, having possessions stolen on a regular basis, being at least partially exposed to the elements more hours in the day than not, and receiving rejection and hostility from most of the community (“What Does it Mean?”). So, why are we letting people live this way?



While there have been multiple attempts to solve the homeless problem by all levels of government and large nonprofit organizations, there continues to be a lack of resolve. Most of these efforts have had relatively small impacts because they were focused on alleviating only one aspect of homelessness, such as housing or employment. The reality is that homelessness is a mess; a system of interlacing problems that requires more than a simple solution (Alpaslan and Mitroff). This is why some organizations have begun reaching beyond simply housing the homeless.

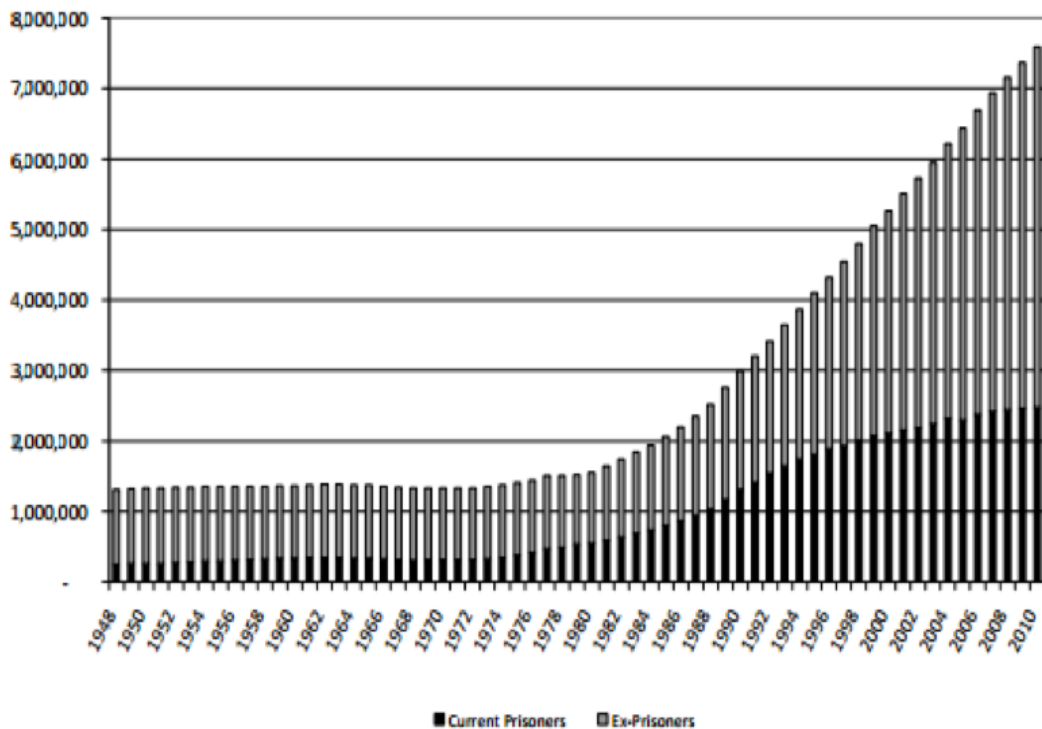
The local non-profit organization, Seeds of Promise, is looking to address the systemic mess of homelessness within their community. Based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Seeds of Promise is

planning to launch a project that is aimed at creating a more resilient, sustainable, and community-focused neighborhood by reintegrating homeless individuals into the community. Their two-year pilot program, called 5P, will include job training, affordable housing, and transition services (including counseling, free transportation and childcare for the first three months). Their vision is that equitable and affordable housing would be built on currently empty lots within the Seeds of Promise neighborhood, surrounded by already-established residences. Because this is a different housing situation than what is typically provided for the homeless, Seeds of Promise will have unique difficulties to face. One of the major difficulties that we anticipate is the stigma that homeless individuals face based on society's stereotypes (Do You Ever). Such misconceptions can lead to poor treatment, even disenfranchisement, of homeless individuals by the surrounding community.

What comes to mind when the word 'homeless' is mentioned? Do you imagine lazy people? Drugs? Alcohol? Maybe you think that homeless individuals are without a job because they are not willing to work hard? These are only a few examples of the negative mantras used to label the homeless population. Yet, these stereotypes are often wrong; built by society to alienate these individuals. Forty five percent of homeless people are underemployed; they work, but their wages are insufficient to maintain a place to live (Culhane). Other common situations that put people at risk for homelessness include financial crisis, attempts to start over or get out of an abusive relationship, being kicked out of a living arrangement, personal bankruptcy, and addiction/substance abuse (National Homelessness Staff). A lack of empathy, paired with a reluctance to dig deeper to the root causes of homelessness, cause negative stereotypes to take hold of the public mind and turn many people against the homeless community. This is why some organizations have made a push to address these attitudes.

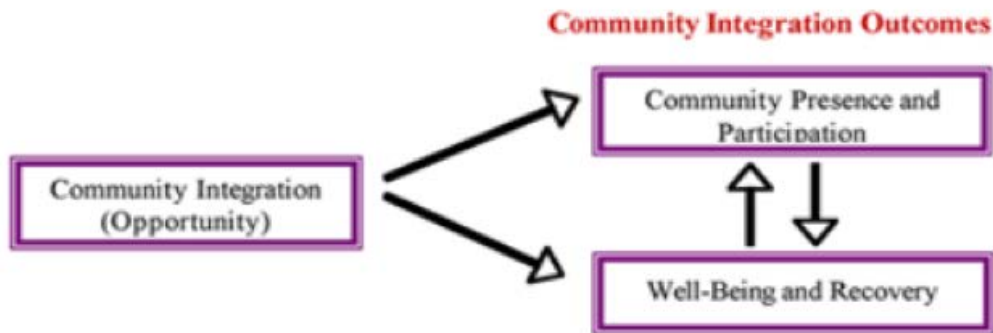
One such group is The Central Florida Commission on Homelessness; a non-profit organization with a campaign called Rethink Homelessness. Part of this campaign was a video called "Cardboard Stories" used to show the public that homeless people are not always unemployed, uneducated, addicted to recreational drugs, criminally convicted, mentally ill, or lazy. "Cardboard Stories" is a step in the right direction for educating the public about these undeserved misconceptions, with six million views and counting.

A specific subgroup of the homeless population that Seeds of Promise is seeking to integrate into their community are former felons. We address them here, because felons have their own set of stigmas that will be equally, if not more challenging to overcome. Former felons seem to have a permanent Mark of Cain on their forehead. Perhaps reading the word 'felony' brings horrible and violent images to mind, but there are many other crimes under this category. The more common felonies are selling liquor to minors, theft, loitering, disorderly conduct, vandalism, curfew violations, weapons violations, forgery, and assault (Anderson). This is not to say that these felonies are easy to dismiss, but to shed light on the fact that felony is not equivalent to murder or violence. Because of the media-perpetuated idea that all felons are extremely dangerous, the public has its own misconceptions about individuals with felonies on their records. These stereotypes and stigmas, on top of the ones associated with homelessness, provide for an amalgamation of negative attitudes towards homeless felons.



The chart above shows that the number of former criminals re-entering society has been increasing exponentially over the years. By 2010, there were close to five million former prisoners living in the United States (Growth in the U.S.). Of the roughly estimated 10,000 people leaving U.S. prisons each week, 10%-30% are homeless immediately (Moraff). This number is only for people who are immediately homeless, but what about the weeks and months that many of these individuals struggle to find a job or a place of their own to live? Many employers are wary to hire a former felon, which leads to a lifetime of job scarcity and the real possibility of poverty and homelessness for many of these individuals.

**The ‘A’ Team believes that community acceptance is the key to making Seeds of Promise’s integration project a success.** This feeling of marginalization, forced dependency, and rejection from community has been powerfully articulated by those experiencing it. As one woman said “... [you] can’t decide what to do because it doesn’t matter what you do. You’re not needed anywhere, not wanted anywhere, and not expected anywhere. Nobody cares what you do...” (Liebow 30). If the new residents of the Seeds of Promise integration project are ostracized from the community in this way, they are at risk of leaving the 5P program and the provided home and going back to the streets where they may have already developed a greater sense of belonging. The tenants need “the opportunity to live in the community and be valued for one’s uniqueness and abilities...” (Salzer). As integrated members of society, we often take these concepts for granted; we do not realize that being alienated from a community can lower a person’s self-worth and consequently tarnish their motivation for self-improvement. If the homeless have any motivation to leave the homes, success for the project is impossible; the driving component of the program is the tenant’s desire to build a better life for themselves through community involvement.



As the diagram above illustrates, community participation is a result of integration and this goes hand in hand with well-being (University of Pennsylvania). Ultimately, homeless individuals need to be accepted as more than their situation; they are fellow humans with as much a soul as the rest of us. Former criminals face a similar obstacle; society tends to define them by their crimes. Community integration is about neighborhoods being accepting of one another and making a place where everyone is welcomed and involved (Chan). That feeling of belonging will be a determining factor in whether or not tenants succeed in the 5P program.

### **Problem Statement**

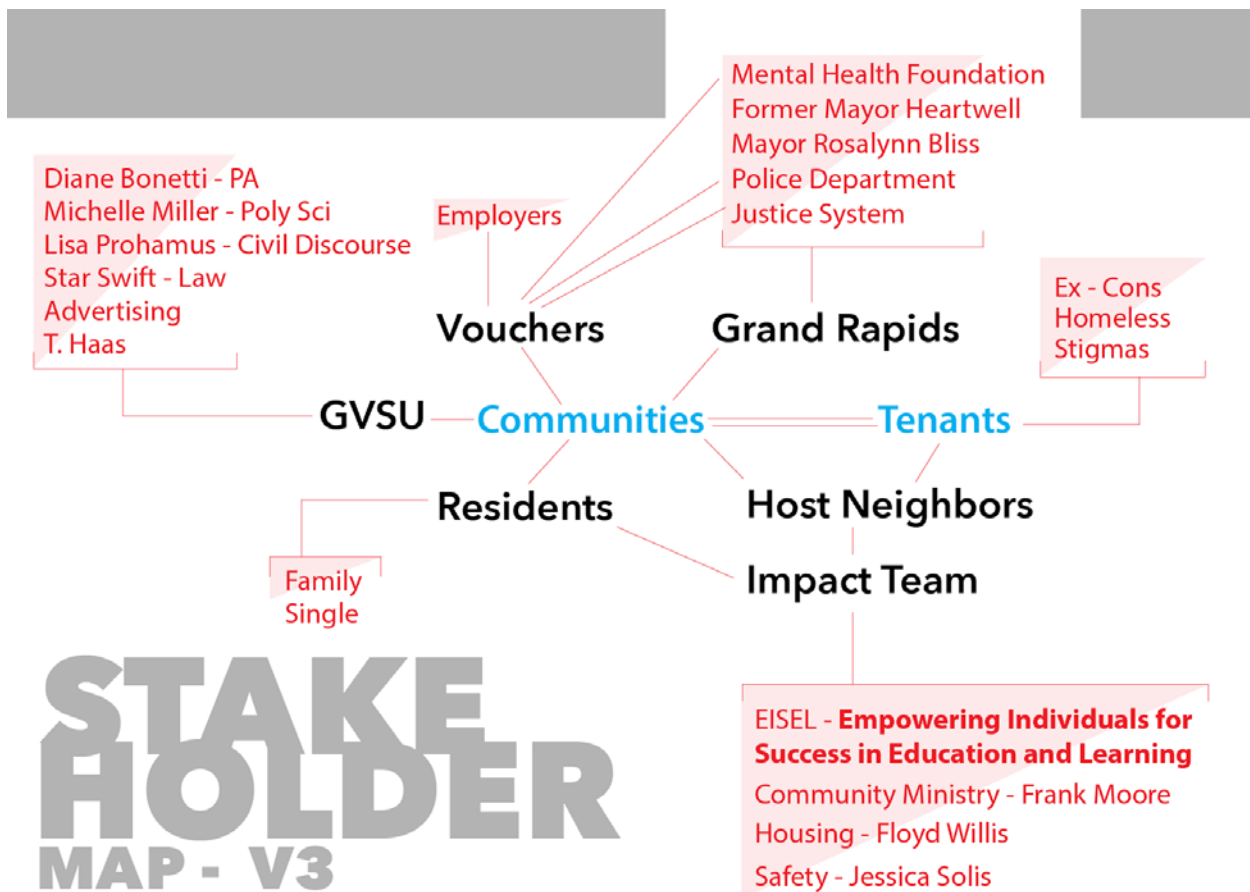
In our initial stakeholder meeting, the team was able to gather a common theme from the Seeds of Promise mission through the “5P Project”— a necessity for an inclusive community that reintegrates and empowers the populations of the homeless and/or former criminals. As Ron Jimmerson, executive director/co-founder of Seeds of Promise, explained the “5P Project” -- a two-year, job training, person-centered, program -- came as the resolve. Emphasizing the person-centered approach, this project looks to spur job creation and personal empowerment through redefining the assumption of the populations as well as change the conception of hand-outs to prosperity through self-action.

Critical to this process is combating the “us/them” complex that develops in communities of economic hardship; and utilizing education, show the community the value of fostering inclusion. It is our belief that such a campaign will kick-start the 5P initiative and the empowerment model of the project.

Together, we can restructure a community as OUR community and empower each other to help all constituents.

### **Ecosystem (Stakeholder Map)**

One of our initial challenges was to organize the complex interactions of our stakeholders into an easily navigable format. We analyzed the community surrounding Seeds of Promise’s integration project in conjunction with stakeholders specifically tied to the parts of the program affected by our problem statement. The result was a hierarchal mind map illustrating these stakeholders and the connections they share with each other. In the center are (A) Tenants of the housing provided by Seeds of Promise and (B) The communities these residences would be surrounded by. We determined that there were essentially six groups adjacent to our two most important stakeholders: (1) Grand Rapids, (2) Host Neighbors, (3) Impact Teams, (4) Residents, (5) Vouchers, and (6) Grand Valley State University.



Organizing our stakeholders as such will allow us to focus our questions with each group in a way that will create the most meaningful dialogue. Because each stakeholder has a unique perspective on the problem statement, their insights will provide us with a more complete picture of what a solution should provide. Gaining this plethora of knowledge will ultimately lead to the most substantial solution and the widest impact.

Ideally, our team will be able to speak to and have quality dialogue with all of our stakeholders as many times as we need. However, the reality is that there are limitations that may prevent us from doing so. The first being schedule conflicts between our team and our stakeholders. We will have to make the most out of the time that we have to sit down with our stakeholders. Another limitation we may face is the reluctance of some of our stakeholders to participate in dialogue with us. The topic, and our desire to eradicate it, may make some people uncomfortable or angry. Something else we may encounter as we attempt to contact a number of administrative and authority figures, is a question of our credibility. We will seek to overcome this through confident and empathetic dialogue with our stakeholders, so they see beyond our student exteriors to people who can make this vision a reality.

## Research Methods

Our team will learn more about our problem statement through an effective integration of primary research, secondary research, immersion, and observation. By approaching the situation



from as many perspectives as possible, we will be able to highlight numerous aspects of our problem statement that would not have become clear otherwise.

Because our problem statement deals directly with the beliefs of the people, we will spend a great amount of time speaking directly to stakeholders for our primary research. This will include gaining the insights of Seeds of Promise Host Neighbors, interviewing current Grand Rapids residents to gauge their perspectives, and speaking with individuals experiencing homelessness and former felons to better understand their situations and desires. However, we will need to be sensitive to the desires of all stakeholders, should some wish that their lives, faces, and names remain private. We will then analyze the research, and work towards understanding themes and insights related to our problem statement. Through cycles of innovation and prototyping, we will determine the best methods for finding an applicable solution.

In order to validate elements of our primary research, we will conduct secondary research. This analysis will grant us a broader understanding of stigmas and stereotypes, homelessness, and the efforts that exist to minimize both. This research will enlighten us so that we might work towards integration and ideating.

Our final method of research will be observation. One of the most effective ways of understanding a lifestyle is to seek out the details that get lost in interviews. We will do this by watching closely for small discrepancies between what people say they do and what they do in practice. Considering our problem statement deals with the mindset of the public towards the homeless and felons, observation will be our best way to see the public's honest reaction to them. In interviews, people may feel inclined to lie in order appear morally progressive, but observation may transcend this disparity.

After collecting all of this information, the next step will be to find prominent and emerging themes through data analysis and correlation. We expect that some of the information we collect may contradict itself on some level, but it is our job to make sense of it, and use it in our quest to producing the best possible solution to our problem statement.

## **Outcomes**

The end goal for our team is to create an inclusive community; one where the homeless/felons and established residents can live and work together, free of social stigmas. This ideal neighborhood would have a stronger sense of community than most others because of reciprocated empowerment and relationship building. Neighbors would reach out and help the new tenants in any manner possible. The words 'all are welcome' would not be a 'cliché, but a universal truth that extends to all current and future community members, no matter the labels society has placed upon them, or the situations they came from. The atmosphere in this community would do nothing but encourage the formerly homeless individuals to complete the two-year program, and come out on the other side with the skills and confidence needed to create a better lives for themselves and those whom they engage with. The acceptance of the community would provide the genuine connection and empowerment needed for these individuals to seek out their brighter tomorrow.

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## Research Bibliographies

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To verify our primary research with stakeholders, we devoted extensive time to finding secondary sources online. The insights gained through this research helped broaden our general knowledge of the topic, as well as confirm some of our original suspicions about the hardships facing those who experience homelessness. Below are the summaries of these endeavors.

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**Your Name: Samantha Klann**

**Team: The A Team**

**Citation:**

Knecht, T. (2009). Humanizing the Homeless: Does contact erode stereotypes? *Science Direct*. Retrieved from Google Scholar.  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X09000106>

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

This article talks about how stereotypes can be broken, and since The A Team is looking for ways to do such, it can give us insight. We may figure out ways which will work better with educating people and eliminating stereotypes they have of the homeless and/or former felons from this journal.

**Main argument:**

The main argument is that Americans do have these beliefs about the homeless, and there may be a way to fight those beliefs by having people interact with the homeless. The ‘contact hypothesis’ is what may lead people to realize how they view the homeless is wrong. Most Americans are judging the homeless without ever really interacting with them, so the stereotypes are completely overshadowing reality. Having people realize the homeless are still people is important if policies are to be changed.

**Important ideas:**

- Americans holds stereotypes of the homeless.
- Contact hypothesis is about eroding fear of a group by interaction.
- “Objectionable qualities” is what Americans use to categorize people.
- Interaction between groups can lead to one group, or both, realizing their “objectionable qualities” are wrong.
- Solve rather than service.

**Evidence:**

Supports that stereotypes are around and not always based on truths:  
 “Allport reasoned that prejudice resulted from hostile attitudes by ingroup members towards out-group members who were presumed to have objectionable qualities.”

Supports how the contact hypothesis may be a solution to stereotypes/homelessness:  
 “Lee and his colleagues found that individuals with the greatest exposure to homeless people were more likely to believe this problem was caused by structural inequalities.”

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

Terms:

- *Contact hypothesis*- Posits that in-group/out-group contact, if positive in nature, erodes stereotypes and reduces fear of the “other.”
- *Objectionable Qualities*-Characteristics inaccurately perceived and degrading for people to identify individuals of a ‘group’ different than their own.

Concepts:

- Contact hypothesis.
- Really caring for the homeless and not just throwing money at ideas which may or may not solve the problem.
- Exposure to the homeless is a way to have people realize how they view the homeless is misguided.
- People better understanding the homeless does not necessarily mean everyone is going to change their minds on policies regarding the homeless; there has to be true understanding and acceptance.

Quotes:

- “Interpersonal and intergroup contact could reduce prejudice by demonstrating to the ingroup that the “objectionable qualities” that they assumed in the out-group were misplaced or overblown.”
- “Indeed, the American public holds many stereotypical views of the homeless (i.e. alcoholics, drug abusers, mentally ill) that often mesh imperfectly with actual figures (Link et al., 1995, Tompsett et al., 2006 and Toro et al., 2007) .”
- “PHC was a response to the “armies of compassion” model that sought to build innovative public-private partnerships to address social problems rather than increasing government spending via the welfare state.”

**Strengths:**

- Explicates solution to homelessness.
- Includes successful case
- Extensive sources
- Statistics to show how contact hypothesis can work.

**Weaknesses:**

- Could use a bit more depth on the contact hypothesis; not just all information.

**Connections:**

- This article does talk about there being misplaced stereotypes on the homeless, and this team is working with the idea of those stereotypes being around the homeless.
- The A Team is working with the idea to eradicate those stereotypes from the minds of the people involved in the tiny homes neighborhoods, and this article gives an idea of what may be effective.
- This articles also mentions that actually having more understanding of the homeless and really trying to help them out is a better way of solving the issue. This team is focusing on more of a compassionate solution, because we view that as a possible solution to the bigger problem.
- The article also mentions the stereotypes people form to categorize people are usually falsely based, and this team is working to prove that stereotypes are not always true.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Is the contact hypothesis a way to go with solving the problem?
- Will people be open to interacting/being educated on the homeless?
- How much actual exposure is necessary for stereotypes to start fading from a person's mind? Does it need to be constant?

**Citation:**

Hilton, J. L. (2004). Stereotypes. *Michigan Library*, 237. Retrieved February 8, 2016, from Grand Valley State University.

[http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=lom\\_gvalleysu&id=GALE%7CA18014714&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon&userGroup=lom\\_gvalleysu&authCount=1](http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=lom_gvalleysu&id=GALE%7CA18014714&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon&userGroup=lom_gvalleysu&authCount=1)

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

This journal goes over why stereotypes exist, how they exist, when they come about, and how they stick around. The A Team is aiming to eradicate stereotypes regarding the homeless and former felons, and understanding where stereotypes come from in the first place is a good way to figure what is the enemy to beat. This article will give the team an idea of what the walls may be in the future, and what education might work.

**Main argument:**

The main argument of this journal is to explore the various aspects of stereotypes, and understand how they are not one dimensional. Why are stereotypes around? Why do they remain? What activates/creates stereotypes in people? All those questions lead to the idea of stereotypes being more than one thing, they do not just exist because of blank or are created by blank the journal explains. Stereotypes appear in different situations for different reasons, so there is more than one situation with stereotypes to consider. There are more multiple answers to each question, which means there has to be multiple solutions.

**Important ideas:**

- Stereotypes are not just around because of one single factor; they appear for numerous reasons.
- Stereotypes can be activated for various reasons, and there is not one single reason for someone suddenly acting on a stereotype.
- Stereotypes being so diverse means that there are multiple answers to them and that there is one single solution to stop stereotypical thinking.
- Self-esteem/superiority/threats are common factors for why people have stereotypes.
- Stereotypes can be suppressed within a person with effort and conscious realization of what the person was doing.

**Evidence:**

Stereotyping emerges for different reasons:

“Stereotypes also emerge in response to environment factors, such as different social roles (cf Eagly 1995), group conflicts (Robinson et al 1995), and differences in power (Fiske 1993). Other times stereotypes emerge as a way of justifying the status quo (Jost & Banaji 1994, Sidanius 1993).”

There is no one solution to stereotypes:

“Sometimes stereotypes are born from self-fulfilling prophecies, while other times they have their genesis in illusory correlations and perceptions of outgroup homogeneity. Similarly, sometimes stereotypes are nurtured by our tendency to assimilate events to primed categories, while other times they are maintained by our tendency to remember information selectively. Thus, to the extent that there is a single message to be gleaned from the current review, it is that there is indeed no single message: Stereotypic thinking is clearly multiply mediated.”

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

#### Terms:

- *Stereotype*-Are beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of certain groups. Beliefs about certain groups.
- *Priming*- when the impact of prior experience on ongoing perception and cognition is pervasive.
- *Illusory Correlation*-People perceive minority groups in a more negative light than majority groups, even when they are doing the same thing.
- *Assimilation (Effect)*-Individuals often are perceived as more similar to their stereotype than they really are.

#### Concepts:

- Where do the beliefs/stereotypes come from?  
The difference between groups, or what some perceives to be true and is true because of their local environment. This is real group difference because of cultural aspects. The second place stereotypes form is from people making observations of groups without reality.
- Automaticity, information processing can become automatic with the right circumstances.
- Prejudice is the application of stereotypes, but stereotyping is not always to the degree of prejudice
- Assimilation Effects are one way stereotypes remain around.
- Incongruent information is remembered more often than congruent information.
- Stereotypes can be maintained through various ways.
- Stereotypes have no one answer.

#### Quotes:

- “Perceivers store abstracted representations of a group’s typical features and judge individual group members on the basis of similarity comparisons between the individual and the prototype,” (Cantor & Mischel 1978).”
- “Because motivation to stereotype is enhanced when people experience a threat to their self-esteem, Spencer & Fein (1994) hypothesized that even cognitively busy subjects would activate their stereotypes when they had been threatened.”
- “...and begin to evaluate and reflect on their beliefs, those who are not prejudiced learn to suppress or replace the automatically activated stereotypic thoughts in favor of more

egalitarian ones. This suppression or replacement of stereotypic cognitions is proposed to be an effortful process that requires conscious cognitive resources.”

**Strengths:**

- Very in depth article.
- Lots of sources cited.
- Gives good explanations of the terms/ideas it is explaining.
- Has decent examples of the terms/ideas to make them more understandable.

**Weaknesses:**

- Wording is a bit weird and difficult to understand at times.
- Some of the ideas seem overlapping even though they are different concepts, so distinction is not the clearest.

**Connections:**

- The A Team is working on eradicating stereotypes of the homeless and former felons, and to tackle such a problem involves knowing the problem. Part of our problem is stereotypes, so it is important to obtain an understanding of them. This article gives some understanding and insight into stereotypes the A Team needs to better comprehend our problem.
- In order to solve a problem, one has to be aware of the problem and certain aspects of it. This journal explains how stereotypes are multidimensional and because of such, there is no one answer for them. The A Team needs to be aware of what the battle may be, and having a heads up of how complex stereotypes are may save some time later on.
- This article covers multiple aspects of stereotypes, so now the A Team will now possess more knowledge on stereotypes and be able to upon more information when dealing with our problem.
- The article briefly mentions stereotypes sometimes being true, and since the A Team has just begun research it is important to keep an open mind at this point. Such information from the article is a way for us to remember that we are still working on our problem and have information collecting to still do.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- What types of stereotypes will the A Team face?
- Will the A Team be able to come up with a solution which is able to beat stereotypes?
- Will the stereotypes remain in people’s unconscious be a very difficult challenge to overcome?



**Citation:**

Ahmed, A. M. (2015, June 29). Main content area Prison, Stigma, Discrimination and Personality as Predictors of Criminal Recidivism: Preliminary Findings. In *ProQuest*. Retrieved from Google Scholar.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1700281969?pq-origsite=gscholar>

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

This article discusses criminal recidivism, and what causes it. One of the causes it talks about is stigmas put on former felons, which relates to the problem The A Team is tackling. This article is giving validation of stigmas on former criminals being a problem, as well as talking about some of the results of the stigmas.

**Main argument:**

The main argument is that there are factors which contribute to former felons once again committing crimes after they have been released from prison. These factors can be considered predictors of whether or not the criminals will do something to go back to prison. Realizing what the predictors can lead to the ability to help tackle them and keep criminals from going back to prison after being released.

**Important ideas:**

- Criminal recidivism is a problem occurring all over the world.
- There are known reasons for why criminals commit crimes.
- The reasons can be used as predictors if understood correctly.
- Society is part of the reason criminals will do an act to send themselves back to prison.
- Prisoners are openly admitting to desiring prison life over a free life.

**Evidence:**

“It is established that ex-prisoners experience societal rejection and labeling, because many people may not freely interact with them. They are treated badly with all sorts of stigmatization and discrimination in society (Madaki, 2011).

“...they are labeled and stigmatized base on their new status among others. Thus, the theory stressed that the combination of all these negative tendencies could invariably foster hatred, anger, anxiety, and thereby creates a scenario of defiance (Francis et al., 2011) and recidivism (Cid, 2009).

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

New Terms:

- *Criminal Recidivism*-when former criminals revert back to criminal behavior (commit a crime after release) and end up going back to prison.
- *Stereotype*-negative belief about individual ability.
- *Prejudice*-showing of low self-esteem.
- *Discrimination*-artificial disparities in term of employment and interaction.

New Concepts:

- Criminal Recidivism.
- Predictors of criminal recidivism.
- Discrimination being a branch off of stigmas.
- Stigmas and discrimination are contributors as to why criminals will reoffend.
- Former criminals prefer prison over the outside world, because of how much people ostracize them.

Quotes:

- “In this society people do really stigmatize us, once you have been to prison that denting image of stigma that would spoil your identity would be enforced on you by society.”
- “Sometimes somebody would prefer to remain in the prison than to come back and face this stigma and discrimination issue.”
- Stigma according to Goffman (1963) is considered as ‘mark’ that discounts a person’s credibility endowing him/her with detrimental characteristics (Link and Phelan 2001).

**Strengths:**

- Good explanation of each point.
- Interviews of actual prisoners.
- References.
- Not overly complicated or wordy.

**Weaknesses:**

- Not of American prisoners.
- More depth is always better.

**Connections:**

- This article is about stigmas and how they do impact criminals when they leave prison, and this gives The A Team validation of such being around.
- The article talks about how bad stigmas are for former criminals, and that information is good for The A Team in figuring out where to go with the problem of stigmas.
- Part of the article talked a little bit about non-criminal citizens not having contact with former criminals and is part of the reason the stigmas of former felons appear. Since The A Team is exploring the Contact Hypothesis, this insight works with that idea.
- The articles gives other insights into what may cause former prisoners to have a difficult time reintegrating into society, and such gives The A Team more aspects to be aware of.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Has an organization tried to help criminals integrated already and had results?
- Are stigmas really playing a key role in former felons going back to prison?
- What can be done in order for prisoners to not feel the impact of stigmas after leaving prison?

**Citation:**

Harwood, J. (2011, March 2). Secondary transfer effects from imagined contact: Group similarity affects the generalization gradient. In *Wiley Online Library*. Retrieved from Google Scholar.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1348/014466610X524263/full>

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

After reading about the contact hypothesis last week, The A Team decided to start looking into it a bit more and this article is about its influences going beyond the immediate group was found. This article is about ‘secondary transfer effects,’ and this could give an idea of how far contact positivity can go. If The A Team decides to go with the contact hypothesis as a way to educate people on the stereotypes of the homeless and former felons being false, this can give an idea into how far the contact could spread.

**Main argument:**

The main argument is that contact beyond one-on-one can influence how people feel about different groups. Changing the views of one group can alter the way people feel about other groups as well. There are also different ideas on how the contact hypothesis can be applied to someone; having someone imagine scenarios can help alter their views on a group of people.

**Important ideas:**

- The contact hypothesis is not limited to directly influencing one group, it can extend beyond the directly contacted group.
- People’s views are not always based on accurate information, so having them imagine certain scenarios can change those views.
- Similarities being realized between a person and a group can be a strong way for someone to change their views on the group.
- Sometimes the similarities are not strong enough between an individual and a certain group, so their views do not change very much.
- For different types of contact ideas, certain factors can be or not be in play regarding how the technique alters people’s views of certain groups.

**Evidence:**

- “Imagined intergroup contact also forces personalization at the out-group in a situation in which group memberships are nonetheless salient “(Miller, 2002).

- Pettigrew (2009), among others, has shown that contact with a single group member can enhance attitudes about not only their group, but also other groups (secondary transfer effects). ... They offer a route through which contact's effects might extend beyond isolated attitude change to broader intergroup tolerance and harmony,"

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

New Terms:

- *Imagined Contact*- Individuals imagine interacting with an out-group member.,
- *Secondary Transfer*- Subsequent effects of an attitude change on feelings about other groups due to contact with a single outgroup member.
- *Stimulus Generalization Gradient*- Whether the size of secondary transfer effects is explained by similarity between the focal group and secondary groups.

New Concepts:

- Secondary transfer of contact allowing more people to be influenced.
- The contact does not have to be one-on-one it can be imagined, which allows the person to recall better experiences because they are imagining it with an individual and not a whole group. This allows for better view of the whole group afterwards.
- The more positive outlook can come from people finding similarities between themselves and the individual as well, so drawing on similarities can be key in making the contact work.
- There is a limit to how far the secondary transfer effects will work, they are not going to spread across the whole world because of one secondary transfer effect.

Quotes:

- “While traditional face-to-face contact can clearly be effective in improving intergroup attitudes (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), concerns have been raised about its practical potential in achieving improved intergroup relations in society (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005).
- “They offer a route through which contact's effects might extend beyond isolated attitude change to broader intergroup tolerance and harmony.”
- “Pettigrew and Tausch et al. hypothesized that similarity between groups is a key moderator of attitude generalization from one group to another and suggested increased attention to this hypothesis.”
- “Secondary transfer effects do not increase tolerance across the board: they are stronger for more similar groups and weaker for less similar groups.”

**Strengths:**

- Many references and data.
- Secondary effects.
- Example case in the journal.

**Weaknesses:**

- Could use more background information.
- Bit of a wordy documents.

**Connections:**

- The A Team is looking at the contact hypothesis to possibly use it as a way to break stigmas of the homeless and former felons. This article talks about how that contact can spread beyond just the initial groups and spread to other groups. This is something The A Team can now remember when thinking about solutions in the future.
- This article admits that not every person's views will change, because there are certain factors outside of just stereotypes people use for justification of rejecting certain groups of people. The A Team needs to know what barriers it might come across in the future.
- This article gives different ways to spread awareness/more acceptance of rejected groups, and such gives The A Team possible ideas it can implement later on for helping to break the stereotypes of the homeless and former felon populations.
- This article also talks about what has worked and what has not, so now The A Team will know not to waste time with certain endeavors.
- One of the groups talked about was the homeless, and the data showed that they became more accepted than other groups after secondary contact effects. Since The A Team is working on a problem regarding the homeless, the information may be helpful in the long run.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Will The A Team be able to possibly create a solution which will influence one group for sure, but also influence another group?
- Will certain factors be present which will limit the ability for secondary contact influence?
- Would having individuals imagine contact with an individual of a certain group be feasible?

**Citation:**

Reaves, Brian A., PhD. “Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) – Felony Defendants in Large Urban Counties, 2009 – Statistical Tables. “*Office of Justice Programs*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 20 Dec. 2013. Web. 22 Feb. 2016  
<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=4845>

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

A large aspect of our problem statement surrounds the stereotypes associated with felons. So in order to better understand this population, we need to understand the makeup of this population. This source gives a detailed description of the charges, demographics, and more useful information about the felons between 1990 and 2009.

**Main argument:**

This study was mainly a numerical summary of all people sentenced for a felony between 1990 and 2009 in the 75 highest populated counties in the USA. It is broken up into six categories, ranging from demographics to adjudication. Along with giving detailed graphs and tables, the study also highlights various trends that are evident over the course of the 20 years.

**Important ideas:**

- Drug defendants made up the largest category of felony defendants (33%), followed by those charged with property offense (29%), or a violent offense (25%).
- The percentage of defendants who are women (17%) is higher than it was in 1990 (14%). Furthermore, the average age of felony defendants in 2009 (32) was four years higher than the average in 1990.
- 13% of the felony defendants were on probation at the time of their arrest. 5% were on parole at the time of theirs. Both of these numbers are down from 1990 (18%, 8% respectively.)
- About half of released defendants were out of custody within 1 day of arrest and three-quarters were released within a week. Overall, 89% of releases occurred within 1 month of arrest; however, 41% of the releases of murder defendants occurred within 1 month

**Evidence:**

As this data is found from a census, there aren't arguments, but rather trends, so I will give two of the graphs that describe such trends.  
“Between 1990 and 2009, more than 3 in 5 felony defendants were charged with either a drug offense or property offense, and about 1 in 4 was charged with a violent offense (figure 5).”

- “The proportion of defendants age 40 or older has increased from about 1 in 10 in 1990 to about 1 in 4 since 2004. Since 1996, just over 3 in 10 defendants have been age 24 or younger, a smaller proportion than in 1990 and 1992, when about 4 in 10 defendants were in this age category (figure 6).”

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

New Terms:

- *Felon*- Someone who has committed a serious crime (felony). Often comes with imprisonment.

New Concepts:

- The average age of felons is increasing as time goes on.
- Most felonies are not violent offences
- Felons with multiple offences were much more likely to receive an imprisonment sentence.

Quotes:

- “Among defendants convicted of a nonviolent felony, 55% of those with multiple prior felony convictions received a prison sentence, compared to 40% of those with a single prior felony conviction and 23% of those with no prior felony convictions.”
- “Rates of re-arrest were highest among robbery (24%) and burglary (22%) defendants. About half of the rearrests in 2009 involved a new felony charge.”
- “An estimated 17% of defendants in 2009 had a prior conviction record that consisted of only misdemeanors. About a third of defendants charged with a driving-related offense (33%) were in this category”

**Strengths:**

- Good analysis of felons.
- Good visual details
- Clear description of the population

**Weaknesses:**

- Six years old
- Not all of America, just 75 largest counties
- No inferences, just analysis

● **Connections:**

- This study showed that those who have been charged before are more likely to be charged again. This comes from the stigma that they don’t fit into society. This validates our problem statement, and shows there is room for improvement.
- This article confirms our guesses that a majority of felons were not involved in violent crimes. From our dialogues, we have found a majority of people do not seem to realize this.
- The proportion of felons who are women is increasing. This goes against what we have found to be the social stigma. This gives us more knowledge in understanding the population that we are trying to help.



**Questions/Concerns:**

- How can we best educate the public?
- How can we integrate ideas from other organizations that have looked into this flaw in the system? Can we learn from their mistakes?
- Is there a way to get more up to date research on these numbers?



**Citation:**

Phelan, Jo et al. "The Stigma of Homelessness: The Impact of the Label "Homeless" on Attitudes Toward Poor Persons". *Social Psychology Quarterly* 60.4 (1997): 323–337. Web...

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

Understanding the impact of the label will foster the empathy that we need for the homeless community. This, in turn, can help us ask the right questions of the people we interview, to gain an even deeper understanding. This article can also help us in our decision making process when creating innovations and prototypes by showing us the reality of the labels and not our assumptions.

**Main argument:**

The main argument of this paper has three points: The first is that homeless individuals is blamed and stigmatized for their plights more so than people who have a place to live. The second point is that the stigma attached to homelessness is equal to that attached to mental hospitalization. The last point is that the two stigmas mentioned are independent of one another.

**Important ideas:**

- Surveys and evidence from the late 1900s can be replicated and applicable today.
- The attitudes of social distance and perception of dangerousness of people labeled
- 'Homeless' can be proved with statistics.
- Gender, race/ethnicity, age, and educational attainment had almost no effect on the attitudes described above.
- Stigma is likely to have negative consequences for homeless people's self-esteem and psychological well-being, and will contribute to the perpetuation of their homeless condition.
- The negative associations with homelessness is independent of the ones for mental hospitalization, though they are sometimes compounded on individuals that suffer in both. The mental hospitalization label elicited a compassionate response (support for government aid), while the homeless label did not.

**Evidence:**

- "In a national survey in the United States, for example, Feagin (1975) found that, when respondents evaluated the causes of poverty, they placed more importance on poor people's behavioral characteristics, such as lack of thrift and proper money management...These results were essentially replicated in 1980 by Kluegel and Smith (1986)"(pg 337).

- “When the vignette subject was described as homeless, respondents expressed significantly greater social distance... than when he was described as living in a small single-room apartment( $p < .05$ )...the homeless label is associated with a small increase in perceptions of dangerousness... (pg.11)” (pg. 331).

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

New Terms:

- *Vignette experiment*- presents a hypothetical situation, to which research participants respond thereby revealing their perceptions, values, social norms or impressions of events.
- *Domiciled*- to reside; be based
- *Correspondence Bias*- cognitive inclination to underestimate the power of situations to influence other people’s behavior

New Concepts:

- “new homelessness” faces same stigmas as homelessness in early 1900s
- vignette designed experiments
- quantifying attitudes and using statistically significant p values
- availability heuristic

Quotes:

- “Between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, the English Poor Laws and similar policies in the United States enforced a variety of harsh and stigmatizing measures (de Schweinitz 1961; Feagin 1975). Many of these policies were clearly intended to stigmatize. For example, those receiving public assistance were required to wear distinctive clothing and badges (Feagin 1975; R Page 1984; Spicker 1984)” (pg. 323). “In more recent times, the official treatment of poor people has become less harsh, but the public's inclination to blame the poor for their condition and the stigmatization nature of public assistance still prevail” (pg. 324).
- “In addition, because many people have limited objective information about homelessness (Lee, Link, and Toro 1991), their perceptions of homeless people are likely to be influenced strongly by a small number of highly visible homeless individuals...in the media or in their local community”(pg. 325).

**Strengths:**

- Definitions of all new terms
- Expanded upon statistics
- didn’t rely on numbers explicitly to prove points
- many outside sources

**Weaknesses:**

- Not as recent as would have liked
- Not easily understood without knowledge of statistics

**Connections:**

- This article proves that attitudes towards the homeless and the reasons for their hardships have been changing little since the eighteenth century. This tells us that a

call to action to fellow citizens may prove to be a bigger challenge than we first thought.

- The negative attitudes towards homeless individuals are not just assumptions we've been making- this article shows that people have negative connotations towards them using statistics and quantifiable measures.
- We need to promote the consumption of objective information about homeless people and foster exposure to populations of homeless people that are representative of the majority.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- Can we really change attitudes towards homelessness for the majority when they've been prevailing for so long?
- Should we also be addressing sub-stigmas that affect some people in the homeless community?

**Citation:**

Miller, B. L., and J. F. Spillane. "Civil Death: An Examination of Ex-felon Disenfranchisement and Reintegration." *Punishment & Society* 14.4 (2012): 402-28. Web. <http://pun.sagepub.com/content/14/4/402.full.pdf+html>

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

Reintegration of felons is a very complex situation, caused by numerous factors. This article shows that disenfranchisement and the loss of civil rights can negatively affect felons' ability to effectively be members of their community.

**Main argument:**

After interviewing 54 felons, the study found that the inability to vote was not the central problem facing criminals, but it still felt limiting, psychologically harmful, and stigmatizing. For some felons, the loss of voting was not a problem, as they had no interest in voting.

**Important ideas:**

- 15% of the respondents felt that the right to vote directly impacted their ability to stay out of trouble. They felt as though not voting meant not being wanted.
- 26% of the respondents said that the inability to vote didn't directly impact their efforts, but rather it could be linked to other major factors, such as employment.
- Half of the respondents claimed that their community played a huge role in them staying out of trouble. At times they had to move away from "trigger" neighborhoods.
- Another reason for successful reintegration was the establishment of a sense of responsibility. Reminding them that there are others who are affected by their actions.

**Evidence:**

- "the disinherited must sit idly by while others elect his civic leaders and while others choose the fiscal and governmental policies which will govern him and his family. Such a shadowy form of citizenship must not be imposed lightly." (McLoughlin v. City of Canton 1951)
- "I really get kind of peeved when people say 'give back to the community' because I'm not a part of the community anymore as far as I can see ...so when they [say], 'What are you going to give back to the community for this and that?' I'm like well, hey, community doesn't want a damn thing to do with me, why should I go back and give anything to do with the community?" (Former offender, cited in Manza and Uggen, 2006: 162)

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

New Terms:

- *Invisible Punishments* – Punishments that exist outside of the sentencing process and often restrict the liberties of offenders even after the completion of their incarceration.
- *Reentry*- What happens when incarceration ends
- *Desistance*- A former offender has stopped engaging in illicit acts; the voluntary termination of serious criminal participation.

New Concepts:

- Felons feel like they are still being punished, even after their incarceration is completed.
- The lack of voting privileges isolated the felons and makes them feel less welcome in society.
- A strong, stable community is key for the successful reintegration of felons.

Quotes:

- “The study confirms that voting is hardly front and central among the concerns of ex-offenders – most respondents saw an indirect rather than direct impact – but they still found its prohibition to be limiting, psychologically harmful, and stigmatizing.” (p. 422)
- “What was most striking was the variation in salience among those for whom voting was a personal priority, particularly the impact that the language of the recovery movement seemed to have.” (p. 422)

**Strengths:**

- Real Interviews with felons
- Open ended questions allowed for unique perspectives
- Didn’t limit to strict categories

**Weaknesses:**

- Not a representative sample
- Took place in Florida, where felons lose the right to vote.
- Statistics open to interpretation.

**Connections:**

- This article provided us with evidence for some of the ways to make the reintegration process as easy as possible. The will affect our prototyping process in finding the best solution
- This article showed us how there could be issues with the system that are causing the entire process to be more difficult than is necessary. This isn’t necessarily possible for us to work with given the time constraints.
- This article gave us one unique stigmatization that we hadn’t considered yet. With this new stigma in mind, there are more factors to look at when considering effective methods of reintegration.

**Questions/Concerns:**

- How can we create the sense of responsibility and stable community that was mentioned in the interviews?
- How do we work towards improving the psychological effects of being stigmatized?

Citation:

Austin, R. (2004). "THE SHAME OF IT ALL": STIGMA AND THE POLITICAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF FORMERLY CONVICTED AND INCARCERATED PERSONS". *Columbia Humans Rights Law Review*, 36(1), 173-192. Retrieved from Google Scholar.

[http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/colhr36&div=13&g\\_sent=1&collection=journals#](http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/colhr36&div=13&g_sent=1&collection=journals#)

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

This article talks about how stigmas on former felons are real and the effects of stigmas are not to be taken lightly. The article also includes discussion on how the effects go beyond the felon. In trying to understand the situation better, the "A" Team needs to know what all stigmas do to former felons. This article gives insight into the effects of stigmas on former felons, along with the effects of people around former felons.

**Main argument:**

- Stigmas on former felons are real, and they have severe consequences for the former felons, their families, and their communities.
- Minority offenders can have other stigmas about their group pushed more strongly onto them after being incarcerated, so their situation becomes worse. Stigmas need to be stopped especially in this case, because these people are fighting more than the stigma of having been in prison.
- There is not much being done to help reintegrate former felons into communities, and the justice system is actually encouraging the stigmas by making arrests and trials and portraying the criminals in a certain way.

**Important ideas:**

- Stigmas happen to former felons after they are released from jail, and they have harmful consequences for the formerly incarcerated.
- Families and communities of felons can also be stigmatized, and have consequences of such happen to them as well.
- Minority groups who are released from prison have more than a former felon stigma on them, and those other ones can be exemplified by prison.
- Stigmas are what can cause a lack of reintegration for former felons into (their) communities.
- Stigmas are not always brought about by what the general public of a state or country thinks, sometimes the stigmas appear just from the way the community feels about former felons.

**Evidence:**

- “According to one investigator, the inability of released prisoners “to earn a decent living and support a family was far more shameful than their criminality. So, the stigma of criminality leads to the shame of being unable to support one’s children, to help one’s mother, and so forth.”<sup>12</sup> (Donald Braman).
- “For minority offenders, the nature of the stigma they experience upon conviction, incarceration, and reentry is compounded by the additional effects of racial stigmatization and is stereotyping...the general propensity of minorities to commit crime exacerbates the stigma they bear.”<sup>18</sup>

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**Terms:

- Stigma- is a mark or characteristic that designates a person as “flawed, compromised, and somehow less than fully human.”<sup>2</sup>
- Shame- “a fearful and chaotic sense of an irresistible and eerie revelation to self, or a vulnerability in one’s nature that, by indicating one’s moral incompetence, isolates and humbles one in the face of what one regards as a sacred community.”<sup>6</sup>
- Reintegrative shaming- “is followed by efforts to reintegrate the ex-offender back into the community of law-abiding or respectable citizens thorough words or gestures of forgiveness or ceremonies to decertify the ex-offender as deviant.”<sup>25</sup>

Concepts:

- The stigmas experienced by former felons not only happens to them, but to their families and the communities they are a part of as well sometimes.
- There is no real effort to help former felons reintegrate into the community.
- Minorities have the former felon stigma along with other ones on them.
- Former felons do feel the stigmas, even though some people may have the notion that the former felons are “too tough” to feel shame or humiliation.

Quotes:

- “Stigmatization erects boundaries or barriers between persons who would otherwise belong to the same community. The stigmatized are outcasts who are to be avoided and isolated. They are dehumanized and considered defective or unwholesome. They are discriminated against...”<sup>4</sup>
- “Beyond the families, the communities from which the incarcerated come also experience stigma. The community loses its “reputation as a good place to live and do business.”<sup>39</sup>
- “At present, however, rehabilitation and reintegration are not prized by a society with a seemingly insatiable appetite for real crime stories packaged as entertainment. The real crime genre for reporting and storytelling emphasizes individual accountability for criminal behavior over structural solutions, and punitive responses that heighten the stigma of conviction and incarceration over other possible purposes of criminal sanctions.”



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| <p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● References.</li> <li>● Explanations of the arguments the article is making.</li> <li>● Not full of difficult words or terminology.</li> <li>● Defines terms, so they can be understood in relation to the article's topic.</li> <li>● Sticks to topic section is about.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grammar is a little poor, so what the article is trying to convey at times take a bit of time to figure out.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The "A" Team has learned about how contact with the homeless, can make people understand other groups better and have more positive attitudes towards them. Now, this article illustrates how having contact with someone can lead to bad results, and the "A" Team needs to be aware of such.</li> <li>● The homeless stigmas/stereotypes have been researched, and this article now sheds light on the former felon population that we will be working with. We're working on our insights for both demographics, and looking to find connections between the two.</li> <li>● The article talked about communities having "ceremonies" to help the former felons become accepted into the community, and that is something that no research so far has uncovered. This idea goes along with the contact hypothesis; it's just a different version.</li> <li>● It was known that people have stigmas/stereotypes formed mostly due to a need to classify people and feel superior thanks to research done already, and this article talks about how people do such and sometimes it even stems from the criminal justice system portraying the felons in certain ways.</li> </ul> |  |
| <p><b>Questions/Concerns:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The "A" Team now has to look at the communities the homes will go in as possible risks to stigmas by other areas due to former felons entering the homes. Are the residents aware of that possibility?</li> <li>● Will the possible education solution on former felons have to go beyond the Seeds of Promise communities in order to help the community not receive (more) stigmas itself?</li> <li>● Will a solution have to encompass all of Grand Rapids to really have a positive outcome?</li> </ul>   |  |

**Citation:**

Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved March 13 2016, from Google Scholar.

[http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.lano.org/resource/dynamic/blogs/20131007\\_093137\\_25993.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.lano.org/resource/dynamic/blogs/20131007_093137_25993.pdf)

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

This source is about how collaboration is important, and how working together is what produces more results. Seeing as how there are multiple parties involved in Seeds of Promises Tiny Homes project, it is important to realize what may be effective in solving the homeless problem through said project. This journal is able to outline what needs to be done for collaboration to be achieved and make an impact. Such information is useful to know, and can help make the project more effective.

**Main argument:**

- A social problem is more likely to be solved when different organizations work together to gradually make progress on solving the problem.
- Collective impact is not everyone working on the same solution together, but every organization working with the same agenda and together finding solutions based on what they each do for the overall agenda.
- Collective Impact is better for complex situations, because it is about working towards a solution and not coming up with a solution and then implementing it. This allows for the collaborators to change their ways and adjust to the situation while still working towards a solution, and independent organizations cannot do such very easily.

**Important Ideas:**

- Collective Impact has a higher chance of solving a social problem than isolated impact.
- It's not about raising more money or resources, but changing what is available and using them differently through collaboration.
- Collective Impact results gradually go through the efforts of all the collaborators.
- With this method, people are able to learn and work together, and more ideas come out because of everyone working together.
- A working solution can be adapted to fit each city or place differently; the overall structure on place used can be transferred to another, but adjusted for the place so that it fits them.

**Evidence:**

- “The heroic efforts of countless teachers, administrators, and nonprofits, together with billions of dollars in charitable contributions, may have led to important improvements

in individual schools and classrooms, yet system-wide progress has seemed virtually unobtainable,” (pg. 36).

- “These varied examples all have a common theme: that large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated intervention of individual organizations,” (pg. 38).

### **Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

#### New Terms:

- *Collective Impact*-The commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem.
- *Isolated Impact*- An approach oriented toward finding and funding a solution embodied within a single organization, combined with the hope that the most effective organizations will grow or replicated to extend their impact more widely.
- *Technical Problems*- The problem is well defined, the answer is known in advance, and one or a few organizations have the ability to implement the solution.
- *Adaptive Problem*- Are complex problems, the answer is not known, and even if it were, no single entity has the resources or authority to bring about the necessary change.
- *Emergence*- Is a term that is used to describe events that are unpredictable, which seem to be result from the interactions between elements, and which no one organization or individual can control.

#### New Concepts:

- Collective Impact being a solution to more complex social problems.
- The five conditions of collective success, it is not just saying everyone is going to work together on something.
- There are different types of problems, and identifying the type of problem is important in effectively understanding how to solve it in one go or gradually work towards an overall change.
- Social problems are complex, large scale, and always changing, so there has to be continually changing solutions in order for an impact on the issue to be felt and kept over time.

#### Quotes:

- “When properly put into motion, the process of collective impact generates emergent solutions toward the intended outcomes under continually changing circumstances. As with evolution, the process is itself the solution,”(4).
- “The power of collective actions comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of their differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action,” (pg. 40).

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “If successful, it presages the spread of a new approach that will enable us to solve today’s most serious social problems with the resources we already have at our disposal,” (pg. 41).</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not too wordy, easy to understand.</li> <li>● References cited.</li> <li>● Evidence, actual examples of what is being explored.</li> <li>● Straight to the point of what is being addressed in each section.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More depth is always better.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The A Team has looked into how the community being together and accepting of one another is important, and this is the flip-side; how important it is for those working for the community to be working together as well. Collaboration across every platform is important to make change.</li> <li>● It has been recognized that solving homeless is not simple and there is no one solution, and this journal illustrates how in those type of situations, progress can be made and solutions adapted over time and place.</li> <li>● With dealing with stigmas and stereotypes, there is also no one solution fits all, because they are created from multiple sources. This problem is also complex, and perhaps a collective impact idea is what would be needed to fight them.</li> </ul> |  |
| <p><b>Questions/Concerns:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is collective impact something which would make a difference in the outcome of Seeds of How could collective impact affect the tiny homes project?</li> <li>● Can collective impact be applied in different ways for different things</li> </ul>   |  |



**Citation:**

Kelman, Herbert C. "Process of Opinion Change." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 25 (1961): 57-78. *Harvard University*. OpenScholar, 2016. Web. 13 Mar. 2016.  
<<http://scholar.harvard.edu/hckelman/files/ProcessesofOpinion.pdf>>.

**Reason for including this source in your work:**

If we are to alter the preconceived notions that people unjustly hold against homeless and former felons, we need to know the process behind opinion change. We need an arsenal of tools to use to help us change the mindset of people who've taken comfort in stereotypes for as long as they can remember, and this article is the first tool we can use.

**Main argument:**

There are three types of opinion change: compliance, identification, and internalization. All three ideas are used to change opinions, and each produce different effects. Identification is the strongest of the three, because the individual actually believes in the opinions and actions they adopt.

**Important ideas:**

- Compliance is not a change of actual opinion- the individual puts out the image of changed opinion to be accepted by certain groups.
- Identification can also be called brainwashing- there is not full acceptance of ideas.
- Internalization happens when actions and beliefs become consistent with an individual's value system
- internalization DOES NOT EQUAL rationality

**Evidence:**

- "He does not adopt the induced behavior-for example-a particular opinion response- because he believes in its content, but because it is instrumental in the production of a satisfying social effect. What the individual learns, essentially, is to say or do the expected thing in special situations, regardless of what his private beliefs may be"(pg. 62-63). – On compliance
- "...an authoritarian individual may adopt certain racist attitudes because they fit into his paranoid, irrational view of the world" (pg. 66).

**Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:**

**New Terms:**

- *Self-defining relationship*- role relationship that forms a part of a person's self-image
- *Compliance*-agreement with a request that is acted upon to gain acceptance. usually accompanied by tension as a result of cognitive dissonance
- *Identification*- person identifies with another in some way other than the argument, and so accepts and believes their argument without question
- *Internalization*-full internal acceptance and adoption of new belief, without coercion from others or driven by any need to relate to others

**New Concepts:**

- opinion change
- "changed perception of conditions for value maximization"

**Quotes:**

- "Behavior adopted through internalization is part of an internal system. It is fitted into the person's basic framework of values and is congruent with it. This does not imply complete consistency: the degree of consistency can vary for different individuals and different areas of behavior. It does mean, however, that there is some interplay between the new beliefs and the rest of the person's values. The new behavior can serve to modify existing beliefs and can in turn be modified by them. As a result of this interaction, behavior adopted through internalization will tend to be relatively idiosyncratic, flexible, complex, and differentiated"(pg. 71).
- "Opinions, for example, represent partial solutions to the dilemmas created by unfavorable evaluations from others or by finding oneself deviating from the group" (pg. 78).

**Strengths:**

- Definitions of all new terms
- backed up claims with studies
- many outside sources

**Weaknesses:**

- Not current
- Thick language

**Connections: Write 3-5 insights about how this resource connects to your design thinking team insights thus far.**

- This article dives into conditions under which opinions are formed, and how to predict how they'll change in the future.
- While we may think we see opinion changes, it might be a superficial process due to compliance or identification.
- Changing the real values and beliefs of people requires a deep personal connection without social pressure.

**Questions/Concerns: Write 1-3 questions or concerns this research raises for you and your team's work this semester.**

- How can we foster a change in attitudes using the things we learned in this article?
- How can we better understand how opinions were formed?

- How does the situation that formed the opinions affect how we change it?



# Affinity Map

By sharing key insights from our dialogues and secondary research as a team and displaying them on an Affinity Map, we were able to group similar ideas together. This process ultimately led us to uncover consistent themes and root causes. By categorizing insights from our extensive research we were able to see patterns and connections across our stakeholders. This process led us to discover the needs of the community, and was our platform for innovation.





## Collaborator Debriefs

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Apart from the primary and secondary research, we were engaged in numerous collaborative efforts with the other teams in the course as well as local experts. At strategic points throughout the semester, we were tasked with presenting our current status to our fellow classmates, professors, and outside stakeholders. Below are the summaries of these debrief sessions. They illustrate the transformation of our problem statement over the course of the semester. They also show how sharing our insights with others inspired new ideas.

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### Debrief 1: Articulating and Revising the Initial Vision

#### Problem Statement:

The 'A' Team will promote inclusion, understanding, and acceptance of the homeless and former felons in the Seeds of Promise communities. We will alleviate stigmas, stereotypes and the assumptions which tend to exacerbate these negative attitudes.

#### Insights:

“The best part about speaking with the homeless is hearing their story. It’s the only thing we’ve got out here.” (compassion/understanding fosters acceptance, discrepancy between what society tells us to think and what we experience first hand-availability heuristic)

“It could be you.” (lack of understanding creates distance, idea that homeless are responsible for problems, when in reality it’s the system)

“Under the whole development of the tiny homes process, we have to come up with a marketing plan of how to begin to encourage the neighbors to support this activity.” (platform for us to move forward, gives us idea of what SoP wants from us)

#### Barriers:

Closed-mindedness (resistant to change, assumptions fostered by education, family)

Lack of Availability with Interviewees (difficulty keeping in contact, scheduling meetings)

Working with communities/the political system to prototype suggested changes

## **Debrief 2: Telling the Story**

### Problem Statement:

The 'A' Team is going to create an atmosphere in which community members foster empathy and understanding towards formerly homeless/incarcerated individuals and work towards genuinely positive relationships with these new members of the community.

### Needs:

SOP communities need to have meaningful interactions (communication to bridge misconceptions).

SOP community members need more opportunities to gain empathy towards homeless and former felons.

Negative labels need to be diffused.

### From-To Statements:

From passive, unconscious interaction with members of homeless/felon individuals to positive interaction throughout the community.

From lack of knowledge that breeds assumptions to a community that engages and empathizes with previously homeless/incarcerated individuals.

From unconscious degrading thoughts towards the homeless and former felons forged from social stigma to positive, mutual relationships.

### Barriers:

To be concise enough with our goals to make an impact.

Being able to get our meaning across with proper wording.

Stagnation of insights.

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### **Debrief 3: Envisioning the Future**

#### Problem Statement:

The 'A' Team is going to create an atmosphere in which community members foster empathy and understanding towards formerly homeless/incarcerated individuals and work towards genuinely positive relationships with these new members of the community.

#### 5 Innovations:

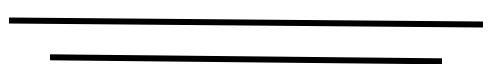
PSA  
Education Program  
SOP Events  
'Meet Your Neighbors'  
Community Project

#### Prototypes:

'Meet Your Neighbors' door sign  
Town Hall "Tell us what you need," incentive (food), invite by groups

#### 2 Questions:

What kind of people usually come to the events you hold?  
What usually brings people to your events? What works/what doesn't?



## Summaries of Top 5 Innovations

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By looking at our insights we were able to narrow down what our stakeholders saw as most important. From there we channeled those insights into innovations. As a team we made a list of all the possible innovations that we could think of. After weighing the merit of our innovations, we concluded that the five innovations below were the best for our particular problem statement.

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### **Public Service Announcement (PSA):**

Capture people with negative assumptions hearing homeless person's story  
It could have happened to "me/you" stories

This idea was inspired by the Rethink Homelessness' Cardboard Stories video that went viral, and would combine our research on how people negatively view people experiencing homelessness with innovations designed to change how they feel about the group through dialogue. This innovation would involve people (homeless or former felons) sharing their stories with people who hold potentially negative views about those groups, and then their reactions to the stories being captured. The other PSA video idea is for people to see how easy it is for the situation of homelessness to happen to people (as insights have shown). This video would aim to make people aware of how it could have been them, but it wasn't, and that should be no reason to negatively look at populations which weren't so lucky. Any PSA video innovation is aimed to show help people come to a better understanding or lose their negative views of the homeless and former felon populations.

### **Education Program:**

Through our dialogues with stakeholders we noticed a need to move from passive, unconscious interaction with individuals experiencing homelessness to positive interaction throughout the community. This innovation involves facilitated conversations and education. As a symposium, this prototype would involve topics designated towards understanding differences. Built in sections, the first would introduce the 5P project and allow neighbors a space to discuss their grievances and concerns while also communicating with other populations involved. Proceeding that, there would be dialogue on the community, how the populations are naturally embedded and contribute to the community-at-large with aspects of how positive interaction may occur. Continuing on that strain, positive interaction would be developed amongst all attendees.

### **Seeds of Promise (SOP) events:**

After hearing from a few of the host neighbors on the Seeds of Promise board, we realized that there are plenty of events held within the community that draw significant crowds from the community. One way to create the atmosphere that we are looking for would be to incorporate some of our programs/PSA's into the established events. It will be much easier to work even closer with Seeds to build off of their success, rather than trying to re-establish and build a program from the ground up. This could include hosting meet and greets for all of the citizens, or simply encouraging everyone to connect, network, and become a closer community. This innovation does

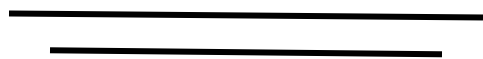
not serve as the “how” of our problem statement, but rather an effective and opportunistic “when and where.” Eliminating those questions will ensure that a majority of our efforts as a team may be spent producing the programs and possibilities for ensuring a hospitable atmosphere for all of the community members, new residents included.

**Humans of Seeds:**

Humans of New York is a project taken on by a photographer meeting and taking pictures of strangers on the streets of New York. He has also been asking the people he photographs personal questions and sharing their answers with the portraits. This is the inspiration for “Humans of Seeds.” In a similar manner, “Humans of Seeds” would capture the faces and stories of homeless individuals that are slated to move into Seeds of Promise neighborhoods, and be made available to the current residents. Either through a combination of pictures and quotes, or a video format, the “Humans of Seeds” project would introduce the new residents to the neighborhood and promote empathy and friendship. The dialogue would include what they are willing to share about how they came to be homeless, what they want for the future, what their motivation is for participating in the 5P program, and a few other things about themselves. The purpose of the project is not to make current residents pity their new neighbors, but rather open their eyes to the concept that these individuals are more than their homelessness and ready to become part of the community.

**Community Project:**

One of the best ways to bring a community together is to give them a common goal. A strategic plan can give them something to work towards together. With every member of the community working on their own piece of the overall plan, a sense of accomplishment and connection can be built within the entire community. This will help aid a positive self-impression, but also a positive view of one’s neighbor. The plan could range anywhere from a community building project to a community center activity. The act getting to know your fellow community members, by working together on a unified task could go a long way towards creating an inclusive, welcoming neighborhood for all. There would be a common agenda/goal for Seeds of Promise and its host neighbors/other collaborators to work towards, but they would each do their own actions which would contribute to the common agenda.



## Top Two Prototypes

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After discussing these ideas with experts and stakeholders, and then further discussing them in our group, we refined our innovations and selected our top two ideas. Below you will see the reimagined ideas, the design of our prototypes, and the feedback we received when going into the community with these ideas in mind.

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### **“Town Hall”**

This innovation came from our desire to transform the seeds of promise neighborhood from passive, unconscious interaction with members of homeless/felon individuals to positive interaction throughout the community. This desire came as a direct result of seeing a need for communication among all members of a community, especially new neighbors, if reintegration is to be successful.

This innovation evolves around the need for more communication within the community. Our plan is to bring together people with some common interest whether it be career, or family setting. We will entice people to come by providing free food and childcare. Furthermore, we will encourage an open dialogue, as opposed to a lecture style setting.

Talking to a community member about a “Town Hall” meeting with an open dialogue prompted a few concerns. She wasn’t sure that this idea could stand alone and bring people in, but said that if it were tied to other wide-spread community events, where people were already gathered, the discussion would be able to flow right from the initial gathering to current wants and needs of the neighborhood. This community member was also asking about the forum and the organization (or the lack thereof) of such a meeting. She said that she was more likely to voice her opinion when the discussion was conducted in a casual manner, as opposed to a raise-your-hand authority-run conversation. She was also slightly worried about the number of people involved. We need to keep in mind that not everyone would be interested in the same topics and a large crowd could be overwhelming for hosts and attendants of the “Town Hall.”

A second community member said that the idea of a “Town Hall” meeting may be more complicated and bring in less people than one may hope. The dialogue would have to be at a level that encouraged the community to be engaged, without seeming to be talking down to them or making them uncomfortable. There is a chance that this could work to bring in more of the honest opinions of the community, but it could also fall through because it relies too much on the citizens who may have too many responsibilities to take care of and not enough time to attend a meeting.



(Town Hall Prototype)

### **“Meet Your Neighbor”**

This innovation comes a result of our insight, “our stories are all we have” that we were lucky enough to have received from a woman experiencing homelessness. Our team feels that harnessing people’s stories and unique attributes/hobbies is a productive way to help current residents see individuals experiencing homelessness for more than their plights.

This innovation involves a door sign that displays characteristics about those moving into the Seeds community. The door sign highlights the hobbies and interests of the individual that is new to the community. The door sign would be placed on all the doors in the community when Seeds of Promise goes door to door for other reasons.

A community member said that they at least look at things they find on their door, and would probably read the door sign if the text was a paragraph or less, and would be even more likely to read it if the picture grabbed her attention. She thought the idea was unique and that the distribution method was more convenient for residents than a flyer. She made an interesting comment-she felt that having something tangible to look at would decrease the ability for her to forget about it later, as opposed to seeing the picture and story on the internet. When asked if she thought these door signs would allow for a better connection between residents and new neighbors, she said that if she read just enough of their story to make her want to ask for more, or the door sign included hobbies that the new neighbor enjoyed, she’d be more likely to initiate a conversation.

A second community member said the idea would force her to actually think about her neighbors. If nothing else, she would read the door sign as she was walking to the trash to throw it out. She also noted she would be more likely to look at a door handle sign than just a simple piece of paper. If “meet your neighbor” prototype was just a flyer, she would be more likely to just throw it away; but the more professional the door sign, the more likely she would be to take it seriously. She also made it clear that the door sign cannot be too crowded and should have lots of pictures that catch people's attention. We were also advised to make the flyers direct and simple, keeping in mind different literacy levels of the neighbors.



Door Sign Prototype

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## Top Two Prototype: Feedback and Final Prototype

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### **Town Hall Activities**

Food is key. In order to bring people in, we need people to make sure that the activities are worth attending for participants. Some techniques for this include providing childcare services and also a complementary dinner. Another insight was that the food shouldn't simply be the usual pizza and coffee, but rather something "special," such as a barbeque. Another important aspect to bringing community members in is having the topic be both relatable but interesting. One way to find the best topics is to ask the public what they are most concerned about, and what they would want to further discuss.

We decided that a good way to gauge the opinions of the public would be to have the host neighbors collaborate and find the best topics for future meetings. Our hopes are that the neighbors would be able to continue the weekly meetings with little to no input from us or the other Seeds advisors.

### ***Meet Your Neighbors Door Sign***

Content of the door sign was a big focus in our debrief meetings. We learned that telling community members that people have experienced homelessness at some point may further isolate them and could perpetuate stereotypes instead of alleviating them. Furthermore, we also realized that certain information could take away from our citizen's security (address, age, and last name.) To go along with the content of the piece, one stakeholder said that focusing on positives for this piece will be instrumental in helping the community members feel more comfortable within their own homes. This could include talking about travel experiences, fun hobbies, and also practical skills that they want to contribute to the neighborhood.

Another aspect of our feedback surrounded the distribution of the pieces. We were told that it is important to include the entire community in the program. This will not only introduce the community to new members, but also show the new members the people that surround them.

### **Final Prototype**

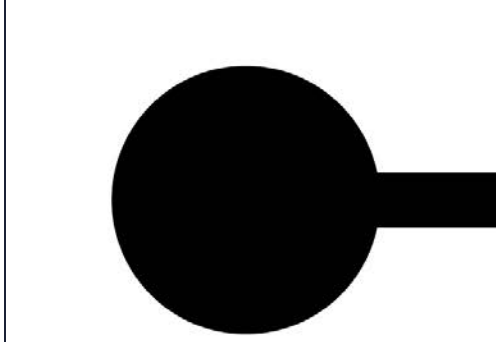
Ultimately, we decided that the best way to initiate mutual relationships in the community is to combine our prototypes above into a community engagement program. Every week, there will be activities in a designated place, shaped by the topics the community want to hear and discuss as a community. With food and child care services provided, community members will have a forum to engage in dialogue and participate in the activities being facilitated around their topic. At the end of the night, door signs will be distributed to each household highlighting one of their next door neighbors. The signs will include a quote telling that neighbors story, skills that they have and what they like or are looking forward to in the community on the front. On the back, community members will find information on the next community activity night, brief bullets of things discussed that week and information about other things happening around town.



**Meet James**

Photographer   Lions fan   Morning runs  
Loves to grill   Guitar

“ *I imagine* GRAND RAPIDS WILL GROW, AND DIVERSIFY, AND BECOME A MODEL OF CHANGE FOR THOSE TO COME. ”




“What Beauty Looks Like”  
Making the Community Beautiful the Way We Want It.

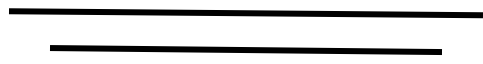
Monday, April 9th @ 7p  
Dickenson Community Center  
436 S. Oakes Road

Meet Your Neighbor  
Sue Ross  
She's an incredible cook!

Farmer's Market  
THIS Saturday



*What is YOUR community talking about.*



## Process Presentation-Pecha Kucha

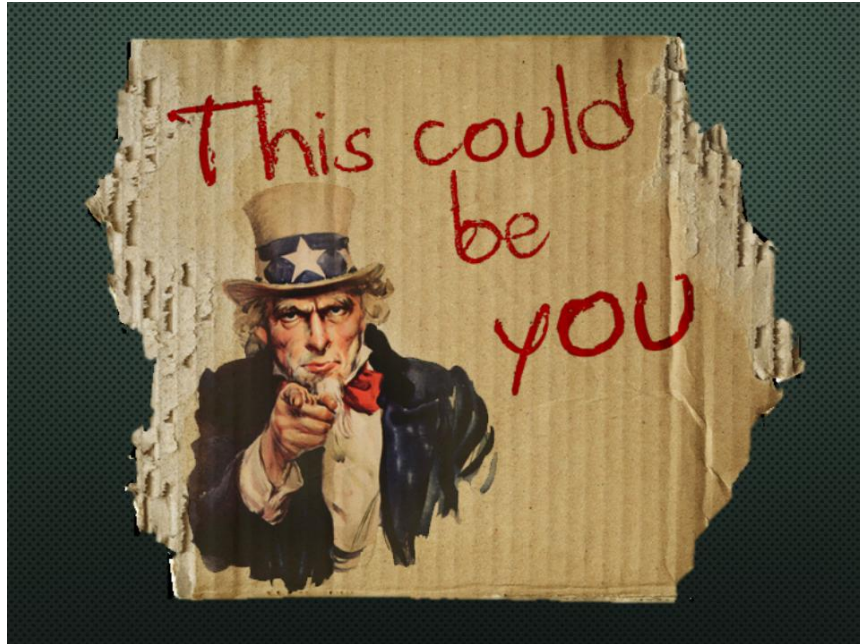
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Hello, we are the 'A' Team. My name is Luke, I am the team leader. We also have Sage, our communications liaison-she arranged our interviews. Hannah served as our primary editor and secretary. Sami was our main researcher and presentation coordinator. And lastly, Terrell served as our interviewer and designer.



This is Marcus on the left. He became homeless when his bipolar disorder caused him to lose his job. Marcus also has a business degree, is well-spoken, and comes from a wealthy family. On the right is Ron, Carla, and their children. They came to live at a homeless shelter when a wrongful eviction, and the illegal disposal of Ron's laptop caused him to lose his job.



What prevents you, your friends, your family from experiencing homelessness? Education? A wealthy family? A steady job? You've just seen two examples of people who came to know homelessness **DESPITE** these advantages. So, if we have no guarantee of a permanent home for ourselves, how can we justify the alienation of those that experience homelessness, often through no fault of their own?



The 'A' Team's focus is just that. Seeds of Promise aims to integrate these new members into the community, but will face difficulties if current residents cannot come to see them for more than their plights. We seek to create an atmosphere in which community members foster work towards genuinely positive relationships with these new members of the community.



Design Thinking is a problem solving method which allows for a problem to be defined after a situation has been outlined. Thanks to this method, we were able to define our own problem after being given Seed of Promise's 5P program situation and gaining insights. Thus, the problem was not created by assumptions or due to a lack of knowledge. We were able to figure out our own problem to work at and alter it with gained insights thanks to design thinking.



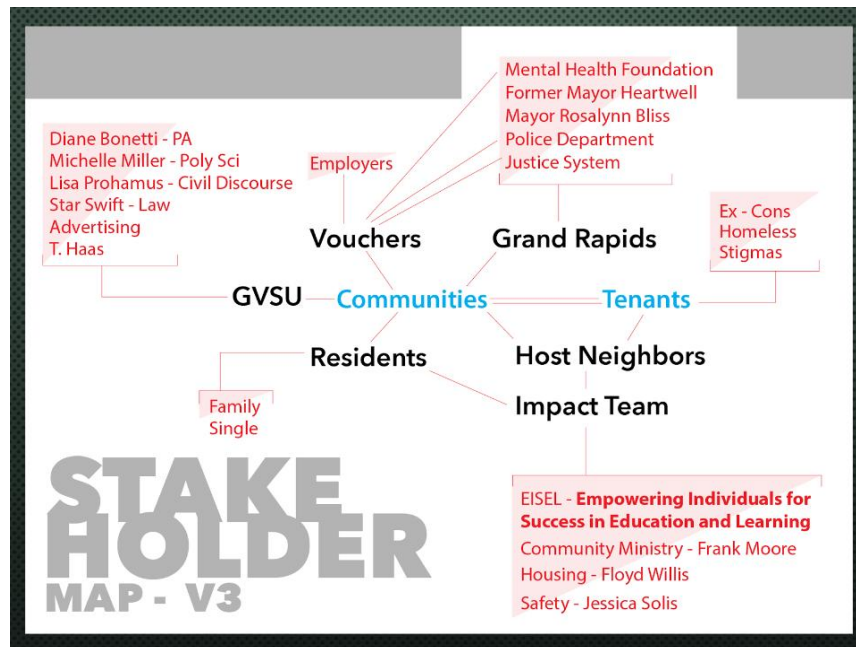
Empathy is a stage of Design Thinking, and it was crucial to us in creating our prototypes for the people experiencing homelessness and former felon populations. It allowed us to gain understanding of the two populations, and thus we were able to work towards finding solutions with their interests, and not ours, in mind. We learned about what they go through due to their situations, and our solutions were designed with those stories and feelings in mind.



Our affinity map allowed for us to find patterns between insights, and thus we found the real needs of the people experiencing homelessness and former felons. This allowed us to create prototypes to solve those real needs of the two populations. Without having identified those patterns, we could have designed solutions which were useless to the two populations. Patterns were key to creating viable solutions.



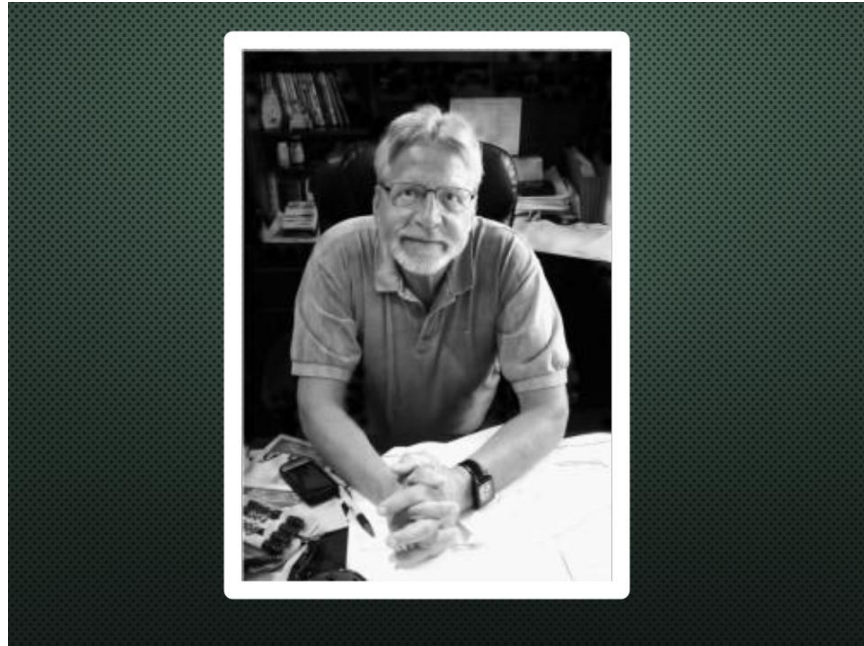
Insights are key to moving towards the innovation process. We would not have reached the innovations presented later if we did not have these insights. We talked so many times in class about whether or not it is even possible to reach innovations without insights. Although it might be possible, who is to say the innovations would actually be relevant. Insights are the building blocks to a successful design thinking process.



By creating a stakeholder map we were able to gain a comprehensive perspective of what is happening from different angles. All of these combined together helps to have well-rounded insights. The most important element to focus on is listening to the voices of the different groups in our stakeholder map. With the focus of community it is important to look at the view of all the people that make up the community.



One of our key insights was gained from a person experiencing homelessness named Rosie. This insight, "our stories are all we have" helped drive our group towards the innovations that we would later create. This insight not only gave a deeper meaning towards the journey we were embarking on but also helped our group to establish our initial problem statement. A statement that focused on inclusion of those experiencing homelessness in order to alleviate stigmas.



Michael Roaleen allowed me to meet him where he was in our dialogue and highlighted that a mental illness can be overcome. As the executive director of the Recovery Academy he lets his life experiences help him help others. He helped me realize integrating populations is more than a home, but by getting their story out and letting them meet their neighbors.



It is the power of dialogue that creates and builds a community. From our dialogues with stakeholders in the greater Grand Rapids community that was a theme our team could not ignore. The insights gave the “A” Team a chance to move past our own assumptions and learn what the community really thought and felt in regards to the populations, because when you can tell your story, you can maintain your ownership and give your neighbor more of you.





To help capitalize on those conversations, our prototype starts with a Town Hall. Providing food and child care, community stakeholders can engage in dialogue around the community and topics they feel are important to positivity and inclusivity.



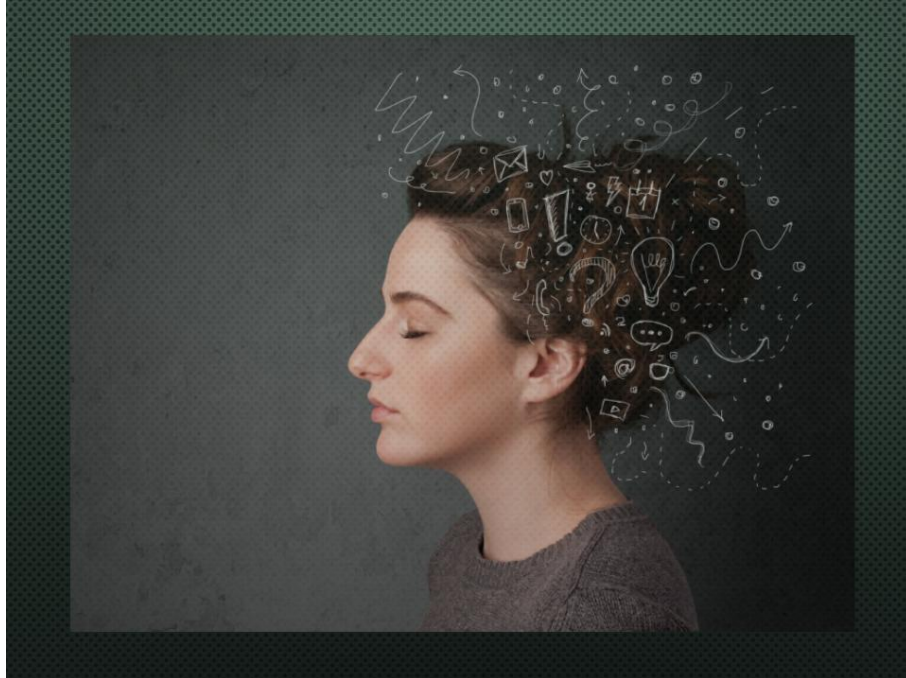
Following those dialogues, every neighbor will be given a door hanger like the ones above. These hangers are meant to highlight an individual's neighbor with a simple "hi." They will also highlight skills and a quote from that member around what is important to them. On the back, a neighbor will find the topic for the coming week and its location, as well as other community events.



We determined that there was a need to create more communication within the community. One of the main reasons that stigmas are accepted are because people don't communicate and thus don't understand each other's mindsets. An open dialog is key to strengthening positive relationships in the community.



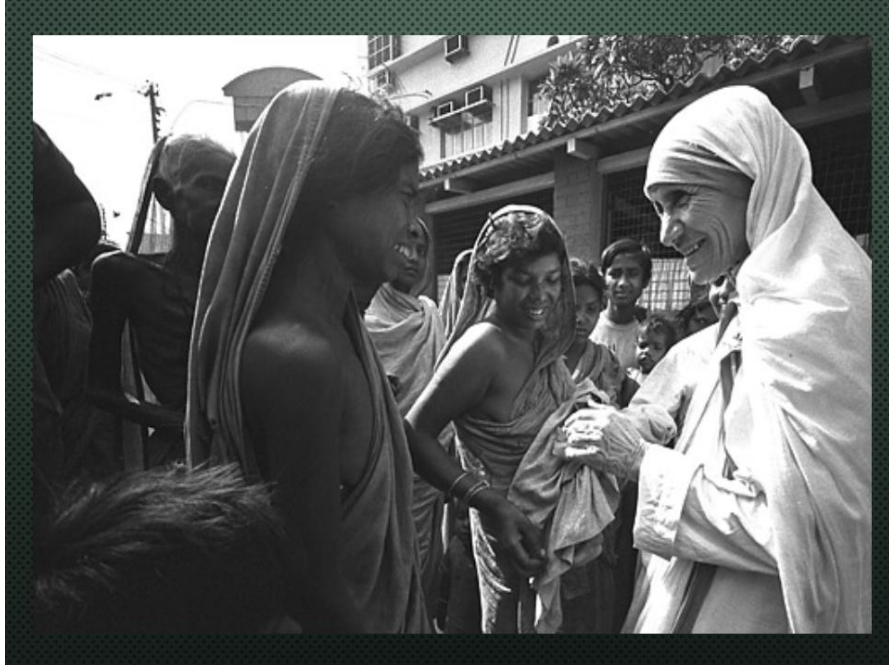
In its simplest form, our target population is the entire community. Through interviews with numerous stakeholders, we were able to empathize with the day-to-day lives of our community members. From there, we were able to build a prototype that will benefit all of those involved.



The trouble with promoting intentional interaction is the problem of changing people's subconscious ideas and actions. People have spent years determining how they think, why they think, and it can be very difficult for them to consider new ideas. It will be integral to our prototype that we create a safe environment for everyone to freely express their ideas and then to engage in active listening.



This leads to the issue of gaining support in the community. A major constraint with any of our prototypes is that they require community involvement. Part of this can be alleviated by incentivizing meetings with food and childcare. That being said, there will always be those who are skeptical and make the process harder. This is especially relevant for a new program.



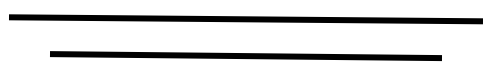
Mother Teresa said, “We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty.” She also said, “We know about poor people. It's the poor people we don't know.”



We think we can all take something from these words. We know poverty and homelessness affect people in the Seeds of Promise community, but we do not know the extent to which they are alienated, and we don't take the time to get to know them personally- we don't ask them where they came from, how they got here, or where they want to go. Seeds of Promise is unique in that they do want to know.



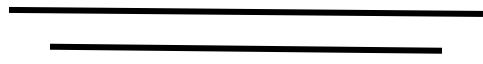
And we want you to WANT to know. We want you to put yourselves in another person's shoes, to feel empowered to make genuine connections in your community, and to empower others to do the same. We NEED you to questions your own assumptions and challenge those around you to question theirs.



### **Team Video Link**

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Youtube link to The 'A' Team's presentation voice-over: <https://youtu.be/lfImt189dYU>



## **‘A’ Team- Team Narrative**

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We are The ‘A’ Team: five undergraduate students from across the campus of Grand Valley State University enrolled in the 2016 Winter semester’s Design Thinking to Meet Real World Needs. We have partnered with Seeds of Promise—a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop a balanced and sustainable community through empowerment and collaboration. We have been set on a path to help Seeds of Promise reach that goal through utilizing the process of design thinking. We were tasked to abandon assumptions, adopt an iterative, human-centered design process, empathize with stakeholders, integrate findings to uncover important insights, and transform needs into a solution that is “...emotionally meaningful as well as functional” (Kelley, 2013, p. 25). When The ‘A’ Team began the design thinking method we saw no tangible end in sight, but we slowly grew into the roles expected of us. By harnessing the method in service of the Seeds of Promise community, and by diving head first into our initial tasks, we eventually accumulated the tools needed to become budding design thinkers.

The ‘A’ Team is an interdisciplinary collection of students. We each have a different major and varying skill sets. Our individual strengths reflect the passions and preferences we have due to our chosen career paths. Despite the fear that our differences would cause conflict, The ‘A’ Team harnessed each person’s experience and opinions to improve our output. The ability to integrate our unique perspectives, combined with empathetic listening and humility, brought us together to make a better design thinking team.

The executive director of Seeds of Promise, Ron Jimmerson, presented us with a project designed to reintegrate individuals who have experienced homelessness or have been incarcerated, back into the community. Immediately following the presentation of this program, we created a stakeholder map to build context for the ecosystem we would be asked to design for. This map illustrated all community members, groups, or officials that Seeds of Promise’s pilot program could affect and be affected by. When our team wondered which facet of our outreach to focus our attention on first, we took this map into account. The ‘A’ Team decided to prioritize the two most important stakeholders: the new tenants and the current residents. This collective decision led to team dialogue on the negative social perceptions former felons and individuals experiencing homelessness often face.

The ‘A’ Team realized that a physical structure alone cannot provide the social, mental, and emotional support needed to feel empowered enough to take control of our future. Stigmas against these individuals and their need for acceptance in the community appeared to be an area of conflict. The ‘A’ Team decided to focus our efforts on promoting a kind of neighborhood that welcomes all new community members with open arms and helping hands. This intention formed itself into our first problem statement. In its initial formation our problem, as defined by Alpaslan and Mitroff (2011), was not the soundest: “A well-structured problem is a problem for which the means and the ends are both well known,” (p. 21). While we had only the slightest inclination of our end goal and no idea how we might get there, we had a start.

Since we were assuming the negative attitudes held by society towards people who have experienced homelessness or incarceration, we sought to overcome our assumptions through empathetic community dialogue and secondary research. Through our community outreach dialogues we sought to assess how our community views these individuals, and to obtain as much information about Seeds of Promise community members as possible. We used secondary research to see if negative stereotypes did hinder reintegration, and if/how other organizations around the

country are addressing this. As we conducted this investigation, we built an affinity map, which allowed us to capture our insights and then group those with similarities. “In other words, complexity doesn’t have to be overwhelming, if we consider our initial panicked reaction and look for patterns, connections, and causal relationships,” (Martin, 2009, p. 81). The groups of insights helped us identify patterns and connections. These allowed us to see the needs of our stakeholders—namely Seeds of Promise community members and individuals who are working past their experience with homelessness or incarceration. Because design thinking is an iterative process (instead of a linear one), we continuously integrated our findings and reevaluated our problem statement. In fact, the problem statement we thought we should focus on was altered almost ten times over the course of the past three months.

Despite initial desires to jump to innovation, when the time came to ideate, the uncertainty of trying to picture what a solution should look like was overwhelming. The ‘A’ Team was struck by the reality that this project is a chance to bring about positive change for an entire community. Instead of letting this trepidation hold us back, we used our newfound sense of creative confidence to propel us forward. By creative confidence, we mean, “...believing in [our] ability to create change in the world around [us]...”(Kelley, 2013, p. 2). Our personal convictions were magnified by the strengths and optimism brought to the meeting by all team members. So, we threw ideas on paper until some of them stuck. Five innovations went through the first round of testing with local stakeholders and two came out on the other side.

The second cycle of innovation had an added component—prototyping. We crafted mock-ups of our top two innovations with paper, cardboard, and sharpie. These two—‘Meet Your Neighbor’ and ‘Town Hall’—were presented at our last debrief with stakeholders. The insights we gained at this debrief led us to combining our top prototypes into a singular solution, which encompassed the key prospects of each.

Every week, there will be activities in a designated place, shaped by the topics the community want to hear and discuss as a community. With food and child care services provided, community members will have a forum to engage in dialogue and participate in the activities being facilitated around their topic. At the end of the night, door signs will be distributed to each household highlighting one of their next door neighbors. On the front side, the signs will include a quote telling that particular neighbors story, skills that they have and what they like or are looking forward to in the community. On the back, community members will find information on the next community activity night, brief bullets of things discussed that week and information about other things happening around town.

These signs will be distributed through door-to-door activities already established by Seeds of Promise host neighbors. Any door that has a no solicitors sign will be excluded unless they request participation. The design will follow a simple template to minimize costs. Furthermore, the designs will avoid large blocks of text. This should help to convince people that these signs are not advertisements, but neighborhood communication. Furthermore, the signs will have a welcoming format to invite people to read and encourage them to participate the town hall activities.

Our way of thinking, both individually and as a team, has been refined so much over the course of this semester that it would be easy to assume the end of the class marks the end of the project. This should not be the case. Our prototype does not require any extensive experience or knowledge to develop. Contrarily, it requires only the willingness of community members to engage with their neighbors in a positive way for the benefit of everyone. It has come to our attention, through conversations with stakeholders, that the best way to bring together a community is by talking about something they are collectively passionate about. We believe that with the help of the Seeds

of Promise host neighbors, a committed community could transform our ideas into regular neighborly engagements. The involvement of Seeds of Promise host neighbors would demonstrate that there is interest within the community to become more united and to share common goals; we hope to provide the catalyst.



## References

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