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Collaborative Platforms for Community Building: Responding to Issues of Homelessness in Grand Rapids through Design Thinking

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Design Thinking To Meet Real World Needs
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Addressing Homelessness in Grand Rapids, MI in Collaboration with Seeds of Promise Using Design Thinking Strategies

Team: The Horticulturists

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Design Brief

Background

      In Grand Rapids, Michigan, a city which in recent years has been awarded numerous national distinctions including being named Best City to Raise a Family, Beer City USA, and #1 Travel Destination (Experience Grand Rapids), there is a problem. Drive down Division Street, one centerfold of the city, and it is nearly impossible to miss many of the city's people who are struggling with homelessness. In a city marked by and proud of its phenomenal growth, there is a persistent, seemingly unsolvable problem. Despite recent programs to completely end homelessness in Grand Rapids (Rilett), the city has seen in recent years an 11% increase in its homeless population (Sidorowicz).

      While the current housing and homelessness crisis is incredibly large mess, Seeds of Promise (SOP) is on the front line of helping those in need. Seeds of Promise is located in the south-east region of Grand Rapids, Michigan. SOP was originally organized in 2003 by a group of pastors; by 2006 the organization became Hands of Hope and in 2008 Seeds of Promise was branded. Seeds of Promise was established to help the community empower itself. They want the neighborhood to direct, decide, and act to improve the lives of those living there. SOP is a many faceted organization with programs based in job creation, education, safe community, and housing. Our beliefs are in line with Seeds; those who live in the community must direct their own improvement strategy.

      As of right now, Seeds of Promise has proposed a plan to reintegrate homeless back into the Grand Rapids Community and the Seeds of Promise Neighborhood. As a bottom-up organization, they have had the help of current community members developing what is referred to as the two-year, 5P program, designed to help homeless develop the personal, professional, and life skills necessary to successfully exit the cycle of homelessness and become an integrated member of the community. In the pursuit of this goal, each person who enrolls in SOP's 5P program will undergo an extensive regimen of testing and evaluation by licensed professionals from various fields, before being given an individually customized program designed by said professionals to help them best achieve the goals laid out by the initiative. As part of the larger community of Grand Rapids, we hope to see this program help those struggling with homelessness in Grand Rapids reintegrate within the city as a whole.

      We, along with the other members of Grand Valley State University's Hon/Lib 323 course, have been asked to review Seeds of Promise's plan, and offer suggestions, particularly on the proposed component dealing with housing for individuals enrolled in Seeds' reintegration program. As it currently stands, Seeds of Promise's proposal would include each individual being granted a lien to a lot and adjoining tiny home. According to the webpage of The Tiny Life, tiny homes are "between 100 and 400 square feet," whereas the average American home is "around 2,600 square feet" ("What Is the Tiny House Movement?"). In considering this question of housing within the greater context of Seeds of Promise's proposed reintegration program, we must also

consider the myriad other factors which relate to the living situations of individuals who have and likely still will be struggling with homelessness and its many causes.

Problem Statement

As people grow and change, so do their dreams. A still prominent cultural myth in America suggests the ability to achieve what you desire through hard work alone is available to all. Unfortunately, it is clear that is not the case for many Americans. Out of the 318 million people living in America, approximately 3.5 million are homeless in any given year. And out of the 3.5 million that are homeless, 71% are located in urban areas (Facts and Figures: The Homeless). Many people who become homeless lose familial and communal support. **In response to this problem, we will be addressing how to develop a reintegration program with a housing component, which promotes community development and support while also fostering participant's independence.** By working directly with Seeds of Promise, community members, and the recently homeless, our team will ideate, prototype and test a housing solution that will benefit those who need a home as well as the community.

Ecosystem Description

A stakeholder map is a useful tool to visualize the different groups or individuals that will be affected by our final product. We chose to fit all stakeholders into one of four groups: Early Adopters, Benefactors, Adversely Affected, and Power.
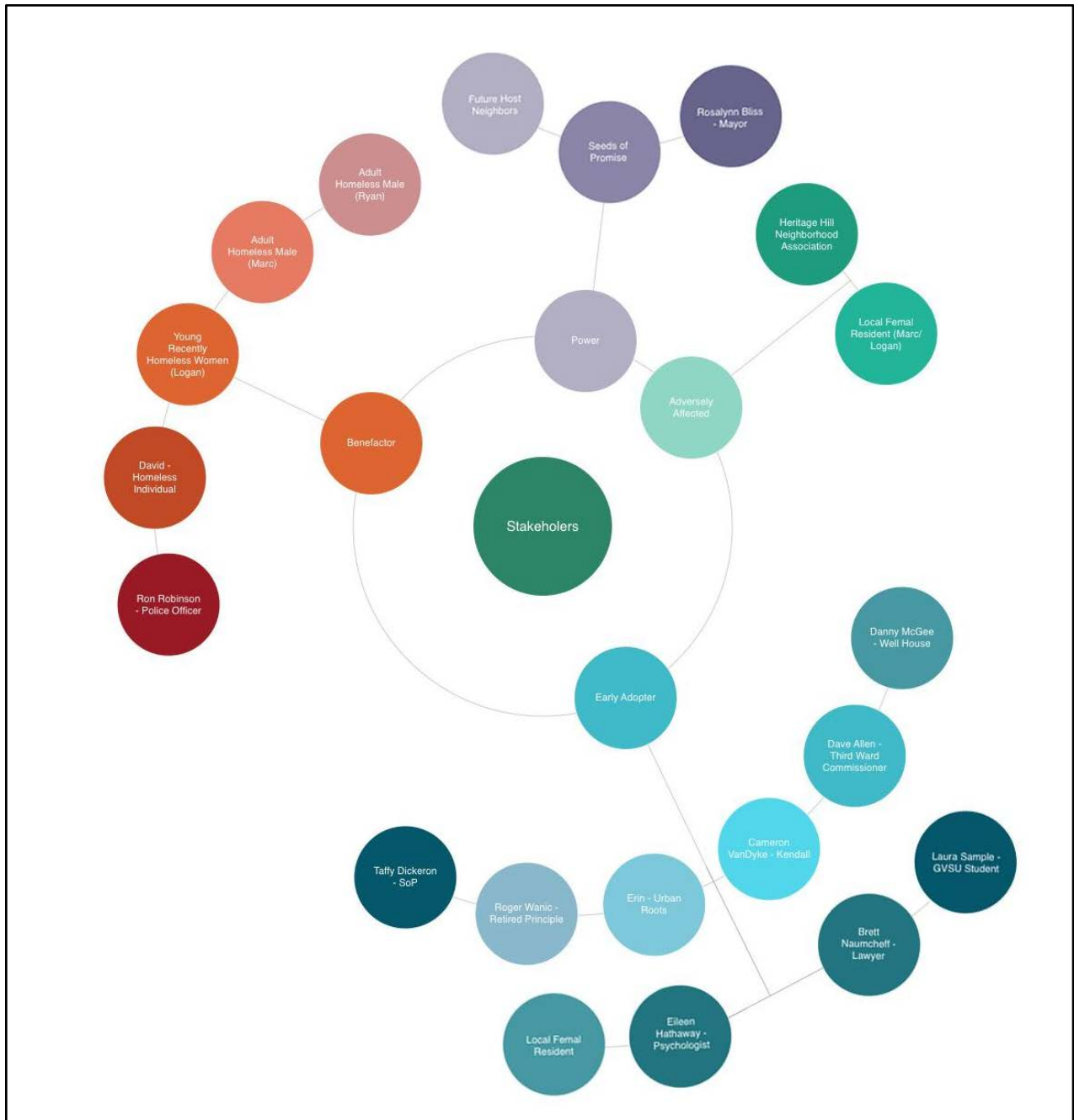
Image: Stakeholder map of those affected by our design

Our Benefactors section includes the individuals and organizations that will be positively affected by Seeds of Promise's goal to transform the neighborhood in a positive manner. The key Benefactors are those experiencing homeless (recently un-incarcerated, youth aged out of foster care, individuals who lost their home, etc.). The Benefactors also include organizations and individuals directly working with our recently homeless demographic (Well House, Taffy Dickerson, etc.), and local residents themselves. In our 'Power' section we are focusing on seeking continued interaction with the Mayor of Grand Rapids, Seeds of Promise, and the Future Host Neighbors, who will eventually be running the entire Seeds of Promise organization. The Early

Adopters take a few different forms. They are those who will be able to directly work with SOP on their mission to improve the lives of homeless individuals. They are also professionals whom we sought advice from who are concerned about the issue, but are not from Grand Rapids. The Adversely Affected group, or the group that has the potential to be negatively affected by Seeds of Promise's program, includes neighbors of proposed housing sites and any homeowners association.

Methods

To tackle our problem statement, we propose three different research methods. First, we will engage in a series of dialogues over a five week period. Our main focus will be interviewing people who are recently homeless and desire to be reintegrated into society. Targeting this group will spread the word about the upcoming Seeds of Promise program, increase alignment between the program's design and stakeholder needs, and thereby boost the value of the program. We will work with grassroots organizations such as the HQ Youth Organization and Reconciliation of Life Prison Ministry to find and interview individuals in this group. Other groups we will be interviewing include individuals in positions of power (i.e. the Mayor of Grand Rapids), local residents (i.e. Seeds of Promise Host Neighbors, Heritage Hill Association), and emergency homeless shelters (i.e. Mel Trotter, Degage). Conversations will be conducted with two team members, where one team member handles the personal interactions while another team member concentrates on recording the responses. Observation and immersion are also important primary research sources. Team members will search for opportunities to observe habits and practices of homeless individuals, and the community in which our design will be implemented.

In addition to engaging the community directly, secondary research from a variety of sources, including scholarly articles, books, legal documents, journalism editorials or video footage will be conducted. Interactions with people struggling with homelessness, and with the people who are already part of the community which is seeking to reintegrate homeless individuals will guide our research and design processes, while secondary research will be used to provide additional data and theoretical foundations for our designs and further research. The secondary research will also open doors to previously unknown constraints and allow a deeper understanding of the various factors affecting the issue of homelessness and reintegration.

All findings will be shared with our entire team to foster collective wisdom and expansion of the framework of our current problem. The methods stated above will enable an empathetic lens through which our group will seek solutions that will make the most positive impact.

Constraints

Although there are many organizations working towards improving the community, these groups often lack consistent and clear communication amongst each other. This is a major constraint for our team, because it will be beneficial for us to work in partnership with the already existing programs in the Grand Rapids area. Some communication between individual stakeholder groups may be achieved through empathizing and ideating with our stakeholders, but communication will most likely not be efficient. We believe that addressing this constraint is central to our problem statement. During the ideating portion of this project, one of our team goals will be to strengthen the connection amongst the existing organizations in Grand Rapids already working towards improving the community. Heartside Neighborhood Collaborative is an organization dedicated to promoting collaboration amongst local organizations focused on homelessness: Degage, Mel Trotter, and Catholic Charities of West Michigan. For a solution to be realistic in regards to our problem statement, our group must work within the assumption that not all organizations which are doing work relevant to this problem will be regularly communicating and collaborating.

A second constraint is the actual real estate available for housing which could prove critical to our proposed solutions, particularly if we find enough support to suggest tiny homes is a superior option. The empty lots we will be dealing with are zoned as "Low Density Residential" and "Medium-Low Density Residential." Low Density allows for 1 to 4.9 dwelling units per gross acre, and Medium-Low Density allows for 5-9.9 dwelling units per gross acre ("City of Grand Rapids Master Plan" 178). We have not been able to find exact measurements for the lot sizes. However based on prior knowledge and measurements we did on Google Maps, most lot sizes are approximately a quarter acre. This implies that we can only have 1 house per lot for Low Density and about 2 dwelling units per quarter acre for Medium-Low Density. This will be clarified in the future once we get a map from Seeds of Promise with the exact lot locations and their sizes. The size of lots is important to our problem because of the impact it will have on the program member's ability to maintain relationships with other individuals in the program as well as relationships from before their enrollment in the program.

A final constraint we will be dealing with is designing a solution that is in line with the ideals of the neighborhood, which will be clarified through iterative personal dialogues with members in the community. Through empathizing, our design will align with the community's concerns, but, as in all things, there will necessarily be compromises between ours and other stakeholder's own efforts. The challenge that this brings to our team is knowing how we, as designers, can best serve the needs of all involved through compromise. It is our intention to address these constraints with care, and recognition of potential implications for the community.

Intended Outcome

Complementary to the Seeds of Promise motto of empowering urban residents to direct their own self-sustaining improvement ("Seeds of Promise"), our intended outcome is to provide a solution for integrating individuals who are struggling with homelessness into the Seeds of Promise community. In order to do this, we will be focusing on the specific populations of those individuals who are aging out of the foster care system, those who are leaving the criminal justice system after periods of incarceration, and those who have recently experienced job loss and eviction. We plan to ***offer a program which will allow individuals to integrate gradually into the community over an extended period of time with enough community support to succeed both immediately and over the coming decades.***

In closing, our team will provide Seeds of Promise and the community with a plan for reintegrating the homeless that will promote both community support and independence for participating individuals. Through our plan we hope that Grand Rapidians facing barriers to finding a home will get a second chance at becoming an integrated member of the community. Our dream is to see a community that fosters life-long learning and trust between residents. We want to encourage people expand their own frameworks and connect across their differences, to not only to help themselves, but to help the community and its growth.

Research Bibliographies

Source #1 Researcher: Haley Wanic	

Schwalbe, Craig S. "Is Program Structure Related to Stigma and Community Acceptance of Justice-involved Adolescents?" Is Program Structure Related to Stigma and Community Acceptance of Justice-involved Adolescents? Nov. 2012. Web. 21 Feb. 2016.

Reason for including this source in your work: ● If SOP's program begins to work well, how will the community react? Will they accept the people who have gone through the program?

Main argument: ● Adults of Jordan were asked to read vignettes regarding delinquent adolescents and justice interventions. They were also asked to report if they would be willing to accept the child as a future employee, friend of their own child, or a future spouse of their own child etc. When a person had appeared to 'learn his lesson' they were revered with greater acceptance and higher expectations of future success.

Important ideas: ● Diversion programs did increase acceptance in this study ● Unclear what aspect created the acceptance ● What matters is if the person completes the program they are enrolled in ● The person has to, or appear to, 'learn their lesson'

Evidence used to support the author's argument: ● Table 3 predicts a greater share of variance compared to model 2 because of the effect of perceptions that Kamal had learned his lesson ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$)

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts: ● "At the individual level, perceptions that programs have little to no impact on youth moral development may exacerbate stigma and the formal and informal exclusionary social practices associated with stigma. Youths involved in the justice system need stigma management skills to convey to others that the intervention experience has indeed changed them." ● "Youths may need strategies to articulate that they did indeed make amends to their former victims, or that they are implementing plans to adopt a more pro-social path into adulthood, or simply that they are abiding by family rules and expectations more than they were before." ● "Successful programs *need* to highlight data, both statistical and qualitative, that showcases the mechanisms through which youth develop moral insights and conform to social norms."

Strengths:	Weaknesses:

● Peer Reviewed ● Strong statistical data	● Study from the Middle East

Connections to design thinking insights thus far:
- No matter how good SOP's program gets, we need future acceptance
- It doesn't have to be 'adolescents' who learned a lesson, all people who go through a program
- Asking people in GR similar questions may be helpful

Questions and concerns that this research raises for our team's work this semester:
- How do we show community members people who go through SOP's program have 'learned their lesson'?
- Do people want to learn their lesson?

Source #2
Researcher: Marc Lehman

Silverstein, Michael. ""Cultural" Concepts and the Language   Culture Nexus *Current Anthropology* 45.5 (Dec. 2004): 621–652. Web.

Reason for including this source in your work:
- While the concept of explicitly mapping out the pragmatic relationships between various words and concepts as used between members in a community, of speech or otherwise, is shown to be useful in analyzing interactions between members of said community, it seems this notion can also be useful when applied to interactions with our stakeholders, particularly when paired with open ended interviews with carefully guided probes, as well as possibly employing an interviewee mapping interview exercise. (This is going to help us both to conduct better interviews and to better understand the results of our research.)

Main argument:
- In addition to the somewhat obvious denotational meanings of words or phrases, members of communities develop connotative associations through the repetitive use of terms in relation to particular other meanings. Through analyzing the way speakers reference different objects or subjects, we can determine how these various meanings intersect to help individuals understand their own world, thereby allowing us to better understand their world and their place in it. This will be even easier when usage of particular terms and phrases are contrasted with the uses of other terms and phrases which together are in a category of similar things.

Important ideas:
- Similar objects and subjects can be grouped into categories or "-onomies", according to a specific cultural group
- Each individual instantiation of these -onomies hold both denotational meaning as well as connotational meaning, which is built up and continually revised through repetitive

use (once again, this is specific to an individual cultural group)
- By mapping out these -onomies, we can better understand how individuals relate to others and other various objects in life

Evidence used to support the author's argument:
- The primary example discussed in the article examines an interaction between two graduate students. Over the course of their conversation, one mentions their undergraduate attendance of Loyola, a Jesuit school. In response, the other graduate student mentions that they attended Georgetown, another Jesuit school which was, at the time, widely regarded as the largest and most prestigious Jesuit school. Because this is recognized by both interactants, the Georgetown grad gains the initial upper hand in what becomes a game of "one-up-man-ship". Fortunately for the other conversant, they are able to steer the conversation to the point where the Georgetown grad admits their experienced difficulty with the work at their now shared University, which allows the individual who once occupied a 'lower' position because of their alma mater to assume a higher position by discussing how well their school, Loyola, prepared them for the rigor of graduate school at their particular university.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- "The use of some particular word or expression at a moment in denotational text-time thus comes differentially to invoke--- to summon to the here-and-now--- some specific cultural concept in a schema of such. (I will return later to the issue of whose indexical associations and schemata "count.") But it does so in a way that is dependent on sociocentric and interactionally locatable patterns of language use as both themselves constituting social action in the way I have demonstrated and as associable with other modalities of social action."
- "The flow of value thus comes to be mappable as a felt effect or adjunct of interlocutors' strategic positionalities---presupposed or entailed---in such complex macrosocial space and of people's stasis in and/or movement through its ever-changing configurations."
- "Each contributory bit of information rather, fits in an emerging multidimensional array of repetition, comparison, and contrast" (regarding how connotational meaning is created, maintained, and understood)

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● Suggests a way in which we can better understand what our stakeholders are telling us, as well ideas for methods which could help us interview even more effectively.	● The author doesn't explicitly discuss how this can be applied to the interview process.

Connections to design thinking insights thus far:
- The example above shows how an -onomie is constructed and interacted with by members of a shared community. We can apply this to our stakeholder dialogues by asking probing questions or clarifications regarding different -onomies, such as various shelters, soup kitchens, social hierarchies within the homeless community or in relation

to the homeless community, or even places where homeless people can sleep when they can't get into a shelter for the night.
- This could also possibly be used to address how various groups are already working with the homeless community.

Questions and concerns this research raises for our team's work this semester:
- Can we map out these "-onomies"?
- Would doing so actually be worth it?
- Have we missed potentially enlightening opportunities to do so already? Who can we talk to in order to catch up on what we've missed?

Source #3
Researcher: Logan Knoper

Charlton, Sarah. "Inclusion Through Housing: Limitations and Alternatives in Johannesburg". *Urban Forum* 21 (2010): 1-19. *SpringerLink.* Web. 27 Feb. 2016. doi:10.1007/s12132-010-9076-7.

Reason for including this source in your work:
- Provides a link between inclusion and housing.

Main argument:
- There is an assumption that providing housing is the path to inclusion and opportunity for the city's poorest residents. Programs should focus on the parts of the housing (what it provides) rather than the package of house ownership. This study is not to say housing projects for the poor are not necessary--it attempts to emphasize the importance of including other services to improve the individual's circumstances.

Important ideas:
- The question should be asked inclusiveness to what? On whose terms? (page 3)
- Other definitions of inclusion focus on access to energy, sanitation, and water as required components, as well as access to the diverse range of urban services (page 3)
- Is housing just another way to force people to contribute to local economy (pay bills and engage in spending/earning money? (page 3)
- Housing is, in our society, the most efficient way to deliver services (page 4)
- Quality of life in homeownership should be equal to that of renting (page 14)

Evidence used to support the author's argument.
- The author uses the definitions and goals provided at the city and national level and then critiques these ideas using other studies on these topics.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- "In addition, this paper moves beyond considerations of tenure—ownership or rental—to propose other ways of conceptualising housing as a contribution towards inclusion of the poor. It is argued that attention should focus on the constituent parts of the

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notion of housing, and the contributions of these to inclusion, rather than the undifferentiated package of 'formal housing for ownership'." (page 2)
- "Her concern is with local efforts at inclusion which do not recognise or contest a wider context which dominates the socio-economic landscape, in which inclusion 'suggests policy accommodation within an unreformed international status quo' (Beall 2002: 45). She calls this 'a reformist rather than a transformationalist policy agenda' and notes that 'the question remains – inclusion on what, on whose terms and in whose interests?' (Beall 2002: 50)." (page 3)
- "This discussion has argued first for support to a wide variety of very low cost rental accommodation, supplied by a range of providers, in contexts such as Johannesburg. The findings suggest for some people the spatial or geographic de-linking of the place called 'home' from state provided RDP housing. (page 17)

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● Access to city services is important to the opportunities available to individuals	● State provided housing projects often isolate individuals or lack a sense of 'home'

Connections to design thinking insights thus far.
- Desires of individuals will differ, so a singular goal (such as housing) should not be encouraged.
- Society works by providing services to individuals dwelling place. This is a barrier that would be very difficult to design around.
- It is important to look at what housing provides rather than imposing the conventional aspects of housing.
- Best results will come when they are led by the actual community

Questions and concerns this research raises for our team's work this semester:
- How do private and public partnerships work together to provide access to services for individuals, but also a sense of 'home' or community?

Source #4
Researcher: Ryan Samosiuk

Ryan, Tiffany N., and Sanna J. Thompson. "Perspectives on Housing among Homeless Emerging Adults." Evaluation and Program Planning 36.1 (2013): 107-14. Science Direct. Web.

Reason for including this source in your work:
- To learn about how recently homeless adults view housing

Main argument:
- Those seeking housing favor safety and community. If you are going to house recently homeless you must have people working there to help them that genuinely care or they will just leave.

Important ideas:
- Most important housing factors (to the youth) - 1) safety 2) cleanliness 3) Behavior or other clients
- Having a truly caring staff
- Being treated not as less mature, a "charity case"
- Type of housing did not matter as much, just as long as there are not "restrictive rules" and it is flexible
- Moving into housing by themselves is viewed as disloyal.

Evidence used to support the author's argument:
- A direct quote from a homeless individual when asked about moving into housing by himself. "If you could supply the same thing...for my friends, that I call family out here. If you can supply 20 other people a place to stay, I'll take it, but if you can't, forget it".
- When asked about how they like to be treated by the case/service workers at these homes, a participant stated, "...the environment, the atmosphere, just how people act. The level of respect and courtesy that people give to each other. If you're going to offer me housing, get ready to work with me, not for me...you don't have to be like, well are you going to behave sir, you know, and get all like up, up in my face, like a drill sergeant."

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- "This group of homeless emerging adults voiced their need for support from service providers, rather than being constantly monitored for violating rules."
- Young homeless individuals moving towards adulthood perceive themselves as independent, self-sufficient adults so they should be treated as such.
- "Studies have also illustrated the positive impact of trusted adult relationships on young people that results in higher self- esteem, better educational outcomes, and less risky behaviors (Rew, 2008)."
- Many homeless emerging adults prefer to use drop-in centers because they feel comfortable with the people that frequent them, as well as the fact they do not have many pre-requisites and guidelines.
- "Previous research suggests that trusting relationships may develop with staff at drop-in centers, which then leads to requests for more intensive and extended services (Slesnick et al., 2008; Thompson et al., 2006). It may be that these less restrictive services act as a gateway to encourage homeless emerging adults to transition into more stable environments once they are developmentally ready."

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
- Places that offer more freedom are more often used by homeless emerging adults.	- Many homeless emerging adults have preconceptions about service housing, since most do not genuinely care about them.

Connections to design thinking insights thus far.
- We want to foster a balance between independence and community.

- This furthers our understanding of how they want to be treated
- Specifically gives us an insight into one of the subcategories of recently homeless.
- Having a true, trusting relationship with whoever the individual is being helped by
- Group housing is incredibly important. Whether they share rooms or not is not important but safety and cleanliness are.

Questions and concerns that this research raises for our team's work this semester:
- How exactly do we find the best type of group home that fits with SOP's mission?
- How to insure the homeless feel welcome?
- What kind of housing would make the individuals feel most empowered

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Source #5
Researcher: Michelle Lo Piccolo

"When One Size Doesn't Fit All: Differing Outcomes For Foster Children in Group Homes."
     Chicago Policy Review. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Mar. 2016.

Reason for including this source in your work:
- A big portion of our work deals with figuring out the most ideal and beneficial living situation for the participants in Seeds of Promises reintegration program. It is important that we research how space and different housing formats and styles may affect the patrons.

Main argument:
- This article revealed some insights about some possibly constraints or advances that may arise if we choose to go with a group styled home housing solution. The article stressed how there have been a limited amount of studies done on the psychological and emotionally impacts group homes can have on an individual.

Important ideas:
- Gender does have an impact on the individual's experience in a group home
- The age in which a child enters a group home can vastly affect their ability to succeed
- Group homes are seen as an expensive and restrictive housing solution

Evidence used to support the author's argument:
- A study was done by researchers at the University of Maryland discovered that long-term outcomes for youth who are placed in group homes differ significantly from those of the children elsewhere in the foster care system.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- "Boys in group homes show a significant improvement in baseline scores on the CANS assessment, while girls in group homes show no significant difference."
- "Eliminating the assumption that children and teenagers in the foster care population respond uniformly to different placements would allow for more strategic placement decisions."

- "Understanding how particular youth may benefit and, conversely, suffer in these settings could be important in ensuring that resources are allocated in a way that maximizes child welfare."
- Age and Gender will affect success of individual

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● Group Homes have the ability to be successful and allow individuals to find healing	● If group homes aren't run properly and take each individual person's needs into consideration, it could hinder people.

Connections to design thinking insights thus far:
- We've been learning how the environment a person is placed in has major effects on their daily living.
- Environmental Psychology is something we should spend researching
- The format and layout of the houses should have great thought put into them
- The number of people per house will affect the success of the program

Questions and concerns that this research raises for our team's work this semester:
- Are group homes our best option?
- Will group homes hinder people more than they will help them?
- How can we create homes that will have the maximum benefit for our clients?

Source #6
Researcher: Haley Wanic

Tarren-Sweeney, Michael; Vetere, Arlene. Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Children and Young People: Supporting Children who are, or have been, in Foster Care. Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013. Ebook Library. Web. 09 Feb. 2016.

Reason for including this source in your work:
- What do young homeless people need? What are some ways to help them? This article looked promising for information regarding these topics.

Main argument:
- This book delves into the severe trauma and mental health issues of children in foster care. What is especially helpful about this book is the discussion of the needs of the children along with the best strategies to help.

Important ideas:
- Mental health interventions are usually grouped in theoretical frameworks: behavioral, cognitive, psychodynamic, systemic

- Group any type of therapy in terms of what you are trying to treat.
- Trust, family, security are what foster care children need to see as a reality.
- Upkeep progress of mental conditions and problems throughout the program.
- There is a need to increase the sensitivity of case workers to the psychosocial needs of children.

Evidence used to support the author's argument:
- 'The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the Social Care Institute for
- Excellence (SCIE) recently published a public health guide for looked after children (NICE, & SCIE, 2010).'
- 'The British government recognized the plight of children in care and the failure of the system to offer mental health intervention in a timely way.'
- This researcher was not the only one; this has become a worldwide issue.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- Psychodynamic psychotherapy is a form of depth psychology, the primary focus of which is to reveal the unconscious content of a client's psyche in an effort to alleviate psychic tension. In this way, it is similar to psychoanalysis.
- Systemic therapy seeks to address people not only on the individual level, but also as people in relationships, dealing with the interactions of groups and their interactional patterns and dynamics.
- "Re-establishing **safety** is seen as necessary to allowing proper reflection, problem-solving and skill building at all levels of the system."
- "The work is slow, and engagement difficult. There are lots of missed appointments."
- "Interventions should be individualized and strength-based and reflect the child's permanency plan and include the child's current and past careers."

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● National Studies ● Scholarly Article	● Inconclusive study results ● Not a lot of conclusive studies used for explanation of ideas.

Connections to design thinking insights thus far:
- Children through the foster care system are the most vulnerable due to poor quality care
- Trust and safety are two main aspects of keeping people in a program like this
- Keep program 'individualized' for every person, ask what they want to gain and why

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Questions and concerns that this research raises for our team's work this semester:
- Should there be an aspect of group therapy for people through foster care?
- How to keep people engaged in the program if there are a lot of missed appointments noted from previous programs?

Source #7 Researcher: Marc Lehman
Irwin, John. *Jail: Managing the Underclass in American Society.* Berkeley, CA, USA: University of California Press, 2013. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 14 February 2016.
Reason for including this source in your work: ● Firstly, this book helps clarify the differences between jails and prisons, a distinction we have not previously made. Second, the book's presentation of the case of those individuals who spend time in jail holds important implications for our conception of the population we are focusing on in our work.
Main argument: ● The individuals who typically populate jails are very different from the populations of prisons and from what the general populace believes. Jails are most often populated by the poor and unfortunate, rather than by the 'dangerous' criminals many people expect. In part, jails were designed and are still operated as mechanisms for controlling and subverting the "rabble" of a city, or those individuals who are "occupationally displaced" and poverty stricken, for whatever reason.
Important ideas: ● Jails are not primarily populated by 'dangerous' criminals, but rather a class of people who are traditionally poverty stricken, and already disadvantaged in our capitalist system such that they enter a regressive cycle where they are unable to fulfill society's expectations for how a 'proper' citizen exists, and thus are thrown in jail, which leads to further inability to live 'properly,' leading to further incarceration, and so on. ● Individuals who are deemed to be part of the "rabble", or "disreputable" are often targeted by the police more than are individuals perceived to be part of the middle or upper class. ● "Disreputable" individuals are often arrested on charges which are generally perceivable as minor or petty, or even falsified. These arrests often lead to the individuals spending time in jail, sometimes for multiple days. Additionally, these charges are often lifted for any variety of reasons, meaning that individual's lives are interrupted for little to no reason, and to questionable benefit, or even harm to the greater society.
Evidence to support the author's argument: ● The authors outline one example where a couple was having a verbal disagreement. One member of the pair flagged down an officer and told them the other individual was attempting to beat and rape them. Despite evidence in support of this, the other individual was arrested and incarcerated, only to be released a few days later after the charges were dropped. ● In another example, an individual was arrested by two undercover police officers while walking and talking with a friend, on charges of possession with intent to sell (illegal

drugs), when in fact the individual was only carrying tobacco mixed with herbs, rather than the accused illegal substance, marijuana.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- Police officers attempt to contain rabble behavior by restricting offensive social types to special neighborhoods and by limiting their deviant activities. (p. 11)
- The public impression is that the jail holds a collection of dangerous criminals. But familiarity and close inspection reveal that the jail holds only a very few persons who fit the popular conception of a criminal- a predator who seriously threatens the lives and property of ordinary citizens.
- Police will often arrest "disreputables" under patently false charges, or for petty crimes which would be ignored if performed in another place or by another person. This sometimes also occurs in waves focused on members of particular demographic descriptions or individuals who engage in similar activities.

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● Provides insight into the distinction between individuals incarcerated for long periods of time for capital offenses, and individuals incarcerated for shorter periods (anywhere between a few days and a year) for comparatively minor offenses.	● This particular chapter doesn't offer any particular insights on how to best reach this population, nor does this chapter offer any perspective on the long term effects of chronic incarceration of kind, though this kind of situation is hinted at. This will be remedied by further research.

Connections to design thinking insights thus far:
- In addition to individuals who are exiting prison after lengthy periods of incarceration, we may also wish to pay special attention to individuals plagued by chronic incarceration in jails.
- Further research with the local police forces as well as our target population will be required to both uncover the common practices of police in the area, and the target population's perspective on the effect these practices have on their lives, and their potential for success in the proposed program.
- It may be necessary, or at least helpful to attempt to work with the local police forces to better understand and address this phenomenon where select individuals are disproportionately penalized for behaviors which would otherwise be considered trivial, at least if there is a similar paradigm in this area.

Questions and concerns that this research raises for you and your team's work this semester.
- Are we including this discussed population in our considerations, or are we planning to focus exclusively on the group of individuals who are exiting long periods of incarceration?
- What are the major differences between these two populations (long term and short term incarceration), and what are the implications of these differences for our work?

- If we choose to include a focus on these individuals, will it even be feasible to focus on both populations (long and short term incarcerated individuals), or will we be better off focusing on exclusively one of the two?

Source #8
Researcher: Marc Lehman

Tosi, Antonio. "Re-Housing And Social Reintegration Of Homeless People." *Innovation: The European Journal Of Social Sciences* 18.2 (2005): 183-203. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 9 Feb. 2016.

Reason for including this source in your work:
- Tosi's account of the efforts made by two different groups seeking to reintegrate homeless people into the community in part through rehousing offers perspectives derived through intensive personal research very similar to what we hope to accomplish. By comparing Tosi's work with our own down the road, we will be able to verify and validate our own results, as well as find divergences which require further investigation.

Main argument:
- Particularly, this article addresses the sense of normality which the study's respondents reported when living in a stable, standard home. The sense of normalcy, both in terms of consistency and regarding cultural norms is viewed as a key aspect for successful reintegration of formerly homeless individuals into a community. However, rehousing as described is only one piece of the puzzle, and insights from the author, including that many of the study's respondents unwillingness to "accept special regimes or types of housing as an answer to their housing problem", will be key in considering our plan to attempting to encourage successful reintegration of individuals struggling with homelessness.

Important ideas:
- Normalcy is important for successful reintegration
- This includes the type of housing used during the process of reintegration. Homes should not be categorically different than others in the community.
- Strength and consistency of personal relationships, both formal and informal are highly important to the reintegration process.
- The use of predetermined "plans" for reintegration is in itself suspect, alternative methodologies may be more effective, and further research is advised, if not necessary.

Evidence used to support the author's argument:

- A quote from one respondent, on the topic of ownership of housing's positive benefits, said, "To have a home is to have a normal life*/it's a psychological matter… It's a great satisfaction, the conquest of something that is yours. When I was in a big home with my family I didn't appreciate it, I didn't understand. Now I greatly appreciate this flat, even if it is so small. I think of the past when I hadn't even a 1,000 lire ..."

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- "To have a home is to have a normal life*/it's a psychological matter… It's a great satisfaction, the conquest of something that is yours. When I was in a big home with my family I didn't appreciate it, I didn't understand. Now I greatly appreciate this flat, even if it is so small. I think of the past when I hadn't even a 1,000 lire ..."
- "Home is citizenship. The role of housing must, however, also be seen within a framework of persistent precariousness, in many cases a framework in which life is still over-determined by the traumatic experience of street homelessness. In this perspective the distinction between 'housing' and 'home' or between 'shelter' and 'home'*/a distinction that is current in housing research*/represents an important key to our understanding of the role housing plays in reintegration and in defining what constitutes an appreciable housing result"
- "The idea of more individualized and 'integrated' forms of assistance is a landmark of the new social services culture on which reintegration programmes are based. In order to tackle the complexity and multidimensional nature of the hardship these people suffer, integrated action (health, psychological and personal relations, financial, training, housing) must be organized in order to offer these people the chance to set out on a reintegration path (Commissione di indagine sull'esclusione sociale, 2002)."

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
- Forces us to challenge one of our primary assumptions, that the plan proposed by Seeds is as strong and potentially effective as we initially believed.	- Doesn't provide concrete alternatives to such programs. Possibility of major differences between homelessness and related cultural norms and legislation in Milan and Grand Rapids.

Connections to design thinking insights thus far:
- Tiny homes may not be the solution. We, as well as the Kendall students, are investigating alternatives.
- A strong sense of community is incredibly important to the people we are working with, and must be maintained throughout the reintegration process.
- Seed's preexisting framework for employment and community is excellent for this kind of work, though the program's nature as such may actually end up being a hindrance unless approached and conceptualized correctly.

Questions and concerns that this research raises for our team's work this semester:

- If organized programs for reintegration are not an optimal solution to reintegration of individuals struggling with homelessness, then is the entire approach of our collaboration inherently flawed and hindered?

Source #8
Researcher: Marc Lehman

Ravenhill, Megan. *The Culture of Homelessness*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1 Oct. 2008. Print.

Reason for including this source in your work:
- This chapter helps us to more accurately define the population we are trying to help.

Main argument:
- Homelessness is a complex, culturally constructed phenomenon. Because of this, each group which is in some way connected to homelessness will have a different conception of what it means to be homeless, as well as a different set of understandings and beliefs regarding optimal responses to instances of homelessness, and homelessness overall.

Important ideas:
- Homelessness is comprised of a much broader array of experiences than we likely initially believe.
- Diverging frameworks for understanding homelessness can hinder efforts to reintegrate individuals struggling with homelessness into the community.
- From this research, it would appear that a definition of home as perceived by both members of housed society and by homeless and ex-homeless people could be: "Home is a feeling of safety, trust, continuity and stability that permits the physical, emotional and psychological well-being necessary for experiencing friendships and relationships. It is a central point in our lives from which other activities like work, friendships and relationships can be experienced and developed. It is also a unique space, place or area through which individuals define themselves and allow themselves to be their true self. A space, or place, that allows them to feel anchored into their society and equal to or able to mix with their peers."

Evidence used to support the author's argument:
- 5 current conceptions and definitions of homelessness:
- Legal, continuum, statistical, housing shortage, and the general publics. Each has different criteria and presents a different picture, while also suggesting different solutions to the same problem.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:

- "Homelessness is an emotive word that conjures up in people's minds pictures of the tramp walking the street, smelly, dirty and hungry, or the alcoholic, obnoxious, loud and drunk. To view all homeless people in terms of these two stereotypes is to do many an injustice. It can also be an obstacle to tackling a serious problem."
- 1. Statutory or Legal Definitions These definitions are used by national and local governments and are enshrined in the legal framework via legislation. The British statutory definition defines families with dependent children and without access to accommodation as homeless and those accepted as in 'priority need' on the grounds of 'vulnerability' (i.e. aged over 60, pregnant, suffering from mental ill-health, young people in danger of exploitation). This excludes the vast majority of single homeless people, especially men. Statutory definitions place the onus on the individual to prove that they are homeless and that they deserve help. Those single people identified as undeserving (i.e. not old, not pregnant, mentally healthy) are not entitled to be housed under the law. The UK's statutory definition of homelessness does not include roofless people. They are identified as rough sleepers, not 'homeless' (e.g. Crisis 1998). They are not counted in the Government's homeless statistics.
- 2. Continuum Definitions Some authors use a continuum of definitions that incorporates all possible types of homelessness, from the roofless to those housed but who would rather live elsewhere (Meert et al. 2004; Bramley 1988). These definitions are based predominantly on the individual's relation to housing, their housing need and/or the type of tenure they have. Although this is the most versatile way of defining homelessness, it may be criticized for defining everyone as homeless apart from those who own their home outright and are happy with where they live. Chamberlain et al. (2000) supports a move away from continuum towards a three-tiered definition of homelessness. Arguing, that by acknowledging degrees of homelessness in three simple levels,2 statistics can be more precise creating a clearer picture of the extent of the problem.
- 3. Statistical Definitions Statistical definitions identify an issue as a social problem then measure the magnitude of that problem. Such definitions are not discussed in the literature as a separate category; they are incorporated into other categories. Yet they play an important role in shaping the general public's attitudes, fundraising campaigns and political agendas. Statistics on homelessness are derived from literally counting people identified as homeless.3 Thus, the definition used determines the number of people that are counted and in turn the size of the problem. For example, in 1993 the homeless figure in Britain ranged from 140,000 households to 8,600 individuals (Shelter 1993). The former figure refers to those 'households' accepted as statutorily homeless in England and Wales; the latter refers to the estimate of how many people slept rough each night. Statistical definitions tell more about the organization collecting them than about the actual phenomena they are designed to measure (Hutson and Liddiard 1994). Homeless people are a transient population; they move in and out of various forms of accommodation and spend time on the streets. Statistical definitions require precise categories of clearly identifiable groups of people. However, people's lives rarely fit neatly into just one category. Countries such as Denmark (Stax 2003), Hungary (Győri 2004) and The Netherlands (Doorn 2003) have found that the more you try to impose definitions suitable for statistical categories, the more complex defining becomes and the vaguer the concept of homelessness becomes. Smith's (2003)

paper on defining British homelessness demonstrates this problem beautifully with a plethora of different categories – resulting in another continuum of definitions. Rossi (1989) dismisses homeless statistics as irrelevant, as counting the uncountable, merely providing a representative snapshot of the problem, but with no way of identifying how representative that snapshot is. However, based on this unrepresentative snapshot, the general public's attitudes, fundraising campaigns and political agendas are shaped.

- 4. Housing Shortage Definitions: These are the most common definitions. They reduce all other factors or problems that may cause homelessness to the lack of accommodation (rooflessness) or its unsuitability. Thus homelessness is caused by a shortage of suitable affordable accommodation in the housing market (Avramov 1995; Shelter 1997; Baker 1997). Hostels are full because there is no suitable 'move-on' accommodation (Spaull and Rowe 1992). Little regard is given to individual autonomy or capability to cope in accommodation, sustain a tenancy or resettle in housed society.
- 5. General Public's Definition This definition is not discussed in the literature, yet it is an exceptionally important definition. The definition used by the general public establishes how much money organizations receive from donations and therefore has a direct impact on solutions to homelessness. It can be molded and manipulated by the media and charities promoting and advertising themselves. The definition held can create apathy or public outrage and it can create stereotypes that are useful or undermining (e.g. drunk not wanting help; lone mother struggling to keep her baby).5 Housed young people and parents in the 'What is Homelessness?' research believed that people visibly sleeping on the streets wanted to be there, it was a 'lifestyle choice' – an attitude linked to an unintended message sent out by the Government in their 2000 anti-begging campaign (Smith and Ravenhill 2007). In fact, the use of or manipulation of the general public's (populous) definition has never been more powerful than when it prompted a change in legislation via the powerful portrayal of homelessness in films like Cathy Come Home and Johnny Go Home. More importantly, the general public's definition of homelessness affects when people in a housing crisis seek help to avoid or alleviate rooflessness. It also affects where friends of people in a housing crisis suggest they look for or access help (Smith and Ravenhill 2007). Thus, as will be shown later, the general public's definition can both alleviate and prolong homelessness, depending on their interpretation of its meaning.

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
Forces a reconceptualization of the population we are serving, something we were already hinting at.	Doesn't offer suggestions for application and implication. Likely remedied in later chapters.

Connections to design thinking insights thus far:
- We've decided to try and focus on individuals aging out of the foster care system and individuals coming out of harmfully long periods of incarceration. This allows us to better conceptualize this shift in focus.
- This gives us a framework within which to view our own conceptions of our target population, as well as the frameworks in which we have to work (i.e. Grand Rapids

policy, Seeds of Promise's definitions, as well as other organizations working with similar populations)

- It will be necessary to understand the conception of homelessness in the minds of the individuals we are seeking to work with and help, as well as the frameworks in which this problem is considered by other interested parties. Furthermore, these conceptualizations and their implications must be considered as they relate to and affect each other.

Questions and concerns that this research raises for our team's work this semester:
- How are we considering and defining our target populations?
- How are these populations defined by governmental entities and other involved organizations?
- What of these definitions do we need to change to make this initiative effective, and how can we go about doing so? (If changing these definitions is even helpful or realistic in our current situation.)

Source #9
Researcher: Marc Lehman

Baron, Eugene. "Responsibility: A Case for the Homeless in the City of Tshwane." *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71.3 (11 Mar. 2015): n.pag. Web.

Reason for including this source in your work:
- This article presents a study of the use of scripture study among homeless individuals in their development of responsibility for themselves and the individuals with whom they have relationships. It seems similar initiatives, if not explicitly religiously based, could be helpful in creating a connected community through the program.

Main argument:
- Groups of homeless individuals were asked to consider and discuss a biblical verse. From the verse, they drew on ideas of systemic oppression which keeps them in poverty, yet they also discussed how they must continue to work hard and maintain a friendly, open demeanor with their detractors, if they hope to leave behind the state of homelessness.

Important ideas:
- Individuals have responsibility for their own lives
- Group discussion can help individuals recognize this, and develop it
- These same group discussions can serve to help participating individuals develop social bonds, which can act as support networks for continued success in these and other endeavors.

Evidence used to support the author's argument:
- "One participant commented, 'We are willing to work hard, we only need to be given a

chance in life.'"
- The participants noted that homelessness and marginalisation were the result of systemic corruption, exploitation, maladministration and greed. Homelessness and marginalisation are largely perpetuated not because people are lazy or do not want to work, but are created by a system that entrenches poverty and vulnerability for the majority of people in South Africa.

Notable quotes, terms, and concepts:
- The participants noted that in order for the Kingdom of God to be realized in their contexts (in reference to the part of the text, '... let your Kingdom come ...'), they should not be bitter and filled with hatred towards the rich and powerful, but ought to forgive and attempt to create opportunities to work together.
- "Responsibility for Bonhoeffer means to be in a relationship with God and others. This is important especially as the homeless people are often seen as the only ones that carry responsibility for the homeless situation in the city of Tshwane."
- "The articulation of shared interest and shared responsibility emerged as one of the themes that runs like a thread through the engagement with the homeless as well as through listening to the responses from theologians and their understanding of the text."

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
● Addresses both self and community, just as we are seeking to do.	● Strict theological focus, which won't necessarily work with 5P

Connections to design thinking insights thus far:
- Reiterates that many homeless people are more than willing to work to better their lives, they just need help reaching better opportunities to do so.
- There are instances already where initiatives successfully develop autonomous responsibility for oneself and for their community and its members, just like we are seeking to do.

Questions and concerns that this research raises for our team's work this semester:
- How can we go about doing something similar without creating a religious program?
- Could other community initiatives, like Urban Root's potential classes, serve a role like this?

Collaborator Debriefs

Collaborator debriefs were an integral part of our design thinking process. Intended to ensure alignment between individual team findings and the community, there were three debrief sessions strategically placed throughout the semester. Local stakeholders and experts from across the system were invited to each debrief in order to redirect team efforts and increase the efficacy of our innovations. The diverse groups of people present allowed us to get maximal feedback on our current ideas. As the following documents, the feedback gained from each debrief allowed our team to push through the design thinking process and continually ideate and iterate. The feedback also allowed us to create an idea that was new, innovative, and most importantly, of great use the Grand Rapids area.

Debrief One: Articulating and Revising the Initial Vision

Image: We presented our progress thus far to Ron Jimmerson, two students from the class at the Kendall College of Art & Design, and the rest of the class at GVSU (Allendale campus). The main discussion points were our insights learned through research.

Flipchart 1: Problem Statement
- We will be addressing how to develop a reintegration program with a housing component, which promotes community development and support while also fostering participant's independence

Flipchart 2: Key Insights
- 4-10 people might be key number per household
- Neighborhood character
- It could be in the best interest of the program and the people involved, to have two separate programs

Flipchart 3: Constraints

- Location Specifics (Lot size and City): Unknown
- Societal Constraints and Expectations (Do we need to fit the norms?)
- Access and Time constraints to stakeholders

Debrief Two: Telling the Story

Image: Our team, The Horticulturists, discussing our innovations at Debrief Two held at GVSU (Grand Rapids campus). Ron Jimmerson (SOP) and Danny McGee from Well House were in attendance.

Flipchart 1: Problem Statement
- We will be addressing how to develop a communal reintegration program which promotes community development and support while also fostering participants independence

Flipchart 2: Top 3 Needs
- Leadership to stay on track
- Security
- Community

Flipchart 3: From/To Statements
- From having nowhere to put belongings, to having a safe, secure location to store personal items.
- From having no accountability, to being able to determine and achieve their own goals.
- From not having the skills that prepare them for opportunity, to having something to offer employers

Flipchart 4: Barriers
- Time constraints relating to increasing course loads at school
- Societal expectations (ie. housing, full time job, etc.)
- Maintaining group work ethic as each of us gets busier

Debrief Three: Envisioning the Future
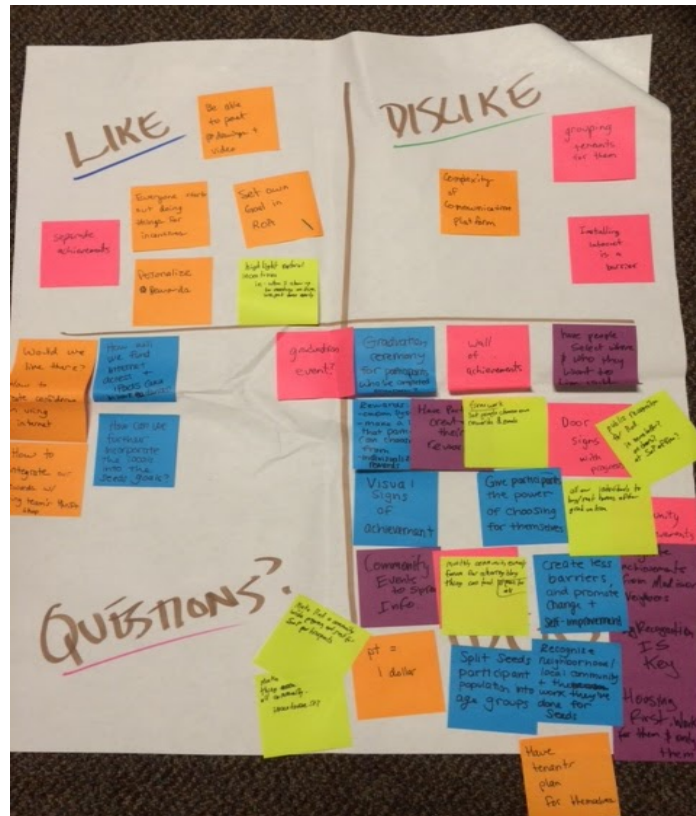
Image: A like-dislike-questions-ideas diagram with input from stakeholders and students following Debrief Three at GVSU (Allendale campus). In attendance were John Peterson (Corporation for Supportive Housing), Jesica Vail, Kent County Continuum of Care Director, and Mary DeYoung, of HQ Center for Runaways and Homeless Youth.

Flipchart 1: Problem Statement
- We will be addressing how to develop a communal reintegration program which promotes community development and support while also fostering participants independence.

Flipchart 2: Top 5 Innovations
- Household Communication
- Record of Achievements/Newsletter
- Framework for Grouping
- Large Item Storage
- Volunteer Classes

Flipchart 3: Top 2 Innovations
- Platform 1: Communication Platform
    - Household Communication
    - Physically printed newsletter AND digital version. Both of these mediums will provide the same content, but with the characteristics unique to each

- Platform 2: Record of achievements
  - Earn "Seeds" which could be the the point system for the program
  - Work towards badges with a variety of categories so that tenants and community members can earn recognition for what they are good at

Flipchart 4: Questions For The Stakeholder
- Record of Achievement: In developing this prototype we considered three different systems for recording participant's accumulated points.
  - Continual benchmark (Point based)
  - Achieve and spend (Point based)
  - Separate achievements tracts
- What do you think would be feasible and motivating rewards for the Achievement system?

Summaries of Top 5 Innovations

A "Belongings Bank"

Even if or when an individual chooses a life without a home (or job for that matter), they will most likely still care about what happens to their belongings. This innovation focuses on the creation of a "stuff-bank" where individuals with no place to call home could store things of various sizes. For small personal items, the bank could have lock boxes for individuals experiencing homelessness to reserve. Eventually the individual could feel empowered that they have a place to store things, and they do not need to "use or lose" small items. For larger items, a stuff bank would look like small garages. These storage garages could have different themes such as furniture, home appliances, or even things as large as cars! These garage-type banks could have a centralized workshop where volunteer experts could tinker and fix things. The individual could even learn how to fix their own items from local experts. In order to foster community, the bank "tellers" should get to know homeless individuals on first name basis. In an effort to protect everyone's safety, developing a personal relationship with individuals could allow for transparency and that no harmful objects would allowed to be stored in these types of banks. Rather offering this free, simple service could be a gateway to lasting relationships whereby homeless individuals could be introduced to programs like those that Seeds of Promise offers.

Motivations Coaches

A motivational coach is defined as a person who will be a supportive figure; one who genuinely wants the participants of the Seeds of Promise program to succeed. In multiple pieces of our research we have learned that many homeless individuals, especially the younger ones, seek to have a person in their life who cares about how well they do in life. We know that when we form a connection with someone who cares about and knows our story, it motivates and creates accountability. These relationships often empower us to see we do have something important to offer the world. The coaches will be assigned to a few participants and will meet with them weekly to learn more about them and help them to create their own goals. We feel that it is not only important to have a supportive person in their life that they can connect with, but to have that person show them that they can do it themselves.

Validating and Rewarding Accomplishments

Many companies around the world offer rewards programs, and here's why Seeds of Promise could benefit from one. Some rewards are simply achievement markers with no physical reward. Examples as gaming systems, apps, and websites come to mind. Xbox, for example, used achievements linked to "gamer points" to give players targets to achieve such as play a set number of rounds or beat the game on a high difficulty setting. For example, one app using rewards is *Untapped*; it virtually awards badges based on certain types of beers experienced. There are badges such as reach a certain number of beers of one style or number of beers originating from a certain country. These type of rewards are mainly incentivized through social connection; they publicize your efforts to others. The achievements and badges usually have a cool design, but the real pride for the individual comes from being able to show it off. Program participants might strive to achieve great things in their new community if there was an avenue to show the public and other program participants how much they have accomplished since starting the program. Another type of program deals with physical rewards such as frequent flyer miles that can be spent to get small perks. An example could be if a tenant pays their rent successfully for 6 months in a row, then they get a free gift like a small appliance for their home. Both types of rewards have their own strengths with certain groups, and a study on which would apply most in this situation might be helpful.

University-Level Courses, Classes, Workshops

Across the country there are a number of programs which allow local communities or imprisoned individuals to study the humanities for free or for incredibly cheap tuition. We propose a similar program in which GVSU, or another local area institution of learning, engages the community Seeds of Promise works with in a similar manner. This could potentially be developed through GVSU's Office for Community Engagement, as they have supported a similar program in the past called "Community Working Classics" through the Philosophy department. After some deliberation, we are leaning towards developing this idea as a set of loosely connected workshops, rather than a single continuous course. It is our hope that this format would encourage more individuals to engage in an open forum. In terms of content, we feel this program should offer the opportunity to learn from a variety of disciplines rather than one single practice. Suggested areas of study include philosophy, literature, anthropology, classics, and possibly even interdisciplinary methods of thinking and acting, such as design thinking. One particular strength of this innovation is its ability to be incorporated with other programs. Seeds of Promise has discussed the possibility of developing community gardening workshops with another local non-profit. Such a program could also provide a topic of discussion between program participants and their mentors, or a topic for program participants to write about as part of the innovation below, the community newsletter.

Participant Newsletter

This innovation developed out of our own experience in this Design Thinking course. For the first two thirds of this course, we each developed our design thinking skills by applying them to our own lives. Throughout this experience, we blogged weekly about our experiences, successes, and learning opportunities (rather than failures). This method of self-reflection forced us to reflect on ourselves and our experiences, rather than acting haphazardly. We believe a similar practice could benefit those individuals who participate in the 5P program. In discussing this idea of journal writing and self-reflection for individuals, we also came to recognize how such a practice could help improve participant's writing skills, as well as their motivation to continue pushing forward. The ability to look back on the progress one has made and the words one has written can be an invaluable experience. This insight led to the idea that sharing one's writing with others

could also prove to be an invaluable experience, as it would allow other program participants to witness their peer's progress, thus sharing motivation and inspiring others; collecting participant's blog entries could also serve as a form of proof of success for the 5P program, or a stimulus for continued development of other facets of the program. Finally, depending on how this newsletter is organized and supported, it could provide a forum for program participants to practice publishing their own writing; journalistic, creative, or otherwise. This could lead to individuals working towards developing their skills in order to seek writing as a career goal, or even to better serve them in their other career aspirations.

Merging Prototypes: Top Two Innovations

We narrowed our top innovations by integrating a few into one cohesive project.

Integrating Technology into a Communication Platform
        After a recent debrief, in which it was pointed out there are higher rates of engagement through video and visual content, we determined we wanted our newsletter prototype to offer the possibility of content which is typically only available digitally. However, making this most accessible to participants in the 5P program would likely require they have regular access to internet. Given that one of our other prototypes was investigating how to enhance communication between 5P participants, households of participants, and Seeds of Promise itself, we decided combining the two would allow us to achieve multiple ends harmoniously. As we're currently conceptualizing this combined communication platform, it will exist as an internet based platform (read: website with or without mobile application) which will publish content in a variety of categories including: informative content from Seeds of Promise including community event announcements and congratulatory statements for participant's accomplishments; participant generated content, which could entail a number of things including personal blogs, vlogs, and eventually even editorials and other professionally styled mediums; republished content from other news sources which highlight the 5P program, or other related initiatives; and finally there would be the potential for other forms of media which are to be determined, but that would support other facets of the 5P program, potentially including other innovations developed as part of this design thinking initiative.
        Now that we're beginning to develop a more thorough idea of what this communication platform might include, we have investigated its details. Seeds of Promise has validated that while there are not currently any plans to have accessible internet in each of the 5P households, they are very open to the idea and would be interested in pursuing it. We have also generated mockups which can be refined through input from experts in platform design and UX research. Finally, we are also investigating the possibility of creating further connections between GVSU and Seeds of Promise. While the School of Communication's Journalism program has not recently helped an organization develop a newsletter or something similar, we believe that given the Office of Community Engagement's recent initiatives, the journalism program may be open to the possibility of developing a seminar style course which would pair students with Seeds of Promise and 5P participants to run and generate content for this communication platform, until the program has matured enough that the newsletter can be run almost exclusively by 5P participants, which is our ultimate goal for this innovation. Meetings are currently being pursued to determine the feasibility of such a partnership between Seeds of Promise and GVSU's journalism program.

Finally, we have recently found a great deal of research describing the numerous ways in which access to mobile technology has changed the experience of being homeless and achieving success beyond homelessness. We believe that given these insights, access to mobile technology for 5P participants will play an even greater role than we can currently imagine, all depending on how it is made available and how they are encouraged and supported to engage communally with it.

A Reinvented Newsletter
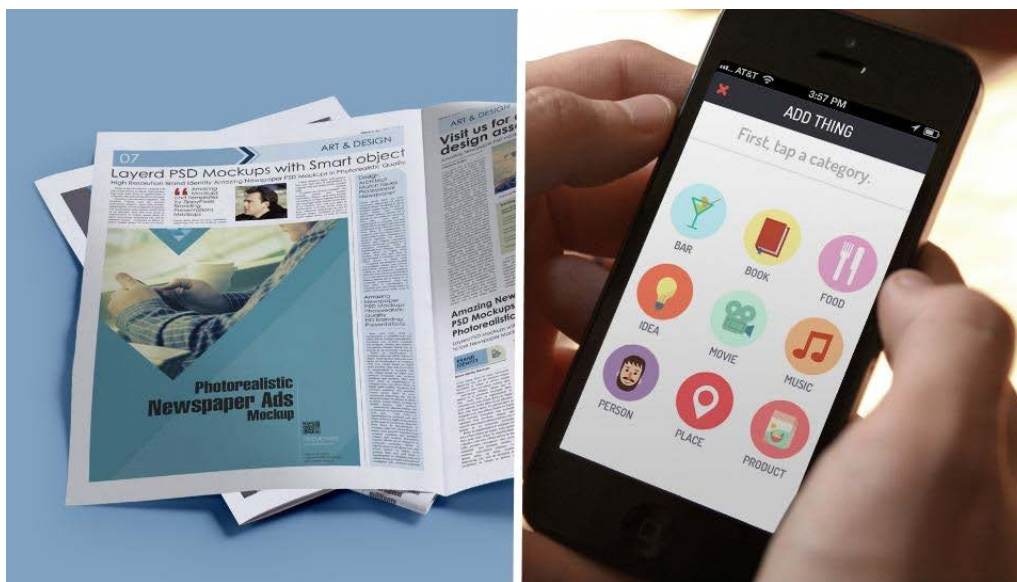
The Newsletter concept we are proposing would serve as an outlet for participants of the Seeds of Promise program to voice their stories, feelings, and opinions as well as be a communication tool for SOP to let the community know the inner-workings and ways to get involved. This newsletter will contain:
- a section written solely by the participants in the program,
- a section with articles by alumni of the program or members from the community,
- updates and information from SOP, and
- interactive sections to help with reading skills.

Our plan is to publish this newsletter online and in print. The online publication would allow the newsletter to be accessible to the city of Grand Rapids and it's neighboring communities. It would also allow for not only written stories but video blogs which often get more attention than solely written material. Through insights we have learned that a print version of the newsletter would be much more beneficial for the community surrounding Seeds since the Madison Area Community has a fair amount of houses without in home internet access.

A print newsletter would also be of benefit to the participants themselves since they would have a physical object to hold that they were a part of creating. This innovation came from research on the impact of designing and managing a San Quentin Prison newspaper on the inmates in charge of it. Those that ran the newspaper and contributed to it felt a greater desire to do good and a greater sense of purpose in their life while incarcerated. Danny McGee from Well House backed up this idea with his insights about how he lets his tenants begin to take over responsibilities of the

house garden which fosters a greater sense of ownership within the individual. With this newsletter we hope to create just that. A newsletter that will eventually be run by the participants themselves. Cultivating this kind of ownership is incredibly important to the success of participants in SOP's program.

Ron from Seeds of Promise was very receptive to our initial ideas for the newsletter. Ron's plan for SOP is to have it completely run by the Host Neighbors (those who live in the Madison Area community) so having the newsletter follow the same idea of becoming totally participant run is right in line with SOP's ideals. He also mentioned how important it was to have a print accessible version that would be of greater benefit to the Madison Area community members who do not have internet, but spreading the information out to the greater community online would only serve to better SOP's mission. Ron said he would like to see if we could integrate this newsletter with some of our other less developed innovations to see if it could boost their usefulness.

Final Prototype Description

The Horticulturists found that one of Seeds of Promise's biggest struggles was communication between the 5P participants, Seeds of Promise, and the surrounding community. Because this need was so huge, we decided to create a platform for all parties to communicate more seamlessly and consistently. Our final prototype will take two forms: digital and print. The printed version will go out into the community on a periodic basis and will feature the most valuable content from the digital version. The digital version will allow timely access and will be updated and continually evolving. Each person in the Dickinson area will be able to receive their own username and password to log onto the platform. Once the individual has logged on, they will be brought to a main screen with options to view Seeds of Promise organization updates; stories, photography, or art from people in the community and 5P program; their individual record of achievement; and dates of upcoming events.

Stories, photography, and art available to all will create broad feelings of community. By sharing stories and personal art, people in the community will no longer be strangers; by relating to one another we create bonds and friendships, strengthen community and expand our framework. A person looking to add content to this interface will be able to do so by uploading their work digitally or, if digital is not an option, a person can bring a hard copy to the Seeds of Promise center where it will be uploaded for them. It will then be screened by Seeds of Promise for assurance purposes.

The individual record of achievement was created to establish goals for the Dickinson area people. The 5P participants and current community members will be able to create and set personal goals for themselves. When a goal is reached, that person will earn a 'seed.' A person can log on to see how many seeds they have accumulated and their progress to reaching the next seed. Technically speaking, one seed is equivalent to one dollar. These seeds can then be used in the community to purchase goods or services. An example of how to spend a 'seed' would be getting a haircut or fresh produce from the local market.

Events will be held throughout the year where 5P participants and community members will be able to have their accomplishments posted on a wall for all to see. Showing successes of all people in the Dickinson area together will allow the community and the 5P participants to have an experience to share. This will help provide further communication and inclusion for people in the Grand Rapids area.

Final Presentation and Video

Our final team Pecha Kucha summarizes our research and findings throughout the semester. The video explains our problem statement and then goes on to describe how we, as a team, decided to help improve this wicked problem. We believe that through community development and encouraging independence our goals may be reached. Our greatest goal was to cultivate ideas that would help build up the Grand Rapids Community as a whole. Our video explains how promoting a new communication platform between the community, Seeds of Promise, and the 5P participants could potentially lead to positive changes. This semester we realized that even if the change we made was small, it is a step in the direction to help the greater Grand Rapids area. As Robert Louis Stevenson once said, "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant."

<div align="center">

You can find our final video at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4slctlzjJPs

</div>

Presentation Slides

Last year, the homeless population in West Michigan went up almost 11% - now totalling around 13,000 people. We want to help Seeds of Promise in their current goal to end homelessness by creating a solution to improve communication and opportunity, while also giving the 5P participants independence.

The homeless currently live with no defined place to sleep, constant food insecurity, and the daily stigma of being homeless. They also may live with possible substance addiction or mental illness. These barriers, among many others, make breaking free of homelessness very difficult for the people of West Michigan.
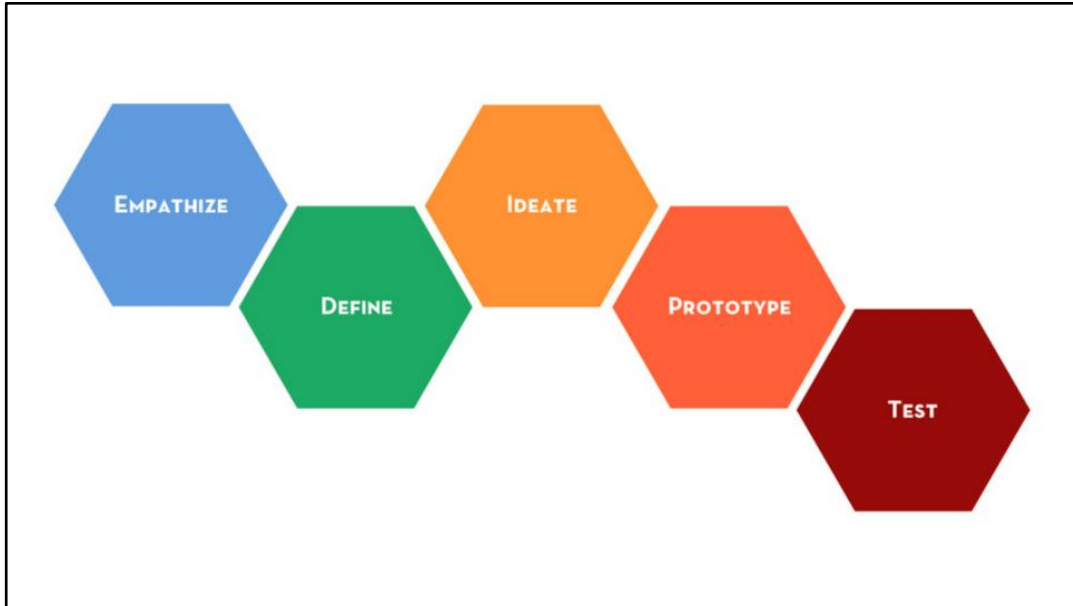
Before even beginning to consider potential solutions, the design thinking process encouraged us to engage deeply with the issues and stakeholders relevant to homelessness in the Grand Rapids community. This heavy emphasis on empathy gave us the opportunity to personally understand the complexities of homelessness, which fundamentally changed our purpose and goals.
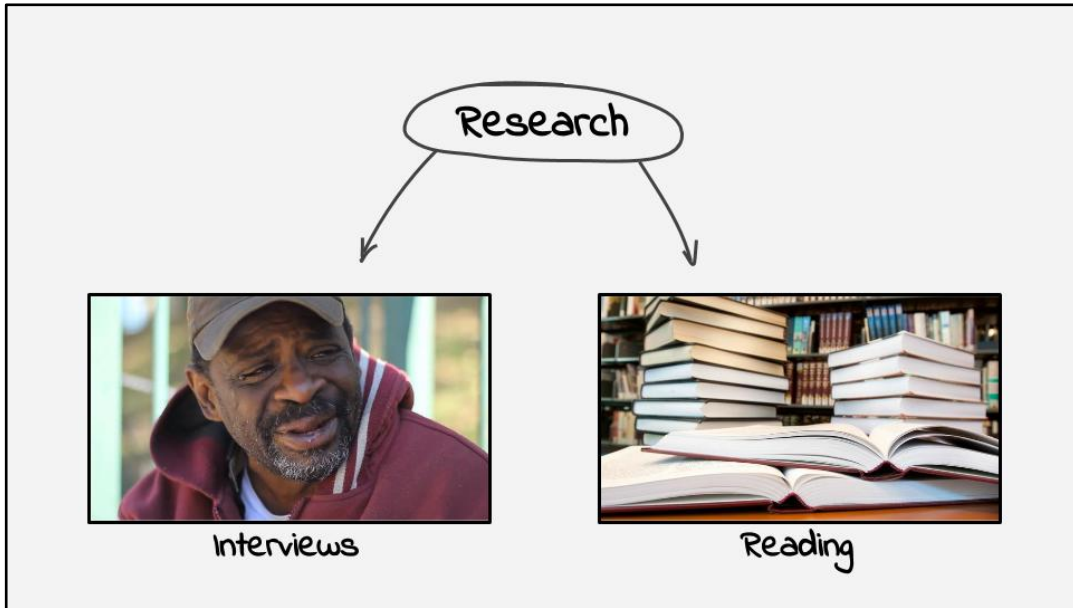
Throughout this entire process, we contextualized our empathetic insights with research from other scholars who have engaged deeply in similar contexts. Near the end of our defined research stage, we organized all of our insights into intuitive groups comprising an affinity map, which guided our design process. However, even after the end of this defined stage, we continually sought feedback from relevant stakeholders.

We used the groupings of our affinity map to better understand needs which would have to be met by a successful reintegration program. From these needs, we developed from:to statements explaining the current reality, and the future we'd like to shape. These from:to statements led to potential innovations, which were revised, combined, and sometimes abandoned based on feedback gathered from stakeholders.
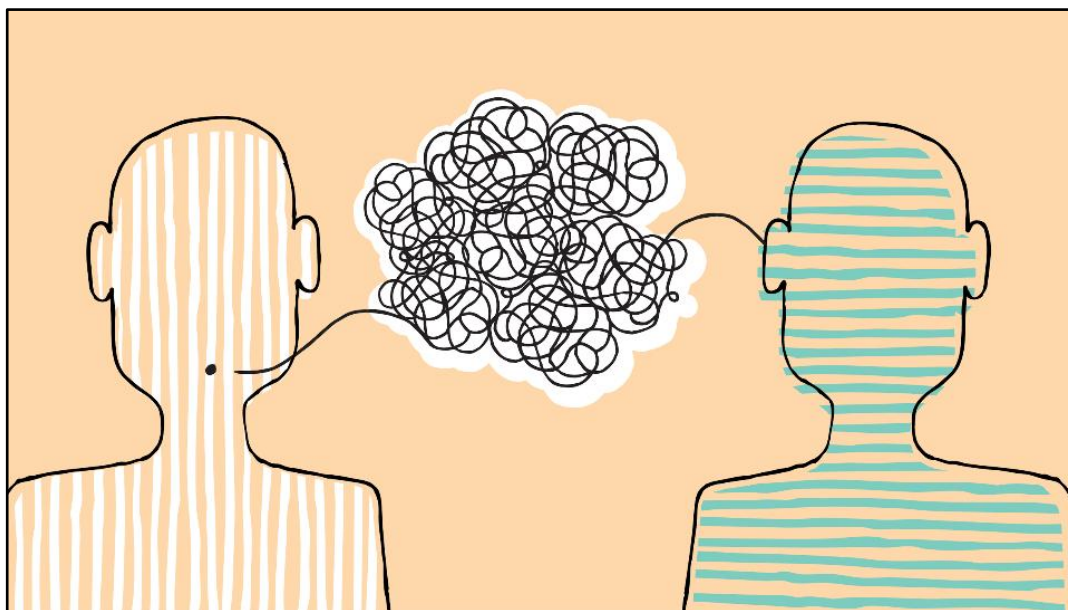

We are proposing a platform for bringing together 5P participants and the rest of the Dickinson community. This will be published both physically and digitally. Publishing a hard copy version will give community members something tangible to take ownership of, while the digital version will increase accessibility and reduce publishing costs.
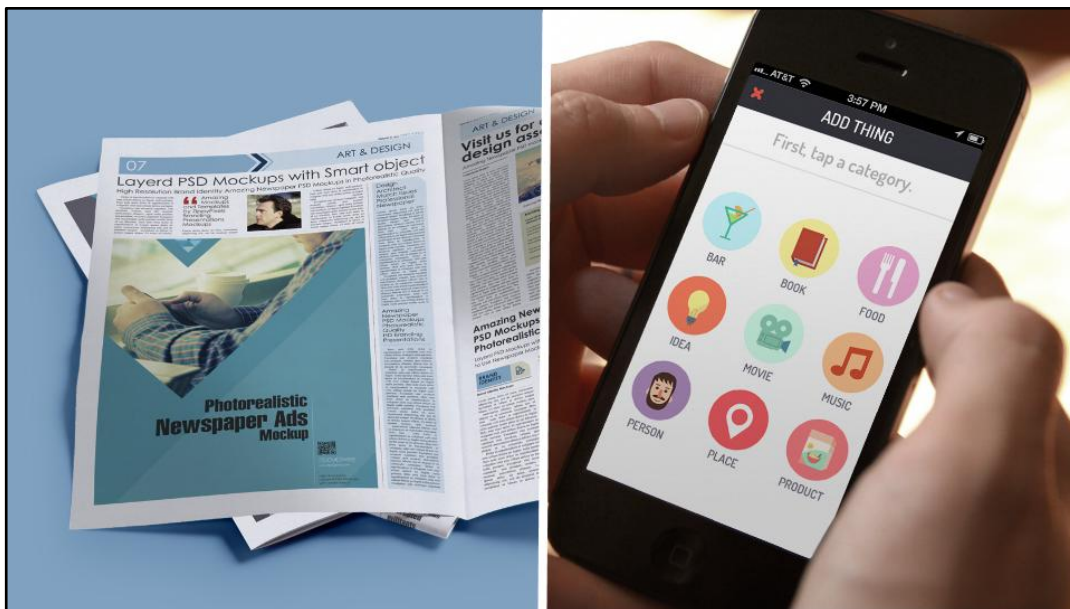
Research has shown the massive impact smartphones can have on the life of a homeless individual, and so we highly recommend they be made available. As expensive as this may sound, there is a history of tech companies donating devices and data packages to similar ventures. We believe this program would prove attractive to potential partners. Now, let's talk about what this platform would actually entail.

The first of this platform's four components will publish announcements related to Seeds of Promise, the 5P program, and other community events. This is mostly already being done by the Host Neighbors Bi- monthly Newsletter, but increased accessibility and targeting it at the whole Dickinson community will greatly enhance its impact.
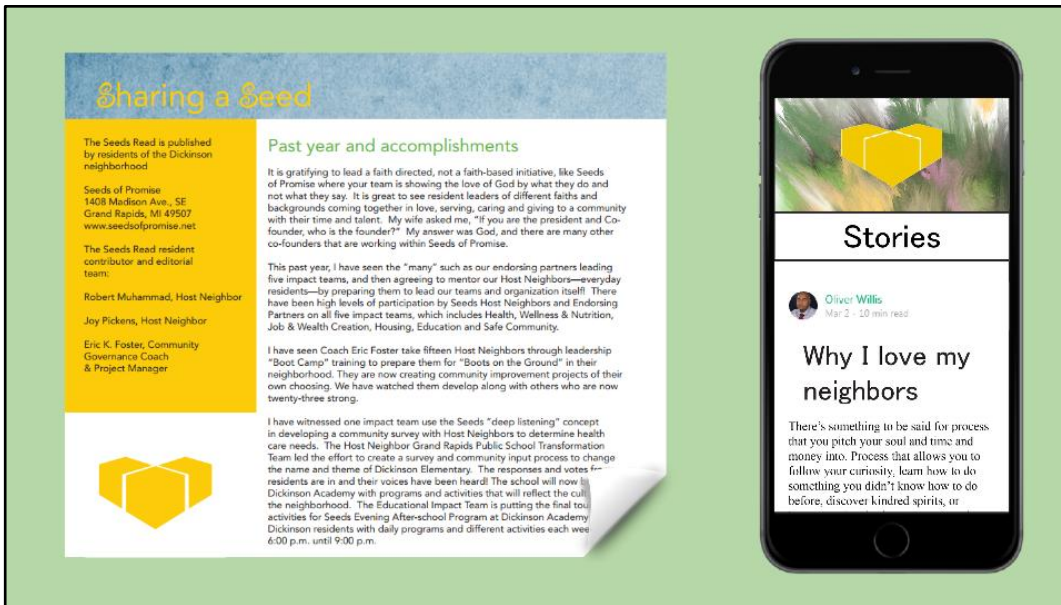
The platform's second component will publish the stories of community members, as they themselves tell their own stories. Because of the option for digital publishing, community members can make their story known through print, video, visual art, or most other conceivable media. Community members would be encouraged to submit content weekly or monthly.

The third component will offer community members the opportunity to set individual goals, track their progress towards achieving them, and receive recognition for their accomplishments. Most of this recognition will come in the form of points which can be exchanged for community goods and services. 5P can also publish notable achievements in the newsletter.

The fourth component of the community communication system will be live periodic events which will encourage the community to come together for food, fun, and for recognizing the many successes of their neighbors and community. Although this would not actually be part of the communication platform, we believe it to be an integral component to building a connected community.

Community Communication System

- 5P and local community announcements
- Community member's stories
- Goal achievement and recognition
- Community events

And that is what we are trying to do- foster an interconnected community of individuals so that 5P participants have greater opportunity for success, and so that the whole Dickinson community can better understand and invest in what Seeds of Promise and the 5P Program are all about.

Our efforts were targeted at trying to deeply understand what needs homeless individuals have, as well as what is important to them. We wanted to head towards an innovation that was born completely out of the needs of those who are affected and not from our own preconceived notions. We also strived to have our innovations be a cohesive fit with the Seeds of Promise 5P program.
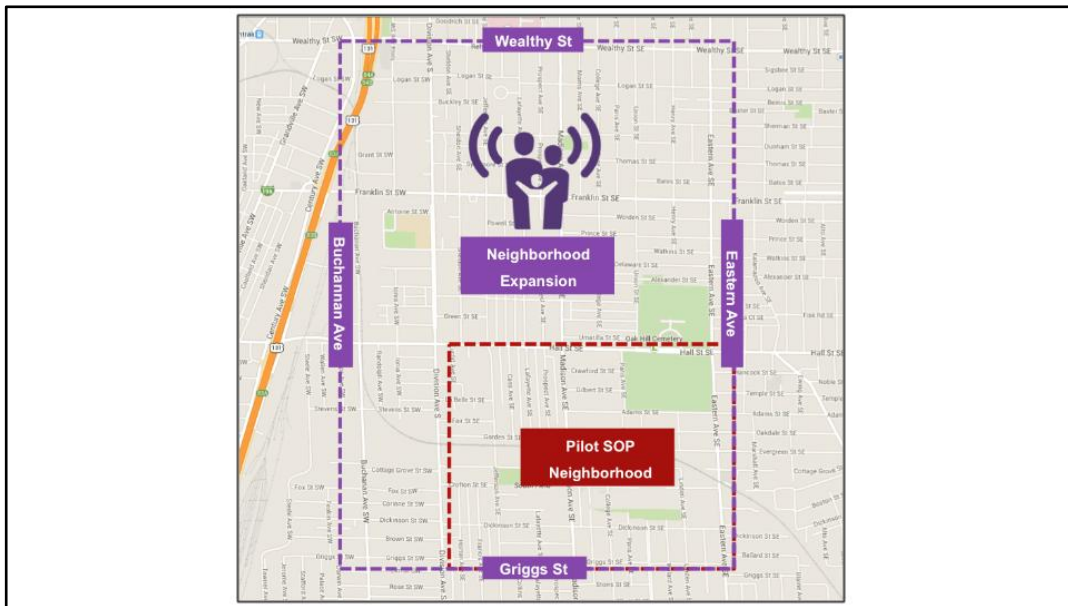
The community we are focused on developing our innovations for is the Dickinson community, east of South Division Avenue and South of Wealthy Street. However the homeless community extends throughout Grand Rapids. We are looking for anyone who is in need and willing to take part in the Seeds of Promise Program, so they may become an integral part of the Dickinson community.

We involved a diverse group of people when working towards achieving our goal of learning how to better serve homeless individuals and their needs. We reached out to the local citizens, the mayor, the Kendall Team, professionals and experts in various fields, and the homeless themselves. Each individual provided us with a wealth of insight about our problem.


[CONSTRAINTS]

The success of these designs depend on a few things: one, how well we can get the community and tenants to share their stories, and two, how many people we can reach through door to door delivery of the periodical or through distribution of digital content. We are aware of the barriers that each of these mediums have.

We anticipate problems providing internet or phone access to tenants of the program. As stated earlier, there are some resources out there that can provide funding for programs like this, and it is going to take some hard work to track these resources down. Additionally, there may be problems finding volunteers to deliver paper versions of the content.

What if the tenants aren't motivated to achieve rewards? What if the community doesn't engage with the program? What if people aren't willing to share their personal stories? Although we believe this idea is very promising, these are still unknowns. But we know that as the program develops, changes can be made to fix the parts that are not effective.
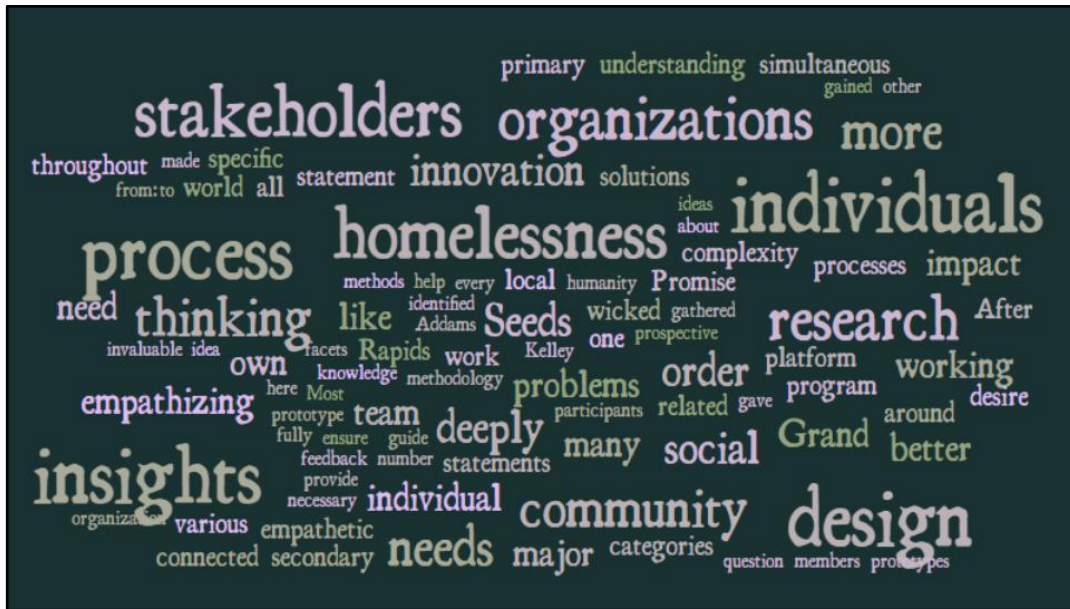
Through all the barriers, problems, and unknowns, the idea of an accessible platform is something that everyone can help develop. This community and the tenants in this program will have the ongoing support of GVSU. For example, the university's journalism program can provide writing resources and the visual studies program would be willing to offer more artistic help.

SEEDS OF PROMISE

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Our innovations were designed through the insights gained by talking with people in this community, people struggling with homelessness, and other organizations working towards the same goals. However, this project still needs your feedback. What parts of these ideas can we improve? How can we get even more people involved? Together, we can make a real change in our community. Thank you!

Team Narrative

Who We Are

You're now reading the story of the Horticulturists, a team of five undergraduates from Grand Valley State University's Design Thinking for Real World Problems course. At the beginning of this semester, we were posed with a problem- how could we help the local non-profit Seeds of Promise reintegrate the homeless people of Grand Rapids into the Dickinson community they are part of, through the use of tiny homes? Homelessness presents an incredibly complex set of interconnected challenges in any community, but effective communication allowed us to better connect with each other, individuals who themselves are homeless, and other individuals who have the power to enact real change. However, the more we talked with people, the more we realized that tiny homes may not be an effective solution because of their potential ability to isolate the individuals who would be living in them. So, in order to address this, we set about to learn and empathize as much as we could about the needs of the homeless and formerly homeless community so that we might create a communication platform for fostering community growth and development through communication, one that might be used by any number of organizations seeking to help people who have struggled with homelessness reintegrate back into the homed community. In short, this is a story of how we tried to help a community better tell their own story, and we hope it can help you to do the same.

A horticulturist cultivates plants and then uses that knowledge to provide technical information for growers (Sokanu, 2016). Our team name, The Horticulturists, refers to our desire to not simply better understand the complexity and humanity of homelessness, but to leverage our knowledge in order to develop a framework which can be adapted by various local organizations in order to enhance the communication that takes place between the program itself, the participants in the program, and the wider community the program and its participants are part of. The ultimate goal is to come alongside these organizations and support their efforts so they can more effectively address homelessness in Grand Rapids.

As a team with diverse backgrounds and interests, we were able to approach this complex issue from an interdisciplinary perspective. Haley, a biomedical science major, brought leadership and organization to the team. Michelle, a business major, often helped us refocus on the humanity of our work when we would begin to focus more on the processes than on the reasons for them. Ryan's passion for urban planning and the creative process brought these skills to bear when working with Seeds of Promise. Logan, a geology major with an artistic background, was eager to learn more about social entrepreneurship in Grand Rapids. Marc, a liberal studies major, had a valuable research ethic and a drive to understand conceptual models which could help to better contextualize insights gathered throughout the research and design processes.

Why We Did What We Did

Empathetic understanding is the river, guided by social theory and design conventions, that flowed beneath all of our primary and secondary research, and development of our from:to statements and prototypes. This foundation gave us the confidence to be sure we were always designing with the needs of connected stakeholders at the front of our minds, just as design thinking requires (Kelley, D., & Kelley, T, 2013). Design thinking is a methodology created for solving problems ranging in complexity from simple to wicked through empathizing with the stakeholders surrounding a problem, leveraging this increased understanding for rapid innovation,

and then iterating with continual feedback. Through this process we connected frequently and deeply with a variety of individuals who represented various different stakeholder categories, including homeless individuals, leaders of organizations working to end homelessness, local politicians, and community members from the Dickinson neighborhood, where Seeds of Promise is based. We then integrated insights derived from these stakeholders to guide every decision we made in researching and innovating around the problems we identified. Jane Addams, a prolific social activist/reformer who was deeply concerned about working with others for social change, employed a similar method and deeply valued the empathetic process. She wrote that a "…a standard of social ethics is not attained by traveling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens" (Addams, 2002). This idea of cultivating diverse connections with people is the root of empathetic understanding and was the single thing we returned to most throughout this process.

What We Did

After our initial stage of research, during which we sought to understand the context we would be designing for, we collected all of our insights and organized them into an 'affinity map', based on similarities we noticed. From the various clusters on this map, which were guided by our own insights from dialogues with stakeholders and knowledge derived from scholarly work like Antonio Tosi's (2005), we developed concrete statements of need, such as the need that humans have for both empowered independence and a meaningful, socially connected life. Then, in order to begin addressing one of those needs, we created five "from:to" statements which detailed what a current reality was and the new reality we wanted to shape through our innovation.

For these five "from:to" statements, we developed multiple potential solutions, discussed advantages and disadvantages, chose the ones we liked best, and brought them in front of yet more stakeholders. This marked the beginning of a rapid process of coming up with ideas, focusing on the best, getting feedback, and refining them with yet more ideas. This process ended a few weeks later with a framework for a communication platform designed to facilitate improved communication between a program, its participants and its community through the publishing of program related announcements, community member stories, an individualized goal and achievement program, and the organizing of local events to bring the community closer together.

How We Did It

This journey from empathizing to the development of an adaptable framework to allow organizations to customize communication solutions in order to fulfill their own communicative needs was characterized by the uncertainty and complexity inherent to wicked problems like homelessness. However, as we've discussed, the design thinking methodology was developed specifically to enable designers to better address such complexities. Most broadly, this is accomplished through a recursive process marked by five stages which were consistently referred to: empathizing with the present phenomena and relevant stakeholders, defining a problem to be solved through reflection on insights, ideation of potential solutions, prototyping of promising ideas, and then testing of prototypes with those you are designing for.

In addition to the research methods mentioned above, we employed a number of tools for determining needs and contextualizing our insights. To ensure we were empathizing with everyone we needed to, we learned what we could from our primary collaborator, Seeds of Promise, regarding their proposed 5P program, and then began constructing a stakeholder map which organized the various categories of individuals who related to our problem. As we continued

through this process, we would replace the broad titles of stakeholders with the names of specific individuals that we connected with. As we gained more and more specific insights through our primary and secondary research, we began organizing our insights into informal categories through use of affinity mapping. After we identified a number of related clusters, we defined statements of what an existing need was and how we would like to impact reality to create a new situation. Development of from:to statements gave us a defined direction around which we could ideate and later prototype. One particular from-to statement, "from having a limited support system to having a progressive, enriching, and supporting community", led us to develop the framework for a communication platform which will better enable a community to do just that.

Next Steps

So, where do our innovations go from here? Before considering this question fully, it must be recognized that this innovation should always be considered to be in a state of refinement. We've intentionally developed a "framework" to encourage individuals and organizations that adopt it to continually question its effectiveness in fulfilling their needs, and adapt it as necessary to better suit their challenges. So, it is our intention that many different groups and organizations will consider our innovation and the impact it could have on their infrastructure and progress in achieving their own goals. After an organization recognizes the positive impact this framework could have on their own processes, they will still need to engage deeply with their own particular needs and the existing programs in order to determine how best to customize it. Although there are many methods of doing so, we would encourage prospective adopters to engage in the design thinking process in order to fully nurture the metaphorical seeds we have planted, that they might prove fruitful in encouraging the simultaneous development of individualism and community. While this may seem to be a daunting task, the benefits in utilizing the design thinking process will outweigh the effort. As Robert Louis Stevenson said, "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant."

Thank you for reading, we hope you're as excited about the opportunity this communication platform offers as we are. Moving forward, there are a few ways you can help us make this a reality. First, please reach out to us with any questions you have, feedback was and remains a crucial part of this process. Second, please send this brief to any individuals or programs who you think might find all or part of it useful. Finally, share this with anyone who might know a person or organization who might benefit from such a framework, and when something similar is implemented in your community, spread the word of it to everyone you can.

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