

# ServiceBook CMA

## Host Information

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## Student and Community

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<b>Community Need</b>	<p>The homeless population in Volusia County and Flagler County, Florida is estimated to be approximately 2,690 individuals, and studies indicate there are some 1,722 Volusia County school children who are homeless as well. A number of homeless are families in which the adult members lack life skills and academic training. Results from a 2007 survey conducted by the Volusia /Flagler Coalition for the Homeless suggest that approximately 22% of the homeless in Volusia and Flagler Counties had completed only some high school, and 34% of the respondents identified unemployment as the cause of their homelessness. West Volusia County is isolated from the eastern, more urban portion of the county by thousands of acres of natural Florida terrain. In recent years, the area has developed from a more rural area into several suburban bedroom communities, many of whose residents commute to the Greater Orlando and Greater Daytona Beach areas. At the present time, a majority of resources for the homeless are clustered in the eastern portion of Volusia County, and only a few programs exist in the West Volusia County area; few of these programs provide instruction for homeless individuals to acquire the academic and the personal skills necessary to attain a high school General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and develop the capability to navigate the application process for employment. Last year alone, twice as many homeless individuals expressed an interest in participating in such training than the existing programs could accommodate in Volusia and Flagler Counties. In order to help more homeless individuals achieve self-sufficiency and enhance the quality of their lives, the Stetson University Student Coalition to End Homelessness has developed an initiative for the purpose of teaching career, life, and academic skills. The aim of the program is to expand upon the existing resources available in West Volusia County for the purpose of empowering a greater number of homeless individuals with self-efficacy, and in the long-term, decreasing the homeless population in the area.</p>
<b>Sharing Decision Making</b>	<p>The L.E.T.S. program intends on taking a strength-based approach by collaborating with the existing programs in the area in the way of sharing facilities with the Neighborhood Center, enlisting volunteers with the service network at Stetson, utilizing the GED curriculum at the Chisholm Center, and by referring participants with special needs to appropriate agencies within the resource network. The program plans on encouraging the sponsorship of local businesses, merchants, and industries through donations of supplies and materials and by their commitment to the L.E.T.S. employment network. The network will serve as a resource for successful participants to access information on available jobs. It is the intent of the L.E.T.S program to create an awareness of homelessness in the community and gain the support of various groups and civic organizations for the purpose of creating an area-wide alliance to resolve the issues of homelessness.</p>
<b>Using Data</b>	<p>The program seeks to provide on-going support to successful participants by assisting with job-related issues. The L.E.T.S. program will assign a L.E.T.S. volunteer to each individual who completes the program and a standardized exit assessment will be submitted by the participant. The duties of the volunteers will include advocacy, mentoring, post-program follow-up, and recording and reporting the level of success of the participant. Successful participants will be monitored on job placement, job satisfaction, and enhanced quality of life. The data will be incorporated in a longitudinal study which will aid in assessing the level of achievement of the program's goals and will guide the organization's members in determining the course of action to be taken to maintain a high level of success.</p>

<b>Community Strengths</b>	<p>The L.E.T.S program desires to build community awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness, to facilitate cooperation and reciprocity among the existing programs, and to encourage greater involvement from the various segments of the community in the way of social capital and financial support. The L.E.T.S. program plans to launch its endeavor under the guidance of the leaders of existing programs in the Volusia County area, and through collaboration with the Neighborhood Center and Chisholm Center on the use of facilities, the Stetson University service network, and through referrals to appropriate existing resources. The network sponsors will have a stake in the project in the form of qualified and competent workers. The existing programs meet the basic needs of the homeless: the AGAPE Clubhouse provides food, shelter and basic skills, the Chisholm Center provides education, and the Neighborhood Center provides housing assistance. The L.E.T.S program will focus on the mentoring aspects of empowering the homeless by providing support to the L.E.T.S. participants. Additionally, the goals of the L.E.T.S. program are to provide resources which are suited to the specific needs of the homeless population in West Volusia County, to expand the availability of services, and to make those services more readily accessible to the homeless population.</p>
<b>Recruiting Volunteers</b>	<p>The Student Coalition is continually encouraging and enlisting student volunteers. Since its inception in August 2006, the Coalition has grown from 4 individuals to 70 members. The Coalition plans to enhance its membership through campus and community awareness. Awareness can be achieved with speaking engagements at various campus organizations, fundraisers on campus and in the community, and by recruiting Bonner Scholar students to participate in the program as part of their community service requirement. Manpower will be supplemented with members of the service network at Stetson University. The program anticipates the active involvement of Stetson's Center for Services Learning and the Service Corp, a bi-monthly meeting of all community service organizations on campus. The Coalition's documentary on homelessness will supplement the recruitment process and increase campus and community awareness.</p>
<b>Enlisting Partners</b>	<p>The program intends to encourage businesses and industries in West Volusia County to commit to sponsorship for the program by donating supplies and joining the L.E.T.S. employment network. L.E.T.S. will partner with existing employment centers such as Job Force One, Straight to Work, and One Stop Career Center in addition to the implementation of its own employment network. In return, the program will provide the job market with qualified and competent workers. Additionally, the L.E.T.S program plans to solicit financial and social capital from civic organizations and other campus groups whose focus is community service. It is an aim of the program to include Stetson's Bonner Scholars in the endeavor, so they may enhance their scope of service learning. The philosophy of L.E.T.S. is to maintain continuous support by consistently promoting awareness of the needs of the homeless and of the benefits to the community.</p>

## Project

<b>Project Title</b>	Life Empowerment Towards Success (L.E.T.S. do it)
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<b>Project Activities</b>	<p>Under the supervision of the initiative advisor, Dr. Patrick Coggins, the L.E.T.S program will utilize existing community resources and will integrate the efforts of a number of organizations to help homeless people obtain confidence and employment. The duties of L.E.T.S. volunteers will include advocacy, one-on-one mentoring, and post-program follow-up, as well as recording and reporting participants' progress. In addition to relationship-building and mentoring, volunteers will tutor participants for the GED, relate career skills such as resume writing, checkbook balancing, and interview skills, and aid in job placement selection. To make this possible, the L.E.T.S. program volunteers will enlist the support of the leaders of existing programs by drawing from their knowledge and resources. The Neighborhood Center has agreed to allow L.E.T.S. to use their facilities for training and tutoring, and help the volunteers reach those that would benefit from the program. The program also plans on partnering with the Chisholm Center to use their pre-existing GED program and on collaborating with the AGAPE Clubhouse and with various local employers to place and employ those who want to work in jobs that are suited to them. The concept behind L.E.T.S. is to connect and communicate with those already involved in community outreach to alleviate the problem.</p>
<b>Project Results</b>	<p>A sense of self-efficacy and economic stability are paramount in breaking the bonds of homelessness and reestablishing a foothold in society. The L.E.T.S. program plans to provide this needed life and career skills training in a personal, relationship-based way. The measurable outcomes of the success of the program will be demonstrated by the number of participants who obtain a GED after completion of the program, the number of successful job placements (as judged by length of employment), and the effect of completion of the L.E.T.S. program on its participants. The aim of this project is to empower people to ameliorate their situations through skill acquisition and career placement; an ultimate measure of the program's success being that those who participate in the program are able to find and keep homes.</p>
<b>Project Measurement</b>	
<b>Project Challenges</b>	<p>The initial obstacle in implementing the project is the acquisition of financial capital. The obstacles to overcome when the program is implemented are obtaining enough manpower to maintain continuous operation of the program and retaining an adequate number of community supporters and employment sponsors. Additionally, the program anticipates the need to provide on-going support to program achievers for the purpose of preventing high rates of attrition. In order to overcome these obstacles, the initiative plans to acquire financial capital by the submission of additional grant applications and though funding from the People Helping People organization at Stetson University. It seeks to involve the 70 members of the Student Coalition to End Homelessness, Stetson's Bonner Scholars, and members of the service network at Stetson to provide the needed manpower. The program will provide mentorship to employed achievers to prevent high rates of attrition. The main concept of the L.E.T.S. mentorship is not merely to assist the homeless in securing jobs, but support them in keeping these jobs. In addition, the Coalition is currently filming a documentary on homelessness to support awareness endeavors and to maintain a high level of interest and support among the various segments of the community. The L.E.T.S. program also concedes that there are challenges many homeless face in resolving issues of addiction, mind-set, and mental illness prior to entering a self-efficacy and educational program and is developing a strategy to implement local programs to effectively surmount these challenges. The initiative will execute a contract with each participant to demonstrate commitment and to reserve the power to expel participants who do not abide by the conditions of the contract.</p>

# Service Learning

<b>Project Integration</b>	The initiative will allow the student volunteers to apply classroom learning to the real world environment. There are some things that cannot be learned in an academic setting but, can be dissimilated out in the field. In addition, the initiative believes the partnership will be beneficial to both the students and the community by breaking down barriers between people, confronting stereotypes, and eliminating cultural biases. The initiative hopes the learning experience of the project coupled with the educational experience at Stetson University will stimulate students to continue their involvement with the issues of homelessness long after they graduate from Stetson University.
<b>Diary</b>	
<b>Budget</b>	The award money will be used for training manuals, educational materials, and for promoting and developing an alliance among other agencies for the homeless, the campus community, and the local community. Alternately, there are costs involved in making application for GED exam fee waivers for the program's participants. The program is being initiated by the Student Coalition to End Homelessness, which currently holds numerous fundraisers each year. The fundraisers include events such as Make a Difference Day, Home Aid Concert, Beardtober, 50/50 raffles, Poker Runs, silent auctions, and others. In addition, L.E.T.S. anticipates applying for funding from Stetson University and the United Way.
<b>Other</b>	In the interest of social justice, the Student Coalition to End Homelessness seeks to create an awareness of homelessness among Stetson students, faculty, and staff. It is hoped that by creating awareness, the Stetson community will be empowered to apply the disciplines of academia to enhance the quality of life.

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