

**HOPE
DISAPPEARING:**
A POPULATION
LEFT BEHIND

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Growing
Crisis of Homelessness in Our Nation

by Sherman Haggerty

IZZARD INK PUBLISHING
PO Box 522251
Salt Lake City, Utah 84152
www.izzardink.com

Copyright © 2021 by Sherman Haggerty

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, electronically or otherwise, or by use of a technology or retrieval system now known or to be invented, without the prior written permission of the author and publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Haggerty, Sherman, author.

Title: Hope disappearing : a population left behind : a behind-the-scenes look at the growing crisis of homelessness in our nation / by Sherman Haggerty.

Description: First edition. | Salt Lake City, Utah : Izzard Ink Publishing, [2021] | Includes index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021028379 (print) | LCCN 2021028380 (ebook) | ISBN 9781642280692 (hardback) | ISBN 9781642280685 (paperback) | ISBN 9781642280678 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Homelessness—United States. | Shelters for the homeless—United States. | Homeless persons—United States. | Homelessness—Government policy—United States. | Homeless persons—Services for—United States.

Classification: LCC HV4505 .H35 2021 (print) | LCC HV4505 (ebook) | DDC 362.5/0973—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021028379>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021028380>

Designed by Ashley Tucker

Cover Design by Andrea Ho

Cover Images: Philip Pilosian/Shutterstock.com

First Edition

Contact the author at info@izzardink.com

Hardback ISBN: 978-1-64228-069-2

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-64228-068-5

eBook ISBN: 978-1-64228-067-8

Contents

Dedications and Thanks v

Introduction 1

CHAPTER 1:

What Is the Point? 11

CHAPTER 2:

Meet Jack:

A Redemption Story 15

CHAPTER 3:

Hope on the Run 23

CHAPTER 4:

A Brief on Recent Changes

to Homeless Services 31

CHAPTER 5:

Mather Community

Campus: The Vision

and the Early Years 41

CHAPTER 6:

Change in the Wind:

Federal Mandates 59

CHAPTER 7:

The Roots of

Disruptive Change 69

CHAPTER 8:

Comparing the

New Service Models with

What Was Replaced 79

CHAPTER 9:

Key Mather Staff 101

CHAPTER 10:

Mather Alumni 121

CHAPTER 11:

The End of a Promising Era

for the Homeless 141

CHAPTER 12:

What Now? 173

CHAPTER 13:

Some Conclusions 191

Epilogue 197

Author's Biography 203

Acknowledgments 207

Index 211

Dedications and Thanks

I am dedicating this book to the following three people who work for the local affiliate of Volunteers of America:

Leo McFarland, chief executive officer

Amani Sawires, chief operating officer

Christie Holderegger, chief development officer

Collectively, these three individuals have provided 100 years of service and leadership to the underserved, undervalued, and disenfranchised citizens of Northern California. They have led the effort to provide shelter, meals, and critical services to homeless singles, homeless families, and homeless veterans. They have also served those struggling with mental health, abused seniors, those struggling with addictions, and the many who were victims of life-changing events that no one could have predicted. I can say with absolute certainty that Volunteers of America has provided more services under their leadership, to more underserved people in the Sacramento region during the past 30 years than any other organization.

I also want to dedicate this work to a handful of remarkable, humble, selfless people whom I had the ability to observe or work directly with during my time at Mather Community Campus. I decided to choose a few to thank publicly in this publication, but there are dozens more; you know who you are and you should take great

DEDICATIONS AND THANKS

pride in knowing how important you were in helping to improve lives immeasurably. Also, enormous gratitude goes to the students who worked so hard to get through this program from 1996 to 2019 and have continued, years later, to make very significant contributions in our community. Some of their stories are a part of this work. Special thanks to:

Beth Maarten	Holly Sexton	Ellen O’Neal
John Reilly	Paula Moulten	Beth Valentine
Veronica Williams	Pat Fitzgerald	Marriane Friedrich
Terri Wheeler	Ruby Yang	Chris Mann
Elizabeth Garcia	Alan Knacke	Greg Williams
Jenna Winn	Connie Aaron	Mary Ann Wheeler*
Jimmy Smits	Erika Acosta	Sam Frank
Lynette Mabitun	Karen Christensen	Tom Crouse
Russ Miller	Haley Armstrong	Marlo Miller
Marcus Robinson	Kay Dowling	Carrie McCracken
Matt Printup	Sue Harlan	

*Including the entire staff from Next Move who stayed at Mather after the merger.

Introduction

This book is based on my and others' experiences working for Volunteers of America at a homeless transitional housing program in Northern California. These experiences represent the current changing landscape for the homeless population across the country and the future for them as citizens. (This work represents the views and opinion of the author and it is not intended to represent the opinions, views, or position of any private or public agency, business, or other individual.)

This book was written in an effort to raise concerns about the treatment of our homeless population; “hope disappearing” is not a cliché. It accurately reflected the future options for more than two hundred people over a 2-day period in the spring of 2017. These people were on a waiting list for comprehensive homeless services, a list that was eliminated by mandate. It was one isolated incident, in one community, but it signaled a change in the direction of homeless services across the country and the future for thousands of people. It was the indirect result of federal policy changes that had been in the works for over a decade. This book provides significant detail about how those changes impacted (and are still impacting) the structure of local homeless services. It also looks at the collateral damage to the homeless people and the communities where they live. If you do not care about the growing number of human beings who are homeless, the demise of their future potential, or its potential social impact, then this book is not for you.

CHAPTER 1

What Is the Point?

THIS IS A TRUE STORY ABOUT HOMELESSNESS AND HOMELESS services. It is amazing how the truth can seemingly change with the perspective of those who hold it, tell it, or hear it. A very important objective of this work is to provide real information for the reader to think about—information that can be coupled with the related data to show the gravity of the situation caused by changes in the federal homeless policy.

This book is intended to make a point about what has been lost to the homeless population in our community and in many other places, for reasons that are difficult to explain. This work is *not* intended to provide THE answer to ending homelessness; but looking at what has been lost could be critical to developing better solutions for the future.

The advertising media today is flooded with messages that encourage our young citizens to “reach for the stars”; to not set limits on their expectations; and to “just do it.” It is hard not to be motivated and enthused about this messaging and the potential impact it has on our children. But many children, teenagers, and young

adults are not in a situation to receive these messages and pursue their dreams. For some children, their parenting, their environment growing up, or exposure to childhood trauma might exclude them from believing in a future with unlimited opportunity. Experience has taught us that many who end up homeless share that history. What was missing was not the opportunity itself. What was missing were the conditions to hear those messages, the vision to see where they can lead, and the support to “just do it.”

There are always going to be people who will miss or pass on opportunity, for reasons that can be difficult to comprehend. Our responsibility as fellow members of the human race should be to make sure the door for opportunity stays open. We are supposed to be a country of second chances. How should we treat those who didn't get the tools early in life to explore their opportunities? How should we treat those who were living out “the good life” and then suffered serious setbacks that were out of their control? How about those who just made mistakes along the way?

We have made progress in this country on working toward equality for many ethnic and community groups, but it has taken decades, and there still remains underlying mistrust on all sides—this translates to missed opportunities. Most mistrust comes from not understanding the perspective of the persecuted. The homeless remain at the bottom of the barrel. This is not so much an ethnic issue but a social issue. The sobering truth about homelessness is that it does not discriminate against race, age, gender, or religion. Of course, other forms of discrimination place certain groups at higher risk to become homeless at some point.

Whatever leads people to become homeless, the silent majority in every community continues to discriminate against them. The discrimination comes in the form of not caring enough to lift a hand. These are not intentional acts of harm but a thoughtless

Index

- advertising media 11
- affordable housing 26, 89, 90
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) 20
- all-community meetings 46, 51, 107
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 63

- budget 143–144

- CAC board 46, 107, 108, 199, 200
- campus intern training program 139
- caregivers 62
- care programs 64
- Child Protective Services (CPS) 105, 106
- client services 147, 148
- community groups 12
- community services 108, 136, 182
 - block grant 54, 109
 - improvement projects 32
- community support 33, 130, 199, 202
 - programs 38
- community-wide homeless system 71

- Continuum of Care (COC) 33, 69, 71, 72, 74, 80, 163
- contract 33, 45, 110, 112, 147–149, 154, 169, 170
- coordinated entry plan 71–74, 76, 77, 80, 84–86, 197
- county contract 7
- county staff 167–169
- COVID-19 pandemic 26, 90, 141, 175, 176
- critical time intervention (CTI) group 61
- current rapid rehousing programs 158

- direct social service programming 10
- discrimination 12
- disruptive change roots 69–77
 - conflict of interest 70–71
 - coordinated entry plan 71–74
 - HUD funds 69–71
 - referral system, replacing 74–77