

The People Concern Malibu Outreach Team

October 2023 Report

Outcomes

In October 2023, the total number of contacts made by the outreach team was 320, with 79 unduplicated contacts. 10 individuals were contacted in permanent or temporary housing. Of the 69 unduplicated contacts currently on the streets, 12 were new contacts, with 4 of them becoming repeat contacts. There are currently 33 contacts considered in various stages of engagement, and 36 are refusing services at this point. The outreach team continues to contact these individuals with the goal of getting them engaged in the housing process.

Success Story

A person growing up in an affluent community and ending up on the streets is not as uncommon as one might think. Ct ML grew up in one of these communities and seemingly had all the resources available to him that one would expect from living in such a place. He was an active participant in athletics at his high school and had family who were important figures in the community. From the outside looking in, it would be hard to predict that someone like ML would be seen disheveled and sleeping outdoors in the same community later in life. ML experienced substance abuse and undiagnosed mental health issues in high school and early adulthood which led to several stints in drug rehabilitation centers. ML's untreated mental health issues, his continued substance abuse and financial difficulties made it difficult for his mother to continue supporting him. We are unsure of the exact circumstances of his departure from home, but he ended up experiencing homelessness after his stints in rehabs ended due to discontinuation of his health insurance.

Although ML was unhoused for several years by the time we met him, he seemed very content and optimistic about the future. ML was always kind, gentle and respectful but it was difficult for us to engage ML in a conversation about exploring housing options as he believed he would be receiving a large amount of money when he reached a certain age. He seemed to live his life without worry and had unlimited positivity. Eventually he realized that he did not have the financial security that he expected. Though this was troubling news, it allowed the outreach team to have deeper conversations about his future and opened up the possibility for us to assist him. Through these conversations, ML realized the need for mental health support and the team connected him to Venice Family Clinic's mobile outreach team and psychiatrist. Noticeable improvements followed as did his openness to accept housing solutions. After a few months of searching for temporary housing openings that were acceptable to ML, we finally received an opportunity for ML to be sheltered in a TPC shelter in the thick of downtown Los Angeles. ML accepted but we were a bit apprehensive.

We were unsure of how a person who grew up in a safe and affluent community would fare at The Village, a TPC shelter in Skid Row. We just knew that ML was finally getting tired of experiencing homelessness. We continued to support the client to ensure a smooth transition and a permanent housing placement. Over time, we noticed that ML was flourishing in his new environment, both in and outside of the shelter. He seems to be able to make friends everywhere he goes due to his genuine and good-natured personality. The excellent staff at The Village supported ML through this period and we eventually found a permanent housing opportunity for him.

ML's story is an example of how people from any background can experience homelessness. And there are countless reasons as to why or how they became unhoused. It's hard for people who have always had secure housing and solid support systems to imagine living on the streets. It's easy to put people going through homelessness into typical boxes

to explain their current situation but doing so ignores the infinite complexity of the human condition. There were multiple causes that led to ML's situation that were out of his control. By losing his support system and his home, his issues worsened and multiplied such as the further exacerbation of his mental health. This is why it's important for outreach teams like ours to step in and provide a support system that is built on trust. We utilize a Housing First approach and with our clients who are not yet convinced, we provide consistent engagement and services to prove that we will work hard and are committed to this goal no matter how long it takes. Our work with ML is a good case in point and we are glad to announce that ML moved into a new TPC apartment building and is officially permanently housed. The building will be staffed with mental health workers and case managers on site to provide wraparound services so that ML has the tools to continue flourishing in his new home.

Community Interaction

The team continues to work with the Malibu community, city council, CART, local churches, Venice Family Clinic (VFC) and the Sheriff's Department. Through these relationships we have received help with locating and assisting the unhoused.

The team continues to work closely with several LA County agencies such as the VA, Venice Family Clinic, LAHSA, DMH and St. Josephs to provide a wide array of services and housing opportunities for our clients.

Next Steps:

The growing encampments at Zuma beach have increasingly become an issue within the community. The Outreach team plans to coordinate with the city of Malibu, the sheriff department, the county of Los Angeles and beaches and harbors to clear that area and assist clients camping there with alternative solutions. Additionally, we are still awaiting more news and developments around CARE court and any increased shelter/housing developments within SD3.