

Engage, Elevate, Empower

Annual Update

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Discussion



- **Overview**
- **Annual Update**



Overview



Mission

- Provide funding to a community-based organization which provides employment opportunities to persons experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and abate litter in our community.



Overview



History

- Created as a pilot program in response to a twofold challenge in Flagstaff: 1) increased number of unsheltered community members and 2) litter accumulation
- Matching funds from the Arizona Department of Housing became available
- Through the formal solicitation and evaluation process, the Community Assistance Teams of Flagstaff (CATs) was selected
 - Tonight, CATs will provide their first annual update.

**Community
Assistance
Teams of
Flagstaff**

People at Work

C.A.Ts P@W Program



C.A.Ts' Mission

Our mission is to transform lives by empowering people with the tools to survive and thrive through the creation of community. We use the Diné term k'é to express our belief that **we are ALL part of the community and responsible for each other's well-being-regardless of housing status.** We reach out to engage unsheltered and disenfranchised relatives where they are and accept them without judgment. We strive to reduce the stigma and humiliation that unsheltered relatives suffer on a daily basis.



A person wearing a red hooded jacket is sitting on the ground in a dark, outdoor setting, possibly a park or a wooded area. The person is hunched over, and their face is not visible. The ground is covered with dry leaves and twigs. The overall atmosphere is somber and bleak.

Lost human potential

- 653,104 people experienced homelessness in the United States on a single night in **January 2023, a 12% increase from 2022 and the highest number since 2007.** Homelessness amongst Native Americans increased by an astonishing **18% in the same one-year period.**
- One in every 500 Americans is without housing, and many more live in substandard conditions.
- Unsheltered community members face significant barriers to housing and employment, including the stigma of being homeless.
- Stigma and community bias force them into the shadows, creating a cycle of resentment, distrust and even hatred.
- Communities that use criminal penalties, restrictive zoning and neighborhood associations to cast out people without housing only worsen the crisis of unaffordable housing and increase the loss of human potential.

C.A.Ts of Flagstaff

- The Community Assistance Teams (CATs) of Flagstaff was getting ready to provide mobile services to reach unsheltered relatives on Flagstaff's streets. Coincidentally, C.A.T's motto is to *"Reach out. Engage. Empower. Transform."*
- Philosophy-how to help unsheltered people reengage with the larger community and address the growing litter problems.



Unsheltered People want to work- but the barriers are overwhelming

Barriers to employment

- Stigma
- Disability or Poor health
- Lack of Training/Education
- Loss of identification documents
- No housing
- No transportation
- No contact information
- Age
- Lack of hygiene and adequate clothing



C.A.Ts People at Work Program (C.A.Ts' P@W)

- C.A.Ts applied for and received the E3 (Engage, Empower, Elevate) grant through the City of Flagstaff Sustainability Office.
- After a successful pilot project in the Fall of 2022 we agreed to continue the program. We learned important lessons from the pilot project and made some changes in year two starting July 1, 2023.
- We changed from a cash payment to a payroll card system.
- We switched from a simple Excel spreadsheet to Quickbooks payroll.
- We implemented an application process including a written form and interview
- We focused on people who show interest in obtaining regular employment and taking steps to improve their lives.
- We bought a small pick up truck with funds from other sources in order to transport litter and to expand our geographic area



What our Crew of Homeless People Did in 2023

- From July 1, 2023, through December 13, 2023, our homeless crew picked up 935 bags of trash and recycling from Flagstaff's streets and public ways. That's about 32,705 gallons or 4,375 cubic feet of street litter.
- They contributed a combined total of 1,206 service hours to the community to maintain it's beauty during the 5 1/2 months we operated in 2023.



Where they Picked Up Litter

- 261 bags of litter were picked up in the Sunnyside neighborhood alone with 336 service hours committed to improving the Sunnyside neighborhood. Our crew of unsheltered folks were thanked, offered homemade cookies, water, and lemonade by grateful residents and businesses.
- 198 bags were picked up in the Southside neighborhood. Again, they were thanked by almost everyone they met.



Litter Collected by Location

Location	Days	Participants	Hours	Litter	Recycling	Total	Approx. Gallons	Approx. Cubic Ft.
4 th St.	90	38	117	61	25	86	3010	402
Buffalo Park	2	9	27	9	3	12	420	56
E Butler	9	36	118	67	39	106	3710	495
Huntington	4	16	51	40	14	54	1890	252
Milton	3	16	54	28	11	39	1365	182
Rte 66	5	23	88	48	24	72	2520	336
Rte 66-Bike Path	2	9	28	13	8	21	735	98
Southside	23	90	291	132	63	198	6930	926
Sunnyside	24	98	336	192	69	261	9135	1221
W Butler	8	29	97	55	31	86	3010	402
Totals	170	364	1,206	645	287	935	3,2725	4,370

P@W Crew Experiences

- The P@W program didn't just help the community. It helped the participants as well.
 - We provided work opportunities to 24 unique individuals;
 - Employees typically worked 3 hours a day, 1-4 days per week
 - 4 people worked only one day, the majority worked for several months
 - Per grant terms, everyone was paid Flagstaff minimum wage and taxes were withheld





Demographics

- Male: 20 (83%) Female 4 (17%)
- Native American 6 (25%), White 14 (58%), Black 2 (8%), Multiracial 1 (4%), Hispanic 1 (4%)
- Veterans 4 (17%)
- Age <30, 5; 30-39, 4; 40-49, 6; 50-59, 8; >60, 1

Real Outcomes

- Of the 24 employees;
 - 1 entered into a paid industrial sewing apprenticeship
 - 5 obtained full time employment
 - 1 obtained regular part time employment
 - 3 were able to earn enough to leave Flagstaff for more favorable destinations
 - 2 entered rehab
 - 1 decided not to commit suicide
- They all reported a greater sense of dignity, giving back to the community and mother earth, and a greater sense of responsibility.



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Working for the C.A.Ts crew made me more aware of the footprints I'm leaving on the Earth and a more active obligation to keep cities like Flagstaff picture perfect. KB

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“This program has helped me gain confidence in myself.” MS

“It's nice to do something for mother earth and makes you feel good about your self.” MB

“I haven't had this many people thank me- EVER!” DK

Community Assistance Teams
of Flagstaff **People at Work**

*Reach out. Engage. Empower.
Transform.*

www.CATs-of-Flagstaff.org

