



# 2021 NCHV ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CHARTING THE COURSE:  
TOGETHER, APART  
JUNE 21-25, 2021

 **NATIONAL COALITION**  
*for* **HOMELESS VETERANS**

# Infusing an Equity Focus into Organizational Operations

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## Panelists:

Erika Hartman  
Downtown Women's Center

Jean-Michel Giraud  
Friendship Place

Jayesh Patel  
Street Democracy



DOWNTOWN  
**WOMEN'S**  
CENTER

# Infusing an Equity Focus into Organizational Operations

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# DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER

The Downtown Women's Center envisions a Los Angeles with every woman housed and on a path to personal stability. Its mission is to end homelessness for women in greater Los Angeles through housing, wellness, employment, and advocacy.





# Trauma Informed and Culturally Responsive

- ▶ Organizational assessment
- ▶ Training and education
- ▶ Embedding trauma informed and culturally responsive practices
- ▶ Operationalizing a roadmap
- ▶ Communicating organizational values



## TRAUMA & RESILIENCY INFORMED CARE TOOLKIT

*A Resource for Service Providers*

FROM THE DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S CENTER



1. SAFETY



2. TRUSTWORTHINESS  
& TRANSPARENCY



3. PEER SUPPORT



4. COLLABORATION  
& MUTUALITY



5. EMPOWERMENT  
VOICE & CHOICE



6. CULTURAL, HISTORICAL,  
& GENDER ISSUES

# Resources

- **Downtown Women's Center:**  
<https://www.downtownwomenscenter.org/>
- **Trauma and Resiliency Informed Care Toolkit:**  
<https://www.downtownwomenscenter.org/trauma-informed-care/>
- **Report And Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness:**  
<https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=2823-report-and-recommendations-of-the-ad-hoc-committee-on-black-people-experiencing-homelessness>



## REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON BLACK PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

LOS ANGELES HOMELESS SERVICES AUTHORITY  
DECEMBER 2019



# FRIENDSHIP PLACE



## INFUSING EQUITY INTO THE ORGANIZATION: AN ANTIRACISM APPROACH

PRESENTED BY JEAN-MICHEL GIRAUD  
PRESIDENT & CEO, FRIENDSHIP PLACE  
WASHINGTON, DC



# Equity Framework at Friendship Place



- Antiracism Task Force
- LGBTQ+ Inclusion Workgroup
- Internally and externally facing
- Actively networking and recruiting allies
- Board, volunteer and staff involvement
- Check your culture against societal trends
- Listen to veteran voices
- Check your environment
- Provide training to increase knowledge and comfort





# Case Study



## ***“ANTIRACISM AT THE BROOKS”***



# The Location



- The Brooks is a short-term housing facility for families in Upper Northwest Washington, DC
- The program is designed to serve up to 50 families
- Upper Northwest is an affluent, predominantly white section of Washington
- The program is a part of the Homeward DC plan to end homelessness in the city
- “Home-Ward” means that every ward does its share



# The participants



- Nearly all the 120 families served since April 2020 have been families of color
- The families come from other, generally less affluent, parts of the city
- Average stay in the program is 90 days or under
- Unit turnover in the building is frequent



# The Program



- The Brooks is a service-enriched program with friendly, well-trained staff
- Interventions are person-centric and empowering
- Services are targeted and effective
- The staff includes a majority of persons of color



# The Issues



- The project drew a high level of NIMBY from the onset (planning period)
- Some neighborhood opposition remained post opening
- Most neighbors have been supportive
- Staff and participants were recipients of micro-aggressions and inquiries from neighbors questioning their presence in the neighborhood.
- Three families were subjected to racial epithets by white neighbors in a nearby city park with a playground
- Other forms of scrutiny and police reports
- Complaints about more cars and trash on the street





# Building an Effective Response



- In June, I proposed to the Board and staff to step up our racial equity work to an antiracism approach.
- Our Racial Equity Work Group had been meeting since February 2018 with an internal and external focus
- Local and national issues were the basis for the change
- **Antiracism meant that we would plan actions**



# Antiracism Task Force



- The Antiracism Task Force meets monthly
- A Core Group steers it
- **Internal and External Goals:**
- Getting people ready for difficult conversations
- Pointing out racist comments or attitudes
- Training community stakeholders
- Impacting on government decisions
- Blending antiracism into the culture of the organization
- Finding allies and developing action steps



# Mobilizing the Community



- We mobilized the 28 religious congregations supporting us and Friends & Neighbors of the Brooks, a lay group.
- Volunteers place signs along the fence of the park where the families were subjected to racist slurs.
- Participants and Staff received support to respond to micro-aggressions
- We affirmed of our antiracist stand
- Blogs were posted on social media
- Webinars were organized to share information
- Food truck visits helped send a welcoming message



# Mobilizing the Community



- Messaging through the congregational structure:
- Clergy, Congregants, Mission groups, Friend, Neighbors
- The Task-Force developed a 5-part training series
- We sought support from city leaders
- We reached out to nearby schools
- We channeled information through the Community Advisory Group linking the program to the neighborhood
- We consulted with the American University Antiracism Center



# Impact



- Staff feel supported
- Some issues and scrutiny remain but no racist comments
- The training series was well received
- The level of comfort has increased
- Community members increased their knowledge
- Connections with government groups and leaders
- Renewed ties with American University Antiracist Center
- Community is effectively mobilized
- Positive voices have lowered the negative ones
- Neighborhood is aware of the need to stop racist acts





# Organizational Outcomes and Planning



- Our advocacy response in this area and LGBTQ+ inclusion has been strengthened
- We have hired a full-time Community and Advocacy Organizer, leading to impact on the DC Council
- We have helped promote legislation to use an antiracist lens in DC government business
- Antiracism is blended into our culture and activities
- We seize opportunities to comment in testimonies and have included it in our strategic plan
- We have linked to the DC Council Racial Equity Council



# Contact Information



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# OUR PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION



how we incorporate equity into our practice

**STREET  
DEMOCRACY**

# CENTERING CLIENTS

## problem

breakage, slippage, referral carousel → high abandonment rate

## solution

front-of-the-line service

CARITAS (comprehensive, accessible, responsive, responsive, individualised, transdisciplinary, accountable and seamless)

## how we do

assigned attorney; t-shaped skillsets; community-centric fundraising; check-ups; SEVA; service-centric metrics (vs donor-centric)

# HIRING

## **problem**

attracting less advantaged, lived experience talent

## **solution**

posting + EEOC boilerplate = not enough

## **how we do**

full report; limit qualifications; targeted recruitment, 9 strategies;  
inverted background checks; collaborative hiring (pilot project)



# PASS THE BATON

## **problem**

holding on too long without building the next generation

## **solutions**

collaborative placement; coach not manage; operational art, levels of war; servant leadership; decentralized command (practice leading)

# FUNCTIONAL JUSTICE

*systems of care/opportunity (evaluating policy)*

## **problem**

systems designed for managing societal problems, not solving them

## **solutions**

agency, opportunity, human-centric, incorporation into law



AMERICAN **BAR** ASSOCIATION

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## Commission on Homelessness and Poverty

- ❖ **To learn more, visit:**  
[ambar.org/homeless](http://ambar.org/homeless)
- ❖ **To request technical assistance,**  
**email:** [Kelly.Russo@americanbar.org](mailto:Kelly.Russo@americanbar.org)

•The Commission on Homelessness and Poverty provides ongoing technical assistance to jurisdictions across the country who wish to set up a homeless court.

•Our Advisory Committee of key stakeholders works to develop a national directory, detailed resources, and a network platform to connect homeless courts, provide technical assistance, and foster replication of the Homeless Court model nationwide. Please reach out if you're interested in getting involved.

# ABA COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

## **problem**

complicity of lawyers in perpetuating inequity

## **solutions**

CHP's blueprint

streetdemocracy.org  
ambar.org/homeless



Jayesh Patel  
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**STREET  
DEMOCRACY**

# Q&A



# Contact Information

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**THANK YOU**

