



IT TAKES A TEAM

Top photo: Members of the "clean team" work on picking up trash.

Our city is at its best when we come together to solve big problems

A strong sense of community stewardship and teamwork helps to set downtown apart from other urban centers in the West. As our city has looked for new ways to help homeless individuals and families, a team-based approach is making a difference in programs designed to move people out of homelessness and into mainstream life.

Clean Team

Life on the streets can be dirty for Utah's homeless population. Limited bathrooms and trash services sometimes create a lack of cleanliness in and around **Pioneer Park** and the **Rio Grande Street**.

In September 2013, the **Downtown Alliance**, Salt Lake City and homeless service providers worked with **Advantage Services** and created the **Clean Team** to help clean up the shelter neighborhood.

Members of the Clean Team include 20 homeless residents and those living in supportive housing who have been hired to work part-time cleaning up trash and performing small property maintenance around the Rio Grande area and in **Pioneer Park** at 350 S 300 West.

Camille Winnie, director of community services for the Downtown Alliance, helped to launch the program and has watched it make a difference



Members of the "clean team" work on picking up trash. Left, the entrance to the Road Home, located at 210 S Rio Grande St.



"This program is literally cleaning up the neighborhood and giving people a chance to improve their own lives."

Green Team

Last year, the Downtown Alliance, **Wasatch Community Gardens (WCG)** and Advantage Services joined forces to build on the success of the Clean Team with a new garden-based job training program for homeless women called the **Green Team**. Funded by Salt Lake City and on land donated by the city's **Redevelopment Agency**, this new 10-month program empowers homeless women through urban farm education, job skills training and employment.

"This is a transitional job program that is being used for women to gain skills to transition into a full-time job," states Winnie. "The Green Team facilitates employment opportunities for homeless women and creates vibrant community spaces and community involvement."

The plot, located behind **The Gateway** outdoor mall at *100 S 625 West*, is in the process of being built. It is an ideal location for a job training garden since it is within walking distance of the majority of homeless services in Salt Lake City. This garden will enhance

in the lives of the workers and in the larger community.

"The goals of this program are to help team members get a résumé, acquire some work experience and a positive reference, and to introduce them to new things that they might not have done on their own," Winnie says.

Advantage Services employs and services the Clean Team. Members earn minimum-wage and work four-hour shifts during the weekdays, picking up trash, shoveling snow, pulling weeds and power-washing sidewalks and buildings. There is even room for job

growth within this program. Work on the Clean Team can lead to other employment opportunities with Advantage Services.

"This has been a productive program allowing people to take the next steps to get out of homelessness," Winnie adds. "People have the opportunity and resources to better themselves and the community where they reside."

"As a downtown resident, I have seen a real improvement in my neighborhood from the Clean Team," said Christian Harrison, chair of the **Downtown Community Council**.



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way out of homelessness,” Winnie says. “It’s teaching our community a better way to help.”

In 2010, the first 10 meters were installed. Six years later, 40 meters pepper the downtown scene. **Zions Bank** was the first to partner with Salt Lake City and the Downtown Alliance on the donation meters. Meters, street signs and stickers direct donors to a website (slchost.org) if you don’t have change to spare. The campaign #HandupNotHandout has been created to get resources to the right people in our community who can make the biggest impact.

Jobs, volunteers and donations are ways to help those who face homelessness. But what is the best way to end homelessness?

“Give them housing,” says Celeste Eggert, director of development for the **Road Home**. “Shelter is often the first step on the road home.”

The Road Home

The Road Home is a leading homeless service provider for the Salt Lake region. As a private nonprofit social service agency, the Road Home offers emergency shelter and low-income housing options to single men, women and families experiencing homelessness. Staff provides personalized case management to help their clients identify and overcome the obstacles that have led them to becoming homeless. The shelter is open every day of the year and doesn’t turn people away if they are in need of a place to stay.

Logging 18 years at the largest homeless shelter in Utah has given Eggert a pretty good grasp on the topic.

“For 90 percent of the clients we serve, they experience a short, one-time period of homelessness and just need a little assistance to get back on their feet, and then we never see them again,” says Eggert. “We find that

neighborhood appeal for current and future residents of the new housing developments in the neighborhood as well as for other downtown residents.

Eight women are hired to work during the growing season, February through November. Green Team members learn to grow herbs and produce, and receive life skills training on topics like personal resource management, interpersonal skills, and health and wellness. They are in class one day a week and spend the other four days in the garden. Additionally, participants have a field trip each month to visit potential employers in food-related businesses in Salt Lake City.

Crops grown in the Green Team garden will be sold at a subsidized rate to the **Salt Lake Head Start** program and will be used as a resource for the meals served at area shelters. Head Start currently produces over 4,000 hot, healthy meals each day for the children in their program.

It takes a village to make this garden grow. WCG manages the gardening operations and Advantage Services provides the hiring and HR functions, future job placement, job training and education components of the program. Downtown Alliance assists Advantage Services with their functions and helps establish collaborative partnerships with local businesses, residents and organizations.

HOST

Creating jobs is an obvious way for the less fortunate to earn money, but so is panhandling. Panhandling is an epidemic

across the nation, and Salt Lake City is not immune. Usually donating spare change to an individual only enhances their problem. This is where the **Homeless Outreach Service Team (HOST)** program is introduced to help “turn spare change into real change.”

HOST is a proactive and collaborative effort to move the community in Salt Lake City into a partnership with the police and homeless service providers to connect homeless individuals with social services and resources. Bright red donation meters are located throughout downtown and allow people to give spare change to the homeless rather than to those who ask for it on the streets. All money collected in the meters goes to the **Pamela J. Atkinson Foundation** and are dispersed to local homeless services providers that provide help for those that need it most.

“This project was started based on the reality that no one ever panhandled their





The Road Home team.

the other 10 percent have something deeper causing them to become homeless and stay homeless for an extended period of time.” Case managers work closely with these clients to help connect them with services that will help them overcome the barriers causing them to be homeless.

That connection with services and resources can only happen in an environment that is built on teams. No individual or organization can solve homelessness singlehandedly. It takes a strategic and thoughtful approach that leverages the strengths of multiple entities to help people who lose their homes.

When an individual or family comes to the Road Home, they are provided with basic needs. The emergency services shelter offers assistance to low-income and homeless individuals on a walk-in basis while the family shelter helps meet the needs for families with children. Case managers are assigned to each family and select single clients to help them develop a plan for housing.

Over the next few years, the Road Home will continue to offer services as part of an integrated team approach that also includes other agencies, organizations and government entities. Instead of providing emergency shelter in a single location, additional facilities



will be built to care for distinct populations and additional resources will go towards preventing homelessness and treating the root causes of homelessness instead of just providing emergency services. The end goal is to phase out the Rio Grande shelter through new facilities and services that reduce the need for emergency shelter.

The Road Home is already lauded as a national leader for finding solutions for people who have been homeless for a year or more. In the **Rapid Rehousing** program, families receive a small amount of funding to allow payments for utility debts, deposits and rental assistance as well as a strong case management component. Once in housing, families rarely need to return to emergency shelter again.

For the small number of families and individuals who have a greater need for supportive services, the Road Home manages

several **Permanent Supportive Housing** programs, including **Palmer Court**. Palmer Court is a 201-unit apartment complex for former chronically homeless families and individuals with mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

As part of a regional team-based approach, the Road Home will work even more closely with other providers like **Catholic Community Services**, **The Fourth Street Clinic**, the **Salt Lake Mission**, **Crossroads Urban Center** and local, regional and state governments to identify concrete goals to prevent people from becoming homeless and to get them stabilized and into housing as quickly as possible.

“The services that these teams offer exist by the help and generosity of our community,” says Eggert. “The city and volunteers step up to support all of us.” ☆



Stronger Together

With compassion and community engagement, Salt Lake will lead in addressing homelessness

BY JACKIE BISKUPSKI

Whether you live, work or own a business in Salt Lake City (maybe all three), you understand the reality: We continue to experience a humanitarian crisis in our own backyard. In spite of previous and praiseworthy work to meet this challenge, we know there are still far too many people in need of help in our city. Too many sleeping in parks, under bridges and in their cars. Too many families shuffling in and out of shelters. And too many suffer every day with untreated mental illness and addiction.

Salt Lake City pioneered supportive programs for people experiencing homelessness. Ours was the first city in Utah to provide year-round shelter when the numbers of homeless people began to skyrocket in the mid-'80s. For years, our residents and businesses have been open and accommodating to dozens of programs that address the challenges of homelessness.

The work continues, and with state funding committed over three years, we are in a unique place to find lasting, outcomes-based and statewide solutions to homelessness.

For years, Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County have been working to address causes of homelessness and long-term solutions. It's now time to put these ideas into action. Salt Lake City has taken responsibility for locating two new homeless resource centers in our community. The Salt Lake City Homeless Services Site Evaluation Commission, co-chaired by former mayor Palmer DePaulis and Gail Miller, helped set criteria for this location process. We also committed from the outset to engage the public in this work. We hosted workshops in four diverse areas of the city, where residents prioritized criteria for locating the facilities. In time, and because we are confident this model will succeed, these facilities will be replicated around the state.

These two centers—both in design and function—will redefine our approach to addressing homelessness. We are embracing a more holistic and targeted approach. The facilities will each be capped at 250 beds. Each will provide easy access to overnight shelter, day services, detox services, and medical and behavioral health support. They will be aesthetically pleasing, promote safety and integrate into surrounding neighborhoods.

No sites have been finalized, yet we needn't go far to see how well this model can work. The Volunteers of America Homeless Youth Resource Center at 888 S 400 West opened recently to rave reviews from service providers and neighbors. One of our community's most stable homeless services centers is YWCA Utah. The campus at 300 South and 300 East has expanded over decades to include shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence, housing for teen mothers and a full range of support services at the Family Justice Center. Meanwhile, the surrounding

“By honestly and transparently engaging with our community, we can come together to manage what often seems like an intractable problem.”

neighborhood continues to grow, with some of the most vibrant real estate in town.

These examples show that by honestly and transparently engaging with our community, we can come together to manage what often seems like an intractable problem. We also know throwing up walls of NIMBYism is unacceptable. That behavior will get us nowhere. As is our way, Salt Lake City will continue to host many —



Jackie Biskupski
Salt Lake City Mayor

though certainly not all — programs to assist those experiencing homelessness. As mayor, I embrace this challenge, and I call on all elected officials to show courage,

compassion and the same willingness I have to get this work done.

I know Salt Lake City leaders and residents will unify around this cause and do the right thing. We will speak with a voice both productive and compassionate. Because our fellow human beings are suffering, and we can help.

We need you now. We have to get this right, and I know we will with your help. ☆



City and County Mayors Step Up to Find Solutions for a Challenged Homeless System

It's time for action to reduce and prevent homelessness

BY BEN MCADAMS

I am ready to make changes that will result in minimizing and preventing homelessness and moving individuals and families away from crisis in their lives towards self-reliance. Our action plan follows two years of hard work by many groups who care deeply about the complicated, long-running challenge presented by people experiencing homelessness in our community.

We identified two issues. First, the main door to access Utah's homelessness services system turns out to literally be the door of the emergency shelter, when a crisis occurs in a person's life. Second, our large "one-size-fits-all" emergency services model does not serve people well, especially families, children, youth, domestic violence victims, individuals with disabilities and working single adults.

These challenges affect the entire state, so we asked for legislative help. The first installment (\$9.4 million) of our \$27 million legislative request is being put to use right now. We're ready with design concepts for two smaller emergency shelter facilities.

The plans take into account what we've learned; that in order to support safety and a pathway to self-reliance, the shelter must provide more than a bed and a meal. Services such as medical and behavioral health care, job training and education must be part of the offering. Just as the causes of homelessness vary, so do the needs of the individuals that find themselves without a stable home. Services must also be geared towards self-sufficiency so people can recover their own lives. The same services must be available to help people avoid a crisis and last resort options.

We've already moved many families out of the Road Home at Rio Grande and into the family shelter in Midvale, which is now open year-round. But emergency shelter is not the solution to homelessness. We must prevent children from experiencing homelessness. That's why my action plan calls for a new family and community resource center that pairs

affordable, transitional, market rate housing with proximity to school, health care and jobs to help families lift themselves out of crisis. After agreeing on challenges, we worked together under our Collective Impact model to find solutions. Along with developing the two facilities described above, and using a third strictly for families, my proposal includes:

- Developing and supporting a common assessment and referral tool that meets people where they are and offers help. Good programs are already in place and can be aligned to be more effective. Recently the county issued a contract request for help to coordinate assessment and referral, starting with families and kids facing a crisis now.
- Launching Salt Lake County's "Homes Not Jail" program, a Pay for Success program that will use the private housing market to increase stable housing options for single adults who are persistently homeless.
- Increasing the availability of affordable housing.



Ben McAdams
Salt Lake County Mayor

improvements to our services. Where the new facilities will be located is up to Salt Lake City officials, following their public process, which is designed to gather feedback

“Just as the causes of homelessness vary, so do the needs of the individuals that find themselves without a stable home.”

- Developing and implementing a 10-year initiative to end child homelessness.
- We will reduce the numbers of families and individuals who rely on emergency shelter by effective individual support and by helping people find housing. Through their increased self-reliance and as we bring the smaller emergency shelters online, we can transition people out of the current emergency shelter at the Rio Grande facility until the need for it eventually drops to zero.

My plan gives the 'how' and 'what' of

on possible sites.

Many good, caring people and businesses have worked diligently over the past decade to address homelessness. In Utah, hearts are big and hands are generous. With this plan, I believe the fewest possible number of our residents will experience homelessness. We'll see improved services, and increased self-reliance for individuals and families in poverty and neighborhoods that are safe and welcoming for everyone. The actions start now. ☆