A Reconciliation of Personhood: Addressing the Panhandling Problem by Restoring Opportunities through Community Development

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ABSTRACT

Public discourse regarding the panhandling problem is largely dominated by the anti-panhandling philosophies of middle-class Americans who perceive the problem as a violation of traditional street civility, work ethic, and public safety. This paper argues from the perspective of panhandlers and claims that the panhandling problem challenges traditional middle class assumptions about social responsibility, individual liberty, and work ethic by placing these values in direct confrontation with factors that bar panhandlers from opportunities for social inclusion, including systemic economic suppression, unequal opportunity, and cyclical poverty. In response, this paper proposes a residential program model that provides individuals experiencing poverty with an intentional living community grounded in fellowship, goal-setting, wraparound support, and individualized professional development to restore employment opportunities and empower residents through their transition from poverty to economic self-sufficiency. The program is designed to succeed in smaller municipalities where social services, employment opportunities, and policy influences are closely entwined in an intimate network. Social workers can benefit from this research by adopting this program model in their work with individuals, groups, and communities so as to enhance the educational, employment, and community development opportunities for persons in poverty and to bridge the divide between the middle class and panhandlers. Further research needs to be conducted on how physical and cognitive disability, mental illness, and criminal history limit employment opportunities for panhandlers. Nonetheless, this paper presents a fresh perspective on the panhandling problem and encourages a paradigmatic shift in the way municipalities assess and address the panhandling problem.

INTRODUCTION

Problem Formulation

Defining Panhandling

Municipal and community leaders, defenders and enforcers of the law, state legislators, and pedestrians continuously find themselves confronting--or glancing away and walking past--the complicated problem of panhandling. Unlike homelessness, which receives devoted attention in forums concerning public policy, abject poverty, resource allocation, and social welfare, the "problem" of panhandling remains relatively unexplored and receives far less consideration despite our daily encounters with it (Goldstein, 1993; Horowitz, 2017). As such, academic, legal, and policy scholarship broadly define the problem of panhandling and subject it to varying interpretations depending on one's social and economic context (Dordick, O'Flaherty, Brounstein, & Sinha, 2017; Ellickson, 1996; Jung & Smith, 2007; Lee, Tyler & Wright, 2010; Neidig, 2017; Spector, 1996), personal and class perception toward panhandling (Barrett, Farrell, & Link, 2004; Tillotson & Lein, 2017), wariness of threatening criminal activity (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Dromi, 2012; Scott, 2002; Smith, 2005), and adherence to traditional norms of street civility (Ellickson, 1996). Therefore to establish a focused, objective operationalization of panhandling, this paper defines it as the chronic activity of soliciting or begging for money in public spaces as an alternative means to earning formal income (Ellickson, 1996; Knight, 2013; Scott, 2002).

Policy Implications of Passive and Aggressive Panhandling

Most legal, academic, and policy scholarship agree on the necessity to separate panhandling into two forms: Passive and Aggressive

(Lankenau 1999a & 1999b; Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002). Passive panhandling is the peaceful solicitation of pedestrians or drivers for money or food without threat or menace (Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002; Thayer v. City of Worcester (*Thayer II*), 144 F. Supp. 3d 218, 224), whereas aggressive panhandling is defined as coercive solicitation with actual or implied threats or menacing actions and which may constitute robbery (Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002; Thayer v. City of Worcester (*Thayer II*), 144 F. Supp. 3d 218, 224). Both forms have different legal implications and strongly influence the public perception of panhandling, especially politically-influential middle-class Americans whose perceptions most directly translate to policy responses in municipalities across the country. In their eyes, panhandling is "associated with aggression, confrontation, manipulation, deceit, crime, and violence," and is personified by "deceitful hustlers whose parasitic existence depends on money given out on the street, which inevitably is used for alcohol and drugs" (Spector, 1996, p. 51).

Problem Justification

Brief Overview of the Problem: 1960s-1990s

Now more than ever, America is in a crucial political position where scholarly research and policy considerations for sustainable solutions to the panhandling problem are necessary for creating long-term effective change (Neidig, 2017). It has been approximately thirty years since the panhandling problem last reached peak attention in the public policy sphere (Ellickson, 1996). In the aftermath of deinstitutionalization and more relaxed policing practices of the 1970s, court rulings of the 1960s and 70s sympathetic to beggars and individuals sleeping outside, and the introduction and embracement of the newly-labeled "homeless" population in the 1980s--coupled with related criticism for President Reagan's welfare cuts--there has been an unprecedented crowding of "undesirables" in municipal public spaces across America (Ellickson, 1996; Smith, 2005). This resulted in a great backlash of the 1990s fueled by a disgust-inducing public confrontation with the impoverished realities of homelessness, public drunkenness, mental illness, bench squatting, and begging (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Ellickson, 1996; Link, Schwartz, Moore, Phelan, Struening, Stueve, & Colten 1995). This backlash manifested itself as intolerant

"compassion fatigue" among fed-up middle-class Americans who viewed these now-inescapable "undesirables" as street nuisances and contributors to a great pandemic of urban decay (Dromi, 2012; Ellickson, 1996; Link et al, 1995; Ormseth, 2018; Scott, 2002).

Increased Municipal Responses to Instances of Panhandling

As of 2016, public intolerance for panhandling has remained relatively unchanged since the 1990s (Tillotson & Lein, 2017; Tsai, Lee, Byrne, Pietrzak, & Southwick, 2017) despite expanded public support for increased federal spending on resources for the poor and homeless (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Smith, 2005; Tillotsen & Lein, 2017; Tasi, Lee, Byrne, Pietrzak, & Southwick, 2017). In fact, panhandling is considered an increasing problem among residents and leaders in American municipalities as indicated by the number of municipalities responding politically to instances of panhandling (Aroni, 2017; Clifford & Piston, 2016; Ormseth, 2018; Rooney, 2018 Scott, 2002; Weiner, 2017). In the Lower East Side of Manhattan alone, the number of pedestrian complaints filed with the police about panhandling increased by 78% in 2015 (Arino, 2015). This is not an isolated trend. More pedestrians are complaining about instances of aggressive panhandling in cities such as Baltimore, Maryland (Weiner, 2017); Slidell, Alabama (*Blitch v. Slidell*, 2017); New York, New York (Aroni, 2015; Dordick, O'Flaherty, Brounstein, & Sinha, 2017); Hartford, Connecticut (Ormseth, 2018), and Providence, Rhode Island (Associated Press, 2019) to name a few. While these complaints are largely anecdotal (Ellickson, 1996; Goldstein, 1993; Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b; Spector, 1996) and empirical trends measuring panhandling levels are scarce, a major indicator of increased levels of panhandling and the weight panhandling holds in the public sphere is the increasing trend in the number of anti-panhandling ordinances proposed, implemented, or defended around the country. Since 2006, the number of American cities to place bans on panhandling increased by 43% (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2018). Between 2011 and 2014 alone, the number of cities to outrightly ban panhandling increased by 25%, and the number of cities with restrictions on begging in specified public spaces increased by 20% (Rooney, 2018).

Social Work's Obligation to Panhandlers

Given these statistics, the public policy response to the panhandling problem continues to criminalize this impoverished population (Clifford & Piston 2016; Lankenau, 1999a; Lee & Farrell, 2003; Link et al, 1995). These anti-panhandling strategies further stigmatize and disrespect their destitute condition (Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b), treating these individuals as dangerous and impersonal nuisances who burden the public with their mental health disorders, addictions, and a presumed spiteful rejection of the work ethic (Ellickson, 1996; Lee & Farrell, 2003; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996; Tillotson & Lein, 2017) and fail to recognize them as a population in need of compassion and support (Lankenau, 1999a). As such, social workers have an obligation to devote renewed and increased attention to the problem of panhandling. According to Standard 6.04a in the *NASW Code of Ethics*, "Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group or class on the basis of . . . mental or physical ability" (NASW, 2017). Current tactics used to eliminate the panhandling problem treat these individuals as a group of nonpersons (Lankenau, 1999a), discriminating against their misunderstood condition (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Lankenau, 1999a; Lee, Tyler, & Wright, 2010; Tillotson & Lein, 2017) by marginalizing them from opportunities to reintegrate into formal society through employment and social interaction (Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b). Therefore, as champions of social justice and as stewards of human dignity, social workers must become the newest allies of this disenfranchised group of resilient individuals by devoting time, energy, empathy, and compassion toward this overlooked issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Formulating the Public Perception

Anti-Panhandling Philosophies of Middle Class Americans

Public discourse regarding the panhandling problem is largely dominated by the anti-panhandling philosophies of middle-class Americans (M. Smith, personal communication, October 8, 2018; Spector, 1996). These philosophies are "rooted in deeply held beliefs about individual liberty, public order, and social responsibility" (Scott, 2002, pp. 2-3), and are molded by repeated exposure to the reality of poverty in American municipalities (Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b; Scott, 2002). This reality is so disparate to the middle class that their confounded reactions to panhandling reflect their own disillusionment and anger towards the problem (Dromi, 2012; Link et al, 1995). They are repulsed by the inescapably apparent sufferings of panhandlers, such as unemployment, physical and/or mental disabilities, mental illness and addiction, disease, racial differences, and poor hygiene (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Jung & Smith, 2007; Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b; Lee & Farrell, 2003). To alleviate their own disillusionment and disgust, the public chooses to disengage the problem by remaining detached from the impoverished reality of panhandlers and preferably ignoring their plight (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Dromi, 2012; Lankenau 1999a & 1999b). As such, the public's physical, social, emotional, and ethical distancing from panhandlers creates an objective general perception of panhandling that permeates the public's political and personal responses to the problem.

Media Depictions of Panhandling

This conclusive, internalized perception of panhandling is formulated by repeated encounters with it, either interpersonally or in the media (Lee & Farrell, 2003; Link et al, 1995; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996). The media depicts panhandlers "as deceitful hustlers whose parasitic existence depends on money given out on the street, which inevitably is used for alcohol and drugs" (Spector, 1996, p. 51). This deceitful impression characterizes them as lazy frauds who manipulate the public to make easy money; who earn more income than they claim through Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or other benefits; and who use that money for socially-condemned activities such as abusing substances (Spector, 1996). These activities oppose society's expectation to "pull an oar" and put their able bodies to good use through formal labor (Ellickson, 1996). As such, among policy makers and the population at large, these "able-bodied" individuals are viewed as undeserving of sympathy, compassion, and assistance because they are socially irresponsible and violate the basic norms regarding formal work (Lankenau, 1999a; Link et al, 1995; Tsai, Byrne, Pietrzak, & Southwick, 2017).

Perceived Threats Associated with Panhandling

In addition to their perceived laziness, the mere presence of panhandlers intimidates the public and prompts them to further alienate panhandlers from civil society (Scott, 2002). Panhandlers are continuously associated with aggression, addiction, erratic behavior, mental illness, disease, poor hygiene, confrontation, crime, and violence (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Ellickson, 1996; Lee & Farrell, 2003; Scott, 2002; Spector 1996). As such they are considered dangerous (Dromi, 2012; Lankenau, 1999a), a public safety concern (Neidig, 2017), discouraging for business and tourism (Scott, 2002; Smith, 2005), and an overall undesirable social problem (Dromi, 2012; Ellickson, 1996, Link et al, 1995; Scott, 2002). The perceived threat of their presence and the repugnance of their diseased condition spurs the public to physically distance themselves (Clifford & Piston, 2016). Extensive personal contact with panhandlers is therefore relatively rare among the American public (Link et al, 1995), and more pedestrians consciously choose to outrightly avoid or ignore a panhandler (Dordick, O'Flaherty, Brounstein, & Sinha, 2017; Lankenau 1999a) than to enter empathetically into a relationship with these individuals (Link et al, 1995).

The Nonperson Treatment

As such, the panhandler is cast into the role of utter stranger and receives minimal human interaction on behalf of passersby (Lankenau, 1999a). Motivated by fear, anxiety, (Dromi, 2012; Scott, 2002), disgust (Clifford & Piston, 2016), and contempt (Dromi, 2012), passersby frequently respond to a panhandler's plea with ignorance or, in fewer cases, harassment and even physical harm (Lankenau, 1999b), failing to acknowledge the panhandler as a fellow person (Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b). This exclusionary and sometimes hostile approach to the panhandling problem diminishes a panhandler's membership in social society and represents the "Nonperson Treatment" (Lankenau 1999a & 1999b). This treatment reflects the public's perception of the panhandling problem and frames their isolating responses to it. Because the public is more concerned with the validity of a panhandler's plea for donations, their personal aggravation over the violation of traditional norms, and their

own paranoia over the internalized stigmas prescribed to panhandlers, the problem with panhandling lies not in the reality of poverty and a desire to fix it, but in the general response to mitigate its felt effects on the public.

Policy Solutions Responding to Nonpersons

Anti-Panhandling Ordinances

City ordinances that either explicitly or implicitly criminalize panhandling are the most popular policy solutions among municipal government officials (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Ellickson, 1996; Lee & Farrell, 2003; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996). Born out of the safety and sanitation concerns of urban business owners and residents, these ordinances deter panhandling in public spaces by criminalizing acts such as soliciting for money or essential goods, sleeping outside, loitering in public spaces, blocking pedestrians' paths, and other typical survival tactics characteristic of the urban underclass (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Ellickson, 1996; Goldstein, 1993; Neidig, 2017; Ormseth, 2018; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996; see also *Young v. New York City Transit Authority*, 903 F. 2d 146 (2d Cir. 1990); *City of Seattle v. Webster*, 802 P. 2d 1333 (Wash 1990); *Doucette v. Santa Monica*, 995 F. Supp. 1192 (C.D. Cal. 1996)). Roughly one-third of all major American cities prohibit all or some forms of panhandling (Scott, 2002) including New York City (Dordick, O'Flaherty, Brounstein, & Sinha, 2017), San Francisco (Knight, 2013), Hartford (Ormseth, 2018); and Seattle (Spector, 1996). These ordinances seek to maintain safety, order, and integrity in public spaces (Ellickson, 1996; M. Smith, personal communication, October 8, 2018; Spector, 1996) and restore the traditional norms of street civility (Ellickson, 1996) by regulating those behaviors of the poor which society deems undesirable (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Ellickson, 1996; Spector, 1996) They punish behaviors that threaten street civility such as aggressive panhandling, sleeping in public, obstructing a pedestrian's path, soliciting motorists (Scott, 2002) and restricting time and place of solicitation (Ellickson, 1996), while utilizing a "tough love" approach (Clifford & Piston, 2016) that subtly disciplines those who violate the ethical standard of earning income through formal labor alone (Lee & Farrell, 2003).

While popular among the public, there are several factors that limit the effectiveness of these ordinances. From a legal standpoint, a

2015 Supreme Court case ruled that many city ordinances banning panhandling are unconstitutional under the First Amendment (Horowitz, 2017). *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* established a new legal tradition regarding the First Amendment's classification of content-based restricted speech and Constitutionally-protected content-based speech (Neidig, 2015). This ruling, which now requires that restrictions on content-regulated speech and subject-regulated speech undergo strict scrutiny and stringent testing, was employed in the 2015 case *Thayer v. Worcester*(Neidig, 2017). US District Court Judge Timothy J. Hillman ruled that panhandling and begging are classified as content-based speech and therefore protected under the First Amendment (Neidig, 2017). Therefore, vaguely- or broadly-written "blanket bans" on panhandling are considered unconstitutional because they do not "'recognize an individual's right to continue to solicit in accordance with their rights under the First Amendment'" (Schworm, 2015, p. 2),

In response to legal challenges, municipalities are being encouraged to consult legal counsel to draft stricter legislation if they want to regulate panhandling (Neidig, 2017; Schworm, 2015; Scott, 2002). However, in most cases these ordinances ultimately fail because law enforcement officials regard passive panhandling as a low priority (Neidig, 2017). From a pragmatic standpoint, officers arrest less than 1% of the panhandlers they encounter (Neidig, 2017) because offenders are rarely prosecuted and the prosecution consumes valuable time better spent on more important matters (Goldstein, 1993; Lee & Farrell, 2003; Scott, 2002). Arresting panhandlers also fails to address the root causes of panhandling and fails to deter reoccurrence (Goldstein, 1993; Lee & Farrell, 2003), actually worsening panhandlers' prospects for finding formal employment because of their criminal background (Lee & Farrell, 2003). As such, panhandlers are ordered to "move along" and the the problem moves elsewhere unresolved (Lee & Farrell, 2003; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996).

Defensive Environments

A more subtle response to panhandling is to alter the physical environments of public spaces to discourage loitering and soliciting (Ellickson, 1996; Scott, 2002). Motivated by the obsessive fear of forfeiting public spaces to the "undesirables," some civic leaders sacrifice the invitingness of these spaces for more defensive physical environments that are less conducive to panhandling (Ellickson, 1996; Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996). They eliminate environmental features such as access to water for drinking and bathing, restrooms, places to sit or lie down, garbage dumpsters used for scavenging, or shelters from the elements (Scott, 2002). Business owners are also encouraged to modify the physical features of their properties to make them less attractive to panhandlers (Scott, 2002). New Bedford, Massachusetts is one of the most recent cities to modify the physical features of their infrastructure, laying new cobblestones at a 45-degree angle at a popular street median to combat soliciting on the roadway (Bonner, 2018). Some civic leaders condemn such defensive tactics as exclusionary (Lankenau 1999b), inhumane, and only serving as temporary reliefs to the problem (Bonner, 2018). Still, as New Bedford demonstrates, some municipalities are willing to sacrifice aestheticism and public funding for strategies that remove these nuisances from their streets (Ellickson, 1996).

Public Information Campaigns

To supplement anti-panhandling ordinances and defensive environments, major cities may also endorse uni-directional anti-panhandling programs that discourage pedestrians from donating money and impose restrictions on panhandlers' lifestyle choices, forcibly channeling them to behave in manners compliant with middle-class social values like the work ethic (Lankenau, 1999b; Spector, 1996). Public information campaigns are an example of such a program. These campaigns utilize signs, handouts, advertisements, and street workers to dissuade potential donors from falling prey to a panhandler's presumably fraudulent plea and encourage them to patronize local charities instead (Neidig, 2017; Spector, 1996). These campaigns hinge on four main premises to inform the public of more optimal ways to address the problem of panhandling: 1.) that their cash donations are used for purchasing alcohol and drugs and not for essential goods like food and clothing, 2.) that small cash donations are pointless because they do nothing to resolve the underlying circumstances contributing to the panhandler's situation, 3.) that there is a breadth of social services available to panhandlers that will better meet the panhandlers' assumed basic needs, and 4.) that

donating may jeopardize the safety of the donor (Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996).

While grounded in the same four premises, these campaigns take different forms in practice. In Evanston, Illinois, workers were hired to stand in close proximity to panhandlers, vocally discouraging pedestrians from donating money and alternatively providing pedestrians with brochures detailing the food, housing, and various health care resources in the city (Spector, 1996). In Portland, Oregon and Santa Barbara, California, pamphlets and information cards were disseminated to the public encouraging them to "Just say No" (Spector, 1996). These pamphlets instructed pedestrians to acknowledge the request through eye contact but to firmly respond "No" when solicited for donations. Instead, they were told to offer a voucher redeemable for food, public transit, laundry items, or personal hygiene items, and to direct the panhandler to social service agencies (Spector, 1996). In San Diego, California, pedestrians could distribute fake coins with an information hotline that could direct them to social service resources in the city (Spector, 1996). Or, more recently, municipalities encourage pedestrians to eliminate cash flow on the streets and to donate money to charities under the assumption that giving to charities would yield a better social impact (Dordick et al, 2017; Scott, 2002, Spector, 1996). Cities such as Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee (Scott, 2002), and most recently Providence, Rhode Island (Associated Press, 2017), have installed special parking meters where pedestrians can donate money to local charities as a "'collaborative and compassionate'" alternative to donating to panhandlers (Associated Press, 2017, p. 1).

While public information campaigns may provide pedestrians with justifiable directives based on the four foundational premises, these campaigns ultimately fail to reduce panhandling because they frame the interactions from the perspective of the donor and disregard the panhandlers' perspectives (Spector, 1996). They wrongly assume that all panhandlers are addicts (Spector, 1996) and transfer those assumptions to their moral justifications for ignoring their pleas (Dromi, 2012). They offer no interventions on behalf of the panhandler (Spector, 1996) but rather perpetuate the nonperson treatment by either intentionally ignoring or instinctively rejecting a panhandler's plea--and encouraging other pedestrians to do

the same (Lankenau, 1999a). The recent option of donating to charities instead has also proven ineffective because few panhandlers receive regular assistance from organized charities and therefore a large percentage of panhandlers are unserved (Dordick, O'Flaherty, Brounstein, & Sinha, 2017).

Permits and Credentials

As a means to distinguish the "deserving" panhandlers from the dangerous panhandlers (Dordick, O'Flaherty, Brounstein, & Sinha, 2017) and to discourage aggressive panhandling, cities may require that panhandlers obtain permits or other forms of authorization from municipal offices to be allowed to panhandle on the street (Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996). These permits resemble solicitation permits, categorizing panhandling as a form of street vending so that municipalities can apply the same behavioral and time-restricted regulations (Scott, 2002). Cities such as Wilmington, Delaware and New Orleans, Louisiana have required panhandlers to obtain permits from the municipal office before being allowed to legally panhandle (Scott, 2002), but there is nothing in the data to illustrate if permitting reduces panhandling or not (Scott, 2002).

Some panhandling scholars argue that credentialing panhandlers is the most optimal and efficient means of regulating panhandling, creating pareto efficiency in the donor-panhandler exchange (Dordick, O'Flaherty, Brounstein, & Sinha, 2017). By partnering with a credentialing agency, municipalities can offer the public access to a record of all credentialled panhandlers using a mobile phone app. These records would help pedestrians make informed decisions about who is considered deserving of their donations and who is undeserving, and would bring together willing donors with worthy recipients in a pareto-efficient transaction (Dordick, O'Flaherty, Brounstein, & Sinha, 2017). These records can also be used to regulate and enforce passive behaviors among panhandlers. In response to increased instances of aggressive panhandling, Slidell, Louisiana introduced permits and credentials to maintain a record of panhandlers to distinguish aggressive panhandlers from passive ones (*Blitch vs Slidell*, 2017). This strategy primarily increases the effectiveness of enforcing bans on aggressive panhandling and arresting offenders, and does

not provide any helpful interventions on behalf of the panhandler (*Blitch vs. Slidell*, 2017).

Vouchers

Beginning in Berkeley, California in 1991 as part of the breakout panhandling program Berkeley Cares, major cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Santa Cruz, California; Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee; Portland, Oregon; Chicago, Illinois; Seattle, Washington; Boulder, Colorado; New York, New York; Boston, Massachusetts; and New Haven, Connecticut instituted voucher programs in an effort to decrease panhandling (Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996). These vouchers were used as an alternative currency, minimizing cash flow on the streets and replacing them with $0.25 vouchers redeemable at grocery stores, shelters, pharmacies, laundromats, clothing stores, and transportation agencies--but not for alcohol or tobacco (Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996). Pedestrians purchase vouchers and disseminate them to the panhandlers they encounter, aiding panhandlers with their small contributions while satisfying the moral sentiments of the donor (Spector, 1996). Unlike the exclusionary policy solutions detailed above that seek to minimize interactions between donors and panhandlers, voucher programs create instances of giving and social interaction, "enabling pedestrians to recognize [panhandlers'] existence" (Spector, 1996, p. 56). Supporters of voucher programs therefore regard vouchers as the most humane and effective solution to panhandling at this time because they encourage more giving among donors, reduce the likelihood of aggressive panhandling, and create more opportunities for interpersonal interactions between the two detached systems (Spector, 1996).

While re-creating the space for donors to interact with panhandlers and recognize their humanity is a positive step toward sustainable solutions, voucher programs cannot be the end-all solution to the panhandling problem. Firstly, they fail to address panhandlers' struggles with addiction, which is arguably the main cause of public panhandling (Spector, 1996). Because panhandlers cannot redeem the vouchers for alcohol or other substances of addiction, they may simply move to another section of the city where there are no vouchers and they can solicit money to satisfy their cravings (Spector, 1996). Secondly, there is the ever-present risk that few pedestrians will continue to buy vouchers or

disseminate them regularly, and evidence shows that in Portland, Oregon the redemption rate of these vouchers shrunk to just 15% (Spector, 1996). And thirdly, the greatest reflection of a voucher program's failure is the implementation of city ordinances that ban panhandling (Spector, 1996). Boston, New York, New Haven, Boulder, Seattle, Portland, and Berkeley have all adopted ordinances or donor-oriented anti-panhandling campaigns to remove panhandlers from the streets, symbolic of the failure of vouchers to sustain a renewed bond between indifferent pedestrians and non-personal panhandlers (Spector, 1996).

Social Services

The policy response to homelessness is largely social service-based, utilizing a network of shelters, soup kitchens, government benefits, addiction recovery agencies, charities, and other services to provide aid to homeless individuals both in kind and monetarily (Lee, Tyler, & Wright, 2010). Since 1990, the public has demonstrated increased "compassion" for the homeless (Tsai, Lee, Byrne, Pietrzak, & Southwick, 2017) by continuously advocating for more affordable housing and more shelters, an increase to the minimum wage, fewer restrictions on sleeping in public (Lee, Tyler, & Wright, 2010; Tsai, Lee, Byrne, Pietrzak, & Southwick, 2017), and increased government spending on aid to the homeless (Link et al, 1995). The public has also demonstrated a willingness to accept personal responsibility in the aid effort, offering to help financially and personally by paying higher taxes to fund housing resources and volunteering at a nearby shelter (Link et al, 1995). As such, for the past twenty-five years the general public attitude toward helping the homeless population has favored social services as the optimal medium of relief (Tsai, Lee, Byrne, Pietrzak, & Southwick, 2017).

The third premise presented in the Public Information Campaign Argument reflects the public's predilection towards charities and social service agencies as the optimal medium of relief for street people (Scott, 2002). However, panhandlers are "an entirely separate group from the homeless" (Spector, 1996, p. 98). As the ineffectiveness of public information campaigns will illustrate, trends show that panhandlers rarely seek help from charities, soup kitchens, drop-in centers, substance abuse treatment programs, and social services despite

the increased public awareness of the existence and specified locations of these services (Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996). This objective observation seems irrational, and the best explanations for this puzzling phenomena are that panhandlers may refuse to utilize services out of personal preference, an unwillingness to fight addiction, an ability to self-sustain through panhandling, and the preference for the scheduling freedom that panhandling offers (Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002, Spector, 1996).

As such, the public is more concerned with a panhandler's fraudulent plea for donations, their personal aggravation for disturbing one's privacy, as well as their own personal safety when asked for donations, than with the actual plight of the person (Dromi, 2012; Ellickson, 1996; Spector, 1996). Policies addressing the panhandling problem reflect this inaccurate understanding of the problem: that "Panhandlers are a stigmatized population associated with rejection of the work ethic, with a propensity to engage in threatening and disruptive behavior, and with negative personal characteristics such as drug and alcohol abuse and mental illness" (Tillotson & Lein, 2017, p. 80).

The Panhandler's Plight

Departing from the public's perception of panhandlers as threatening nuisances (Ellickson, 1996) whose requests best be ignored (Dordick et al, 2017; Lankenau, 1999a) out of concern for public safety (Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002; Spector, 1996) and maintaining the integrity of traditional street civility (Ellickson, 1996), the remainder of this literature review will examine the plight of panhandlers in light of their personhood. To borrow a more humanized description, a panhandler is "a *person* [emphasis added] who publicly and regularly requests money or goods for personal use in a face-to-face manner from unfamiliar others without offering a readily identifiable or valued consumer product or service in exchange for items received" (Lankenau, 1999a, p. 4). While a surface interpretation of this description can align with the media's depiction of panhandlers as parasites (Spector, 1996), it moreover serves as an introduction to the arduous daily existence of these persons and the courageous resilience they muster to overcome their treatment as nonpersons (Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b).

The Dregs of Society

Several studies demonstrate that panhandlers are the dregs of society, embodying the combined effects of uncontrollable life circumstances and the residual failures of a variety of social institutions (Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b; Lee & Farrell, 2003; Smith, 2005; Tillotsen & Lein, 2017). Generally, these persons are demographically similar and share comparable experiences. According to several studies, the average panhandler is an African American male in his 30s or 40s who is unmarried with no children, has few family ties, is unemployed, holds a high school diploma and trade skills, has chronic health issues, and who suffers from mental illness and addiction (Lankenau, 1999b; Lee & Farrell, 2003; Neidig, 2017; Scott, 2002; Tillotson & Lein, 2017). These characteristics highlight the inadequate stores of primary social capital held by these individuals, lacking interpersonal relationships, employment support, and good health (Tillotsen & Lein, 2017). Many panhandlers endured adverse childhood experiences in their working-class family of origin, suffering abandonment, neglect, conflict, homelessness, and a replicated pattern of broken family relationships (Lankenau, 1999a; Tillotsen & Lein, 2017). These traumas were inadequately treated in the child welfare, foster care, and public education systems (Tillotsen & Lein, 2017), resulting in the failure to lift these individuals from the working class as they graduated with only a high school diploma and completing trade school (Lankenau, 1999a; Tillotsen & Lein, 2017). Subject to the physical and environmental dangers of manual labor, many panhandlers suffered debilitating illnesses or injuries impairing their physical stamina and strength such as back or leg problems, poorly healed broken bones, burns, knife and gunshot wounds, diabetes, and exposure to HIV (Lankenau, 1999a).

Because most panhandlers lack primary social capital, they rely on secondary social capital during hard times or when they become unemployed (Lankenau, 1999b; Lee & Farrell, 2003; Tillotsen & Lein, 2017). They initially turn to policies and programs that provide healthcare, supplemental income, housing, food, and disability support (Tillotsen & Lein, 2017). However, this demographic of single, working-age adults with substance abuse and mental health problems and who have become

permanently or temporarily unemployed face severely restricted access to needed benefits and assistance (Tillotsen & Lein, 2017). For example, the number of states providing general assistance for this demographic has decreased while the number of states to impose work requirements and time limits for public assistance has increased (Tillotsen & Lein, 2017). As such, these persons face an unfavorable interaction between restrictive public policies that limit access to supportive benefits and the individual failures of social capital and social institutions that entrench these persons in economic desperation (Lee & Farrell, 2003; Smith, 2005; Tillotsen & Lein, 2017).

Given the adverse life experiences and socioeconomic factors outlined above, it is truly desperation rather than laziness and a preferential rejection of the work ethic that drives persons to panhandle (Lee & Farrell, 2003). Limited by personal struggles with mental health and addiction, panhandling may be the only viable option to support themselves financially (Lee & Farrell, 2003; Smith, 2005), supplementing any government benefits or small charity assistance they may receive to obtain food, toiletries, and other basic needs (Scott, 2002). Disregarding the inhibitors of addiction and mental health, employment prospects are further narrowed by the mismatching trends of the labor market (Jung & Smith, 2007). Inner cities are producing high-skilled jobs that are unattainable for low-skilled, low-income Blacks, while the attainable low-skilled work is being moved out to the suburbs and would require unaffordable commuting (Jung & Smith, 2007). Even if a person chose to make the commute to these jobs, the real value of the minimum wage continues to be driven down as former welfare recipients enter the low-wage job market and increase competition for these low-skilled jobs (Jung & Smith, 2005). As such, a person's choice to panhandle is not only a desperate means to survive, it is economically constrained by the limited opportunities available in the low-skill labor market (Jung & Smith, 2005; Lee & Farrell, 2003). And lastly, recipients of government benefits such as SSI, SSDI, or Social Security are restricted by income guidelines such that, should their income rise above the minimum level, they may lose their subsidized housing (S. Melucci, personal communication, November 16, 2018). As such, panhandlers are structurally constrained by their rational choice to panhandle because they prefer housing over a formal minimum-wage income (Jung & Smith, 2005).

The Skills of the Trade

While panhandling involves informal labor, it does not mean that panhandling is absent of a skill (Lankenau, 1999a). While the typical money-making strategy for panhandlers is their well-developed sales pitch (Scott, 2002), successful panhandling requires strong interpersonal skills that parallel the required skills for success in the service sector (Lankenau, 1999b). Amidst the public's harassment and their explicit efforts to minimize interactions with these individuals (Lankenau, 1999a), panhandlers deflect harassment by managing their emotions and remaining calm under pressure (Lankenau, 1999b). They develop their own repertoires and personas to overcome their treatment as nonpersons (Lankenau, 1999a), confidently, artfully and respectfully (Goldstein, 1993) contracting strangers into a relationship that yields them a regular donation and, if successful, a new friend (Lankenau, 1999a & 1999b). By creating this new donor-panhandler relationship, the panhandler enhances his own dignity and status in the eyes of the donor (Lankenau, 1999b), and the donor begins to regain compassion for the panhandler as he frames the interaction in moral terms and considers his obligation to the person as a fellow human being (Clifford & Piston, 2016; Dromi, 2012). As such, the skills and potentialities of panhandling bear the fruits that are capable of sowing the seed for the enhancement of these disenfranchised individuals as long as the interactions between the panhandlers and the public can be strengthened and renewed (Lankenau, 1999b; Spector, 1996).

HYPOTHESIS

Because the public's proposed solutions to the panhandling problem reflect their overwhelming desire to distance themselves from the reality of the panhandler's social, political, and economic suppression, they deprive themselves of the opportunity to witness the personhood of panhandlers. Instead, they choose to allocate more time, energy, and tax money on strategies and campaigns that mitigate the felt effects of poverty, preferring to remain comfortably detached from the panhandler's plight without seeking to understand the story of poverty from the panhandler's perspective. As demonstrated

by the disappointing results of these proposed solutions, isolating panhandlers and their sufferings from the public eye is an ineffective and inefficient strategy because it permits the public to ignore the reality of poverty and fails to address the direct causes of poverty particular to the panhandler's plight, namely, addiction, untreated mental health, unaffordable healthcare, stable housing, welfare restrictions subject to income constraints, and employment support. Only by coming to a mutual understanding of the panhandlers' resilient experiences and by recognizing their personhood can the two parties reach a more effective solution that addresses these causes. Therefore, this paper posits that a comprehensive, formative residential program designed in consultation with persons who panhandle is the most humane, effective, and sustainable solution to the panhandling problem. The following sections offer a program model for formative, value-based communal living; one that has been developed in consultation with a convenience sample of the Providence, Rhode Island panhandling population and which is available for immediate implementation by social service agencies committed to advancing employment and integration opportunities for persons who panhandle and who may be experiencing homelessness.

METHODOLOGY

Origins

The program proposed below is a comprehensive residential program that combines the models, missions, and philosophies of the Settlement House Movement and three nonprofit service agencies in greater Providence: Year Up-Rhode Island, Amos House, and House of Hope Community Development Corporation. This proposed program, titled "Tom Joad House," offers a unique residential experience similar to the settlement houses inspired by Jane Addams in the early twentieth century. It uses an intentional-community approach to serve the material and spiritual needs of the program's residents while promoting social interaction and mutual learning between the poor and the greater community (Council on Social Work Education & National Alliance of Social Workers, 2001). The one-year program provides personal and professional development opportunities while using a value-based approach to form residents, modeled after Year Up--a one-year workforce development program founded by Gerald Chertavian in 2000 (Chertavian, 2012). Tom Joad House adopts Year Up's models of goal-setting, wraparound support, small group coaching facilitated by staff members, community assemblies, feedback, professional development speaker series, and supervised field training. The supervised field training is partly inspired by Howard Goldstein's experiential learning paradigm (2001), and will utilize a form of democratic learning that allows residents to supplement classroom learning with direct field practice and hands-on problem solving. Tom Joad House utilizes Amos House's model of comprehensive treatment, and will offer vital services to lift residents out of poverty and toward economic self-sufficiency while utilizing a community network of career training and employment assistance, financial advising, food services, and treatment opportunities (Amos House, 2019). The peer mentoring approach outlined below is inspired by House of Hope's Peer Mentoring Program. And lastly, the name Tom Joad House is inspired by the John Steinbeck character who resolves to be in solidarity with those "fighting for a place to stand / for a decent job or a helping hand" (Springsteen, 1995) and for those struggling to be free in today's society.

The program is designed in consultation with Mr. Francis White, a 46-year-old male who panhandled in greater Providence for seven years. Francis was recommended to the author by two outreach social workers at the House of Hope who also served as consultants for the program's design.

Guiding Principles

Mission Statement

The mission of Tom Joad House is to provide individuals who are experiencing poverty with an intentional living community that uses fellowship, goal-setting, wraparound support, and individualized professional development to restore employment opportunities and empower residents through their transition from poverty to economic self-sufficiency.

Vision

Tom Joad House envisions a residential community that promotes dignity, respect, hope, forgiveness, and fellowship in an effort to empower individuals experiencing poverty. By

offering these individuals a hand of welcome, Tom Joad House embraces the resilience and unique experiences of each resident and works to restore employment opportunities through community partnerships, educational and professional development opportunities, experiential learning, and individualized support. Through an intentional community approach that focuses on strengthening relations among residents and among the greater community, Tom Joad House lifts residents out of cyclical poverty and gradually restores the broken bonds between the poor and the public.

Goals

- Advance the dignity of each resident by fostering a supportive, welcoming community that combines fellowship, responsibility, leadership opportunities, and professional development.

- Assist residents with career counselling by connecting them to educational and professional development opportunities and preparing them to transition to the workplace through experiential learning (Goldstein, 2001).

- Promote leadership within residence and in the community by providing opportunities for residents to assume leadership roles throughout the program.

- Equip each resident with the ability to provide and receive constructive feedback.

- Connect each resident to supportive intervention services that will meet their assessed and expressed mental health, medical, addiction, or other personal needs.

- Secure housing for each resident by the completion of the program.

- Unify residents, staff, and community supporters in advocacy efforts to create and improve necessary resources that can competently meet the various and newly-arising needs of residents.

Core Values

The following core values guide all aspects of the program's operations and are central to the program's mission and vision:

Dignity

Tom Joad House affirms and advances the inherent dignity of each individual regardless of class, race, sex, religion, orientation, age, or background, and works to ensure equal opportunity for all dignified persons.

Respect

Tom Joad House asserts that every person is deserving of respect, and requires that every person is given the respect he or she is due.

Hope

Tom Joad House balances its mission and goals on the fulcrum of Hope, committing its staff and encouraging its residents to persist in the hope of realizing justice and opportunity for the disenfranchised.

Forgiveness

Tom Joad House forgives the wrongs of the past and works to realize a baptism of opportunity for all residents.

Fellowship

Tom Joad House champions the power of fellowship and the essentiality of human relationships in realizing our mission and goals. We believe in starting at the personal level and building upon a foundation of fellowship.

Approach

Intentional Community

- Upon entering Tom Joad House, each individual becomes an integral member of a supportive, intentional residential community committed to the values of Dignity, Respect, Hope, Forgiveness, and Fellowship.

- As integral members of a residential community, residents will dine together, reflect together, and advise and support one another. They will learn to affirm one another's dignity, respect one another, instill hope in one another, forgive one another and oneself, and grow in fellowship with one another through daily activities and community responsibilities.

- Each day will begin and conclude with a community assembly. Assemblies will be a time for fellowship, sharing, reflection, and processing. The morning assembly will consist of a staff-led discussion on the learning and development objective for the day, followed by an interactive activity and the chance for group reflection. Residents will be encouraged to share announcements and to organize activities and events such as study halls or recreational activities. Coaching time will occur once each week following morning assembly. Evening assembly will consist of a daily examen where residents and staff will share in small groups and sometimes with the whole group:

1) what they learned about themselves and/or their studies that day, 2) who was a blessing for them that day, and 3) something they could have done better and will try to do better tomorrow. At each assembly, there will be the opportunity to affirm someone in the community for a good deed or for modeling the core values. Residents will each be given opportunities to facilitate assemblies throughout the program.

- Feedback will be a crucial component to the program and to community life. Each resident must be open to receiving feedback from staff, fellow residents, and external instructors/colleagues/supervisors and will be held accountable for applying feedback to their professional and personal lives. At the end of each week, residents will discuss with their coaches the feedback they received throughout the week and how they can apply that feedback going forward.

Contract

- Each resident will be required to sign a contract outlining in detail the expectations of each individual as a resident in the program.

- Residents will be expected to be open to growing in Dignity, Respect, Hope, Forgiveness, and Fellowship; to help their neighbors grow in these values; and to use these values to guide their actions and personal and professional choices.

- Residents will be expected to receive feedback from staff and other residents, and to give feedback in return.

- Residents will be required to commit to receiving vital services for mental health and wellness, detoxification, addiction treatment, personal and/or group counselling, and/or any other supportive intervention services that will meet their assessed and expressed needs.

- Residents will be required to commit to educational and career development opportunities accessed through potential community partnerships with the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Rhode Island Local Initiatives Support Corporation (RI-LISC).

- Upon completion of their educational and career development programs, residents will be required to apply for, secure, and maintain

a full-time internship, apprenticeship, or practicum which will constitute their experiential learning. They will meet regularly with their coach and career counsellor to establish and pursue career goals.

- The contract will be enforced using a points system. Points are awarded for meeting expectations for the week. Should a resident fail to meet expectations, points will be deducted from the contract according to the severity of the offense. Should a resident's point total equal zero, a resident will receive a probationary period to rebuild his/her point total and will meet regularly with his/her coach and other staff members to address personal or external problems detracting from the resident's success in the program. Failure to demonstrate improvement and meet expectations during the probationary period will lead to the resident's resignation from the program. Resignation is a last-resort action that may only be utilized after all supportive efforts have been exhausted. Ultimately, it must be the resident's choice to resign as evidenced through his/her failure to demonstrate a willingness to receive support and improve behavior.

Coaching

- Each resident will be assigned a staff member who will serve as his/her coach for the entirety of the program. Each coach will serve three or four residents, constituting a small Coaching Group.

- Each week, coaches will meet with their coaching group for an hour to discuss the theme and objectives for the week, assess any immediate or ongoing needs or challenges that the resident(s) is facing, and to utilize fellow residents and the coach for support. The coaching group is highly encouraged to be in regular communication outside of coaching time and to engage in activities and rituals specific to their unique group dynamic.

Peer Mentoring

- Each resident will be given a Peer Mentor, a volunteer person from the community who has experienced chronic homelessness, addiction, and/or unemployment and now has stable housing, is sober, and is employed or economically stable.

- Residents are expected to contact their peer mentor weekly, either through a form of personal communication or in person. Residents are encouraged to ask their mentors questions about their professional or personal life experiences, to utilize their professional network, and to promote the mission and objectives of the program to their mentors.

Education and Professional Development

- Upon entering Tom Joad House, each resident will work individually with his/her coach and a career counsellor to discuss previous career experience and establish new immediate and long-term educational and professional goals to build upon his/her previous experience.

- Upon establishing these goals, each resident will undergo an extensive readiness assessment to measure his/her level of education, previous work experience, and knowledge of his/her respective field. Based on this assessment, residents will be carefully advised to apply for educational and/or professional development opportunities that match their aspirations and competency levels. They will immediately enroll in these programs upon their acceptance.

- Should a partnership with the Rhode Island DHS and the RI-LISC be established, each resident will enroll in an educational or professional development program in their area of interest. The readiness assessments and career advising will determine each resident's placement in a specific program.

- Upon completion of his/her respective educational and training program(s), each resident will apply for, secure, maintain, and complete an internship/apprenticeship/ practicum in his/her field of interest for the remainder of the program to engage in experiential learning. Coaches, career counsellors, and other staff members will support residents through the internship/ apprenticeship/practicum application process, transitional onboarding period, experiential phase, and converting the internship/apprenticeship/ practicum to a full-time job or securing a job elsewhere.

- During the experiential learning phase, residents will be required to meet with their supervisor on a weekly basis to receive feedback. Supervisors' feedback will be documented using a worksheet template and will be submitted by the resident to his/her coach. Supervisors will be asked to comment on the resident's strengths and growth areas, and to briefly explain the reasoning behind their feedback. This weekly assignment will serve as a tool to measure the resident's progress and development, and his/her ability to apply feedback.

Classes in Residence

- Volunteers from the greater community will be asked to serve as instructors for classes in residence which will be offered in the evening. These classes will be tailored to the assessed needs of the residents.

- Standard classes may include: GED Preparation, Personal Finance and Budgeting, Literacy, and English as a Second Language (ESL).

Weekly Professional Development/Witness Guest Speakers

- Each week, Tom Joad House will host diverse members of the community to provide residents with wisdom and witness about their own professional development, and to bear witness to the challenges and experiences unique to the residents. Guest speakers will speak according to the weekly theme and will serve as models of success and professionalism, as potential resources to the residents, and as witnesses to the residents' resilience and the community's devotion to restoring opportunities.

- Potential guest speakers should be, but are not limited to being: professionals in a relevant field, persons who have experienced homelessness and have fought addiction, corporate executives, Peer Mentors, representatives from service agencies in the community, public servants, professors and students from local universities, nonprofit executives, housing authorities, and attorneys, to name a few. Hosting a diversity of guest speakers with various backgrounds and experiences must be a priority.

- It will be customary that a resident introduces each speaker. Speakers will be asked to submit a brief biography of themselves, their work experiences, and their background. They will also be asked to share something personal that will elicit a

connection to the residents. A resident will introduce the speaker by reading the biography to the audience to practice public speaking.

- It will also be customary that the guest speaker be introduced to one or two residents to learn their stories. Each week, residents will be asked to share their personal narratives, their journey to Tom Joad House, and their goals. The purpose of this custom is to create the space for social interaction at the personal level between residents and members of the greater community. This strategy will seek to gradually break the stigmas prescribed to persons who panhandle and experience poverty and homelessness, and to establish friendly relations between the public and the poor.

Recreation

- After dinner and prior to evening assembly, evenings will be a time of recreation.

- Specific recreational activities will be subject to the creative discretion of the residents. They may choose the activities in which they want to participate.

- Board games, playing cards, films, literature, and intellectually stimulating activities should always be available.

- Opportunities for self-reflection, mindfulness, exercise, and wellness should be regularly offered.

- Celebrations and group outings will be held at the completion of each six-week phase to award hard work and incentivize residents to achieve their goals.

Opportunities for Leadership

- Residents will be highly encouraged to assume leadership roles within the living community and, later, in the workplace and greater community.

- An Advisory Board will be established, comprised of residents democratically selected by their fellow residents. This board will meet with staff to provide feedback on the program, suggest improvements, and share innovative and creative ideas for the program.

- Residents, staff, community supporters, and members of the Advisory Board will work in conjunction with one another to advocate for

the creation or improvement of necessary resources that will meet the varied and newly-arising needs of residents. Advocacy will work from the grassroots and will allow residents to use their voice in promoting social justice advocacy.

- Committees may be formed to reflect the interests and needs of residents. For instance, there may be a Recreations Committee to oversee recreational activities and promote events and activities within the residence.

- Through these leadership opportunities, residents will learn responsibility, accountability, problem-solving skills, and teamwork while being counselled by staff members who will be ever-vigilant for opportunities to empower residents to assume leadership.

Housing

- Tom Joad House is a transitional program and therefore serves residents as a transitional home. Residents will work with housing specialists to secure affordable housing for when they complete the program. The long-term goal is for residents to be economically self-sufficient in their careers to the point where they can afford their own housing and will no longer need housing assistance.

- Should an individual wish to participate in the program but has already secured housing, the individual may enroll in the program as a commuter and still participate in the program's functions. Board members and staff should continuously discuss further innovative strategies include commuters in the program.

- Should housing be unavailable for a resident upon his/her completion of the program, Tom Joad House will partner with housing agencies to provide transitional housing in the interim and work closely with the resident to secure independent housing.

Higher Education

- As a long-term goal, residents will have access to higher education through partnerships with local colleges and other institutions of higher learning.

- These partnerships will ensure that residents have the opportunity receive an affordable education that will help them be upwardly mobile in their career field.

A Reconciliation of Personhood: Addressing the Panhandling Problem by Restoring Opportunities through Community Development

Weekly Program Outline

Week	Objectives
Phase 1	**Self Awareness and Building Trust**
Week 1 Theme: Dignity	● Embrace identity and personal narrative ● Share stories and identities with others ● Foster inclusion through team building ● Introduce Tom Joad House Support Network
Week 2 Theme: Respect	● Affirm Staff's respect for residents ● Respect self and others ● Learning how to provide constructive feedback
Week 3: Theme: Hope	● Reflect on and honestly discuss hopes and dreams ● Recognize the challenges of others and oneself ● Encourage Hope through conversations on assets and trust
Week 4 Theme: Forgiveness	● Reconcile the past—those who have wronged us, and reconciling ourselves and our past ● Learn from mistakes ● Forgiveness exercises
Week 5 Theme: Fellowship	● Define Fellowship ● What is Community Life? ● Know your support network
Week 6 Theme: Diving In	● Finalize education and training plans ● Prepare residents for transition to next educational or professional opportunity ● Affirm support now and throughout program
Phase 2	**Embracing Learning and New Opportunities**
Week 7 Theme: Responsibility	● Understand personal responsibility and consequences of actions ● Know responsibility to self and as member of a community ● Discuss challenges associated with responsibility
Week 8 Theme: Curiosity	● Engage and encourage residents' unique interests ● Plant seeds for leadership opportunities within residence ● Introduce skills for asking good questions
Week 9 Theme: Resourcefulness	● Work together to identify personal network, skills, and strengths ● Develop ability to recognize resources and assets ● Learn to identify opportunities and potential connections/resources
Week 10 Theme: Teamwork	● Know how to be a team player ● Overcome challenges as a team--Tom Joad Olympics ● Affirm others and know to ask for help
Week 11 Theme: Initiative	● Learn ways to take initiative ● Practice taking initiative--incentivize residents to perform a task or complete project that they self-start
Week 12 Theme: Problem-Solving	● Practice problem solving through simulated activities ● Encourage resilience and determination through problem solving
Phase 3	**Being a Leader in the Workplace and in the Community**
Week 13 Theme: Humility	● Understand that humility is central to leadership ● Understand personal limits and growth areas ● Receive feedback humbly ● Practice gratitude within the community
Week 14 Theme: Values	● Identify own values ● Learn how to lead by values ● Discuss Core Values and explain their relevance
Week 15 Theme: Service	● Engage in service opportunity as a group ● Long-term Activity: Serving one's neighbor regularly throughout the next few weeks/months
Week 16 Theme: Role Modeling	● Identify good role models and sharing them with group ● Reflect on role models ● What it means to be a role model/Who they can be role models for
Week 17 Theme: Communication	● Communicate with others effectively and in a timely manner ● Provide direct feedback ● Ask clear questions ● Use electronic communication formally

Week 18	● Commit to justice for self and fellow community members
	● Build confidence to advocate
Theme: Justice	● Empower neighbors through advocacy and organizing
Phase 4	**Demonstrates Workplace Readiness**
Week 19	● Know how to professionally dress
	● Challenge: Be on time for all activities in residence
Theme: Professionalism	● Know how to set professional boundaries and practice boundary setting
	● Review resumes and implement recommended changes
Week 20	● Practice mock interviewing
	● Research company/interviewers
Theme: Interviewing	● Practice asking relevant and appropriate questions
Week 21	● Practice networking with other residents
Theme: Networking	● Host a networking night with professionals from the community
Week 22	● Introduce the John Wooden definition of Success
Theme: Thoroughness	● Demonstrate willingness to work diligently and thoroughly
Week 23	● Review importance of feedback
	● Apply feedback to thinking and behavior in professional manner
Theme: Applying Feedback	● Seek examples of how to apply feedback
Week 24	● Comfortable asking questions
	● Demonstrate resourcefulness
Theme: Seeks Help	● Know to seek help from colleague instead of making costly mistakes
Phase 5	**Setting Sights on the Future**
Week 25	● Identify SMART life goals for short-term and long-term future
	● Discuss methods and tactics to realize goals
Theme: Setting Goals	● Identify supportive people and organizations who can help realize these goals
Week 26	● Affirm others and learn to affirm self
	● Identify skills and personal strengths
Theme: Confidence	● Reflect on accomplishments thus far, identifies skills
Week 27	● Demonstrate an enthusiasm for life
	● Identify personal struggles and obstacles
Theme: Enthusiasm	● Use coaching/support network to persist through obstacles
Week 28	● Exhibit tenacity for goals
	● Introduce role models of ambition--underdog stories
Theme: Ambition	● Plan steps strategically
Week 29	● Reflect on previous challenges and overcoming them
	● Share experiences with group
Theme: Resilience	● Affirm resilience of self and others
	● Recognize the establishment of new support network
Week 30	● "Next Pitch" mentality
	● Practice making an "Ask"
Theme: Persistence	● Encourage boldness and fairness
Phase 6	**Utilizing Network and Sustaining Connections**
Week 31	● Network informally at work
	● Host networking night in residence
Theme: Conversation	● Share personal narrative comfortably with other professionals
Week 32	● Know importance of saying thank you
	● Write thank you notes to networking acquaintances
Theme: Gratitude	● Demonstrate appreciation at work and in residence
	● Write letter to someone from the past whom the resident is grateful for
Week 33	● Help connect peers to opportunities within own network
Theme: Elevating Others	● Embody selfless teamwork at work and in residence
Week 34	● Utilize LinkedIn
Theme: Social Networking	● Edit social media profile(s) and ensure professionalism is protected
Week 35	● Simulate transition from one company to another
	● Understand etiquette of transitioning roles
Theme: Transitioning	● Know how to remain in touch with coworkers transitioning roles
Week 36	● Encourage residents to reach out to someone they lost along the way
Theme: Reaching Out	● Practice asking forgiveness and restoring a connections

Phase 7	Hope and Faith in Yourself
Week 37 Theme: A Saint's Past	● Reflect on past struggles ● Confront mistakes ● Forgive self and other offenders
Week 38 Theme: Gift of Experience	● Reflect on lessons from past ● Share reflections with others ● Present personal narrative to others in light of new self
Week 39 Theme: Odyssey	● Recognize the morals of the process ● Appreciate the journey ● Practice self-reflection and discuss outlooks for the future ● Support residents to turn their new page
Week 40 Theme: Belief	● Acknowledge support from staff ● "If you don't believe in yourself, know that someone believes in you, so believe in that." -Sara Enright
Week 41 Theme: Closure	● Meet with coaching groups to give closure to past and prepare for new beginnings
Week 42 Theme: Embracing New Beginnings	● Justify hopes and dreams with coaching group ● Assess needs and growth areas for self-sustainable living
Phase 8	Demonstrates Readiness for Self-Sustainability
Week 43 Theme: Personal Finance	● Create a budget and learn to utilize budgeting tools ● Understand credit ● Assess benefit eligibility and planning for higher income
Week 44 Theme: Housing	● Understand housing process ● Work closely with housing specialists to assess individual housing situation ● Create plan for short-term and long-term housing
Week 45 Theme: Health Care	● Assess remaining health care needs ● Apply for health insurance if still not covered ● Understand basic health care jargon ● Find primary physician and dentist
Week 46 Theme: Family	● Acknowledge the family created in Tom Joad House ● Discuss hopes for family life going forward
Week 47 Theme: Employment Forecasting	● Discuss long-term plans for employment ● Discuss educational goals
Week 48 Theme: Summations	● Banquet and Awards ● Assess further support ● Introduce Alumni Network ● Graduation

CONCLUSION

Restating the Problem

The panhandling problem challenges the traditional middle class assumptions about social responsibility, individual liberty, and the work ethic by placing these values in direct confrontation with systemic economic suppression, unequal opportunity, and the cyclical perpetuation of poverty. Historically, this confrontation has spurred the middle class to advocate for municipal policies that isolate panhandlers at the fringes of society in an attempt to mitigate their disillusioned and uncomfortable feelings toward poverty. Yet as evidenced above, policy efforts to marginalize, parasitize, criminalize, and stigmatize the panhandling population have failed to reduce the problem and only briefly delay the public's inevitable confrontations with poverty. As such, in order to sufficiently address the panhandling problem, the middle class must enter into this confrontation by engaging the panhandling population interpersonally. Through interpersonal interactions and relationship building, the middle class may come to recognize a panhandler's personhood and arrive at a mutual understanding of the difficult yet resilient life experiences he or she endures. By restoring this damaged relationship, both parties may, together, reach a more effective solution that directly addresses the causes of poverty and reverses the systems that have barred the panhandling population from economic stability.

Hypothesis and Grassroots Support

This paper hypothesized that a comprehensive, communal, residential program designed in consultation with persons who panhandle is the most effective, humane, and sustainable solution to the panhandling problem. The program proposed above would provide individuals experiencing poverty with an intentional living community that uses fellowship, goal-setting, wraparound support, and individualized professional development to restore employment opportunities and empower individuals through their transition from poverty to economic self-sufficiency. Designed in consultation with Mr. Francis White and two outreach workers from the House of Hope Community Development Corporation, this grassroots program has the potential to be a driving force in bridging the divide between the middle class and the panhandling population and enhancing the well-being and economic opportunities of both populations.

Concluding Statement on Paradigmatic Shift

To conclude, sufficiently addressing the panhandling problem requires a paradigmatic shift at the municipal level that places a heavier emphasis on creating and sustaining opportunities for the person in poverty. Since the 1980s and especially since the 1990s, policies that treat panhandlers as a collection of impersonal nuisances have failed to prevent the widespread propagation of homelessness, addiction, crime, mental illness, disease, violence and other social problems symptomatic of panhandling and poverty. As such, policy-makers need a new paradigm to follow that both recognizes the social forces contributing to poverty and works together with the individual, group, and community to redirect those forces toward an economically viable path. Programs similar to the one proposed above that seek to enhance the educational and employment opportunities of the person in poverty and that bridge social divides across classes have the potential to transform the narrative of poverty and realize the principles on which America was founded: liberty, equality, and freedom.

Implications for Social Work Practice, Research, and Policy

This paper contributes an innovative evidenced-based residential model that combines a spiritual element of community life with concrete opportunities for treatment, professional development, and educational advancement. As stewards of human dignity and champions for social justice, this paper calls on social workers to ally with the panhandling population to create and promote service models which empower persons in poverty to realize their personal and career goals while bridging social connections among the poor and the middle class. In order to meet the varying needs of the panhandling population, further research must be conducted on how and why physical disability, mental illness, and criminal history negatively affect employment opportunities for adults in poverty. A historical structural analysis of the limited employment opportunities of persons with physical and cognitive disabilities and persons with criminal backgrounds should be prioritized. Finally, this paper calls on social workers to partner with the panhandling population in advocating for the protection of rights among persons who panhandle, and for policies that recognize the personhood of the poor and that promote social interaction among the poor and middle class.

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