



A Community *United*

Florida Business Leaders' Summit
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A Community United – Hope Place

Hope Place in Daytona Beach is a temporary shelter for homeless students and homeless families with children. Hope Place adaptively reuses a school that had fallen into limited use. More than a shelter, Hope Place offers restorative programming for families and students experiencing homelessness. As importantly, Hope Place’s programs and facility are being integrated into the surrounding community.

There are twin perspectives to this white paper: it describes the program and it describes the process for developing Hope Place. The shelter is a model program realized out of a private-public partnership that can be replicated by other communities. Hope Place reflects the best intentions of local government and the private sector, including non-profit agencies, area businesses, faith congregations, and individual citizens. The process of model for action is transferable elsewhere. The process is not limited to addressing homelessness; it can be used to address other community needs.

There are four components to the program and process in developing Hope Place:

- a clear problem
- a clear plan
- champions- public and private sector
- political will

Each component is discussed below. The box insets provide a thumbnail outline of essential *process* consideration, while the narrative body presents *project* details.

A Clear Problem

It may seem overly simplistic to say the first step to ignite political will is to set forth a clear problem statement. Yet ignoring this main step stymies countless projects. A clear problem is defined in a way that:

- Reflects consensus of stakeholders
- Is worthwhile and non-trivial
- Is manageable
- Reflects common sense

Disagreement about a problem hinders the development of a response. The lack of a unified view stalls projects at the discussion stage. The lack of consensus frustrates momentum to devising a response and taking action.

HUM’s expertise in working with the homeless gave them the knowledge of the subpopulations of homelessness and their differing needs. HUM’s successful history of managing services helped them specify a particular population (or problem). Stakeholders recognized that the identified problem made sense, was manageable, and tackled a real need within the community.

A Clear Problem

For nearly 40 years homeless prevention and intervention services in Volusia County have been provided by Halifax Urban Ministries (HUM). HUM is a nonprofit corporation of the Atlantic Central Conference of the United Methodist Church. HUM began a hot-meal program in 1981. The hot-meal program receives donations of food and is staffed by volunteers from local churches of all denominations. The hot-meal program continues today with over 30,000 volunteer-hours per year. Recognizing other needs of the homeless, HUM expanded its services, providing hygiene and ancillary functions such as shower

and laundry facilities, mail pick-up service, a medical clinic, and employment assistance. In 2008 HUM opened a small family shelter on their North Street campus.

The population of homeless and near-homeless is multi-faceted. “Homelessness” is not a single uniform type. Recognition that there are categories of homelessness that can be addressed in different ways is the basis and the genius of Hope Place. Differentiation of categories of homeless – single adults, families with minor children, couples, unaccompanied youth, and the chronic homeless – permits identification of similarities and differences in the needs of each subgroup.

Homeless families are typically the situational homeless. Families may become homeless due to a parent’s loss of a job, a health condition, or other strain on the family’s finances which leads to eviction or forced departure from the home. Hope Place provides temporary and short-term housing for children and families. Temporary housing in a safe environment enables families to regain stability and rebuild their lives with their children; unsheltered students can successfully complete their education.

The single chronically homeless population has issues and challenges that could include substance abuse and mental illness and/or lack of job skills and education. Hope Place does not shelter single or chronically homeless “street people”. It is not a domestic abuse shelter, not a mental health treatment center, not a drug treatment center, not a public soup kitchen or food pantry, and it is not a walk-up center.

This differentiation in the homeless population is the basis for the clear statement of the problem that the facility addresses. Hope Place has a clear sense of the population it serves: families with minor children and unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 without a guardian or stable housing.

In some instances, identification of a particular problem (i.e. problem specification) may lead to alteration or cessation of allied service initiatives. However, this is not an automatic result. The Hope Place project did not alter HUM’s services to the chronically homeless. HUM continues to offer its daily meal program, as well as prevention and intervention services at its North Street complex. HUM has turned the emptied rooms into housing for another segment of the homeless population – sheltering twenty single adult homeless veterans.

Since the Hope Place partnership, Volusia County government has partnered with two other municipalities for shelters serving other segments of the homeless population.

A Clear Plan

The second step necessary in making change is having a well-defined plan for action. A clear plan specifies action steps in sequence. Milestones are established as a mechanism to track project progress. Other key features of the project plan and process are highlighted in this section.

One shortcoming of the prior HUM family shelter was its location. The shelter was bounded by commercial and vacant properties. The neighborhood was hobbled with crime, poverty and drugs. The shelter was on the same campus where HUM’s daily meal program and other services for the chronically homeless adults were offered. There was scant space for outside play for children. Nearly 150 homeless families annually declined to stay at the shelter because they did not feel comfortable living in the neighborhood and being around people who had been on the streets for years who accessed services in the same complex.

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| <p>A Clear Plan</p> <p>Having a clear plan does imply rigidity. Indeed, a clear plan must be capable of addressing the identified problem with sufficient flexibility to modify strategies as conditions warrant, while maintaining fidelity to the original goals.</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a lead agency?• How will the project be funded?• Are tasks properly sequenced for action/completion?• Does the plan accommodate contingencies for changing conditions?• Can the plan be carried in view of changing personnel?• Are “win-wins” built into the plan? |
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A second shortcoming of the former HUM family shelter was its limited capacity. Families with children are believed to comprise about 40% of the local homeless population; most of them headed by single mothers. Yet only 24 rooms with 94 beds were available at HUM’s facility on North Street. Approximately 90 families were served annually.

Unaccompanied teens in school were recognized as an underserved group of the homeless; they comprise a group compatible to house with homeless families with children. The Volusia County school system identified over 2,000 of its students as homeless in 2014. 180 of the identified children did not have a family and were on their own when the afternoon school bell rang. These teens slept in friends’ homes or on the streets. This is not conducive to academic progress or success.

Facility Characteristics

Hope Place reclaims a former school for full use. Hurst Elementary School was built in 1961 and operated for approximately 40 years until it ceased offering classes for elementary students. The school board continued to maintain the structures, using one building for a maintenance office and another for teacher professional development training.

Retrofitting prior government buildings is not unheard of, but this use of a former school is novel. The school sits on a relatively large lot of 15 acres in a residential neighborhood. The large acreage and residential environment addressed the shortcoming of the former HUM family

shelter. The property was more appealing and provided opportunities for a safer, more secure facility with large outdoor recreation areas for children.

Hope Place can accommodate up to 300 people – more than three times the number of the largest family shelter on the Volusia County’s east side. The campus consists of multiple buildings, accommodating varying populations. One building serves as emergency housing for up to 150 people; 26 rooms have up to six beds in each. Emergency housing can be expanded to a second building. A third structure has nine apartments for families who are transitioning from emergency shelter to independent living. The expectation is that most families will stay for approximately 90 days before moving into permanent housing; although some families may be allowed to stay longer.

There are beds for 32 youth aged 18-24 who are own their own, enrolled in, and attending school. The youth live in dormitory style rooms in a separate section. The unsheltered teens/young adults have house parents/mentors. Hope Place’s goal for youth is to provide a safe and secure place so they can succeed academically, which advances their long-term stability and breaks the cycle of homelessness.

Residents are admitted into Hope Place based on referrals from social service agencies and schools. Individuals are prescreened during intake to make sure their background makes them a good candidate for a family center and neighborhood. A criminal history and drug test are part of the background review.

Programming

HUM realized early on that the key to getting the buy-in for Hope Place was a solid operational plan for both populations, homeless families with children and unaccompanied youth. A team of professionals and stakeholders began the process of building an operational plan for homeless families with children and for unaccompanied youth. The plan covered every aspect of operation from intake and admission to a successful discharge and follow-along services. The plan was in written form, continued to be refined, and was disseminated to interest groups, both public and private, during the process of the project.

Services cover basic needs, job and education assistance, and fulfilling health goals. Classes in interviewing and resume development, budgeting, parenting and life skills, assistance in finding employment and housing, and GED classes help families move into permanent housing and self-sufficiency. Computer access, job skills classes, and counseling help students achieve academic success.

The strength of Hope Place is in its many public and private sector partnerships. Volusia County government, the Volusia County school board, area businesses, faith communities, and citizen supporters have joined with Halifax Urban Ministries to offer services at Hope Place. Child care is provided onsite for children aged birth to 12 years old and funded through the Early Learning Coalition. Catholic Charities has an onsite office offering counseling, staff training, and

parenting classes. The employees of a local home improvement store built a community garden; and a local nursery provided the plants. The garden is tended by residents and the produce used for meals. A new community library is located adjacent to the facility along with a community playground. A local bank provides budgeting classes for residents. Job fairs are held onsite routinely with residents taking advantage of employment opportunities. Community donations have stocked a “store” and residents are allowed to “shop” for household items as they prepare to move to permanent housing. A local furniture store helps provide furnishings for resident’s new home.

The shelter includes free laundry facilities for residents. Storage areas are provided so that families and youth have a dedicated area for stowing possessions that cannot be accommodated in living quarters. An outdoor playground, indoor leisure areas, a library, and the community garden present additional opportunities for individuals to improve their overall lifestyle and health. A local church has committed to further development of an internal courtyard to create recreation and social spaces for the families.

Funding

Hope Place has been funded with public and private dollars. Several municipal governments allocated funding without restriction, but county government funds were originally and exclusively designated for capital costs (i.e. construction). Subsequently, in 2017 due to public discussion of another project for the homeless, Volusia County Government agreed to fund operating costs of the shelter through a matching grant. Such funding is for a limited time period and will be reviewed annually. Hope Place also received federal and state grant funds for homelessness and additional grants are being sought. A campaign is underway to receive annual sponsorships for all rooms from individuals, churches, and businesses to underwrite ongoing operational expenses.

Contingency planning

As noted in the inset box, “A Clear Plan”, the shelter plan was not static but evolving. Key parameters were identified at the outset but they also accommodated unforeseen events. Both literal and figurative benefits adhere in planning for contingencies. One literal benefit is having the resources to address financial shortcomings. Other common literal benefits are having the ability to deal with legal and staffing issues as they arise. A figurative benefit is that the foresight to anticipate difficulties helps build decision makers’ support. Having answers for “what can go wrong” increases confidence that the plan is well-defined, has been thought through, and will be achieved.

The Hope Place plan was robust enough to weather changing personnel. Halifax Urban Ministries had three changes in its executive director between plan formulation in 2011 and shelter opening in early 2018. The strength of HUM’s Board of Directors provided the stability and acumen to keep the project on track. The Volusia County Schools experienced a change in school superintendents during the decision period and the property transfer. Volusia County Government also experienced change in key leaders. The Volusia County Council is comprised

of seven members who set policy for county government. Members are elected to four-year terms. The 2016 elections changed nearly half of the council's seats, with three new council members elected. Changes in key decision makers increase the likelihood of stalls, restarts, directional shifts, and sometimes, are the death knell for a project. At a minimum, time must be dedicated to educating the new leaders and garnering their support for the problem, the proposed plan, and the necessity of action.

The plan encountered speed bumps unrelated to changing decision makers. One was the increased project cost for construction. A rising economy restored demand in the construction industry for workers and supplies, which translated to increased costs for renovating the campus. Independent of economic recovery, Hope Place involved repurposing existing structures that had been built under earlier building codes. Meeting new codes led to added cost in the kitchen and children's programming areas. The reuse of existing structures, while more-cost efficient overall, also created unknowns in the project scope, which served to depress the number of competitive subcontractor bids. Two hurricanes during the construction phase impacted the completion timeline and budget. Hurricanes Matthew and Irma occurred within eleven months of each other (October 2016 and September 2017, respectively) again driving up the cost of construction.

Part of the School Board's concern in selling the property was relocating the maintenance and teacher training functions that were held on the Hurst campus. To address this, Volusia County Government offered to host the teacher development classes for up to three years in county office space. And despite taking ownership of the property, Halifax Urban Ministries agree to let school maintenance operations continue on the Hurst campus for up to three years. Other financial arrangements were negotiated between Volusia County government and School Board.

Another aspect of any project is to have a long-range plan. A clear plan needs to focus not just on immediate and short-term needs, but to speak to future requirements. Decision makers and funders planned for the expanded Hope Place campus, as well as considering the shelter's long-term operations. The HUM board engaged supporters through its long-term funding plan which includes an endowment to fund continuing operations.

Champions - Public and Private Sector

A clear problem statement and a clear plan are necessary but not sufficient ingredients for producing action or change. Partnerships are critical. Yet it is also axiomatic that there is a leader – the champion. It is the champion who drives and sustains the work for project success.

Champions-Public and Private Sector

A majority of successful projects involve collaborations. However, it is also axiomatic that there is a driving force that leads the effort – a champion. Identifying champions does not negate that there may be multiple advocates or champions on the plan to achieving success.

Characteristics of the champion include:

- Commitment
- Connections
- Charisma

Hosseini had a track record of success; she founded the Food Brings Hope (FBH) charity to address student hunger. The food program started in Volusia County schools to address student/family hunger when school is not in session. Currently 800-1,000 bags of food a month are carried home by students for their weekend and holiday meals.

Dinneen also had a track record of success; shepherding the County Council to a positive financial position as well as being a trusted advisor to the county council members.

Key partners and advocates of Hope Place included HUM's executive directors, its board of directors, local community leaders, and a few key leaders within county government. Forough Hosseini, a local business executive and philanthropist, has been the most consistent and visible community champion of the project.

A former HUM Executive Director Troy Ray had the vision for a larger family shelter that could offer more comprehensive services in a safer location. He identified the vacant elementary school as compatible to the needs

of a family shelter. The property consisted of multiple structures, which could provide separation of resident populations (families and unaccompanied youth) and function (sleeping quarters, feeding programming, and leisure). In 2012 Ray approached Volusia County school authorities about gaining use of a long-vacant school. The inquiry stalled.

Ray shared his vision with Hosseini, who was the architect of Food Brings Hope (FBH), a food bag carryout program for students. Hosseini reached out to school officials and was able to secure a meeting. She and HUM Executive Director Ray met with the Volusia County School Superintendent on November 12, 2012. The superintendent was not interested in selling the school at that time. A year later the superintendent was ready to talk about selling the Hurst Elementary School campus to HUM for a homeless shelter.

Hosseini has been a tenacious champion of Hope Place. She approached the County Manager of Volusia County government, Jim Dinneen, about financial support shortly after the school district signaled its openness to discussing a school purchase. Dinneen became the public-sector champion as clear parameters were set before hearing a presentation about Hope Place: the county would not own or operate the facility, nor would it pay for ongoing expenses. A one-time capital expenditure was the only support to be considered.¹ Dinneen was insistent that the project be able to clearly show results and show long-term sustainability.

¹ This restriction was later reversed; see discussion under "Political Will".

HUM realized that a successful build-out of Hope Place would require specific expertise. Hosseini built a Hope Place Building Committee comprised of local building experts from the private sector, the educational arena, the county government, to include Dinneen, and members of the HUM Board of Directors. By resolution of the HUM Board of Directors, authority was given to this Committee to make any decisions to include construction and monetary issues necessary to get the physical facility built.

With two clear champions, Hosseini and Dinneen, unforeseen obstacles were overcome. Both individuals were dedicated to the daily issues and attention to detail that made the project successful. Working through the Hope Place Building Committee, realistic goals were set, building costs were reduced, and work was completed on a timely basis. Donations from the private sector of approximately \$400,000 in labor and materials ensured the project stayed within budget and also helped secure buy-in from the local private sector.

Part of the champions' success lies with their commitment to the issue and their personal charisma in conveying to others. Hosseini is no exception. She pressed the necessity and urgency of homelessness with decision makers in all corners of the community. Hosseini made multiple presentations about Hope Place to secure the commitment of the Volusia County Council officials and community partners for financial support. Her passion for the issue was evident in her presentation. Hosseini challenged everyone to help in becoming a community to eradicate hunger and provide a safe space for families with children and homeless students – she set an ambitious time frame of four years to do so (by 2020).

Political Will

Many a good idea has languished because conditions were not right for moving ahead. When government is involved, whether directly or indirectly, threshold to pass tend to multiply. The commodity of political will may prove key to achieving success.

Political will is more than majority of public opinion. Political will refers to the fact that there may be some political cost for council members in decision making since an action will please some and displease other. Political will refers to that collective amount of political benefits and costs that would result from taking any given action (passing a budget, ordinance, law, or zoning).² For the family shelter there were more favorable elements than unfavorable to tilt the decisional equation.

² Retrieved June 1 2018 from <https://www.quora.com>.

Political Will

Pundits assert when government does not act that it “lacks political will”. Academics have difficulty defining political will, with many asserting that political will “is the sine qua non of policy success which is never defined except by its absence” (Hammergren, 1998).

Suffice it to say that for the Hope Place project political will was established and helped by:

- Common understanding of a particular problem
- Commitment to supporting the proposed solution
- Few barriers to action
- Having “win-wins” to offset criticism

First, the shelter location presented fewer problems for county decision makers. The property was centrally located, three to five blocks from three cities (Daytona Beach, Holly Hill, and Ormond Beach), yet sited in an unincorporated pocket of the county. This meant that the county had controlling jurisdiction; the other municipal governments did not have the authority to oppose the project.

Second, the property’s physical layout was not conducive to very many other functions. With multiple buildings, a cafeteria and gymnasium and large campus, the former school would require considerable demolition and reconstruction if reimagine for other purposes. There was probably no other practical use for the property unless it was reused as a school – that is, until the idea to use it as a family shelter gained currency. The fit between the physical plan of an elementary school and a family shelter was good.

The third favorable element was financial. The structures had been well maintained by the school board. The value of existing foundations, walls, and utility infrastructures already in the ground was conservatively estimated at \$6 million. The county was asked to capitalize on this infrastructure investment with another \$3.5 million. Taxpayers who had already paid once in building the school were asked for a smaller investment. The timing for the Hope Place project was financially favorable. The economy was improving; the recession of 2011 had ended. Volusia County also had several capital projects concluding and unobligated reserves, which meant funding could be redirected to Hope Place.

Upon preliminary verbal agreement for transferring the school for reuse as a family shelter, formal legal steps were necessary. The first step was for the county to purchase the school from the Volusia County School Board. That agreement for purchase and sale included the terms: (1) a purchase price of \$200,000 and \$10,700 for title insurance and survey costs paid by Volusia County, (2) a three-year use agreement permitting the school district to use county facilities for teacher training at no charge and the school district to continue the use of the maintenance building at Hurst Elementary School, (3) a three-year intergovernmental interest-free loan to the school board for use toward construction of a training and professional development center, and (4) rezoning of the property by the school board to public use prior to June 30, 2016.

The school was zoned R-4 (residential) but needed to be rezoned to public use. Owing to the school’s location in the unincorporated area, the county’s Planning Board governed. The first of the required two hearings was held in April 2016. A second zoning hearing was set for May 10, 2016.

Hope Place was not without controversy. The day prior to the second Planning Board hearing on rezoning, HUM convened a community meeting to address area residents' concerns. The May 9 meeting boiled over. Neighbors felt disregarded in the process and they were angry about the eleventh hour invitation to learn about Hope Place. The idea of a shelter for homeless raised concerns that the shelter would further blight the neighborhood. A “not in my backyard” (NIMBY) view was expressed. The failure to engage area residents early in the planning process led to misinformation that fostered negative community perception. Residents in the neighborhood conveyed their resistance to Hope Place to county council members by email and telephone prior to the critical council meeting about Hope Place.

In June 2016 the County Council held a final vote on transfer of title of the former school to Halifax Urban Ministries and a funding to renovate school buildings for Hope Place. Neighborhood residents packed the council chamber. They publicly aired their concerns about the impact of a shelter on their home property values and crime in the area. The decision makers were not immune to the disapproval of vicinity homeowners.

One supporter of Hope Place was the Volusia County Builders Association. They brought an interesting perspective to the discussion. In 2015, over 50 homes within five blocks of Hurst Elementary School were in various states of foreclosure. It was argued that Hope Place could be a huge asset to every resident in the community once it was renovated. HUM recognized the many struggling families and retired homeowners in the neighborhood. HUM's vision for Hope Place was expanded from serving just homeless families and homeless students to opening programming to all low-income families and seniors in the area.

Finding “win-wins” to offset public criticism became part of the decisional equation for policy makers. One of the “win-wins” in this project involved HUM partnering with the County to convene a Neighborhood Advisory Council to share plans for Hope Place, hear concerns, and receive input on a variety of issues related to Hope Place. Solutions that were mutually advantageous for Hope Place and its neighbors helped build acceptance of the shelter. They also helped to foster the political will to support the project. Win-wins also ultimately improved programming amenities in the complex.

Another “win-win” was achieved as the county refocused services in the neighborhood in the form of landscaping, a park, and a community library. Landscaping around the facility would create an aesthetically attractive complex to bolster the overall community appearance. Previously, the nearest park was nearly two miles away from the community. The county agreed to build and maintain a park with a multipurpose field, two basketball courts and a playground that would be open to residents of the neighborhood. Children in the neighborhood will now have walking access to recreational opportunities. Opening the park integrates the family shelter into the fabric of the community. Residents of the shelter no longer feel segregated from the larger community. Children and families feel safe enough to be outside; and the children can continue to interact with schoolmates, developing friendships that carry into the neighborhoods.

The plan for a modest on-site library for shelter residents developed into a comprehensive library holdings and services for the entire neighborhood. The original plan was to renovate an existing building, but the structure was found to have a considerable amount of mold and mildew. It was expensive to correct and estimates for an entirely new library building were not that much more costly. In February 2018, following the grand opening of Hope Place, the county held meetings to gather community input about a new library. In March 2018, the Council approved a one-time allocation for constructing the library.

The library will offer a basic reference collection, reading materials for all ages, newspapers, basic periodical titles, and DVD's. There will be computers for research and accessing eGov applications (social security, Medicaid, food or housing assistance), family literacy programs, afterschool programs, movie programs, and story time programs. The library will be a branch of Volusia Count's public library system. In 2008 the branch library serving the neighborhood closed due to fiscal constraints. When the Hope Place library is completed in 2019, the catchment area that includes the Derbyshire neighborhood will have nearby library access. The Hope Place library helps to integrate the family shelter into the community fabric and overall amenities of the neighborhood.

The county also agreed to fund Sheriff's Office patrols to address crime and safety concerns. A fence encircles the campus. Security cameras, controlled access to the property and buildings, and on-site staff provide a 24/7 security presence.

Another way the County Council addressed neighbors' concerns was to attach restrictive covenants to the property deed. These conditions attach to the property title, thus offering legally enforceable protection relative to the property, whether owned by Halifax Urban Ministries or conveyed to another entity. The covenants and restrictions ensure fidelity to the asserted parameters of Hope Place (type of client, length of stay, type of programming). In sum, the shelter provides temporary and transitional housing only for families and unaccompanied youth, and those clients have to meet established pro-social criteria (no drugs/alcohol, none/marginal criminal record). In the event Halifax Urban Ministries sells the property to another entity, the county will be reimbursed for its construction contribution and receive a pro-rata share of any sale profit.

The June 2017 council vote for transfer of title from Volusia County Government to Halifax Urban Ministries for the Hope Place family shelter was unanimous. The project was heralded as a public-private partnership addressing a real societal need with benefits for the target population and the surrounding community (homeless families with children, unaccompanied youth aged 17-15, and the Derbyshire neighborhood adjacent to the former Hurst Elementary School, respectively).

The County Council had initially signaled they would not fund operating expenses – only infrastructure or construction costs would be funded. However, in 2017 Volusia County

Government was approached to fund two different projects for the homeless that included operating funds. Consequently, in July 2017 Volusia County Government agreed to match up to \$400,000 in operating costs annually for Hope Place. The agreement for funding is for a limited time and will be reviewed annually.

Hope Place Today – A Plan Fulfilled



Hope Place held its grand opening on January 30, 2018. The first family moved in on February 26, 2018. By the end of May, Hope Place was filled with families full of hope for a brighter future. Since the opening of Hope Place, 91 families have called Hope Place their home. Of the 91 families, 57 families have been discharged to permanent housing with 56 of those families remaining successfully housed and stable. With Hope Place operating today at capacity, there is a waiting list of families desiring to enter. The wait time is usually around 2-3 weeks. The average length of stay for a family is approximately 45-60 days. The on-site day care has proven to be invaluable as most families at Hope Place have, at least, one family member employed.

Student housing is just now gathering momentum. As of February 2019, 12 students have been served. Working with the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Volusia County School System, Daytona State College, and other local child-serving agencies, it is expected that more students will find their way to Hope Place and can concentrate on their academic work.

Success has many faces. It may be Brian who with his daughter lived in their car for a year before coming to Hope Place. Despite their circumstances his daughter had a perfect attendance record at school. Brian is employed, finishing his studies at Daytona State College, and will soon be able to regain housing stability as his family moves to a permanent home.

Success may be seen in the face of a single mother with 3 daughters living in local parks for the past 3 years. Safe, at last, the mother participated in parenting classes learning how to shepherd and guide her daughters. With a new job, the future looks bright as they too will soon have a permanent home.

As noted in the beginning, Hope Place reflects the best intentions of local government, the private sector, and individual citizens. The promise of Hope Place has been fulfilled due to a clear problem statement, a clear plan, a champion to drive and sustain the process, and decision makers with the political will to make a decision to support the project. The model for action is transferrable to address other needs in other communities as communities become united, hope is born.