

# Bridging the Gaps



## Homelessness Has No Place

**Student Interns:** Jack Grossweiler, Drexel University College of Medicine  
Kelsey Raftis, Drexel University, College of Nursing and Health Professions, Creative Arts in Therapy

**Academic Preceptor:** Dr. Steven Peitzman, MD, FACP, Drexel University College of Medicine  
**Community Preceptor:** Brendan Sculley, MSW, Depaul USA

### COMMUNITY PARTNER

Depaul USA has 5 programs in Philadelphia that provide services to people experiencing homelessness. The 3 main supportive housing sites are located in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia, but Depaul headquarters are in Chicago, IL.



### TEAM'S EXPERIENCE

The BTG interns worked at 3 sites: Depaul House, St. Raymond's, and St. Joseph's House. Due to the unique needs of each site, the interns surveyed each one individually. Once they had a clearer idea of overlapping interests at each site, the interns developed programming for the month of July that was visible for the residents to see. At each site there were more practical, life-skill focuses such as time management and budgeting for the college age students, resume and job services for residents in the recovery program, and housing and disability services applications for the disabled residents needing longer-term housing. In addition to those practical issues, there was also programming around creative arts such as music, art and movement as well as community events, such as trips to local museums and gardens.



### REFLECTION

Jack Grossweiler: "In this internship at Depaul, I acquired a much more comprehensive understanding of the different paths one may face when experiencing homelessness. One of the biggest lessons that I learned was the importance of establishing and nurturing a personal connection with people to achieve the best care that I can provide them and understand the social inequities they may face. With this new perspective and the insights gained from residents and staff, I have grown immensely in my ability to help individuals from various backgrounds and experiences. This growth will help me connect with new vulnerable populations in my training and profession."

Kelsey Raftis: "In my time at Depaul, I have been grateful to broaden my knowledge in the concerns that these various communities face. There is truly a "gap" in the support that folks experiencing homelessness encounter and I've been privileged to have had many conversations with the residents expressing their individual challenges on top of what it is to be chronically without shelter and resources. I have learned so much more about accessibility needs in the disabled community, the overwhelm of navigating subsidized housing, and the pressures of being a 20 something college student, facing life's challenges predominantly on their own. In just 7 weeks, I feel I have had access to new insight about these communities and I will continue to build on knowledge as I move forward in my work as a future therapist."

### BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

- In 2021, 64% of persons in Philadelphia entering housing assistance were entering for the first time
- 170 days= the duration of time individuals spent in shelters, safe havens or transitional housing
- 80% of people exiting a program for permanent housing did not return to homelessness
- 78% of individuals experiencing homelessness in Philadelphia are Black
- The average age of an unhoused person is 35

Source: [OHS City of Philadelphia FY2021 Data Snapchat](#)

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ CHALLENGES/JOYS

- Provided resources and followed up with two individuals interested in smoking cessation
- Connected residents to nearby green spaces, community events and local organizations
- Aided several residents in long term housing applications

#### Examples of creative programming:

- Self care jars: List things you do to care for yourself on popsicle sticks and pull a couple a week to plug into your schedule
- Water coloring with prompts: Paint what relaxation looks like to you, paint an object or friend in the room, paint something that makes you happy
- Lyric Analysis with folks in recovery: Sang and listened to Rise Up by Andra Day and O-o-h Child by Five Stairsteps and then discussed how the lyrics connect to their experiences

