



Executive Summary of Project FIND Talking Points The Benefits of the Woodstock Tenant Model of Care

Purpose

Project FIND has conducted a study showing how the Woodstock Tenant Model of Care has increased life expectancy for our formerly homeless and low-income seniors. The goal of the document is to make the organization's work more legible and communicate how Project FIND has positively impacted tenant's lives by providing stability, comfort and longevity to its residents.

Funders typically require applicants to demonstrate their program's outcomes in ameliorating human service issues. This piece provides that crucial background information to include in conversations, meetings and resource requests with government officials, foundations, corporate supporters and donors.

Progress

Our preliminary report was shared with members at the December 2018 Board of Director's meeting. Since that time, we have incorporated suggestions made by the Board and have added housing stability information acquired through surveys and interviews of our Woodstock tenant population. Recognizing the importance of this data, this report is the first phase of the creation of outcomes/talking points for all Project FIND programs.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Life Expectancy - The blend of supports offered to Woodstock tenants (housing, social workers, meals and activities, behavioral health and in-house medical care) has had a major impact in prolonging their lives. Nationally, the life expectancy of the typical homeless client is 64 years compared to the average lifetime length which is 79. The average age of the Woodstock resident is 71 while the average age of those who have lived at the Hotel for 10 or more years is 78.

Our research found that older homeless adults have medical ages that far exceed their biological years. These individuals experience geriatric medical conditions that are on par with those among their housed counterparts who are 20 years older. Project FIND's unique model consists of care protocols which help us track the reason(s) they are in the hospital and the follow-up assistance they may need.

Cost-effectiveness - Housing programs that incorporate interventions to address geriatric conditions provide a cost-effective promising model of care. A year of assisted living costs \$6,000 per month or \$72,000 per year in New York City. The average cost of nursing home care in New York City is \$500 per day or \$182,500 per year vs. Project FIND's model which is \$13,980 per year. Investing in supportive housing programs makes social and economic sense resulting in significant cost savings by averting premature or unnecessary institutionalization.

Growth of the Homeless Population – Within a decade the U.S. is facing a massive surge in the number of homeless people expected to die prematurely. Project FIND's services are now more important than ever before. We add quality years to tenant's lives.

Prepared by Kathleen Fitzgibbons: 5/29/19



New Survey Finds Housing Stability the Best Way of Increasing Life Expectancy of Homeless Seniors

A new survey of formerly homeless and low-income seniors shows that permanent affordable housing is a cost-effective solution for increasing their life expectancy and quality of life. The study reports the median age of the formerly homeless living in supportive housing is higher than the average lifespan of homeless older adults nationwide.

Project FIND conducted a review of its tenant population living at the Woodstock Hotel; one of its supportive housing facilities located on 127 West 43rd Street in Manhattan. The mission of Project FIND is to provide low- and moderate-income and homeless seniors with the services and support they need to enrich their lives and live independently.

Project FIND houses 600 older adults across three residential buildings. The organization also runs four successful senior centers frequented by more than 750 seniors daily. Each year Project FIND serves 215,000 meals and provides an impressive array of health, wellness and recreational programs at its centers to the older adult community.

Goal

- Our goal is to make our work more legible and to communicate our successes in providing stability, comfort and longevity to the Woodstock Tenant population.

Our Methodology

- We examined the background of 65 Woodstock tenants who have lived at the Hotel for ten or more years and reviewed their reasons for homelessness, the length of time they were homeless as well as their housing stability prior to reaching Project FIND.

Findings:

- Average period of homelessness for 65 Woodstock clients that were reviewed – 4.6 years
- Key reasons for homelessness –
 - alcohol or substance abuse coupled with job loss and inability to pay rent;
 - illness leading to an inability to pay rent leading to eviction;
 - Incarceration leading to shelter placement or homelessness after discharge from jail;
 - Clients who were living with parents/friends pass away and then could not afford the rent;
 - Fire resulting in business or house burning down leading to job loss and inability to pay rent.

Life Expectancy

- Nationally, the life expectancy of the typical homeless client is 64 years of age compared to the average lifetime length in the U.S. which is 79 years. Older homeless adults have medical ages that far exceed their biological years. Research has shown that they experience geriatric medical conditions such as cognitive decline and decreased mobility at rates that are on par with those among their housed counterparts who are 20 years older.¹

¹ Dennis Culhane, PhD, et al, The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness: Could Housing Solutions be Funded by Avoidance of Excess Shelter, Hospital and Nursing Home Costs? (University of Pennsylvania), 2.

- Within a decade the U.S. is facing a massive surge in the number of homeless expected to die prematurely. Currently there are 400,000 homeless in the U.S. who were born before 1964 and it is estimated within 15 years, nearly every one of them will have passed.² Contemporary homelessness is in large part a birth cohort phenomenon, disproportionately impacting people born in the latter half of the post-War baby boom (1955-1965).³ Individuals born after the peak of the baby boom are more likely to be economically disadvantaged relative to their predecessors due to an excess supply of workers at the time of their labor market entry, among other factors.⁴
- Project FIND's services to assist this vulnerable population are more important now than ever. Based on our review, the average age of the Woodstock resident is 71 years of age, while the average age of those who have lived at the Woodstock for 10 or more years is 78 years. We add quality years to tenants' lives.

Cost Effectiveness

- Permanent supportive housing defined as subsidized housing with closely linked or on-site supportive services may reduce acute care utilization among homeless adults. Many older homeless adults who have functional impairments and other geriatric conditions may be placed in nursing homes due to a lack of other more appropriate options.⁵
- Housing programs that incorporate interventions to address geriatric conditions provide a promising model of care. A year of assisted living costs \$6,000 per month or \$72,000 per year in New York City. The average cost of nursing home care in New York City is \$500 per day or \$182,500 per year vs. our model which is \$13,980 per year.⁶ Nursing home care is a costly alternative and in many cases a level of care that may not be necessary.
- Investing in supportive housing programs makes social and economic sense resulting in significant cost savings by averting premature or unnecessary institutionalization. Published literature states the placement of people who are formerly homeless in permanent housing is associated with reduced use of shelter, health and nursing home services and related expenditures.⁷

² Scott Keyes, Surge in Homeless Deaths Expected Over Next Decade Unless We Act, <https://thinkprogress.org/surge-in-homeless-deaths-expected-over-next-decade-unless-we-act-12f09dd9d99/> (January 21, 2014).

³ Culhane, The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness: Could Housing Solutions be funded by Avoidance of Excess Shelter, Hospital and Nursing Home Costs?, 1.

⁴ Culhane, The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness: Could Housing Solutions be funded by Avoidance of Excess Shelter, Hospital and Nursing Home Costs?, 1.

⁵ Rebecca T. Brown, Geriatric conditions in a population-based sample of Older Homeless Adults, the Gerontological Society of America; *The Gerontologist*, 2017, Vol. 57 No.4, 764.

⁶ <https://www.dibbern.com/nursing-homes/new-york/cost-for-new-york-nursing-homes.htm>

⁷ Culhane, The Emerging Crisis of Aged Homelessness: Could Housing Solutions be funded by Avoidance of Excess Shelter, Hospital and Nursing Home Costs?, 14.

The following is a comparison of costs per month at the Woodstock vs. assisted living and nursing home placement (per person)

Woodstock Rent	\$ 745 (Section 8 pays \$530/tenant pays \$215 pm)
Cost of social work services	368
Behavioral Health care	12
Senior Center meals per month*	<u>40</u>

\$ 1,165 Avg. cost per WS tenant vs. \$6,000 p/m for assisted living vs. \$15,208 p/m for nursing home care

Housing Stability

- Of the 65 individuals in the Woodstock tenant cohort we gathered in-depth information on the housing history of 21 persons. Our research revealed this cluster of tenants had an average of 10.95 years of housing instability. ** In 20 percent of the subset of cases studied, substance abuse is the primary reason for their housing instability. Job loss and/or insolvency were the primary reason for housing instability in eight or 38 percent of the 21 cases.

Importance of the Woodstock Tenant Model of Care

- The Woodstock Hotel contains 281 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units and has a 6-person social services team in addition to psychiatric services provided by Janian Medical. In-house medical care is also delivered to tenants Family Health Centers of NYU Langone which has reduced hospitalizations and emergency room visits. Our unique model consists of care protocols which help us track the reason(s) they are in the hospital and the follow-up assistance they may need.
- Multiple services provided in one location assure optimal coordination and oversight. Prior to their residency at the Woodstock participants' lives on the street encompassed poor nutrition, social isolation, exposure to the elements, and a lack of medical care and access to entitlements.

Conclusion

- The array of services offered at the Woodstock Hotel is more important now than ever before. Most homeless older adults lack any safety net of income, pensions, savings or familial assistance. Market rate housing is not a viable alternative and publicly subsidized housing options remain very scarce. ⁸ As the homeless population continues to grow, opportunities such as the Woodstock model of care are sensible investments as homeless individuals could be placed in higher levels of care that are unnecessary and very expensive. The time is right for increased support of organizations that provide effective housing models to accommodate the increased demand.

⁸ Drs. Judith Gonyea and Sara Bachman, *Hearth Ending Elder Homelessness: The Importance of Service-Enriched Housing* (November 19, 2009), 4.

* The suggested donation for a senior center meal is \$1.75 with the average donation being \$.15 thus the cost per meal per participant is \$1.60 x 25 meals per month-estimated.

** Housing instability is defined as having a severe rent burden, overcrowding, forced displacement (i.e. eviction, substandard housing) and homelessness. Partner for Change 8/18/18.