



# COMMUNITY PARTNER BRIEF

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR 2020 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

USING INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM OUR 2020 CHANGEMAKER CHALLENGE COMMUNITY PARTNERS WE HAVE COMPILED FINDINGS ABOUT EACH PARTNER'S MISSION, VISION, PURPOSE, HISTORY, PROGRAMS, CHALLENGES, ASPIRATIONS AND TESTIMONIALS FOR USE IN YOUR CLASSROOM.





## OVERVIEW

"PATH is ending homelessness for individuals, families, and communities. We do this by building affordable housing and providing supportive services throughout California."

**MISSION:** To end homelessness for individuals, families and communities.

**VISION:** PATH envisions a world where every person has a home.

**VALUES:** Creative collaboration, strategic leadership, empowerment for all, passionate commitment

- **Creative Collaboration:** We strategically align resources with others while utilizing the knowledge and expertise of our team
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- **Strategic Leadership:** We identify opportunities and remove barriers to operate effectively and efficiently.
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- **Empowerment for All:** We provide the resources for our community of partners and the people we serve, and invest in our team, to work together to achieve success in ending homelessness
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- **Passionate Commitment:** We advocate for solutions, promote adaptability, implement best practices, and inspire others to reach their goals.

## HISTORY & BACKGROUND

"It all started with a letter written by Claire and Rev. Charles Orr, calling for the community to address the ever-increasing issue of homelessness. In response, on the night of December 8, 1983, 60 people gathered together to figure out how to help people who were experiencing homelessness in their neighborhoods. On that night, PATH was born.

The group began distributing food and clothing to people living on the streets. As homelessness continued to grow nationwide, research revealed that Housing First— a best practice model that first connects people to permanent housing and then focuses on stabilization through voluntary supportive services, proved more effective. Now, over thirty years later, we have more than 25 locations throughout California, provide services in more than 140 cities, and more than 1,000 units of permanent supportive housing completed or in the pipeline.

Across the state, we help people find permanent housing and provide case management, medical and mental healthcare, benefits advocacy, employment training, and other services to help them maintain their homes stably. Since 2013, we have connected more than 10,000 people to permanent homes."



## ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE

In 2008, the San Diego City Council with the support of the Mayor, the San Diego Housing Commission, and CCDC (now Civic San Diego) initiated a vision for a one-stop homeless services center. In 2010, a volunteer citizen's panel, along with the approval of the San Diego City Council, selected PATH as the lead agency for the project.

PATH San Diego's Connections Housing is a partnership that brings a variety of agencies together under one roof to meet the many needs of the downtown homeless population. PATH is the lead agency providing the services and operations for Connections Housing. Affirmed Housing Group and PATH Ventures developed the building. Family Health Centers of San Diego is also a founding partner as well as the health center operator.

In San Diego, we provide a variety of services for our neighbors experiencing homelessness that include employment, outreach, housing navigation, interim housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.

## PROGRAMS & SERVICES OFFERED

- Employment
- Outreach
- Housing navigation
- Care coordination
- Interim housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing

## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES USD STUDENTS CAN HELP EXPLORE SOLUTIONS FOR?

In the next section, two problems identified by PATH are described. Each of the problems provides some background as well as poses a question for students to explore and ideate upon. Students will submit a 2-3 minute video featuring an idea to address one of these challenges.

- How might we help PATH provide opportunities during COVID-19 for clients to engage in a way that will allow them to connect with others that is safe and dignified?
- How might we help PATH become better known in the San Diego region in a way that educates and empowers local community members to become active in their communities to drive change?

Learn more about each of these Challenges in the next section.



## CURRENT CHALLENGES

In an interview with the Changemaker Hub, Sigrid Struben (USD Alumna, 2019), the Kitchen and Volunteer Coordinator for PATH, provided specific information about the challenges they are currently facing. In the sections below, we have provided direct quotes from this interview.

# PATH Challenge 1- CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

## DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM

"I think one of the challenges is definitely client engagement. Getting clients to come and attend any classes, making sure they get to their appointments and just in general, getting them excited about being part of the program and not just focusing on the housing part. This has become even more important to our organization since COVID-19."

## Engagement versus Isolation

"The intern that just got hired did a little bit of research on clients and isolation. The studies that she came up with actually said that once people get housed, they tend to become more isolated. And that's a huge issue because that's going to lead to not having contact with your case manager, missing appointments and not getting involved in the community. And the longer you are isolated, the greater your chances are of losing your housing again. I think it would be interesting to figure out how many of our clients stay housed permanently, how long they stay housed and how many end up losing their housing. Is losing housing related to isolation? What could we be providing to ensure people remain housed and feel supported? I've talked to staff that have been here for years and they have seen clients move out, get housing and then return within a year or two. So what's going on? What could PATH provide to empower these individuals to remain housed?"

## Key insights from research on engagement

"Study findings suggest that if the rehabilitation goal is to improve overall community participation, interventions may need to focus more on enhancing activity capability such as cognitive and mobility functioning rather than on lessening illness-related symptoms. Second, more attention may need to be paid to people who are housed since they showed less involvement in the community."

## Takeaways for PATH

- Focus on getting permanently housed individuals engaged in the PATH community. This means engaging both, site tenants at PATH's downtown depot and Permanent Supportive Housing tenants with their case managers on site.
- Encourage women, older adults, those with a home, and those who have been homeless for a long duration to attend classes which might help them secure a job (i.e. computer classes with a focus on resume writing, interview prep, maybe a class on applying to jobs?)
- To increase social and leisure participation focus on limited mobility clients, ones with speech limitations, and those who are currently housed.
- This means focus more efforts on Zephyr and Atmosphere clients, as well as the upper levels of PATH. Regarding limited mobility clients, holding classes in a easy-to-access location is of utmost importance.



## CURRENT CHALLENGES

### **WHY IS THIS PROBLEM IMPORTANT TO YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

"When people move in it is easier to lose them. They were so focused on housing and keeping them engaged in not only PATH supportive services but the community in general becomes more difficult. If clients are isolated in their apartments and barely coming out, there is a much greater chance that something can happen and they will get evicted. What is the correlation there? Client engagement is one of the biggest challenges I see and has only been made more urgent with COVID-19 and the new safety policies and guidelines. We want to make sure that we can focus on safe and dignified engagement in the current climate of COVID-19 as well as traditional challenges. With all of the challenges with client engagement and isolation, COVID-19 has really put the spotlight on this challenge. For example, we have all transitioned to zoom/teams but our clients are completely left out of this space whether it is due to lack of housing, finances for computer, technology skills, community interest in creating engagement opportunities and solving some of these issues. We also have clients with many different needs. Some are unhoused, some in Permanent Supportive Housing, some in apartments. How do we focus on what each individual needs to encourage engagement? For this challenge we would like to focus on clients housed in the community, those staying at PATH's interim housing and those that are tenants at the Permanent Supportive Housing sites including Atmosphere, Zephyr and The Link."

### **WHAT HAS BEEN TRIED BEFORE TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM?**

"We've put quite a bit of staff time into figuring out the best way to engage clients. Is it the space? We have considered having the classes downstairs in the Depot, on the outside terrace or have them on the floors. Our intern actually went around and talked to every single client that is staying at our interim housing facility a couple of months ago to see what they were interested in and we got some really fascinating responses back. One woman, for example, told her: 'you know, we don't always want a class on writing a resume. Like sometimes, we just need to learn how to have fun being sober, just being like part of a community being sober from morning till night.' The intern put all the information that people gave her about possible classes together in a document. Some of them we did try and still nobody came. But some of them were successful like when we offered snacks and coffee at activities. Perhaps client engagement falls short because clients know what they need but the program doesn't always look the way that they would envision it. We also tried a couple ways of diversifying forms of engagement by incentivizing clients. For example, there was a system where clients had punch cards for classes they attended and could redeem them for items in our clothing closet. This new process got cut short because of COVID-19 but the one time we did it everyone really enjoyed it and we had interim and PSH clients come."

# PATH

## CURRENT CHALLENGES

### How has PATH maintained a sense of dignity and connectedness with its residents during times of social distancing?

"The social distancing needed to deal with the COVID-19 is an added layer to the challenge. With client engagement, it is now going to be that much more difficult to provide opportunities to engage. Clients from the interim floor have expressed to me that they have been sad, worried and stressed with everything going on. They miss the frequent one on ones with their case workers. Even our family dining has had to change since we can't eat together family style in the cafeteria for dinner. In the past, people would also come down for lunch and we'd have volunteers serve lunch, socialize, play Pictionary and provide a community lunch experience. Now clients eat on the floors upstairs. The chef is now cooking breakfast, lunch and dinner. He makes it, volunteers put it in containers and then the caseworkers come down and bring it upstairs because we can't have everybody together obviously." We have had to cancel our art class and other groups as well. The Depot looks very different than it did in February."

#### More info:

- PATH conducted research focused on client engagement. [This file](#) provides an overview of the survey results.
- PATH San Diego [Website](#)
- PATH [Blog](#)
- [Client Stories](#)
- [Meet the Regional Director of PATH San Diego](#)



### WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE USD STUDENTS CAN HELP EXPLORE SOLUTIONS FOR?

How might we help PATH provide opportunities during COVID-19 for clients to engage in a way that will allow them to connect with others that is safe and dignified.





## PATH Challenge 2- OUTREACH & LOCAL "BRANDING"

### DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM

"I know with PATH San Diego we do have issues with people just not knowing who we are and what we do. I feel that one of the biggest challenges is for PATH to better communicate and educate the public to what we do as an organization and what they can do to support our neighbors in need. PATH San Diego is relatively new and we need to use language that resonates in this region. Often as we do outreach we are compared to other well known homeless service organizations because they have been in San Diego forever and have brand recognition. I think there is a need for outreach more broadly about the work we do at PATH, to educate the community about the issues surrounding homelessness, how PATH addresses these issues and how they as community members can be part of the solution."

### WHY IS THIS PROBLEM IMPORTANT TO YOUR ORGANIZATION? AND WHAT HAS BEEN TRIED BEFORE TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM?

"We are working on some internal/external branding that changes the perception of PATH as just a charity/nonprofit to becoming part of a movement. We think it is important for people to be aware that homelessness is community problem and everyone needs to be involved. How do we stir that same excitement that we see in some other movements like climate change? We hope to empower San Diego residents to become active in their communities to drive the change. How do we increase branding and awareness to tackle specific community issues and get local San Diego communities involved? This could also involve educating the public around homelessness and allowing them to get involved in their own communities."

#### More info:

- Social Media: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Client Stories](#)



### WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE USD STUDENTS CAN HELP EXPLORE SOLUTIONS FOR?

How might we help PATH become better known in the San Diego region in a way that educates and empowers local community members to become active in their communities to drive change?