

Final East Duwamish Greenbelt Encampments Phase I Outreach Report

Reporting as of July 31, 2016

Summary

The outreach team has concluded its intensive outreach to the East Duwamish Greenbelt Encampments (EDGE). The outreach team was composed of 6 outreach staff in the field and additional mental health, case management, and support personnel who work with those who accept offers of housing, shelter, or services. The outreach team has decades of combined experience with homeless services and outreach and includes team members who have personally experienced homelessness and addiction. The team has been working with every individual, presenting meaningful and highly personalized offers of shelter and services.

As of July 31, 2016, the outreach team had contacted and engaged 357 separate individuals, making extensive outreach efforts in both the early morning, mid-day, and late evening in order to maximize the opportunity to engage as many people as possible. A total of 70 individuals (roughly 1 in 5) have accepted offers of housing, shelter, services, and/or relocation assistance. The outreach team estimates that it has contacted or engaged with 99 percent of individuals living in the EDGE with multiple interactions. In some areas of the EDGE, there is very clear drug distribution and human trafficking activity. The outreach team made initial contact with those individuals but not attempted to engage them with offers of shelter or services.

UGM estimates that approximately 75% or about 250 individuals have departed the I-5 Greenbelt. The outreach team estimates that approximately 90 percent of the people living in the EDGE are struggling with substance abuse disorders.

UGM and partner service providers are making available a variety of options for permanent and transitional housing, shelters beds, authorized encampment spaces, access to addiction treatment and recovery programs (with housing), access to mental health treatment, medical care, legal services, and other services. The full list of available resources is available below. The ethos of the outreach team is to find an individualized solution for every situation. For example, if an individual would be willing to accept entry into a recovery program but does not want to be separated from a pet, UGM and the City have partnered with the Seattle Animal Shelter to house pets for up to 90 days. And if an individual is willing to go to a shelter but needs a place to store extra personal items, the City's FAS Department has arranged storage of personal belongings.

Recap of Engagement Effort totals since May 23:

- 357 people engaged personally by UGM Outreach Team
- 70 people accepting housing, shelter, services and/or relocation assistance

- 43 (estimate) of people who have moved into the area
- 118 (estimate) people remaining in the EDGE area

Housing, Shelter and Services Provided (pending in a few cases)

- 47 received assistance in relocating (to authorized or other unauthorized encampments)
- 21 entered recovery programs, which include housing
- 5 received legal aid (immigration papers, IDs, other housing barriers)
- 6 accepted transitional housing/rapid rehousing
- 4 received assistance with alternative shelter arrangements
- 2 received assistance with immigration status issues
- Multiple accepted assistance with medical issues

Stories of Impact

Angela, Miguel and Locitta

“On July 1, I received a letter from Angela that her puppy, Locitta, was stolen or lost. When I arrived to work on July 6 we began our search plan for Locitta; we made LOST signs and posted them around the local area and decided to try Seattle’s Animal Shelter. Angela was beside herself at the loss of her puppy. We arrived at the animal shelter at 12:30pm and spoke to an individual and showed him a photo of Locitta. To our amazement, he said that the puppy is upstairs with the vet! He informed me that we needed to have the owner to release the puppy and that it would cost \$175 to get her back. The amazing part is the timing: the puppy was about 30 minutes away from being adopted.



I then went back to pick up Angela and found her with a strange man I had not seen before. He was removing surgical tubing from his arm, so I knew that he had just shot up. Angela was standing a few feet away on his cell phone calling me. I told her that I think we found Locitta, and she jumped in the van overwhelmed with excitement.



She said she had not eaten for a couple of days, so I took her to McDonalds on the way to the animal shelter, and she asked if she could just have a chocolate milkshake. I bought her some food and the shake. When we arrived

at the animal shelter, she stepped out of the van and dropped her full cup of shake on the ground. She started to cry scooping up the shake back into the cup in order to still drink it. I let her know I would get her another shake.

Once we arrived at the shelter, it became very evident that she had also shot up with this man I'd seen earlier. As we were sitting at the desk talking with the vet she dropped her head rapidly, and it slammed on the table, and she did not wake up. I finally got her awake and moved her to a different chair so I could do what it took to get the dog. I waited for 40 minutes to talk with the folks to get the dog, and Angela became more incoherent, and so I moved her to the van. After another hour I finally had Locitta in my possession. The Seattle Animal Shelter deducted some cost to where I only had to pay \$145 to get her out, and they were so grateful for what we are doing to help folks.



Angela upon first arrival at the shelter

When I arrived at the van, Angela had fallen out of the chair and was laying in between the seats on the floor in the front. I moved her back to the seat and belted her in. Once we arrived at the closest entrance to her camp, I went around to get her out of the van, and she was passed out. So I got all the paperwork, tied the dog leash around my wrist and picked up Angela in my arms. I carried her to the second level under the highway with the dog pulling us left and right. Once we arrived at her camp I noticed Manuel wasn't home so I put Angela to bed and hung out for 30 minutes with the dog in hopes Manuel would show up. He never did, so I tied Locitta to a bed post to keep her inside and left with pain in my heart and tears in my eyes." – Brian Chandler, outreach team lead



Brian with Angela's dog Locita

Thankfully, the story doesn't stop here. Manual, Angela and their neighbor Mary Lee were moved into one of the Mission's transitional two bedroom duplexes. Manual also struggles with heroin addiction but is not able to take positive steps

forward without an ID due to immigration issues. The UGM legal team is now working with him and are optimistic that they will resolve the immigration issues so that he can get an ID. Angela has suffered from AIDs for many years but has not received any treatment for the last six. We've connected her with Lifelong Aids Alliance for medication and assistance getting on disability. She is in a lot of physical pain, which heroin numbs. Once on disability, she will have funding and connections to long term housing. Mary Lee is staying in the duplex for now but plans to move to Hope Place, our long term addiction recovery program, next week.

Renee and Dan

Two other individuals moved out of the EDGE— a couple mentioned in a prior report, Renee and Dan. Renee is wheelchair-bound and her husband Dan is the sole provider. She had developed a severe eye infection that had already permanently blinded one eye, and was now spreading to her remaining eye. Within days her husband was required to go to jail for 90 days to serve for a past warrant. The woman did not want to leave because they have a dog. The outreach team worked with Seattle Animal Shelter to board the dog and Renee and Dan are now living in Othello Village. Dan turns himself in on Monday at 9:45am and he'll be in jail for 90 days. Meanwhile Renee will be able to receive the medical care she needs.

Mom and Six year Old Son

Several notable stories emerged including the discovery of a family (a mom with a 6-year-old boy). We believe they were just moving into the EDGE area. The team attempted to engage with the family but the mom would not respond. At the time there was an adult male with them. We sent a case manager/counselor up to their tent early the next morning and spent a significant amount of time talking with the woman, building trust, and eventually we were able to bring her and her son out of the area and into stable housing.



Herion Overdose Intervention

We were also able to engage on a deeper level with a couple where the husband was presenting cognitive challenges and had an injury to his face and eye. We soon learned that he had overdosed on heroin, and that his wife discovered him laying out of the tent where a rat was biting her husband's face. She was able to chase away the rat, but her husband remained unresponsive. When paramedics arrived they rushed him to the hospital. In transit, they were able to revive him with Narcan. However, it appears he may have suffered some brain damage. In addition, he lost part of his upper eyelid and the outer layer/lens of his eye. We are working to provide services and assistance for the couple, but to date they are not interested.

Legal Aid

We worked hard to help one female resident obtain her driver's license and legal ID. The team was able to get her to the Department of Licensing, only to learn that her license was suspended in two other states. She was immediately dejected and began to visibly lose hope. However, the team encouraged her that we weren't done, and that we could contact Open Door Legal Services (ODLS) for assistance. ODLS was contacted and they confirmed that they could help and made an appointment for the next day.



Plane Ticket Home

There have been several situations where outside assistance from an individual's family has been instrumental in helping people accept help. This has ranged from a family who paid for a plane ticket to get their family member back home, to one young man who has come to the EDGE several times to reach out to his own brother. He used to live in the EDGE and struggled with addiction, too, but after going through recovery and getting a job, he has worked with the outreach team to help his brother get out. This week his brother entered in a recovery program.

Caring for Pets

One of the most significant factors in helping individuals accept offers of service have been the trust that the outreach team has been building with each individual. One couple is in the final stages of accepting housing, and it has been partially due to how the team has cared for their pets. One of their cats had kittens and the team, after a long day of outreach, went out and purchased some Similac and brought it back so the kittens could be fed and nourished. Two of the kittens have now been named after a couple of the outreach workers.



A kitten named Brian

Dog Boarding and Respite Care

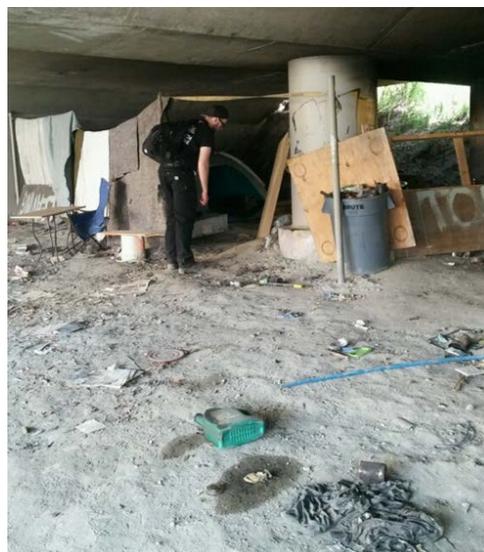
Mayor Ed Murray joined the outreach team and engaged with people in the EDGE on June 8. During this outreach, the team was able to convince another couple to come out and engage in services. In that couple, the husband is the sole caregiver for his spouse, who is wheel chair-bound. She is also suffering from a severe eye infection that has already blinded one eye, and is now affecting the sight in her remaining eye. Unfortunately, her husband must serve 90 days in jail for a past warrant, so he will not be able to care for her.



Now the Seattle Animal Shelter has offered to board their dog, and the wife will be entering into UGM’s Extended Care Program that works with homeless individuals (usually referred through Harborview or Swedish Hospitals) who are experiencing significant health issues.

Other Observations

The team was also **able to extend their outreach into the late evening hours, out until nearly 10 p.m.** This has allowed them to connect with some of the residents where tents appeared to be lived in but were vacant.



While the majority of the original population has either been helped or has moved on, those who remain are clearly more resistant and have less hope that their lives can change. It is clear that multiple contact and conversations with these individuals is helpful, and with most we have met with 5-10 times, and **in some cases we have engaged well over ten times.** One team member has commented:

“The thing I am seeing more than anything is how much the folks trust us now, they know we are there because we care and it has allowed us to have difficult conversations about issues and to give hope. I have seen more smiles this week than I think I have seen in there since we started.”

The relational work has spread down towards the Royal Brougham encampment area as well. This past week the outreach team was able to bring together multiple service providers (Salvation Army, Operation Nightwatch, MID Mental Health Outreach, etc.) who not only met with individuals, but were also able to host a BBQ, and provide additional resources. Several individuals from the EDGE came down to serve the meal and assist in picking up trash surrounding the encampment. During this event the outreach team provided mental health counseling, case management, and were able to move at least one more woman into housing.



The team has continued to observe multiple incidences of human trafficking and drug trafficking. The drug dealers are aware of the team's presence and purpose, and even appear cordial. There have been no hostile encounters with dealers or residents, though a few residents have lashed out verbally, almost exclusively when intoxicated.

We continue to estimate that more than 90% of the residents of the EDGE are struggling with addiction issues, primarily heroin use, and this remains the largest hurdle for them in considering housing or recovery options. Secondary to addiction would be those who are dealing with criminal justice issues (i.e. past felony convictions, warrants, registered sex offender status).



The team also met with two City Councilmembers, Mike O'Brien and Sally Bagshaw. Councilmember Bagshaw met the team at our Pioneer Square location, while Councilmember O'Brien met the team at the Bayview location and spent some time talking with residents of a Sudanese encampment before walking a short distance along I-5.

One comment repeatedly realization **actually**

At first they

irritated that they will have to move. However, once we explain to them that the City doesn't just want to move them, that it wants to help them and that we are there at the request of the City, they respond differently.



that we have heard from residents is their that **the City is reaching out to them.**

are skeptical and a bit

