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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Kevin Gerard Buchheit entitled "The Homeless: Who They Are, The Situations Precipitating Their Homelessness, The Services Available To Assist Them--A Comparative Study Between Cookeville, Tennessee And The United States." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Planning.

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THE HOMELESS: WHO THEY ARE, THE SITUATIONS PRECIPITATING
THEIR HOMELESSNESS, THE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ASSIST
THEM -- A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN COOKEVILLE,
TENNESSEE AND THE UNITED STATES

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Master of Science
Degree
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ABSTRACT

Homelessness has been in existence in the world for many centuries. Today, homelessness is a problem across the United States for cities of all sizes.

Who are these homeless and why are they homeless? Generally, what services are available to offer assistance to the homeless? How do the answers to these questions differ between the general national view and that of Cookeville, Tennessee? These questions were researched through a literature review, interviews and personal correspondence.

The results showed that the characteristics of typical homeless persons have changed considerably over the last fifty years; the homeless now include younger, more heterogeneous people from all walks of life. The reasons for the homelessness are as varied as the homeless people themselves. It was also revealed that assistance is provided, to varying degrees, by both the public and private sectors, both for-profit and not-for-profit.

The situation in Cookeville is similar to the national situation. The number of homeless in Cookeville is small and many of the services are measures to prevent people from ever becoming homeless.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

There is a situation in today's society that some people tend to downplay or shun altogether. That situation is the growing population of homeless people. Society is finding an increasing number of its members sleeping in such places as shelters (if they are lucky), in their cars (if they have one), the streets and parks, under bridges and in doorways, just to name a few.

The problem of homeless people is not a recent phenomenon. References are made as early as the Roman history of Ammianus Marcellus in A.D. 368 and in English law in 1349 (Cook, 17). Homeless people are those people who are without a regular shelter. When homelessness is mentioned, people tend to think of transients, vagrants and bums. While these people may be homeless, the homeless are not necessarily the same limited group; therefore, when "homeless" is used in this paper, it may stand for one or all of the members of the vast group of people without a regular shelter.

Homeless populations are related to the economy and business cycle, decreasing in times of prosperity and increasing during depressions and recessions. The numbers tend to grow during periods of social change and the disorganization which follows (Bahr, 1973, 18). Two examples of this are the industrial revolution and, more recently, the technological boom.

The recent recessions are still taking their toll, as the current government-claimed economic upturn has not been strong enough to reabsorb all of those who were displaced.

Exact figures are hard to come by; it's hard, obviously, to track people with no permanent address. However, an advocacy group, National Coalition for the Homeless, estimates that two million people were on the streets last winter (1983) and that the number (was) much higher this year (Knack, 28).

Other estimates range from a conservative 500,000 to four million homeless; these estimates come from advocacy groups and other organizations, such as the United States Conference of Mayors. In May, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released estimates of only 250,000 to 350,000 homeless people in the United States, which was termed "utterly ridiculous" by a spokesman for one anti-poverty group (Knoxville News-Sentinel, May 2, 1984).

Figures on the number of homeless people nationwide which are given by advocates and politicians may be skewed high or low depending on which scenario is being presented. The advocate may try to win the sympathy of the public with higher, more liberal estimates, while the politician may support the lower, more conservative estimate. Either or both views may be inaccurate. This debate over the actual number of homeless people nationwide is still unsettled.

The demographics of this group have changed considerably since the "romantic" era of the hobo and tramp. Today the median age has dropped to about 35 (Andersen, 14) and the group includes:

male and female (some of the latter are commonly referred to as Bag Ladies); all ethnic and racial groups; alcoholic and sober men; drug addicts and "crazies"; crippled and hale; ranting and still; stinking and clean; abused spouses and abused children; unemployed; cast-off children; depressed; some families; even former professionals. A group of "new poor" as they are called includes increasing numbers of "good, solid, middle-class families . . . people who had good jobs and their own home but lost it all and hit the road" (Hildreth, 23).

There are a variety of reasons why these people are in the streets, some of which are: loss of job; new restrictions causing loss of social benefits; eligibility for social benefits negated by inability to negotiate the bureaucratic maze; displacement of urban poor and a reported loss of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels by renewed interest in the redevelopment potential of some central city areas (gentrification); rising housing costs; absence of proper identification -- no identification, no job; the recession and its effects; a severe shortage of low-income housing; inability to cope with society, perhaps as a result of alcohol or drug addiction; and the practice over the last twenty years of discharging the less seriously afflicted mental patients whose symptoms could be controlled through prescription drugs.

Some people are provided a place to sleep, though, given that they are victims of abuse, be it alcohol, drug or spouse abuse,

"but if you're just poor, broke and out of work, it is much harder to find bed space" (Chaze, 57). Despair may set in and it has its own momentum. "At loose ends and with no place to live, the luckless become scruffy; off-looking, they are denied jobs; finding an apartment is all the harder" (Andersen, 15).

Homelessness may be caused by one of the preceding factors, but as Marjorie Hope and James Young tell in their article in The Christian CENTURY:

Rarely does a single cause account for a homeless person's situation. We remember, for instance, a thin, blond Ohio woman with hunted (sic) eyes and a twitching mouth. A widow with three children, Janice had had a part-time clerical job paying minimum wage; her total earned income then was \$215 a month. Until 1982, through a complex system of employment "disregards" designed to provide an incentive to work, she had also received a supplement of \$237 from AFDC. When the employment "disregards" were cut, leaving her with only the mandatory work deduction of \$50 (intended to make up for taxes, transportation and lunches), she was left with an income of only \$377 (\$150 above the maximum AFDC payment in Ohio for a family of four). From this she had to pay \$220 in rent. Two months later she was evicted. After spending three nights in a craterlike abandoned building, she and the children found asylum in a temporary shelter. But the stress of the situation . . . took (its) toll. As her employers put it, Janice began acting "peculiar." They decided to include her in layoffs. Today she and her children are separated; they live in a foster home, she in a shelter. While Janice is getting therapy, she has not found a job. Her depression has scarcely changed. The shelter may soon close for lack of funds (Hope, M. and Young, J., 48-49).

The paradoxes of homelessness are practically endless.

As cities revitalized their downtowns in the 1970s by tearing down dilapidated hotels, they threw thousands into the street who could afford nothing else. As states emptied

overcrowded and ill-staffed mental hospitals, they set thousands free to fend for themselves. And now, as local governments and charitable organizations stretch to provide relief, they find, according to some accounts, that the more they do, the more they increase the demand. Meanwhile, what they cannot do -- from providing underwear (an item, unlike overcoats, that's rarely donated) to finding family backing and permanent housing -- is what the homeless often need the most (Alter, 22).

In the eyes and minds of too many people.

(t)he homeless man is seen as dirty, defective, and morally inferior; he is diseased, hopeless and nonredeemable. He tends to be treated by agents of society with intolerance and disrespect, avoidance and fearfulness, disgust and apprehension. Even representatives of helping professions or charitable organizations are more apt to refer homeless men elsewhere, to "where they belong," than to treat them as people with soluble problems (Bahr, 1973, 86).

Their hopelessness grows into a feeling of powerlessness. That powerlessness is a result of disaffiliation or lack of social ties (Bahr, 1973, 17).

The homeless people are a national problem crying for a solution of some kind (Bahr, 1973, 64). ". . . the homeless man is a symbol of what's wrong with our society, an indication of man's brutality to man. He is the beacon-light warning us of the reefs ahead" (Levinson, 596). Thus is expressed the broad humanist view. The practical view, to be presented, is somewhat different.

The Problem

Much could probably be written on the social reasons for dealing with the problems of homelessness, but there are several reasons

for a city government to be involved in finding solutions to these problems. They are practical reasons from the standpoint of the city in terms of fiscal and budgetary considerations. Removing homeless people from the streets should enhance the investment atmosphere in central areas and thereby increase the chances of having a higher tax base there. Because so often the organizations which cater to the homeless are located in or very near the Central Business District (CBD), they, the homeless, are more visible during the day on the downtown streets than in most other parts of the city. This could tend to be counterproductive to any revitalization efforts which might be considered.

For example, when Donald Benedict set up an emergency shelter program at his church in Chicago's Uptown, the area's Chamber of Commerce appealed to city officials to close it down on the grounds that it was 'detrimental' to business interests (Peerman, 208).

The presence of homeless people could, perhaps, be one cause for the CBD losing a prospective retailer to another location in the city. During the course of the 1984 Synthesis class at the Graduate School of Planning, this attitude was found to exist in Knoxville.

Many of the people interviewed who have an interest in CBD revitalization expressed the belief that the presence of the (homeless) makes the area less attractive to investors regardless of the nature of the potential investment (Synthesis, 71).

If both the homeless and this attitude are present in large cities, both could also be present in smaller cities.

The Study Area

Cookeville, Tennessee is located in the east central part of the state. Cookeville is located nearly midway between Nashville and Knoxville on Interstate 40; Chattanooga lies approximately 95 miles to the south. The 14 county Upper Cumberland Region is predominantly rural and several of the counties are among the poorest and least populous of the state. Cookeville's population is nearly 21,000 while the county population is nearing 50,000. Cookeville is a small regional center as its nickname "Hub of the Upper Cumberland" indicates.

The Purpose

The purpose of this research was to recognize, define and qualify the problems of the homeless both nationally and for Cookeville, Tennessee; homeless people are living in the streets of cities every day. The investigation attempted to determine who the homeless people are, what situation might have been the cause of the homelessness and generally what services are available to assist the homeless. These questions were researched as they pertain to the national picture. Then, the same questions were researched as they pertain to Cookeville. It was not the intent of this research to be oriented to interviewing the homeless people. Due to the limitations of the

scope of the study, the interviewing process should accompany future research. Suggestions for future research were also made.

The Methodology

The methods of research for this study included a literature review and interviews and personal correspondence with representatives of service agencies and organizations in Cookeville. Literature which was reviewed included books, professional and popular periodicals, congressional and government agency reports, a seemingly inexhaustive supply of newspaper articles as well as other printed material which the author thought might contribute to the study. Interviews were also conducted with local government and law enforcement officials to gain insight to their views of the local situation.

Organization of the Paper

The remainder of this paper researches the questions at hand. The second chapter defines who the homeless people are across the United States. Demographic characteristics are presented to help define the group. As an integral part of this chapter, the investigation reveals some of the causes of homelessness generally across the United States.

The third chapter examines the types of shelters and other services which are available to the homeless across the United States. This section examines not only what types of assistance are generally available, but whether that assistance is provided by the public or private sector, and whether it is operated for profit or not.

Chapter IV researches the same questions that were covered in the second chapter with the main focus being Cookeville, Tennessee. This allows for comparisons between Cookeville and the United States in general. ✓

The fifth chapter investigates those services which are provided locally in Cookeville. As Chapter IV relates to Chapter II, so does Chapter V relate to Chapter III. Again this allows for some comparisons between Cookeville and the rest of the nation.

Chapter VI is the concluding chapter of the paper. As such it includes the author's findings and suggestions for further study on this problem which seems to swell in times of recession. Of all the planning problems caused by the sluggish economy, none is more pressing than the need to provide emergency (and long-term) shelter for the growing numbers of homeless people (Knack, 28). This is a social problem, and all the social sciences, planning included, need to investigate it to see what contributions can be made to help alleviate or at least lessen the problem of homelessness in America.

CHAPTER II

THE HOMELESS AND THEIR PROBLEMS

The situation of the homeless in America has received increased attention in recent years. Exactly who these homeless are and why they are homeless has not been determined on a national scale and may never be accurately determined on that large a scale. Local studies have been done, but the reliability of these may be questionable. However, a picture of today's homeless is beginning to form.

The traditional characterization of homeless persons is that of single, middle-aged, white, alcoholic men. While that may have been true some years ago, today the homeless are a much more heterogeneous group consisting of women (including 'battered' women) as well as men, people of all age groups (including runaway youths), blacks and Hispanics as well as whites, those with alcohol, drug abuse, and mental health-related problems, families as well as single persons, those who have never been employed (or have been unemployed for a very long period of time), and those who are recently unemployed. Interviews with hundreds of people who have specialized knowledge of the situation of the homeless across the nation suggest that these diverse groups cluster, generally, into three basic categories: people with chronic disabilities; people who have experienced severe, personal crises; and people who have suffered from adverse economic conditions (HUD Report, 22).

The first group, those with chronic disabilities, includes alcoholics, other drug abusers and the chronically mentally ill (HUD Report, 22). Going back to the skid row bum, alcoholism seems to have been an omni-present characteristic of homelessness. This is not to imply that all homeless are alcoholic, or that all alcoholics

are homeless. However, there does seem to be some degree of association between the two. The number of other drug abusers who are homeless has become more noticeable with the increased awareness of drug traffic in this country (see Table 1).

"After the passage of the 1963 Community Mental Health Centers Act (P.L. 88-164), a large number of mentally ill persons were released from or ceased being admitted to mental institutions" (HUD Report, 22). This was a well intentioned Act; however, it was not carried out in full. For a long time the mental health institutions suffered from a poor public image, and the intention of deinstitutionalization was to create a more humane, better accepted mental health system. The community-based mental health centers which were to accompany the deinstitutionalization, for the most part, never materialized. Thus was created a population of homeless mentally ill people. Being without shelter and not being able to effectively deal with the real world may have increased in intensity the problems of the mentally ill.

The second group of homeless people consists of those "people who are homeless due to some personal crises" (HUD Report, 22). Examples of personal crises include recently divorced people, runaway youths and victims of domestic violence, most often women and children. Recently released prison convicts, refugees from other countries and transient people who lack financial resources and may be homeless only temporarily are also included in this group (HUD Report, 22). The problems of these people are generally not as severe as those

Table 1
Three Types of Homeless Persons

	Types		
	Chronic Disabilities	Personal Crises	Economic Conditions
Examples	Alcoholism	Battered women	Recently unemployed
	Drug abuse	Runaway youth	Welfare recipient
	Mental illness		
Predominant Form of Homelessness	Chronic or repeated episodes	Short-term, temporary	First time, most only for a short time
Work Status	Unemployed or irregular employment	Variable	Employable; some have history of stable employment, others have no previous employment history

Source: HUD Report, 23.

of the first group. The people in this group may lack financial resources and/or employment skills, but they are not as chronically disadvantaged as those people mentioned in the first group.

The third group of homeless people includes those whose situation cannot be explained primarily by a personal disability or crisis, but by economic forces which are beyond their control (HUD Report, 22). This group has been dubbed by the press and others as the "new homeless" possibly because the characteristics of this group have not traditionally been associated with the image of the homeless people. People in this group may be homeless for the first time or may have been homeless for a short period of time. The media have reported that this group is largely made up of former middle-class people who, because of economic conditions, have fallen on bad times.

[W]hile there are some homeless people who have job skills and a recent history of steady employment, more often this group consists of those who have had occasional jobs or who have never been able to find employment and have always lived at the margin in terms of economic resources (HUD Report, 22).

Although three groups of homeless people have been presented here, they are not mutually exclusive of each other (HUD Report, 23). Some homeless people may have characteristics of more than one of the groups described above. Still others may be in transition from one group to another. The fluidity of this population obviously makes any kind of categorization difficult. Another difficulty in determining why people are homeless is that "ultimate and precipitating causes are sometimes difficult to distinguish" (HUD Report, 23).

With the example of becoming alcoholic and losing a job, both events could be either the ultimate or the precipitating cause.

The deinstitutionalization of mental patients over the past twenty years probably has not had as major an impact as proposed by the media. If deinstitutionalization is defined narrowly as the release of long-term residents of mental institutions, its effect has been minor; most of the decline in the population of state hospitals has been due to the deaths of elderly patients or to transfers to nursing homes (HUD Report, 25). The authors of an article which appeared in the February 1983 issue of Hospital and Community Psychiatry point out that deaths alone accounted for twenty to forty percent of 'releases' . . . (and that) in 1974, approximately 85,000 nursing home residents had been transferred directly from a mental hospital (HUD Report, 25). Although this is data from a period over ten years ago, no new evidence has come to light to indicate a change in this information.

What, then, is the demographic picture of today's homeless? It has changed considerably over the last 20 to 25 years. The image from the past is one of the middle-aged, single, white, alcoholic male. Results from a survey produced by HUD show that most of the homeless are still single, but there is a significant number of families included in today's homeless population (HUD Report, 28). The HUD national shelter survey found that single men make up 66% of the homeless population and single women make up 13%, while families comprise 21% of the homeless population (HUD Report, 28). This

data is about two years old now, but there has not been a more recent, comparable study done on a national scale (see Table 2).

Table 2
Homeless Population Profile

	National Shelter Survey	Average of Local Studies
	(%)	(%)
Single Men	66	65
Single Women	13	14
Family Members	<u>21</u>	<u>21</u>
	100	100

Source: HUD Report, 28.

In the past, the ages of the homeless probably had a range largely between 45 and 55. Today's population is considerably younger with a median age near 30 and an average age of 34 (HUD Report, 29). Social programs have helped in part to keep older people off the streets by providing Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Food Stamps and subsidized housing (HUD Report, 29).

The skid row population of the past was predominantly, if not completely, white. This is somewhat the case today, but the proportion of minorities is increasing (HUD Report, 29). The HUD study points out that the composition of the minority population differs by area of the country, in that "Indians predominate in Minneapolis, blacks in Newark and Hispanics in Miami" (HUD Report, 29).

In most communities, a majority of the homeless people have lived for a year or longer in the area in which they are currently located. The HUD study reports that 52% were local residents (HUD Report, 29). The exception to this were a few communities located on transportation routes which showed a majority of new arrivals and transients on their way from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West in search of better economic and employment conditions (HUD Report, 29).

Although the middle-aged, single, white alcoholic male is still a part of the homeless population today, he is not an accurate representative of the whole population as he formerly was. Today's homeless population is younger, with a greater gender and racial mix. Today's homeless population includes more family units as well. While many times the skid row man was a non-local migrant worker, a majority of today's homeless people are from the local area.

The HUD Report looked at results from local studies which attempted to determine the length of time people have been homeless. There is a "sizable minority of chronically homeless persons," that is persons who have been homeless for a long term (two years or more) (HUD Report, 29). This group includes the people who have no immediate prospects of permanent housing.

A large minority of the homeless are episodically or occasionally homeless according to some local studies (HUD Report, 30). These

people may experience more than one occasion of homelessness, especially when their own monetary resources become depleted. People in this group may be on fixed incomes which come from such sources as welfare or SSI.

There is indirect evidence from several studies that "the situation of many homeless persons is rather fluid. They move from shelters to the streets and back again, and also spend some time in SRO hotels or with family or friends" (HUD Report, 30). These people move around for a variety of reasons, one of which is the time limits imposed by most shelters on the number of nights any one person may stay for any given week or month. Although, a person can usually get three meals each day from a shelter, bed space is so limited that restrictions must be placed on how many nights a person can stay each week or month. This causes movement between different shelters and usually between the shelters and the street. Those who can afford the cost of a room at the YMCA or the SRO hotel occasionally may get a reprieve from a night on the street. The data gathered in the local studies suggested that the homeless do not fall into two mutually exclusive groups, those on the streets and those in shelters; instead there is considerable interchange between the groups (HUD Report, 30). The national shelter survey, as well as some of the local studies, found out that only about one third of shelter occupants could be characterized as regular users; most used the shelters very infrequently over extended periods of time (HUD Report, 30).

Just as general demographics differ from one area to the next, so do the characteristics of the homeless population. Differences in the homeless characteristics can be observed for varying city sizes and between the different regions of the country. "In small metropolitan areas, there are more homeless families, a lower percentage of minorities and alcoholics, and more first-time shelter users than in the larger areas" (HUD Report, 31). Table 3 demonstrates the differences between city sizes and between the different regions of the country. The information in this table was gathered from many local studies and the previously mentioned national shelter survey, as was much of the information in the HUD report.

Regionally the greatest differences are between the West and North Central areas (HUD Report, 31). According to the information in Table 3, the North Central region has the highest percentage of regular shelter users, alcoholics, and the long-term unemployed and local people, and the lowest percentage of recently evicted people. The West has the lowest percentage of alcoholics and the long-term unemployed and the highest percentage of those who were recently evicted and those who are first time shelter users. In both the West and the South, a majority of the homeless are transients (HUD Report, 31). This information is taken from 1984 data which for any number of reasons may be inaccurate now. However, this is the most recent source for information of this type.

Table 3
 Characteristics of the Shelter Population by Region and
 City Size

Percent	Size of Metropolitan Area			Region			
	Large	Medium	Small	East	South	North Central	West
Single Male	73	64	41	79	68	76	56
Single Female	14	7	16	8	12	9	17
Family	13	29	32	13	20	15	27
Minority	54	32	16	48	40	45	44
Local	55	45	46	57	39	86	40
Recently Unemployed	38	32	29	37	44	15	42
Long-term Unemployed	49	56	58	52	51	74	40
First Time Users	39	45	74	42	45	31	63
Regular Users	41	40	19	49	38	57	13
Mentally Ill	25	12	19	23	14	10	29
Alcoholics	39	46	24	36	40	63	27
Recently Evicted	38	33	43	41	38	17	46

Source: HUD Report, 31.

General differences between regions and city sizes may explain some of the differences, while mobility may explain other differences. These reasons may help to partially explain the variations from one place to the next for the homeless population, as well as the overall population.

Despite all of the shelters and affiliated services which offer help to the homeless, there is a portion of the homeless population which does not or will not use these facilities. Through the national shelter survey, a question was put to shelter operators and operators of "outreach" programs to find out how different those in shelters are from those who rarely or never use the facilities. The purpose of the outreach programs "is to find street people and try to persuade them to use shelters or other facilities" (HUD Report, 32). The shelter and other program operators frequently gave for answers to the question -- that those people outside shelters are more likely to be:

1. mentally ill;
2. alcoholic;
3. characterized as "loners . . . too proud to come into the shelters . . . non-conformists . . . free spirits . . . want to maintain their own lifestyle . . . don't want to be changed;" and
4. depicted in terms such as "drifters . . . drop-outs . . . the quitters . . . the hopeless . . . those without goals" (HUD Report, 32).

The characterization of this sector of the homeless population as given by shelter managers is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4
Non-Users vs. Users of Shelters: Characterization
by Shelter Managers

Non-users are:	Percent
More mentally ill	23
More alcoholics/drug abusers	19
More non-conformists/free-spirits	22
More drop-outs/drifters	8
No differences	8

Source: HUD Report, 32.

The percentage figures do not total 100 because multiple responses to the question were allowed.

Many of those operating 'outreach' programs indicated that the most severely mentally ill or alcoholic were afraid of going to the shelters out of fear of what would happen to them, or that they did not want to abide by some of the rules of the shelters (HUD Report, 33).

These people may never be helped by the shelters and other services available for their use.

As with much research on controversial subjects, criticisms have been voiced concerning the HUD report referenced here. Professor Barry Lee of the Vanderbilt University Department of Sociology and

Anthropology is one who has criticized that report. Professor Lee is involved with ongoing studies on Nashville's homeless population and has recently undertaken the task of interviewing the homeless people there. His main concern about the HUD report was the narrowness of the operational definition of homelessness. Professor Lee felt that the HUD report should have given more consideration to the fluidity of the population and such segments as victims of domestic violence and runaway youths. Instead, Professor Lee contends the report deals with a derelict sub-stratum of the homeless population. "If anyone, regardless of personal circumstances, has no place to go for permanent shelter, they should be included in a study on homeless people" (Lee, 7-18-86).

In her article, "The Homeless Problem," Ellen L. Bassuk acknowledged that literature on homelessness is sparse. However, through the available information and her own research experiences, Ms. Bassuk reports that an increasing number of the homeless suffer from mental disorders (Bassuk, 40). Ms. Bassuk continues, reporting that although shelters are a valuable service, they do little more than feed, clothe and give the homeless an occasional place to sleep; what the homeless actually need is some level of psychological treatment or constant care in an institutional setting (Bassuk, 40).

Causes of homelessness, as reported in Ms. Bassuk's article in Scientific American, generally correspond with those reported by HUD. However, Ms. Bassuk states that while there is no single

simple reason for homelessness, it is often the final stage in a lifelong series of crises and missed opportunities and a gradual disengagement from social support networks (Bassuk, 43).

Studies are many times largely descriptive and have been plagued by methodological problems. As for probable solutions to the homeless problem, Ms. Bassuk states that there is no mystery about the nature of an appropriate solution: carry out the aborted plans of the 1963 community health law by providing a spectrum of housing options and related health-care and social services for the mentally ill (Bassuk, 45).

In his Psychology Today article, "Home On The Street," Steven Fustero notes generally the same causes of homelessness as reported by HUD. Mr. Fustero states that one reason homelessness continues to exist in the United States is that our society has tolerated it (Fustero, 60).

Quoting from Surviving Schizophrenia, a book by E. Fuller Torrey, a clinical and research psychiatrist, Mr. Fustero reports that vocational rehabilitation efforts in the United States have, for the most part, excluded the mentally handicapped; in parts of Europe and Asia, sheltered workshops are a coordinated effort with psychiatric hospitals (Fustero, 60).

Mr. Fustero states that he has little doubt that the problem of homelessness will probably continue to exist. However, if the problem is ever to be solved, if people are to stop living and dying

on the streets there will have to be a reduction in the public's willingness to tolerate the situation and a concerted coordinated effort, involving the courts, lawmakers and public and private organizations (Fustero, 63).

The needs of the homeless are many and varied, but can be met effectively beginning with an aggressive program that moves the homeless off the street into emergency facilities. From these, the homeless will be moved to transitional shelter and finally into permanent housing (Fustero, 61).

Solutions will probably be as diverse as the causes. The private and public sectors as well as the legal system will play important roles in developing these solutions (Fustero, 61).

Other members of the fields of psychology, sociology and social work have largely arrived at the same general causes of homelessness as reported by HUD. However, more emphasis is understandably focused on the effects of deinstitutionalization rather than on the "economic recession, unemployment, and cutbacks in federal support programs" (Jones, R., 808). Some of the reports state that some of the homeless "suffer from some disabling psychological disorder, including chronic alcoholism," but they do not discuss whether those problems caused the homelessness or are the result of it (Sexton, 82). There is a need for a study to find out how homelessness effects the people who are caught up in that phenomenon.

There exists extensive literature on social stratification, but it tells little about the political and social functions of such

outcast groups as the homeless (Sexton, 79). Whether the homeless people have a social function is not widely discussed, but "this outcast class is almost always a political symbol" (Sexton, 79). With the advent of very vocal advocacy groups for the homeless, the politician must take note of their situation and attempt to assist in the finding of solutions to the problems brought on by homelessness if he is to survive in the political arena.

While homelessness emerged in the early 1980s as a significant public problem, much confusion still exists about "the nature of the problem, who the homeless are, and what can be done about them" (Stern, 291). The homeless have been a part of society for many years, but just recently have received increased attention. The advocacy groups became vocal and the media reported their claims. The outcry for assistance surges with cold weather and wanes with warmer weather. Mark J. Stern, of the University of Pennsylvania, reports that

[a]lthough there was some evidence that the problem was getting worse, the increase in attention was totally out of proportion with the increase in the phenomenon. I propose that the emergence of the homeless was an element of the conservative reaction that brought Ronald Reagan to the presidency. . . . (Stern, 296).

The Reagan administration has dramatically reduced the federal government's role in many of the major welfare programs and continues to place that burden on the state and local government and the private sector. As this process continues through the next several years, one

can only assume that the media coverage and public attention will continue as it has throughout the 1980s as shelters and other types of more permanent living arrangements are sought.

The types of shelters and the services offered by them are varied. The next chapter examines shelter types and services from across the country. The published information available on this is sparse and caution must be exercised in reviewing the data.

CHAPTER III

THE SHELTERS AND SERVICES

Little research has been done to determine the nature and extent of the effort to assist homeless people on a national scale. Therefore, it is somewhat difficult to compare and assess the varying needs between different regions. The HUD report has attempted to research this through questionnaires and interviews at help centers across the nation.

Nationwide shelter capacity in 1984 for any given night was estimated at 111,000 persons. Compared with published estimates on the number of homeless people nationwide ranging from 250,000 to four million, shelter capacity falls far short of estimated need. Some of the bed spaces are provided for runaway youth and battered or abused women. The majority of these beds, though, are provided for other homeless people, including single men, single women and parents with children (HUD Report, 34).

There has been an expansion of shelter capacity in the last few years. As of May 1984, 41% of all shelters were in operation for four years or less, and 21% had been in existence for less than one year. At that time, efforts to expand existing shelter capacity were underway in many areas (HUD Report, 34).

Even with all the attention and the efforts to help the homeless mentioned in the media, communities do not always help in the

establishment of new shelters or in the expansion of old shelters. One-fifth of the shelter operators interviewed in the national shelter survey indicate that they have been hindered by local, State, or Federal regulations or policies, with the most frequent problem being zoning (HUD Report, 35). Residents of cities realize the need for services for the homeless, but no one wants those services to be located in his neighborhood.

→ Another problem is inner-city redevelopment of the areas in which shelters are located (HUD Report, 35). Those shelters located in city-owned buildings are many times forced out to make way for redevelopment without having a place to reestablish the shelter. This is the case for shelters in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Miami, Florida, as well as other cities (HUD Report, 35).

For study purposes, the national shelter survey divided the United States into four regions: North East, North Central, South and West. The shelter capacity percentage for these four regions varies slightly and corresponds closely to each region's portion of the homeless population (HUD Report, 35). Although the reported percentage differences are relatively small, the largest differences between shelter capacity and share of the homeless are in the West and South; while the South has disproportionately more shelter capacity than homeless, the West has disproportionately more homeless than shelter capacity (HUD Report, 35). The figures for homeless in Table 5 may or may not include those homeless who were not in shelter

Table 5

Regional Distribution of Shelter Capacity and Homelessness for
Metropolitan Areas of 50,000 or More Persons, January 1984

	Percent of Shelter Capacity	Percent of Homeless
North East	22	23
South	28	24
North Central	23	22
West	27	31

Source: HUD Report, 35.

beds in January 1984. The very nature of this subject makes it hard to establish firm figures; therefore, given the source of the information, the figures are probably a fair estimate.

Although the shelter is a major source for providing beds for the homeless, it is not the only means by which the homeless are given shelter. There are other options available, but on a much smaller scale. Many persons are given temporary vouchers which allow them to reside in hotels or apartments (HUD Report, 35). Funding for these vouchers is through private as well as public sources. Public sources include the Federal Emergency Management Agency; vouchers are also provided by local, State and other Federal agencies with block grant money from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HUD Report, 36).

Some localities help households to make their rental payments to prevent evictions (HUD Report, 36). The emphasis behind this type of assistance is to help prevent people from becoming homeless. In Houston, an association of churches uses donations to make back rent payments for some families, while in Portland, Oregon, \$1,000 loans are made available to those moving into permanent housing to help pay for deposits, move-in fees, and first and last months' rent associated with permanent housing (HUD Report, 36).

Voucher programs and rent assistance programs are valuable, non-shelter forms of assistance to those in need of housing. The exact number of persons served by these means is difficult to determine as the demand and the funding varies over time (HUD Report, 36).

Throughout the year, the capacity to house people remains fairly constant, as 95% of all shelters are open year round (HUD Report, 37). As one can guess, the heaviest use of shelters occurs during the winter, but "one in five has heaviest use in the summer" (HUD Report, 37).

Usually, not just anyone who walks into a shelter is allowed to stay there. Most shelters restrict their clientele to a specific group, for example families, women only, women and children, or men only. About one-fourth of all shelters, according to the National Shelter Survey, have no restrictions on the kinds of persons they will serve (HUD Report, 37). While only 8% of the shelters house families, most families are helped via temporary vouchers which may

be provided by county welfare departments or sometimes by private agencies (HUD Report, 37).

There are other restrictions which most shelters impose on their guests. One such restriction is the number of nights one is allowed to stay. A Miami, Florida shelter allows a maximum of seven nights a year; while the average maximum number of nights in a row a person can stay in a shelter is two weeks, New York City imposes no stay limitation because of a consent decree resulting from a suit brought against the City on behalf of the homeless (HUD Report, 37). In that decree (Callahan vs. Carey, New York State Supreme Court, August 1981), the city pledged to provide shelter to whomever requested it for as long as needed (HUD Report, 37).

While most shelters have restrictions about the number of nights one is allowed to stay, only about 60% of all shelters allow people to stay during day-light hours (HUD Report, 38). For occupants of the other 40% of shelters, they must leave and usually end up in the streets, libraries, parks or other public places, or in abandoned buildings (HUD Report, 38). This creates additional problems for the elderly, the handicapped, and pregnant women who are "least able to deal with the rigors of being in the street" (HUD Report, 38). The HUD report states that some of the larger cities have "drop-in" centers for daytime use by the homeless, but such centers are not common (HUD Report, 38).

The HUD report states that across the nation a majority of the shelters provide services, other than just bed space, which

include meals (or some type of food), showers or baths, laundry facilities, clothing and television. Greater than 75% of all shelters provide some type of counseling, but only about one-half of the shelters require a person to meet with a counselor, who may not necessarily be professionally trained (HUD Report, 38). In the South, only about 41% of shelters require counseling (HUD Report, 38). Some shelters also require the people to do chores and to attend religious services; about two-thirds of all shelters make referrals for housing and jobs, with some actually having employment-training services (HUD Report, 38).

In a few instances, some homeless people even assist in the operation of the shelter facilities acting as cooks or janitors. These "Guest Worker" or "Work Experience" programs allow the participants a small wage and reserved beds for their efforts (HUD Report, 38). While this type of program has its merits, it may reap unintended results. Some participants may "see little reason to leave them when they settle into a life style that includes work and some income" as well as food and shelter (HUD Report, 38).

Most shelters have some rules to be followed which may include no fighting with shelter staff or other residents, no weapons allowed, no smoking, not being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and a shower or delousing is required, as well as making one's own bed or disinfecting one's mat; some shelters require advance notice that the shelter will be used on a given night, and some require

arrival at a specific time in the evening to use the shelter and not leaving once in the shelter (HUD Report, 39).

Most establishments have some set of rules to follow which help to retard chaos and disorder. Oddly enough, these rules which help to keep order in the shelters, make the shelters unattractive to those who may need help the most, "particularly those who are severely mentally ill, or alcohol or drug abusers" (HUD Report, 39). Some of these people have been evicted and refused re-admittance to shelters because of abusive behavior or vandalism (HUD Report, 39).

While the estimated number of homeless people exceeds the total number of beds nationwide, the average monthly occupancy rates are usually less than 100% (HUD Report, 39). However, in 1984, the occupancy rates in large cities were higher than in small cities, and this paralleled the finding that the rate of homelessness was also higher in the large cities than in the small cities (HUD Report, 39). The occupancy rate for the South during January 1984 was 63%, as compared with 64% in the North Central, 76% in the West and 79% in the North East (HUD Report, 39).

If the shelter occupancy rate is less than 100%, then theoretically no one should be spending nights on the streets. No one knows exactly why the occupancy rate is not 100%, but these possible explanations have been suggested:

1. Those who are newly homeless do not know where shelters are or are afraid to use them.

2. Some shelters have charges and although the charges are minimal, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that even minimal charges reduce occupancy levels.
3. In warmer climates, some homeless people prefer to sleep on the beach or in parks where the natural setting is more attractive than some of the shelters.
4. Some of the mentally ill or alcoholic homeless may be unable to cope with shelter rules (HUD Report, 40, 41).

Regardless of why shelters on the average are not fully occupied, some people are still without shelter. The question arises of just who should respond to the needs of the homeless. Should it be the public sector or the private sector? Perhaps a combination of the two is most appropriate.

Ninety-four percent of shelters in the United States are operated by the non-profit sector; the remaining 6% are operated by units of local government, with many such shelters found in New York City (HUD Report, 43). Funding for the shelters comes primarily from private individual or corporate contributions; however, non-profit shelters also receive some public support through the various branches of government (HUD Report, 43). Other types of support which are important to shelters include volunteer time, and in-kind donations of food, other shelter supplies and other services (HUD Report, 43).

It is not uncommon for the public and private sectors to work together to serve the needs of the homeless. The services

can differ in approach and emphasis, with the most common model being one which is a privately operated, short-term emergency shelter which usually limits the number of days that a person may spend there (HUD Report, 43). Following are several examples of shelters which were found during site visits, telephone interviews and published local reports as the HUD Report was being assembled:

1. The Samaritan Shelter for men in Long Beach, California, is located in a beautiful building recently constructed with \$1.2 million in private donations. It served 20,000 men, and 90,000 meals in 1983, on a \$250,000 budget. It relies upon 90 volunteers from churches in the community and donated food. The shelter refuses government aid because there would then be restrictions against required attendance at religious services.
2. A private Catholic shelter for men in Miami served over 326,000 meals in 1983, and provided 12,135 nights of lodging, all free of charge, at a total cost of \$139,973. All costs were covered by private donations.
3. An abandoned firehouse was renovated within three weeks and made into a shelter in Birmingham in 1983. It serves 30 to 36 men nightly. The firehouse was provided by the City to the Birmingham Public Housing Authority (PHA) for one dollar a year. The PHA renovated the building with \$45,000 of the City's Community Development Block Grant money. An interdenominational church group staffs

the shelter so that operating costs consist only of utilities paid for by the PHA. Everything else is donated.

4. In New York City, there are approximately 200 churches and synagogues which operate 70 emergency shelters, relying heavily on private donations, foundations, and volunteer efforts. This program is in addition to the largest city-operated shelter system in the country.
5. In Boston, there are about 700 short-term emergency shelter beds operated largely by private groups (HUD Report, 44).

Other types of housing and other services also have involvement by non-profit agencies, and include:

1. Transition housing for intermediate periods of time (for example, the Weingart Center in Skid Row Los Angeles provides such housing for 200 men and women in an old hotel renovated with donations from private corporations and with low-interest public loans, including an Urban Development Action Grant;
2. Various social services, such as counseling, job referrals, vouchers for temporary housing, and emergency payments for those facing temporary difficulties;
3. Programs for those with alcoholic or emotional problems; and,
4. Free food distribution systems (in the State of Washington, for example, there is an organization which picks up

surplus crops from farmers and distributes them to shelters and other social agencies across the state; similarly, in St. Louis, a private organization picks up surplus food which would have to be thrown away and distributes it to some 160 agencies at an average cost of 3 cents a pound; it serves 15,000 people weekly) (HUD Report, 44, 45).

On the local level, the private, non-profit sector is further involved with the homeless people acting as advocacy groups or task forces to give the homeless people a voice. Agencies such as Travelers Aid and the Salvation Army can address the needs of the homeless across the United States through their national networks (HUD Report, 45). In recent years, Mitch Snyder and his Community for Creative Non-violence have received considerable media coverage in their efforts to help the homeless in the District of Columbia and bring to the attention of all politicians the plight of the homeless across the country. The National Coalition for the Homeless is another advocacy group which has organized efforts to assist in rectifying problems faced by the homeless.

In recent years, an announcement was made about a nationwide program involving "\$19.6 million in grants to fourteen cities to be used to provide health care and assistance in obtaining access to public benefits and other services for homeless people" (HUD Report, 45). Nashville was one of the recipient cities.

As stated earlier, in many instances the public and private sectors work together to provide shelter and/or other services for the homeless. The most common local government response to the plight of the homeless is to give money to private shelter operators as operating subsidies and sometimes for rehabilitation services (HUD Report, 46). Some local governments provide vouchers for temporary housing, and some provide for the rehabilitation and/or lease of buildings at minimal charges for use as shelters (HUD Report, 46). The majority of the funds from local governments come from such state and Federal sources as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Community Development Block Grants and Community Service Block Grants, all of which are administered through the Office of Community Planning and Development, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD Report, 46).

A minority of local governments provide no service for the homeless. These places tend to be small and have a "less serious or negligible" homeless problem (HUD Report, 45).

Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) have been established to help provide low cost housing for those in the lower income brackets, but typically have not helped those people who are on the streets. Some PHAs may, under an emergency policy, house the homeless. Their definition for an emergency situation includes those people "displaced because of fire, government programs, natural disasters or . . . evictions," but not necessarily those people who are homeless due to other reasons which might also be beyond their control (HUD Report, 46).

While most PHAs have argued that placing the homeless at the top of their long waiting lists could create some problems, a few have attempted to assist the homeless by working with local governments or non-profit agencies (HUD Report, 47). PHAs in Dayton, Seattle and Birmingham have working programs to assist the homeless in their respective cities (HUD Report, 47).

States have also made attempts to assist the homeless, but this is usually done in an indirect way. The major way in which states have been involved in responding to the homeless problem is through their decisions on how to spend Federal assistance funds (HUD Report, 48). On those rare occasions when states use their own revenues for emergency services for the homeless or potentially homeless, they are frequently for shelters for a select group such as battered women (HUD Report, 47).

The Federal government also assists the homeless through programs which are administered by state and local governments. There is organized a Federal Task Force on the Homeless which works "with the private sector and with local governments to inventory and coordinate potential resources for the homeless" (HUD Report, 48). Federal emergency assistance is provided through such programs as: Federal Emergency Management Agency; the Community Development, Community Services and Social Services Block Grant Programs; and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Block Grant program (HUD Report, 49). Other Federal assistance includes making Federal vacant

property available as shelter space and distributing surplus commodities through the Department of Agriculture's Emergency Feeding Program (HUD Report, 49).

Assistance for the homeless comes from private agencies, both for-profit and non-profit, as well as all levels of government. Many times it is a combined effort of the private and public sectors which results in assistance for the homeless. The type of assistance varies between different regions. Some assistance is monetary, while some is in-kind services. Volunteers, as well as paid staff, professionals as well as non-professionals assist the homeless. Many forms of assistance are available to the homeless, and there are efforts, or preventative measures, which seek to help keep people from becoming homeless in the first place.

Housing is a fundamental problem for the homeless but it is not the only problem (HUD Report, 50). "[L]ong-term solutions . . . must take into account the diversity of the population," as different types of homeless people have different needs (HUD Report, 50). Improving the condition of the homeless over the long term "requires tailoring public and private responses to fit their widely-varying needs rather than placing a singular emphasis on emergency shelter" (HUD Report, 50).

CHAPTER IV

COOKEVILLE'S HOMELESS AND THEIR PROBLEMS

The situation of Cookeville's homeless and their problems is very similar in description to the national picture; however, the problem or the number of homeless people is very small. Of the three types of homeless described in Table 1 (page 12) of the second chapter, Cookeville has some homeless people who could be categorized in two of the three groups.

The first group, those people with chronic disabilities, could include most of the local homeless people. The predominant problem attributed to these people is alcoholism. Many of the people in this situation can be seen around the original location of the Cookeville Rescue Mission, abandoned buildings and vehicles and in some secluded places in the city.

The second group, those people who are homeless due to some personal crises, could include some local people and the transients. The local people who could be categorized in this group include those who are temporarily homeless due to a fire or eviction, for example. These people generally find a new permanent shelter in a very short time. The transients are listed here because they usually lack financial resources to get to their ultimate destination.

The third category in Table 1 includes those people who are homeless due to economic conditions. While it is perceived by some

that Cookeville has no people who can be categorized as homeless due to the economy, there are many people who are potentially homeless due to economic or other conditions. When interviewed, the local officials had no real perception of this problem. As discussed in the next chapter these people have moved in with family or friends and have created a potentially dangerous situation. Cramped boarding houses and multiple family units under the same roof have created many cases of overcrowding in Cookeville. In many cases, if it were not for the relative or friend allowing them to share accommodations, many people might be homeless in Cookeville. The region around Cookeville is predominantly rural where traditional country values are present. The people here know each other's family, if not each other, so the anonymity of the larger, more urban places for all practical purposes, does not exist in the Cookeville area.

In speaking with area service agencies, a picture of a Cookeville homeless person has emerged. Not very unlike the national picture, the Cookeville homeless person's approximate average age is 35. Cookeville's homeless is also predominantly single, white and male; some of these homeless people have an alcoholism problem. These numbers are small, but these people have no permanent shelter and must find shelter where they can on a daily basis. While it has been argued that these people could have permanent shelter if they wanted it, the fact that they are currently living in the streets cannot be denied.

There is a real difficulty in precisely defining who the homeless are in Cookeville. This is due in part to the existence of some "hidden homeless." These people live at the fringe of homelessness, but because of the "country" values which exist here, they are in many cases assisted by relatives or friends. Many times where homelessness might exist, overcrowding is found instead.

There is no practical means for determining just who might be homeless if not for the support of family and friends. Since these people generally are not seen wandering the streets, the problem is difficult to locate and resolve.

Transients must also be assisted in Cookeville. Usually traveling through Cookeville via Interstate 40, some transients stop here looking for food, rest and/or money for gasoline or auto repairs. The two agencies which, due to their proximity to the interstate, most often assist the transients are the Cookeville Rescue Mission and the Putnam County Clearing House. Both are located one half mile south of Interstate 40. Other agencies, such as the Cookeville Public Housing Authority have assisted entire families who drive into Cookeville carrying all their possessions.

Colonel William G. Patterson is the chairman of the Cookeville Regional Planning Commission. His thoughts about this problem were that homelessness is probably not a big problem in Cookeville. In his years on the planning commission, no study or investigation into the concerns of the homeless was ever discussed. The local

officials have not made a request for such a study, therefore, the planning staff has not chosen to investigate homelessness in Cookeville.

The office of Community Development handles the staff planning activities for Cookeville. To date the local homeless situation has not been studied. This is probably because the problem is not perceived as a problem by the local elected officials. If homelessness is not perceived as a problem by those who are in the position to try to resolve it, the problem will probably continue to exist despite current private efforts to lessen the incidence of homelessness.

The shelter and other agencies which offer assistance to the homeless are numerous given the size of the city and the scope of the problem in Cookeville. The information about each agency was obtained through personal interviews and is reported in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

COOKEVILLE'S SHELTER AND SERVICES

Assistance for Cookeville's homeless population is provided by private as well as public agencies. Many times a combined effort is utilized. As is the case nationally, some assistance is monetary, while some is in-kind services. Some assistance is provided by volunteers as well as paid staff, professionals as well as non-professionals. Some of the assistance is an effort to prevent homelessness from occurring to people who live on the line between having and not having a permanent shelter. The following is a discussion of the services available to the homeless in Cookeville.

The Cookeville Rescue Mission

The Cookeville Rescue Mission is a non-profit, charitable corporation which received its charter on July 13, 1977. As stated in the charter, the purposes of the Cookeville Rescue Mission are:

1. To glorify God by conducting a charitable, educational and evangelistic ministry in accordance with the Work of God; to furnish shelter, food, clothing and other necessities to those in need; to teach the whole counsel of God; to seek to rehabilitate those who have been or are addicted to alcohol or other drugs; to conduct personal witnessing and preaching of the Gospel;

2. To receive and maintain a fund or funds, or real or personal property, or both, and subject to the restrictions and limitations as set forth in the charter and by-laws, to use and apply the whole or any part of the income therefrom and the principal thereof exclusively for charitable and religious purposes.

The preceeding information and following information on the history of the Cookeville Rescue Mission (hereafter referred to as the Mission) was obtained from a pamphlet which was printed by the Mission.

The original Cedar Street Rescue Mission began operations on March 21, 1976, on the corner of Broad and Cedar Streets in downtown Cookeville under the co-direction of Reverend Larry Self and Brother U. L. Whitson. The original purpose behind the establishment of the Mission was to provide a Christian atmosphere and fellowship to all who desire or need it. The Mission was initially open only during the day, providing donuts and coffee, and distributing Bibles to those who stopped in. As the need for expanded services became apparent, the Mission was kept open on nights and weekends to provide lodging, thereby "serving the whole man."

The Mission lost the lease to the downtown facilities due to the settling of an estate. The lease loss was not related to any plans on the part of the city or merchants and land owners to redevelop that part of downtown Cookeville; however, some redevelopment has occurred there in recent years. After discovering that the

Mission was zoned out of other districts in Cookeville, a site was located just beyond the southern corporate limits of the city.

On March 13, 1981 the Board of Directors signed a lease agreement on the annex of the old Wilhite Church building located one-half mile south of Interstate 40 on Sparta Road. Shortly thereafter, the Board was given an opportunity to purchase the property and building, and on August 15, 1981, final purchase agreement papers were signed. Personal guarantees by Board members and interested parties were necessary to secure the loan. A "Note Retirement Fund Drive" was initiated on December 10, 1982. On August 16, 1984, the original bank loan was retired, using an interest free loan from a local church. Through continued fund raising efforts, the remaining debt was paid off on April 14, 1985.

Since April 1, 1984, the Mission has provided office space for the Putnam County Clearing House and Project Help making it a community focal point for those seeking physical or spiritual relief. On April 14, 1986, utilizing the generosity of local dentists and dental assistants, the Mission began operating a weekly dental clinic for those who do not otherwise have access to dental services.

Through an interview with Reverend Self, it was revealed that the Cookeville Rescue Mission is affiliated with the International Union of Gospel Missions. The staff includes Reverend Self and his wife, as well as three Mission "clients." These clients are part of a work program through which the Mission is run. Time is

allowed for these members of the support staff to seek other work and perhaps find permanent employment. Self-help is encouraged even in these people who assist in the daily operation of the Mission.

The Board of Directors has nine members who are nominated by the local churches. Members can succeed themselves and currently there are two female and seven male members.

The Mission is a "temporary living refuge" wherein food and lodging will be provided for three consecutive days. Additional lodging time may be granted on a case-by-case basis by a three person review committee made up of Board members. This is discouraged, but exceptions may be made for families or transients who have new and permanent employment and are awaiting the processing of regular checks by their employer.

Capacity at the Mission is from 30 to 35 people per night. Simple rules which all patrons must agree to abide by are:

1. There will be no alcoholic beverages or firearms on the property or in the building.
2. There will be no smoking in the building.
3. Everyone is responsible for keeping his/her sleeping area clean and neat. Beds must be made by 7:00 a.m.
4. The kitchen is off limits to everyone except Mission staff.
5. The phone may be used only with permission.
6. While at the Mission, everyone is expected to attend chapel services.

7. Curfew time is at 9:30 p.m.
8. All new arrivals must shower before being assigned a bed.

An agreement listing the above rules must be read and signed by each patron. Chapel services are nightly. On Sundays and Thursdays a complete religious service is performed, while on the other nights, a few minutes are set aside for a short scripture reading with time for personal reflection on it. Twenty-five to 30 locals from the original Wilhite Church congregation still attend services here, presenting an opportunity for local interaction with Mission patrons. Laundry services are not advertised, but can be had "if they can persuade a staff member to operate the machines for them" and the need is verified.

After ten years in existence, Reverend Self reported that people generally feel comfortable going to the Mission for help. Community confidence in and support for the efforts of the Mission are present. A slide presentation has been developed to inform local civic organizations of the Mission's efforts. The Mission remains open for use during daylight hours, but the patrons are encouraged to seek additional help, jobs and/or permanent shelter on their own.

Services provided by the Mission, termed by Reverend Self as "Bandaaid Services" because they temporarily cover the problem but do not actually solve it, include: meals; showers; laundry (on occasion as explained earlier); clothing; spiritual counseling;

housing and job referral (when the opportunity arises); some medical and dental services. The Mission also receives day-old bread from Kroger and fresh vegetables from area stores and farmers, then redistributes that which is not used by the Mission, coordinating the food distribution with the Clearing House efforts. Despite the nature of these services, Reverend Self insists that the Mission is a ministry and not a social service agency.

The majority of Mission patrons are transients who are enroute from one place to another and for some reason find themselves passing through or stranded in Cookeville. These people are assisted as much as they can be in order that they can be on their way to their ultimate destination. The transients are not encouraged to remain in Cookeville. The number of transients has increased in recent years, probably due in part "to the economy." Some of these people are "trying to get back home." Reverend Self estimated that 20% to 25% of Mission patrons are chronically disabled, either by mental incapacities or because of drug or alcohol abuse. Some of these people are referred to other agencies including: Plateau Mental Health Center (this referral is done through a medical doctor); Humanity Acres, Inc. (an Alcoholics Anonymous affiliated organization).

Some locals also use the Mission facilities. Reverend Self stated that this is usually due to being burned out or evicted from their former residence. After the three day limit is up, Reverend Self makes a contact with the clients' local family members to get

them to assist their relatives in their time of need, but "the family usually does not consider the situation an emergency as long as the Mission will house them." Besides these people, the Mission also gets in locals who have been on drinking binges and who will use the three days to "dry out."

Despite the simple and relatively few Mission rules which clients must honor, some people will not use the facility because of them. The usual culprit here is the mandatory chapel attendance. Still others will not use the Mission facilities simply because "they do not want to."

Funding and other forms of assistance are given to the Mission from various sources. The Mission depends greatly on the contributions from area churches. This money is usually a budgeted item for the churches. Other donations come from individuals, civic groups and local corporations. Approximately one-third of the operating funds are generated from the congregation attending the Mission services on Sundays and Thursdays.

When asked about government sources, Reverend Self stated that he did not seek nor did he wish to seek assistance from any governmental unit for fear of the restrictions which might be placed on the spending of such funds. Accepting government funds would probably disallow the current mandatory chapel attendance, and Reverend Self looks on chapel attendance and spiritual counseling as very necessary parts of the Mission's role in helping those in need.

In-kind contributions are also accepted by the Mission. Some donated clothing is kept on hand to give to those who need it. Storage space is limited, so the donations of clothing which are accepted must also be limited. A relatively wide assortment of clothing is available at any given time.

Food donations, other than those already mentioned, include canned food which is collected as an entrance fee to special sports exhibition games of Tennessee Technological University teams. This food is divided between the Mission and the Clearing House. The Mission has also accepted a large refrigerator/freezer unit from a local merchant who was remodeling his food store.

Volunteers are utilized for special projects which the Mission undertakes. Some construction and landscaping has been done by volunteers. A person comes to the Mission one day each week to do the cooking. The rest of the time, one of the live-in workers does the cooking. The dentists in the dental clinic and the spiritual counselors also volunteer some time to the Mission.

An expansion to the sleeping quarters is in the discussion stage, with construction completion optimistically targeted for the fall of 1986. The expansion will add a second floor where women and families will sleep. The single men will remain on the main level along with the dining and kitchen facilities. Reverend Seld also spoke of moving to a one-week program for the families who stay at the Mission.

Reverend Self has experienced no major problems in running the Mission, explaining that his philosophy that people should "be good to each other" has been a contributing factor to the success of his program. Although some people have chosen not to stay at the Mission, no one has ever been turned away because there was no room, even during cold weather.

Reverend Self has described Cookeville as a "Wait-And-See" community, stating that people who develop a new idea, such as the Mission, must prove themselves and the idea worthwhile and worthy of community support. The Mission's first five years on Cedar Street proved the value of Reverend Self's Mission. When the Mission moved to the current location, community support was not lost, but has continued to grow.

Additional low cost permanent housing and job referral services are viewed by Reverend Self as needs in Cookeville to help those who have become homeless reestablish themselves in the community. Additional support is also needed for the city's Project HELP, which will be discussed later.

A key to the Mission's success has probably been the fact that someone is on hand around the clock to deal with the people who have been referred to the Mission. Referrals come from local law enforcement officials, who also provide transportation to the Mission if necessary, area 24-hour businesses, the hospital emergency room, the Plateau Mental Health Center and others. Reverend Self

also cites interaction with and support of the Cookeville community as major contributing factors in the Mission's success.

The Putnam County Clearing House

The Putnam County Clearing House was first established in 1975 and chartered in 1983 with the purpose of furnishing emergency assistance to "the needy of the community of Cookeville and Putnam County." The Clearing House, run by Mrs. Mildred Miller, is a one-time, one-stop help center. Those seeking assistance from the Clearing House are usually given one-time assistance from the Clearing House (records are kept), but they are also advised on where else to seek assistance for their specific needs.

Mrs. Miller termed the Clearing House assistance as a "Bandaidd Measure" for problems which are beyond her means to solve. The Clearing House provides assistance to locals as a preventative measure to their becoming more destitute; assistance is also given to transients to "assist them on their way." Here again, the transients are encouraged to move on rather than settle in the area and add to the local burden.

The Clearing House keeps detailed records on everyone who asks for and receives help. A social security card is required as information on each applicant is collected. Detailed records on who was assisted and how they were assisted, coupled with good communication between the Clearing House and area churches, has helped reduce the incidence of "double-dipping." Double-dipping,

Mrs. Miller explained, is the act of contacting many churches for assistance. Mrs. Miller's records have helped curb this kind of abuse of the system. Mrs. Miller told of a case of one woman returning for additional assistance after going home and changing clothes.

Mrs. Miller is the only staff member at the Clearing House. On occasion she is assisted by a very supportive eight member Board of Directors. Those serving on the Board of Directors are selected "to try to get equal representation from all of the denominations of the churches" from across the county.

Services provided by the Clearing House include: food which is nutritional and easily prepared (this given no more than four times annually, per person or family, allowing for discretion on the part of Mrs. Miller in determining whether additional assistance will be given); help in purchasing prescription medicine and eyeglasses; assistance in paying utility bills; providing some gasoline and/or auto repairs to allow transients to continue on their way; providing bus tickets to as far as the Nashville or Knoxville Traveler's Aid center where it has been prearranged that someone will assist the transient from that point (other than this type of coordination, there is no direct affiliation between the Clearing House and Traveler's Aid); referral to other agencies for other types of assistance. One hundred fifty dollars is allowed per client per year for rent, gasoline, auto repairs and utility bills. Most of these methods of assistance, other than those provided to transients, are provided

to help prevent locals from becoming increasingly destitute and, possibly, homeless.

Mrs. Miller reported that the largest problem faced by the Clearing House is lack of sufficient funds. Sources of operating capital include many of the local churches, United Way, and the federal and county governments. The only funds whose use is not limited in any way comes from the churches. The United Way provides some quarterly support; however, a portion of this is designated for operating expenses of the Clearing House. In 1985, a small federal grant was received, but limits were placed on the allowable amount of assistance for any one client. The Putnam County Commission allocated a total of \$1200 for Clearing House operations in 1985. This money came from the County's General Revenue Sharing Funds, and part of it was designated for rent, other than initial deposits.

In the past year, the need for assistance has approximately tripled, according to Mrs. Miller. Mrs. Miller thinks this is due in part to the closing of local industries (particularly textile industries), increased transient traffic enroute from the north to the south and west, and delays in receiving assistance from other agencies, such as the Department of Human Services (Social Security, S.S.I., Welfare, Food Stamps).

Humanity Acres, Inc.

Humanity Acres, Incorporated, is an Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) affiliated agency run by Mr. Marlin O. "Butch" Marshall. Mr. Marshall

has been an A.A. member for 35 years and moved to Cookeville from the Detroit area. Humanity Acres was established in 1983 and has had a non-profit status for two years. Currently, funding is provided by private contributions, church allotments and minor corporate donations. At present the local government units do not contribute, but Mr. Marshall anticipates that contributions will eventually be sought from both the city and the county. Humanity Acres has also sponsored Gospel singings and circuses to raise funds. The staff of Humanity Acres includes four volunteers besides Mr. Marshall. The Board of Directors has 15 members from the community, Reverend Self among them.

The main purpose behind Humanity Acres is to assist the recovering alcoholic to reenter society in general. Mr. Marshall believes that in Cookeville, as well as in other cities, there is some relationship between alcoholism and homelessness. Many of the people he works with spend some time on the streets of Cookeville. Some have a home or a room in a boarding house, but others do not. Mr. Marshall told of a dilapidated frame building hidden by trees and undergrowth located only about two blocks from city hall where some of "his people" live. Driving past the structure revealed that there are no windows or doors on it.

In order for the A.A. rehabilitation process to be effective, the client must be detoxified or dried out. Mr. Marshall has sent some people to the Mission to dry out for three days so that treatment

may begin. Humanity Acres also works with couples and families in order to work out the alcoholism problem and possibly save a marriage or keep a family together in the process.

Mr. Marshall associates himself with anyone who might be of benefit to Humanity Acres. He is currently working with local lawyers and judges to set up an alternative form of sentencing for convicted D.U.I. offenders, namely the Humanity Acres 16 week treatment program. The cost of the program is \$150, while the cost of the other sentence currently used is 30 days in jail. Mr. Marshall made the statement that most D.U.I.s are "amateurs"; that is, they are not true alcoholics. Participating in the Humanity Acres program may help prevent D.U.I.s from sliding into alcoholism and possibly into the homelessness which is sometimes associated with alcoholism.

Humanity Acres and Mr. Marshall are presently looking for a suitable location to put a rehabilitation center. The program at the center would last for 30 consecutive days at a cost of \$3000 per client. The program will include intensive spiritual and social counseling, group meetings and activities including viewing rehabilitation oriented movies.

On May 13, 1986, Mr. Marshall and friends appeared before the Algood Regional Planning Commission to discuss locating the center at the old Master's Rest Home site. Algood is adjacent to Cookeville's northeast corporate limits. The facility is ideally situated including room for 40 beds, ten which would be reserved for teenagers and

four for convicted D.U.I. offenders. Very few renovations would be necessary for the structure to accommodate the center, but many neighborhood residents turned out at the meeting to voice opposition. This was another case of the thought that it is a good cause, but "Not in my backyard!" Whether the residents' fears are rational is debatable. Mr. Marshall is now searching for another site, because he felt that forcing the issue where the people were opposed to it is a poor way to begin community relations.

Putnam County Health Department

Although employees have observed them, the Putnam County Health Department does not deal specifically with homeless people. Mrs. Jean Davis, a Public Health Nurse, was referred by the County Executive as someone who might know details about four men who, a couple of years ago, lived in an old bread delivery truck in a wooded ravine behind the Health Department. When interviewed, Mrs. Davis was joined by Mrs. Frances Bumbalough, a social worker with the Health Department.

The four men who spent much time in the ravine and around the bread truck were presumed homeless and were known to have an alcoholism problem. The area of the ravine, although only a few blocks from the county courthouse, is low-lying, heavily wooded and very secluded given its location. One can only assume the men might still live there if the truck had not burned one day when they were cooking something in it. Neither of the ladies had direct

contact with any of the men, therefore, the direction the men took from the ravine is unknown.

Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Bumbalough spoke of other people who had characteristics of the homeless, but the primary concern of their jobs is preventing deterioration of the health of the general public. Often they are called upon to check up on someone in the community. The ladies told of overcrowded boarding houses, deplorable conditions of overcrowded mobile homes in certain trailer parks in town, public housing units whose residents go against rules and take in family or relatives causing overcrowding there, and extended families or multiple family units living together in a small four room house. Mrs. Davis described the fringe homeless, people who are potentially homeless, in that if it were not for a family member or friend allowing them to share accommodations, they would probably be homeless. Mrs. Davis referred to people in this situation as "hidden homeless."

This phenomenon again reflects the values of the community, the strength of the family structure and the act of friends helping friends. Cookeville is a small community where, unlike the large cities, people generally cannot get lost in anonymity. Relatives or friends giving assistance in times of need helps to avert homelessness for some people.

City of Cookeville

Dwight Henry has been Mayor of Cookeville for only about one year, so his insights into the problem of homelessness were not

well developed. He, personally, has not seen any homeless, but may not have looked for them until now. The city has no structured program to deal with the homeless at present. Requests for assistance are heard on a case-by-case basis. Some funds have been appropriated to several social service organizations in Cookeville. Mayor Henry also operates a Christian radio station which receives calls for assistance as a church would. Referrals are made by the radio station personnel to the Mission and other established service agencies.

Mr. Luther Mathis has been the Cookeville City Manager for about three years. He has been employed by the city for nearly 35 years, and he stated that he thinks homelessness in Cookeville is not a major problem. Although he is personally unaware of circumstances where people have been without permanent shelter, he could not say that it has not happened here. He reported that the city has no policy or program for dealing with homeless people, but that this may be so because the problem is not perceived as a problem.

Perhaps because of the local officials' lack of perception of homelessness as a local problem, neither the Cookeville Regional Planning Commission nor the Office of Community Development, which handles staff functions for the Planning Commission, has chosen to investigate the homelessness situation here. The officials do not view homelessness as a major concern in Cookeville, and therefore, probably give the situation a low priority ranking for corrective action. Since other planning concerns have been determined to be more pressing, the Planning Commission and planning staff members, to date, have not studied the problem of homelessness in Cookeville.

Putnam County

When asked about the problem of homelessness in Cookeville, Putnam County Executive John Gentry stated that there are some homeless here but the situation is probably not too great. Mr. Gentry has heard of instances of people living out of their cars and one group of men who utilized an abandoned bread delivery truck. Mr. Gentry felt that Cookeville probably has more people living hand-to-mouth than true homeless; he called these people borderline homeless. If one unexpected expense arises, these people can become desperate for help. These people are in poor economic straits, but manage to hold on to what they have through the support of friends and the traditional values held by the people here.

At present the county has no structured program to assist the homeless, relying more on the private organizations to handle the situations. Temporary assistance has been granted on a case-by-case basis to help an ill person, the elderly or those who are in the initial delay period for other services.

The county does have a list of four to eight county residents who receive \$50 in assistance per month. This is general assistance money not directed toward rent or food or any specific use. This is designed to be temporary assistance. Applicants must file an application and be approved for assistance by the full County Commission. The list is reviewed each January and July. Mr. Gentry has made judgment calls in the past and given on-the-spot assistance if dire need has been demonstrated. These are measures designed to help keep people from becoming homeless in the first place.

Putnam County contributes to several service agencies including the Clearing House, Human Services and the Triad home for troubled children located just west of Cookeville in Bloomington Springs. These, too, are designed to help prevent homelessness from occurring in the community.

It was Mr. Gentry's opinion that much of what is being done to help the homeless today is a bandaid approach to the problem. A program needs to be developed to give complete direction to those seeking assistance. There is a need for one place where those seeking assistance can go to receive a comprehensive view of the type of aid available. This, according to Mr. Gentry, would involve a screening process to determine specific needs and match these with the appropriate service agency. "We need to teach them how to fish for themselves rather than just give them fish." This would involve, among other things, teaching them how to balance check books, set up a household budget and eventually establish self-sufficiency.

Department of Health and Human Services

Social Security Administration

Mr. Jeff Bass is Operations Supervisor with the Cookeville office of the Social Security Administration. Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (S.S.I.) and Welfare programs are administered through this office.

Mr. Bass stated that this office seldom deals with homeless people. On the occasion that a homeless person does seek assistance with his office, Mr. Bass reported that unless the person has

previously applied and been deemed eligible for benefits, there is very little immediate help which can be given.

Eligibility for either Social Security or S.S.I. must be established in order for assistance to be given. According to Mr. Bass, such applicants generally do not have enough work background for Social Security benefits and they must be handled through S.S.I. S.S.I. has some restrictions and limitations which must be worked around. First, S.S.I. is generally used for people over 65 years of age. If the applicant is under 65, in order for assistance to be obtained, the applicant must be disabled, physically or mentally. Then after an application has been filed, there is a 100 day processing period during which eligibility is determined.

When asked what these people were to do until eligibility was determined, Mr. Bass suggested two options. The first option is referral to other area agencies for immediate assistance. The second option open to his office is called making a "presumptive decision." By making a presumptive decision, the agency presumes that the applicant will be deemed eligible because of certain visible conditions; for example, a limb is missing or the applicant has Downs Syndrome. Based on the visible conditions, the applicant can be given three months of temporary payments which must be repaid when the benefits actually begin. A third option is available if the applicant has already been determined eligible. This is an immediate cash benefit and is used only in emergency situations.

It was Mr. Bass' opinion that many homeless people have probably filed for benefits somewhere as they wander about. Many such applicants are then denied benefits for "non-cooperation" because they move on before eligibility can be established. Mr. Bass spoke of a case he worked on when he was with a Florida office. He had worked on several occasions with a former mental institution patient trying to establish eligibility. Each time the man was denied benefits due to "non-cooperation." Eventually it was discovered that upon release from the mental institution, the man was told that if he remained in one place for too long, the hospital staff would pick him up and return him to the hospital. This evidently frightened the man enough to keep him unsettled.

Mr. Bass stated that he thought there are probably not too many homeless people in Cookeville and that a majority of them are probably transients. Mr. Bass also believes that mental incapacity is a major contributing factor to the problem of homelessness in general.

Putnam County Sheriff's Department

Sheriff since 1974, Mr. Jerry Abston has been with the department for a total of 17 years. During the most recent years of his tenure, Sheriff Abston has had contact with a few homeless people. The Sheriff believes that the number of homeless people locally is small. The Sheriff also stated that locals who are homeless are so by choice because they could probably obtain permanent shelter if

they wanted to. Sheriff Abston stated that a strong sense of family combined with support of the local churches has helped keep the incidence of homelessness down locally.

The Sheriff's department, when it receives calls about a suspected homeless person from citizens or local agencies, will investigate the situation and refer the person to the Mission, Clearing House, Department of Human Services or other agency for assistance. Many of these people are transients going down Interstate 40. The local agencies will do what they can to assist these people in reaching their ultimate destination.

The Sheriff appears to be very economically-minded in dealing with the transients. If a transient is found intoxicated, he may be taken to the Mission to dry out rather than to jail. When the transient is able to travel, he is given a bus ticket to the nearest Traveler's Aid station in line with his destination. The Sheriff compared the economics of the local agency treatment versus jailing the transient for public drunkenness. The agency treatment costs \$15 (the price of a bus ticket provided by the Clearing House to either the Nashville or Knoxville Traveler's Aid) plus perhaps a few meals at the Mission, while the cost of jailing the transient for 15 days for his offense is approximately \$11 per day or a total of about \$165 of tax payers' money. Despite the savings to the county, the Mission is not reimbursed by the county for the cost of the food and lodging for the transient.

Cookeville Police Department

Police Chief Tom Moore has been with the city for about a year after serving with the Tennessee Highway Patrol and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations for a combined total of 35 years. Chief Moore stated that he feels there are relatively few homeless in Cookeville. The Police Department has a cooperative working relationship with the Mission, Clearing House and other agencies and will refer both locals and transients to these agencies for help.

Chief Moore stated that there probably are some people who sleep in abandoned buildings and vehicles around the city. Such places that the Department knows about are checked during cold weather and people who are found there are taken to a warm place, usually the Mission. At other times, the police will clear the people out of these places upon receiving a complaint from a city resident or a request from the property owner.

Cookeville Public Housing Authority

The Cookeville Public Housing Authority (P.H.A.) was established to provide low cost housing to those in the Cookeville area who need it. At present, there are a total of 350 units, ranging in size from efficiencies to five bedrooms, at seven sites around the city. Rent is based upon income and the current "legal" population is 656. Mrs. Roberta Wilson who has been with the P.H.A. since 1959 explained that the actual population is higher due to relatives and friends illegally living with residents. Mrs. Wilson stated that

the P.H.A. is probably abused in this manner because it is government related.

Applications for housing are taken from single people if they are 62 years of age or disabled, and from families. The P.H.A. definition of family is two or more people related by blood, marriage or adoption. The time it takes to evaluate the application and determine eligibility can be as little as one day depending on the availability of information necessary for the evaluation. Until eligibility can be determined, applicants are referred to the Mission for temporary lodging. Even after applicants are found to be eligible, they may be placed on a waiting list. Some rent ranges are closed; that is, units renting for certain prices are fully occupied.

Mrs. Wilson reported that some people who apply for housing with the P.H.A. drive in from somewhere outside the community with all their worldly possessions. It is presumed that some of these people gather all their belongings and family and move on without all the necessary resources to take them where they want to go. Some of these people are reportedly living out of their vehicles.

It is a general practice of the P.H.A. to assist everyone they can once eligibility has been established. Currently, the lower rent ranges are filled to capacity. If a homeless person applied for and was deemed eligible for housing today, chances are that there would be a waiting list of other applicants ahead of

that person. In such cases, the applicant is referred to the Mission for temporary accommodations.

Plateau Mental Health Center

The Plateau Mental Health Center (hereafter referred to as the Center) is located adjacent to a nice residential neighborhood approximately one mile south of Interstate 40 on the Burgess Falls Road. The Center is landscaped and appears to be compatible with the neighborhood. The Center is so compatible that on at least one occasion, a young boy was seen riding his bike onto the Center grounds to use the basketball goal there.

A liaison worker for community support, Mr. Neil Williams, has been with the Center for approximately four years. Patients at the Center arrive from state institutions, are referred by social workers and are brought in by families who cannot handle them after they are released from an institution.

When discussing the mass deinstitutionalization which has taken place over the last twenty years, Mr. Williams stated that no one will be released from the Center if they have no other place to live. Generally, patients are released into the protective care of the immediate family or one of twelve boarding houses in the Upper Cumberland area. Six such boarding houses are located in the Cookeville area.

The boarding houses have room for an average of seven patients, with the largest housing 18. Each home is run by a "house parent"

who must be licensed by the state, and is charged with making sure medications are taken as directed and any other therapy is administered. Usually, each patient is receiving benefits from Social Security, S.S.I. or a trust fund; this money helps to pay for care at the boarding houses.

Project HELP

Project HELP is a program through which money is donated to help pay the utility bills of people who might otherwise have their utilities turned off. Utility customers may donate one dollar or whatever amount is desired; this amount is automatically listed on and added to the utility statement. At the end of each month, the collected donations are transferred to Mrs. Miller at the Clearing House. These funds are kept in a separate account and are used to assist the elderly and families with children in an emergency situation in paying utility bills only. Currently, approximately \$350 is collected monthly.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research which has been presented here has compared the situation of homeless people in Cookeville with the general situation of homeless people nationwide. This paper investigated who the homeless are, the situations which precipitated their homelessness and the services which are generally available to assist them. One major limitation to the research was the scarcity of reliable, current, accurate data on the national scale. The data which was used here is the most current data which was available at the time of the research.

This paper revealed that homelessness is still a problem more than 16 centuries after the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellus made reference to the homeless. The demographics of this group have changed considerably, even in the last 50 years. The group is generally younger and more heterogeneous than in the past, including people from all walks of life.

The reasons for being homeless have changed with the demographics. The reasons are generally as varied as the people are.

The research examined the array of services which are available to assist the homeless. Assistance is provided by the public and the private sectors, both for-profit and not-for-profit.

A comparison of the information on the local scene and the national scene provided many similarities and relatively few differences. The perception of the problem and the scope of available services are relatively small in Cookeville, but the importance of handling the situation adequately is very important.

There are two different groups of homeless in Cookeville. The first group includes the people who have ties in the community. These local homeless people have family in Cookeville and are a part of the community. There are certain agencies whose operational focus is to assist the local people who may be ^{Down} done on their luck. These agencies try to help the local people reestablish themselves in the community.

The second group of homeless are the transients, or those people who are in transit from one place to another and find themselves in Cookeville temporarily. Generally, these people have no economic or family ties in Cookeville and the agencies which deal with transients do what they can in order that the transients can be on their way to their ultimate destination. These agencies do not encourage the transients to stay in Cookeville any longer than necessary. Social agency funds are limited and the assistance is given to as many people as possible rather than concentrating the help on a limited group.

Within the whole population of homeless people there are people with chronic mental or physical problems who cannot adequately

support themselves. There are also people who are homeless due to economic conditions; these people may eventually end up living with other family members in a sort of extended family arrangement.

Then there is a group who for some reason are homeless by choice. These people have stepped away from the rest of society to live a different lifestyle.

A reliable figure on the number of homeless people nationally which can be agreed upon by all concerned parties is virtually impossible to derive; therefore, this research has not attempted to quantify the problem, but rather qualify it. The fluidity of this group makes it difficult to grasp the magnitude of this national problem. If only one person has to spend a night on the street or somewhere other than a permanent shelter, there is a problem which must be solved; however, this is not always the case. Those who have not personally witnessed the problem do not always perceive it as a problem. Until that happens, this nation will have the problem of homelessness to cope with.

The traditional good neighbor values usually associated with rural areas are evident in Cookeville. Rather than becoming homeless, people in need move in with family or friends. Where homelessness might exist in a larger urban setting, overcrowding results in Cookeville. Overcrowding is not a good situation but is usually better than being homeless. There is a perception that a number of people who are potentially homeless are taken care of by concerned relatives or friends.

Homelessness is a problem in Cookeville. The numbers may be relatively small, but if one person must be without permanent shelter, efforts to rectify the problem must be organized. Currently, the city has no policy for dealing with the homeless people possibly because the local officials have not been made aware of the problem. Therefore, the problem is not perceived as a problem. In order for the city to effectively deal with homelessness, the officials must be educated about the problem. The planning staff can assist in determining if there is a need for permanent shelter which is not being met by first compiling an inventory of the current services available and comparing that with results of an investigation to find out who might be spending nights without shelter. If there is a gap between services and need, alternative courses of action can be developed for consideration by the officials. Possible alternatives include:

1. Do nothing. This may result if the city determines that the need is being met with adequate services.
2. Provide financial support to existing services. If current services do not quite meet the existing need, the local government can help to fill the void.
3. Initiate a program to be funded and staffed entirely by the city. This may not be feasible for the city to undertake.
4. Develop a public/private partnership to alleviate the housing problems of the homeless. This presents problems

as some of the privately sponsored programs here fear government regulations.

Whatever policy develops from a local investigation, the city planning staff and planning commission should be involved in the formulation of possible solutions to the problem of homelessness locally.

There exists a problem among the various public and private service agencies, in that one does not know the full extent of services provided and actions taken by the others. There may be cases of services being overlapped in one area and completely missing in another. The Clearing House is a good attempt at resolving this situation, but the idea must be expanded. Cooperation between the service organizations is necessary to obtain the most efficient and effective distribution of services to those in need. The Clearing House is a good idea, but it must be brought to its full potential in order to better serve those in the community who need the services.

Further research into this problem is recommended. Such research might include a comparison study between the situation in Cookeville and other similarly situated cities: 1) in the southeast; 2) across the country. Much information has been published on the problem of homelessness in the large cities. A comparative study of small cities could prove interesting.

Another area of research which is probably worthwhile would investigate why the problem in Cookeville is not greater than it is given the rural setting in one of the poorest regions of the state.

Examining local family and community values, religious and cultural ideologies may help to explain this query.

Performing indepth interviews with homeless people could prove to be very interesting as well as enlightening to the personal situations of individual homeless people. There may be some question as to the reliability of information obtained from the homeless people, but Vanderbilt's Professor Lee, currently involved in his own interview process with Nashville's homeless, states that "homeless people in general have less to hide than the average person involved in a public opinion poll. Their problems are more visible, hence, they have less reason to distort the truth of their situation" (Lee, 7-18-86).

This problem of homelessness should be investigated so that a solution might ultimately be found. On the local level, the planning staff should at the very least be aware of homelessness as it exists in the community in order to better implement a comprehensive planning program. If not specifically requested to study the problem, the staff planner should gather basic data and keep informed by the local service agencies as to the magnitude and seriousness of homelessness locally.

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