

City staff reached out to three service providers that engage with our unsheltered community members to learn more about their outreach interests at Geri Field. Those agencies included the Opportunity Council's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), Lighthouse Mission's (LMM) Outreach Team and GRACE, while not an outreach program, GRACE provides case management for housed and unhoused community members that are the most challenging to serve.

GRACE currently has three enrolled members at Geri Field. Lighthouse Mission Ministries recognizes many Geri campers as former guests, and their outreach team will go near the camp, but their team does not feel welcome nor safe entering the grounds of the encampment. LMM believes there are some or maybe several that are restricted for serious reasons, such as sexual predation. HOT sent a volunteer to Geri to collect information as part of the County's annual Point in Time count surveys and recognized many who they had seen at other locations during the count. Once the advocates and campers learned this volunteer was part of the Opportunity Council programs, they were no longer welcome in the camp and were asked to leave (?).

In the month of January, HOT visited over 130 camps providing outreach services. One of HOT's primary mission is to connect people to housing or shelter, such as Base Camp. Since Base Camp was opened last summer, they have been successful at getting campers to access services provided at Base Camp. It sometimes takes years for HOT to build enough trust to help our unhoused make decisions to leave the outdoors. HOT personnel shared that one of the hardest impacts to ... is the trust bond that has been broken because of Camp 210 and Geri field. HOT does not believe the circumstances at Geri offer a useful and productive setting to successfully do outreach, and any resources they focus there takes away from the other 130+ camps in the county. However, they have indicated a willingness to coordinate an outreach effort if close by but not in the encampment.

LMM staff, like HOT, were asked to leave the Camp 210 perimeter. They have often, in public meetings, mentioned that they would welcome an invitation to do outreach at Camp 210 or Geri. (City officials have expressed this as well, that invitations would be helpful.) No invitations were received. Their strong preference would be to receive an invitation so that they know they are welcome but have also agreed to coordinate an outreach effort off site. From LMM's perspective this is important because the campers should be allowed to make the choice to access services rather than the feeling that service providers are invading the space.

LMM continues to help people get "ok'd" to come back to Base Camp. Some campers think they have been restricted but have not been. Not all Geri campers will be able to come back to Base Camp because their behaviors are not safe to guests or to staff. For example, one of the campers had (insert Bridget - sexual predator). Not necessarily a Geri camper, but another example of why a guest would be restricted from Base Camp was

LMM's Base Camp, while it is a low-barrier shelter, is not the catch all for every single unhoused person as LMM must prioritize safety for all guests and staff.

GRACE prefers an invitation and agreement with the "operators" of the encampment although mentioned that only 1 or 9 representatives had shown any interest in learning more about the complexity of homelessness nor about the robust system our community has in place to help our most vulnerable.

GRACE, HOT and LMM have spent an amazing number of hours responding to questions and trying to correct the plethora of misinformation that has resulted from Camp 210 and Geri. They have made little headway in educating advocates on the housing and service system for the unsheltered. All three representatives believe their clients and guests have taken many steps backward in their work and relationships with our most vulnerable community members as a result of these camps. LMM notes that Camp 210/Geri was their biggest sadness this winter as they have witnessed guests that were on the path of recovery fall back to old ways at these camps.

All three agencies stand with their arms open arms.

DRAFT SUMMARY TALKING POINTS *(for discussion only, Janice's edits/additions to Nicole's bullets)*

- **What has been the biggest challenge to serving the homeless population this winter?**
 - According to area homeless services providers, the top challenges to serving the homeless population this winter have been the encampments at City Hall and Geri Field. These encampments have:
 - Disconnected individuals from services, medication and caseworkers, and created an atmosphere with no rules or boundaries, reversing the progress of many clients toward overcoming personal struggles and obstacles.
 - Undermined the legitimacy of agreed-upon county-wide strategies and the multiple agencies that serve this population every day.
 - Reduced the use of indoor, fully staffed and operated shelters, resulting in those services being underutilized.
 - Violated CDC guidelines for social distancing and avoiding groups.

While Camp 210 increased community awareness and support for the homeless populations, this attention has come at a great cost, including the problems listed above and consistent health and safety concerns.