

2014

Wesley Food Pantry Project

Jalyn Smith
Parkland College

Recommended Citation

Smith, Jalyn, "Wesley Food Pantry Project" (2014). *A with Honors Projects*. 110.
<http://spark.parkland.edu/ah/110>

Open access to this Essay is brought to you by Parkland College's institutional repository, [SPARK: Scholarship at Parkland](#). For more information, please contact spark@parkland.edu.

Jalyn Smith

Jason Keist

SOC 220

May 14, 2014

“A with Honors” Project Reflection

Participating in the volunteer orientation video for Wesley Food Pantry at Parkland was an experience. Wesley was created to serve the community and has many qualities of a formal social work practice. The project entailed making an orientation video for future volunteers to give them an idea of their duties. While doing so, we were to find ways that we could connect our experience back to class, specifically social work practice.

Wesley Evening Food Pantry is an organization operated by volunteers that community members can go to once a month to get receive food if they have a need for it. The idea for the Wesley Food Pantry was developed by Donna Camp, the director of the pantry. The ultimate objective behind starting the food pantry was to tackle an important issue: hunger. Particularly, Donna recognized the need in the community for a food pantry that had more feasible hours for those who have other obligations during the morning and early afternoon.

The evening pantry is open every third Thursday of every month from 5-7:30p. Donna had the idea to open the pantry towards the end of every month because she figured that's when families are typically running out of money from their last paycheck.

Donna recognized the struggle that some college students face as well. Some students have to focus on their studies, so some are not able to work. She opened a food pantry at

Parkland College last December. The pantry is located in the S building, and their hours of operation are 7a-2p, the second Wednesday of every month.

Although the pantry was started in a church, you don't have to be a member, nor do you have to practice a particular religion. In fact, you don't have to be religious at all. That is one of the points Donna wanted us to mention in the video. She wants volunteers to make people feel as comfortable as possible. Volunteers are to stress that there is no such thing as too much of one item. Besides the peanut butter, people are allowed to get however much they need for their families.

In many ways the efforts of Donna and all of the volunteers match the definition of a social worker. By definition, a social worker is a graduate of a school of social work (with either bachelor's or master's degree), who uses their knowledge and skills to provide social services for clients who may be individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, or society in general (Zastrow 2014). Being a social worker is about helping people, and you don't have to be a college graduate to help someone. Although she doesn't formally identify herself as a social worker, Donna identified a problem that was taking place in the community, and she came up with a game plan to try and diminish the uneasiness that some families face.

Donna also provides a safe, judgment-free environment for people with needs. In any job in the social work field, one must have the ability to make others feel comfortable. It is important that your clients trust you with their safety and also the information they are sharing with you. No, by definition Donna Camp is not a social worker, but she provides a vital service to those in need.

I believe that Wesley's services can be viewed from both institutional and residual views of social work practice. There are so many different ways that one can look at this. The residual view suggests that one should only be given assistance during an emergency. To an extent, I agree with some aspects of this, but I think it depends on the situation and the circumstances of the individual case.

Whenever children are brought into play, it's an emergency. Regardless of what's going on with a parent, if their child is hungry, they need to be fed. I don't think it should be a concern if all of their other resources are exhausted. Parents have a duty to take care of their children, and if they can't, making the child suffer is not the ethical thing to do because social workers are supposed to be there for the people. We also have to consider the fact that some people are too proud to ask for help.

Wesley Food Pantry was not created to take care of anyone for the rest of their lives. It was put in place to solely support a family's need for food for a week's time. Personally, I don't feel that it always has to be an emergency when you get food from the pantry. Sometimes you just feel better knowing that you have one less thing to worry about that week.

I went to the Wesley Food Pantry at Parkland once, not because I didn't have any food, but because it's free food. If there is enough for everyone, I don't think anyone should be denied that. It's a whole different case with food stamps and cash assistance. I know personally of some people who abuse those services.

The opposing view point, the institutional view, simply states that people's problems are not always their fault. Life happens, and that could leave a person in a bad position. I absolutely agree with this. I know people who legitimately have a tough time, but they try their best. I know

that some people can potentially become too dependent on certain resources, but I don't think that it's ever right to deny someone help.

I enjoyed learning about and volunteering at Wesley Food Pantry. When we first decided as a class to do a video, I was so excited. I had high expectations for it. I believe that the volunteer orientation video will, of course, give volunteers a better understanding of what exactly is expected of them. I think that it is more effective for people to see something being done as supposed to just hearing someone tell you what to do. Once volunteers understand exactly what they're supposed to do and how, they can better assist clients, and that is the most important aspect.

References

Zastrow, Charles (2014). Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare: Empowering People (11th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.