

Ending Homelessness in Virginia...

One Home at a Time.

One Meal at a Time.



**THE
CAMPUS
KITCHENS
PROJECTSM**



**Habitat
for Humanity[®]**

George Mason University

Fairfax, Virginia

Community Service Project

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2018-2019

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Purpose of Project

Statement of Project Goals

Although Virginia is known to be an exceptionally wealthy state, there remains a large population that struggles financially. This population often goes unnoticed, especially in the NOVA region. The George Mason University PBL chapter wanted to reach out to these families and individuals by supporting and working with Habitat for Humanity’s ReStore and Community Build Day. The main purpose of the ReStore is to accept donations that come from local businesses, building contractors, suppliers and individuals. These donations are then resold at 50-90% below their retail price to make them more affordable. The money earned through the ReStore is then allocated for Habitat for Humanity Community Build Day, whose main goal is building affordable homes for low income families and individuals. Apart from helping financially struggling families and individuals to have a home, we also wanted them to have food. This led us to partner with George Mason's Campus Kitchen Project. Mason's Campus Kitchen Project takes remaining food from dining services and packages it for delivery to shelter residents. With that said, the goals of this project were:

- Promoting an awareness of Habitat for Humanity and its services
- Volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Chantilly
- Volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity construction sites
- Packaging remaining food from Mason dining halls and dropping them at the Katherine K Hanley Family Shelter

Service to the Community and Its Citizens

Table 1.1

Characteristic	Number of people
Total Homeless Population	6,067
Total Family Households Experiencing Homelessness	631
Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	478
Persons Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	896
Unaccompanied Young Adults (Aged 18-24) Experiencing Homelessness	303
Rate of Homelessness per 100,000 Population	72

The statistics about homelessness in Virginia were taken from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. There were a total of 6,067 homeless individuals in Virginia in 2017. 631 families were experiencing homelessness, 478 individuals encountered chronic homelessness (individuals who are disabled) and 303 young adults (18-24) were homeless as well. For every 100,000 individuals in Virginia, 72 were homeless.¹

As the tables suggest, there is a large population of low income families and individuals in Virginia. This is considerably high in comparison to other parts of the United States. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment was \$1,027 and a two bedroom house was \$1,211 per month.² The NLIHC also noted that due to the high cost of rent, 257,338 people in Virginia were considered low income renter households, and 72% of low income renters had severe cost burden.³ This means those renters were spending more than half of their income on housing and utilities costs.

Due to the population of homeless individuals and families in Virginia, organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnerships on Ending Homelessness are more involved in local communities. Both these organizations have branches that specialize in building houses to be either sold or rented at affordable prices. Recognizing the importance of these organizations, we decided to help the organization by working at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Chantilly. Our contribution to the ReStore will directly benefit the Habitat for Humanity construction sites. All the profit made at the ReStore goes toward these construction projects. The food we collect from the Mason Dining Halls goes directly to feeding those homeless or low-income families and individuals.

Planning & Development

During our first meeting for the 2018 school year, the GMU PBL began to brainstorm ideas for our community service project. One of our members brought up the idea that though Virginia prides itself on being one of the wealthiest states in America, there remains a population of homeless individuals and families. These families have nowhere to stay and nothing to eat. In the middle of the conversation, one of our chapter officers brought the idea of working with Habitat for Humanity because he had volunteered at the ReStore numerous times. Since his experience was very rewarding, we decided to work with Habitat for Humanity. Right away, the community service officer, Ahmet Dalgic, started researching information on Habitat for Humanity to get our project launched. This research included possible ReStore and construction locations we could work with. We knew we could make a substantial impact because the profit and donations received at the ReStore are put towards building affordable homes in the community. It was also decided that we would volunteer at the Community Build Day on February 14th, 16th and March 17th, and at the ReStore on February 22nd and March 3rd, 10th and 24th. We felt that

volunteering more at the ReStore would be most effective because it would allow us to bring more members and doesn't require as many skills.

Since we did not know how to feed these families and individuals, by a surprise twist of fate, an organization who specializes in fighting hunger contacted us. Due to the mission of Phi Beta Lambda, a local campus organization reached out to us for a partnership. After evaluating their missions and goals, we decided that this would be a great opportunity to help combat hunger in Virginia. Ana Rodriguez, one of the main staff members for Campus Kitchen at GMU, was excited about the partnership. She agreed that this would give our members and volunteers the opportunity to work together in different events. Once that was done, we decided that our first volunteer date would be on February 19th. Table 1.2 below shows the various steps that had to be taken before we could volunteer at the ReStore, Community Build Day and Mason Kitchen.

Table 1.2: Volunteer for H4H(Left), and Volunteering for Mason Kitchen(Right).

<p>Organizing and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called ReStore for procedures and requirements • Created a survey to find out what students knew about Habitat for Humanity before hosting the collection drive • Made sure volunteers had appropriate attire for working in a construction area • Organized a carpool <p>Promoting Awareness & Encouraging Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a Flyer promoting the volunteer dates • Advertised to PBL members • Presented events at chapter meeting • Volunteer sign up link sent to all PBL members • Posted flyers on Facebook, and Instagram • Created a survey about Habitat for Humanity and its services and sent to GMU and UVA PBL members 	<p>Organizing and Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voted on volunteer dates • Met at the Southside Dinning Hall • Went over the rules and procedures of handling foods, how to interact with staffs, pick up locations and drop off shelter. • Made sure everyone attended orientation <p>Promoting Awareness & Encouraging Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertised to PBL members • Presented volunteer dates at chapter meeting • Volunteer sign up link sent to all PBL members • Posted flyer on Facebook, and Instagram • Created a survey about Mason Kitchen and its services, and sent to GMU and UVA PBL members
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The survey referenced in Table 1.2 was a nine question survey for our PBL members and campus students. The purpose of the survey was to find out how much students knew about Habitat for Humanity, as well as Mason Kitchen and what each of those organization does for our community. Below is the summary of our findings based on 30 students we surveyed.

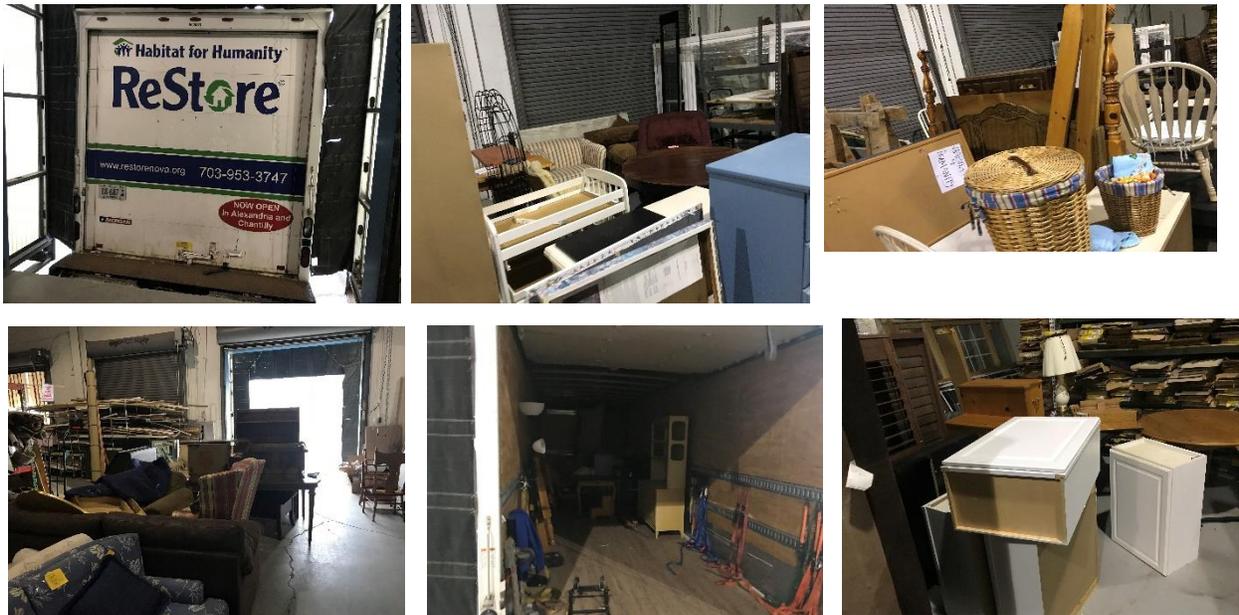
1. Have you ever heard of Habitat for Humanity?
 - 32 people said yes, 4 people said maybe, and 2 said no
2. There are millions of homeless families in the US, including college students. Do you think that there are students or faculty members on campus that need these affordable houses?
 - 34 people said yes, 4 people said maybe, and 1 said no

3. Habitat for Humanity has ReStores that collect donations and resell them at lower prices than retail stores. Have you ever shopped or volunteered at any of the ReStores?
 - 23 people said no, 11 people said yes, and 5 said maybe
4. Have you ever met/known a person that was homeless or from a low-income family in Virginia?
 - 31 people said yes, 6 people said no, and 2 said maybe
5. VA is one of the wealthiest states in the US, but how many families/individuals do you think are homeless?
 - 16 people said 4503-6002, 11 people said more than 7003, 6 people said 1501-3001, 5 people said 3002-4502, and finally 1 person said 0000-1500
6. Is an organization like Habitat for Humanity that specializes in helping the community necessary?
 - 37 people said yes, 1 people said no, and 1 said maybe
7. Have you heard of Campus Kitchen?
 - 21 people said no and 18 people said yes
8. Have you volunteered for your campus kitchen?
 - 26 students said maybe, 7 said yes, and 6 people said no
9. Is an organization like Campus Kitchen that specializes in helping the community necessary?
 - 38 students yes and 1 person said no

Implementation of Project

ReStore

Since it **was** our first-time volunteering with the Chantilly Habitat for Humanity ReStore, the store manager asked us to watch a short introductory video on what the organization is, what it does, and how volunteers can help throughout the Restore. We were asked to sign a community service acknowledgment form, a volunteer waiver form, and finally a release and waiver of liability. After signing the forms, the manager explained to us that we would be organizing the store, assisting customers, processing donations, and then moving them into the warehouse. Once we were done with the tour of the facility, our first task was to help unload the truck full of donations the organization had picked up prior to our arrival.



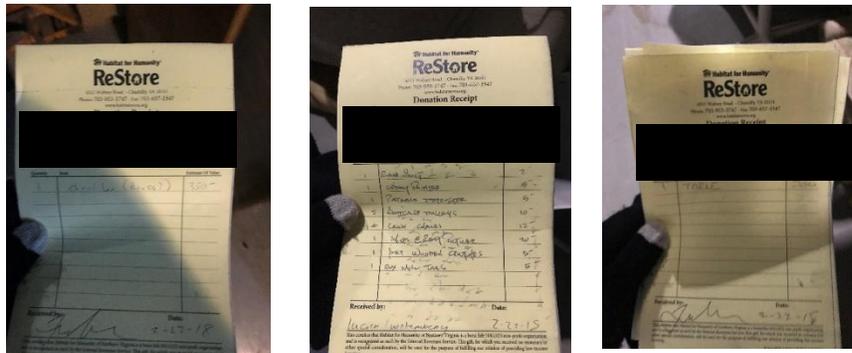
The six photos above are some of the items received from the community. Out of the truck came items that were basically in a new condition. We received more than ten white cabinets from an office building, two queen size bed frames, more sofas than the ReStore knew what to do with, and two boxes filled with things like wine glasses, plates and other kitchen utensils. The truck also contained two laundry baskets, a baby bed, a feeding chair and two kid's drawers, all clear signs that they once belonged to a happy mother.

The most amazing donation came later in the afternoon from a community member. Below are some of the items he donated.



He donated car washing kits, lots of kitchen utensils and paint sprayers. The most intriguing piece was the green handmade artwork. That was one thing that immediately caught the eyes of all the volunteers. Amazingly enough, it was painted by the donor. Our PBL Vice President, Lucien Wobombong, liked the painting so much that he bought it at the end of his shift.

On our first volunteer day, we accepted over 100 donations from the community. Based on the donors estimate of the items value, we received over \$3,500 worth of items. Below are some of the donations we received a few minutes after we started volunteering.



Community Build Day

Our experience at the Springfield construction site was just as exciting as our experience at the ReStore. The house we were remodeling belonged to a senior who lived there with his wife, but unfortunately, they passed away. Since the couple had been living there for so long without senior assistance, the house was not well maintained. We had to replace almost everything in the house. Below are pictures showing the condition of the house when we started working.





As the pictures above show, the house needed major renovations. Insulations and electrical wiring in the ceilings had to be completely redone by a contractor. They were a fire hazard. The picture on the bottom left shows the part of the ceiling we had to saw off because there was a crack line going along. The most eye-opening section of the house was the basement. The top right picture above shows the basement and laundry room that was completely infested by mold. The top middle pictures depict a bedroom, whose walls were cracked due to water leaks. Due to the leaks not being fixed, the bedroom had also been infested by mold. The black mold in the walls were so bad that we had to wear hazmat suits to clean it up. The walls in the basement had so many cracks that it took us two work days to caulk it. The six pictures below show the aftermath of our work on the various sections of the house depicted in the six pictures above.



Just like the inside of the house, the outside was not well maintained. Since the organization wanted to raise the value of the house as high as possible, we also did some work around the outside of the house. The backyard needed attention the most. Cleaning the backyard involved

removing tree trunks, and various belongings like walkers, car parts, and wheelbarrows. The bottom pictures are the new fences we built and installed.



Mason Kitchen

Unlike Habitat for Humanity, we could not volunteer as a chapter. This is because George Mason University has three main dining halls, therefore each volunteer date was limited to two people. On our first volunteer day, the Mason Kitchen staff walked us through orientation. She talked about the purpose of the organization and its goals. She showed us where to get the food, how to handle it, and label them. We were also given three papers, one for each dining hall, which we had to fill them out. At each dining hall, once we received the food, we had to write down what the food was, the date it was cooked, the expiration date, where the food had been stored, and the quantity.

Our first destination was the Southside Dinning Hall. During our orientation, we were told to introduce ourselves as volunteers for Mason Kitchen, and to always look for the chef in a tall hat. On day one, we received three varieties from Southside. We received one pan of rice tofu, one pan of roasted potatoes and one pan of Mexican beef with corn. From The Globe, we got two pans of Jambalaya, one pan of lime cilantro, and two pans of Cajun. The pictures below are some of the foods we received from each hall and transported to Katherine Hanley Family Shelter.



We maintained contact with the Mason Kitchen staff members on days we could not volunteer so that we could see how much food they were receiving from the dining halls. On March 16, they

received over 20 pans of different foods. Like the staff said on their Facebook post, they were able to recover “800 pounds of food from campus that would have otherwise been thrown away...” (Mason Kitchen, 2018). The pictures below are what was posted on their Facebook page.



Impact and Benefits to the Community

The original purpose of our community service project was to spread awareness about impoverished families and individuals in our community. As stated earlier, we planned to achieve this by doing the following:

- Promoting an awareness of Habitat for Humanity and its services
- Volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Chantilly
- Volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity construction site
- Packaging extra food from Mason dining halls and dropping them at the Katherine K Hanley Family Shelter

The success of the Restore is directly dependent on the support they receive from volunteers. By providing the ReStore with volunteers, they had more manpower to receive, process, organize, and sell donations to potential customers. Our help increased the ReStore’s efficiency and productivity, allowing them to make more money to be put towards funding construction projects for the community.

By working at the constructions site, we were directly fighting homelessness in our community. The home we helped renovate will be bought by a low-income family or individual, therefore decreasing the number of homeless families or individuals in Virginia. According to Liz Salter, one of the volunteer coordinators for Habitat for Humanity, the organization has successfully helped 100 families in Virginia. These homes were a success due to the help the organization receives from the community.

The biggest impact our community service project made was spreading awareness of Habitat for Humanity. We had flyers around campus, so over 3,000 students at Mason were exposed to what Habitat for Humanity is and does for our community. The survey we conducted in the business school proof of how we spread awareness. Before we conducted the survey, only 7 people had heard of Campus kitchen, but after our survey, 39 students were now aware of the organization.

By promoting awareness about Habitat for Humanity, we also highlighted homelessness in Fairfax County, including in our own school. By encouraging people to join our chapter in helping first hand, we believe that more was learned about homelessness in our local community. With awareness, community members will continue to support both the Habitat for Humanity construction projects, the ReStore, and Mason Kitchen long after our project.

Evidence of Publicity

Events promotion

The three posters below were created and posted on our social media pages, as well as displayed during our monthly meetings. With the school approval, we were also able to post them around the George Mason Campus. We posted these in areas we knew had lots of foot traffic. We posted them on each floor in the Johnson Center, as well as on our various social media pages. Our chapter currently has 27 members, our Facebook has 94 followers, and our Instagram has 108 followers.

Phi Beta Lambda Community Service Project Habitat for Humanity ReStore	
Dates Feb 14 th , 16 th , 28 th March 3 rd , 10 th , 24 th	
Location: 4311 Walney Rd.	GMU PBL will be volunteering at the Chantilly Habitat for Humanity Restore . This organization collects donations and resells them for more affordable prices. Please join us at one of the times below.
Requirements • Comfortable attire • Arrive on time • Stay for the entire shift	Shifts are...
Contact us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/gmupbl/	9:30 am – 1:30pm 1:00pm – 05:00pm
Volunteers will...	
• Collect	
• Clean	
• Move donations to the sales floor	
• Give donations receipt to donors	

Phi Beta Lambda Community Service Project Habitat for Humanity Building Days	
Dates February 14 th February 16 th March 17 th	
Location: 7303 Axton Street, Springfield, VA 22151	GMU Phi Beta Lambda will be volunteering at the Chantilly Habitat for Humanity Construction Sites . This section of the organization buys run down homes, rebuild them and sell them at affordable prices. Please join us at the time below.
Requirements • Comfortable attire • Arrive on time • Stay for the entire shift	Shifts are...
Contact us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/gmupbl/	8:00 am – 3:00pm
Volunteers will...	
• Paint walls	
• Caulk the walls	
• Install new insulations	
• Move old building materials to the trash	

Phi Beta Lambda Community Service Project Mason Kitchen	
Dates February 19 th March 19 th	
Location: Southside Dining Hall	GMU Phi Beta Lambda will be volunteering with Mason Kitchen . This organization collects donations uneaten foods from all the dining halls on campus and donate them to homeless shelters. Please join us at one of the times below.
Requirements • Comfortable attire • Arrive on time • Stay for the entire shift	Shifts are...
Contact us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/gmupbl/	12:00pm – 2:00pm
Volunteers will...	
• Collect foods	
• Drive foods to shelter	

To reach a bigger audience outside our chapter and Mason, we decided to contact other chapter officers and asked them to get their members involved. We contacted the chapter officers at the University of Virginia (UVA) and asked them to send the survey referred to in Table 1.2 and posted above to their members. UVA currently has 120 members, and their Facebook page has 276 followers. With the combine might of both chapters, we were able to expose Habitat for Humanity, and Mason Kitchen to potentially 140 PBL members, 370 Facebook followers, and 108 Instagram followers.

Conclusion

Looking back at the work we did for the ReStore, construction site, and Mason Kitchen, we believe that we have not only spread awareness of the poverty that exists within our community, but also made a direct impact on the community through our volunteer work. With our goals for this project including:

- Promoting an awareness of Habitat for Humanity and its services
- Volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Chantilly and Alexandria
- Volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity construction sites
- Packaging leftovers from Mason dining halls and dropping them at the Katherine K Hanley Family Shelter

Volunteering at the Restore and construction site were successful because of our promotion strategies. We utilized both above and below the line promotions like mass emailing, social networking, and flyers to inform a wide audience about Habitat for Humanity and its benefits to our community. We believe our community service project made an impact on low-income individuals and families because more students are now aware of the poverty that exists in Virginia. They are also now aware of what Habitat for Humanity and Mason Kitchen are and the positive impact that their work has on our community. We believe we were able to encourage PBL members and other students from Mason to volunteer at the Restore, construction site or Mason Kitchen.

Appendix

The table below consists of PBL members who either participated in the development of the project, volunteered at the ReStore, Community Build Day or Mason Kitchen Project.

Name	Name
Ahmet Dalgic	Krish Nagdev
Anna Boujakjain	Lucien Wobembong
Catherine Pham	Markeyla Galy
Claire Carr	Melanie Dicker
Jacquelyn Brown	Michael Pham
Jason Nguyen	Nick Tupaj
Jennifer Sosa	Sam McCurry
Jessie Smith	Tiffany Dawson

Citation

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[action/map/#fn\[\]=1500&fn\[\]=2900&fn\[\]=6100&fn\[\]=10100&fn\[\]=14100&all_types=tru](https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/map/#fn[]=1500&fn[]=2900&fn[]=6100&fn[]=10100&fn[]=14100&all_types=true&year=2017&state=VA)

[e&year=2017&state=VA](https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/map/#fn[]=1500&fn[]=2900&fn[]=6100&fn[]=10100&fn[]=14100&all_types=true&year=2017&state=VA) ¹