

Office of the Sheriff



Santa Barbara County **Keeping the Peace Since 1850**

Executive Summary: Sheriff's Treatment Program Success Stories Participants Collaborate with County and Community Non-Profits to make Personal Protective Equipment for First Responders and Community Members

Overview:

The Santa Barbara County Emergency Operations Center, the Santa Barbara Bucket Brigade, and the Santa Barbara Foundation collaborated with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office to create a community service project that gave incarcerated individuals participating in the Sheriff's Treatment Program/Success Stories Program an opportunity to make Personal Protective Equipment for first responders and medical providers, and cloth face masks for Santa Barbara County residents during the local COVID-19 crisis.

Challenge:

As COVID-19 was spreading across Asia and Europe, United States health officials started sounding the alarm on the country's personal protective equipment stockpile. The first US death as a result of complications from COVID-19 was on February 6, 2020. During the months of March and April we saw in Santa Barbara County the beginning of what progressed into a wave of infections. Santa Barbara County Officials at the Office of Emergency Services saw a need for PPE that wasn't going to be fulfilled through traditional channels as the entire country was scrambling to obtain the same equipment. The county knew that the best solution was to find an alternative way to source PPE for its first responders and frontline workers. The question was, what can we do to help our first responders who are on the front lines serving in this time of crisis?

The Santa Barbara Foundation was also concerned about the lack of PPE equipment for frontline medical workers. While cloth face coverings are effective for civilian use, medical professionals use face shields to avoid contracting COVID-19 from patients. These clear plastic visors cover the entire face and are used in conjunction with N-95 face masks.

The Santa Barbara Bucket Brigade has supported Santa Barbara County residents through disasters like the 1/9 debris flow and again saw a need to support the community by making cloth face masks, specifically for vulnerable populations like essential workers, the elderly and incarcerated individuals, especially after seeing the affects of the COVID-19 outbreak at the Lompoc Federal Penitentiary.

Solution:

To respond to the challenge of keeping first responders, medical professionals, and community members safe during the pandemic required connecting resources, collaboration, and mobilizing community members to assist in the effort. The Santa Barbara County Emergency Operations Center reached out to the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office and inquired about mobilizing incarcerated individuals who were motivated and eager to give back to their community. Those incarcerated individuals were participants in the Sheriff's Treatment Program/Success Stories Program had just reached out to custody staff about the possibility of contributing to their community in some way. The opportunity to make face shields for first responders was born.

The Santa Barbara Foundation was also recruiting community members and maker spaces for their 3-D printed face shields for medical responders and custody staff reached out with an offer of utilizing incarcerated community members to assist in assembling the various 3-D printed parts.

The Santa Barbara Bucket Brigade put out a challenge to the Santa Barbara community to assist in making 10,000 face masks during the month of May and the Bucket Brigade was also able to benefit from incarcerated community members who assisted with making their monthly goal.

Innovation:

“The best way to be rid of darkness is to add light.” During these novel times it is imperative that we evolve in our approach to dealing with crises, and justice for that matter. We ended 2019 with a shift in our approach to rehabilitation, by creating a space for incarcerated individuals to work with each other in addressing their underlying issues of their criminal identities and lifestyles. The Success Stories Program was created by a group of men at Central Training Facility-Soledad Prison. Success Stories was featured in a CNN documentary titled The Feminist on Cellblock Y. This is the first rehabilitative program at the Santa Barbara County Jail that is organized, led, and facilitated by incarcerated individuals. The Sheriff’s Office believed that it is not enough to just say “don’t do drugs, don’t commit crime, don’t involve yourself in gang activity.” So, the SBSO decided to offer an alternative opportunity allowing incarcerated individuals to step outside of their beliefs and criminal identities and invite them to look at life and their potential from a different perspective.

Creating opportunities for prosocial activities is imperative in the process of cognitive restructuring. Most incarcerated individuals have had significant Adverse Childhood Experiences. This trauma contributes to a general lack of trust and a sense of helplessness. Later in life, if that trauma isn’t processed and if healthy coping strategies are not developed, oftentimes these individuals turn to substance abuse to cope. Selfishness is a central characteristic of an addict, therefore providing opportunities to serve causes greater than one’s self can be transformational. A part of the vision of Success Stories is to provide consistent opportunities to be involved in community service projects, to give them opportunities to step outside the criminal identities that they carry the stigma of, and step into the role of servant leaders who are eager to give back to their community. In this instance, the darkness are antisocial beliefs and behavior and prosocial activities and behaviors are the light. Giving these incarcerated individuals the opportunity to make a difference in their community bridges the “us vs. them” division and allows them to focus on their strengths.

Results:

Success Stories participants made 5,000 face shields for the County Emergency Operations Center, 300 3-D printed face shields for medical professionals, and assisted in prepping fabric to make upwards of 15,000 cloth face masks for Santa Barbara County community members. The Santa Barbara Foundation donated 100 face shields back to the SBSO and the Bucket Brigade donated 1500 cloth face masks for SBSO staff and individuals incarcerated at the SB County Jail. Success Stories participants were able to regain one of the freedoms that they lose when they find themselves in custody and benefited from the prosocial leadership opportunity.

Replicability:

The Success Stories curriculum is recognized by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and is available for other county jails to utilize in their programming. The curriculum can be run either through trained facilitators or by correspondence course. The model of utilizing a peer-facilitated, strength-based curriculum as well as creating leadership and community service opportunities could be promoted to other jail programs as a best practice.

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