Assessment Summary

Description

Homelessness Outreach Pursuing Education (H.O.P.E.) Hall is a service oriented living-learning community. All 46 participants lived in Murchison residence hall and completed an application to participate. The program spanned the entire academic year. All participants of the program served the community while learning more about the homelessness epidemic and its many facets including issues of shelter, health, hunger, education, and public policy. The students explored these aspects of homelessness through weekly service excursions and then returned to their residence hall space where they participated in small group reflection activities to help them process their experiences. H.O.P.E. Hall students also attended weekly large group meetings with all members of the hall during which the students participated in various activities, training sessions, and group discussions that allowed them to deepen their understanding of the issues surrounding homelessness while increasing community on the hall. The students also arranged large-scale programs to educate the campus-community about homelessness and provided on-campus volunteer opportunities for faculty, students, and staff.

Assessment Method

All 46 of the participants in the program were invited to complete an online survey, and 35 participants completed the assessment questionnaire for a response rate of 76%.

Results

Among the 35 respondents, 69% identified as female and 31% identified as male. 18% were first year students, 29% were sophomores, 47% were juniors, and 6% were seniors. 54% of the respondents identified as White (Non-Hispanic), 23% Hispanic or Latino, 17% Asian or Pacific Islander, 0% African American or Black, and 6% selected “other”. 6% of students indicated that they were upper class, 71% upper middle class, 20% lower middle class, and 3% working class with regards to their socioeconomic status.

The program was designed to support four of the CAS Learning & Development Outcomes, and did so successfully. Program goals indicated that students would:

- be able to articulate personal values, beliefs and/or attitudes (C2: Identity Development)
  - The questionnaire asked the students to list some of their personal values, beliefs, and attitudes. 94% of respondents listed at least one value, belief, or attitude. Responses to this question include: honesty, integrity, respect, faith/spirituality, and family.
  - The questionnaire also asked students in what ways (if any) participation in H.O.P.E. Hall helped them identify personal values, beliefs, and/or attitudes? 89% of students listed at least one way H.O.P.E. Hall activities and/or reflection helped them to establish or reinforce their values, beliefs, and/or attitudes. Responses to this question include:
    - “[H.O.P.E. Hall] has further solidified my beliefs and allowed me to thrive in a community with others who have similar values.”
    - “It has reinforce the idea of giving back to my community and most importantly helped me learn not to judge people based on their appearance.”
    - “Experience volunteering in HOPE hall has reinforced my beliefs in why service is important and helped me get a wider variety of experience working with people less fortunate than myself. I know all people are just people, regardless of their circumstances, but I’ve witnessed it more closely.”
be able to articulate how individual and collective actions have an impact on local and global communities (E2: Global Perspective)

- The questionnaire also asked the students if they believed their actions through H.O.P.E. Hall had an impact on local and/or global communities and if so, how. 94% of respondents described at least one contribution. Responses to this question include:
  - “I have learned that I may not be able to change the world on my own, but that every small drop of water eventually fills the glass. Being part of HOPE Hall makes me feel that with everything I do with the community, I am filling the glass with one more drop.”
  - “Volunteering for only 2 hours per week may not have made a global impact but I am confident I changed at least one life in the two semesters I participated.”
  - “I believe our combined efforts of the dorm has made a considerable difference with our working partners locally.”

engage in action for positive change in the community (E3: Social Responsibility)

- All participants in H.O.P.E. Hall volunteered a minimum of one hour each week and also participated in large group volunteer activities such as Habitat for Humanity, service hours at the Food Bank, building and delivering sandwiches for a food distribution center, and more.
  - The group as a whole invested over 1,800 service hours throughout the course of the year, served over 36,000 meals to those in need, and provided over 1,650 showers to people experiencing homelessness.

encourage others to engage in action for positive change in the community (E4: Sense of Civic Responsibility)

- H.O.P.E. Hall arranged seven different programs for the campus community including six on-campus volunteer opportunities during which students, faculty, and staff could make sandwiches that would be delivered to a food distribution center and a Hunger Banquet - an interactive educational experience where students learn more about the hunger epidemic.
  - The students also participated in a dorm storm which raised money for the United Way of Bexar County.

To request a copy of the assessment instrument, email DAT@trinity.edu.

Discussion

H.O.P.E. Hall had a very successful year. The program was honored with a gold distinction National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Excellence Award and continues to be the model living-learning community on Trinity’s campus. The program achieved the desired learning and developmental outcomes and contributed significant amounts of time and resources to the community. The students’ high level of engagement resulted in a nomination for San Antonio’s United Way Volunteer of the Year Awards - a city-wide recognition program for San Antonio’s most dedicated volunteers. The award and nomination are a testament to the degree to which these students have engaged in action for positive change in the community (one of the program learning outcomes).

The program was less time-intensive for the staff members this year. This is due to the fact that there was not an associated first-year course and because the student leadership for the hall is very strong. Much of the administrative structure was created in year one and this made for an easier year for the two administrators that work with the program. The total cost of the program was $4,450.00 for the year well as the appointment of a residential life student staff member valued at $6,575 per year. While this represents a high per student cost, it is important to note that, in an effort to encourage others to engage in action for positive change in the community (another program learning outcome), H.O.P.E. Hall organizes seven programs throughout the year that are open to the entire Trinity community.
Additionally, the First Presbyterian Church of San Antonio donated $5,000.00 to the University solely for the H.O.P.E. Hall initiative.

The Campus & Community Involvement Office and the Residential Life Office strongly support the continuation of this program. Slight modifications to the leadership structure of the hall may assist even more with regards to the amount of time staff members work with the program. In past years the program has been overseen by one student leader who solicits volunteers for specific events. This student leader also serves as the Hall Manager for the group, leading hall meetings, handling conduct violations, assisting first year students with transition, building community, and more. The staff members working with the program recommend that the hall operate with a leadership team comprised of one Hall Manager (selected by the Residential Life professional staff and tasked with the community building and other residential-related portions of the job) and a H.O.P.E. Hall Director (selected by the outgoing leadership team in consultation with representatives from the Campus & Community Involvement Office and the Residential Life Office). The H.O.P.E. Hall Director will be in charge of community outreach and program development. There will also be a team of three upper-class students who will assist with program logistics, marketing, and recruitment. This new structure alleviates much of the work of the staff members and the former Hall Manager, and also provides additional leadership opportunities for the students.