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# Clean Camp Program and Homeless Issues

Clean Team Director Chris Brokate



# RRK Clean Team History

- Founded as Clean River Alliance sponsored by RRK in 2015, removed over 85,000 pounds trash, volunteer effort with community
- 2016 Clean Camp and Education Program launched in lower River on Thursdays, 160,000 pounds total
- 2018 Chris left job to work full-time as Program Director
- Clean Camp program has lead to speaking engagements around state to share the programs results
- Well over 1 million pounds of trash removed from the Russian River watershed to date, less debris on coast



# Clean Camp Program

- 2021 2 FT and 2PT staff working 70 percent time for homeless population work
- Weekly trash pickup on 75 miles of Russian River with four towns and five communities
- Gov't Homeless funding was \$130k/yr, down to \$76k, homeless program cost 2020 was \$160k
- Sonoma County Community Development Commission, Regional Parks, Health Services and donors provide Clean Camp program funding
- Total Clean Team program funding in 2020 was \$226,250 with \$180k from government contracts



# Clean Camp Program Evolution

- Starting with weekly trash pickups at lower Russian River camps and tabling every Thursday in Guerneville at service provider events
- Consistency is important to build trust, and many homeless eager to participate some take more time
- Piloted a Clean Streets like team in Guerneville, cleaned up downtown area and paid in food and transportation cards, want to work, helps build responsibility
- Homeless consistently help and cleanup trash and maintain a clean camp the more we build trust



# COVID and Clean Team

- Homeless population vulnerable to COVID, hard to shelter in place last spring
- Clean Team staff adopted precautions, used to working in hazardous situations
- Assisted service providers delivering meals, water, PPE and personal care supplies while collecting trash
- Partnered with COVID temporary camps and navigation center to provide volunteer trash work
- Increased strength of relationship with local homeless during COVID by showing we care



# Homeless Solutions - What is Working

- Leave people in place until there is permanent housing they agree to go to, shelters often do not meet needs or not safe and are temporary
- Provide basic services at or near active camps, portable restrooms, trash, service providers
- Develop an exit strategy for camps when entering housing, most often mess left behind
- Mobile service provider teams w medics and Clean Team service rural camps each week, trade knowledge
- Government & NGO partnerships, Sonoma County key to Clean Team success



# What is not working for homeless solutions

- Policy of moving people with no place to go, harms people/more trauma and environment as they make new camps
- Hoarding with no consequences, one person in Healdsburg over 35,000 pounds in last 3 years
- Pushing homeless just over political boundaries or pretending no homeless
- Homeless service providers who do not acknowledge trash issue and how they contribute to problem by ignoring it
- Mowing Trash: Homeless along roads



# QUESTIONS?



Feel free to reach out with more questions and input!

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