

Rural Homelessness in Northern Idaho:
An Autoethnography and Study on Family Promise

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Authorization to Submit Thesis

This thesis of Amanda D. Adler, submitted for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in Anthropology and titled “Rural Homelessness in Northern Idaho: An Autoethnography and Study on Family Promise,” has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates below, is now granted to submit final copies to the college of Graduate Studies for approval.

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Abstract

Take a moment to imagine your life. There are many aspects to consider; picture your home, your vehicle, and the other objects in your life that signifies your success. Now consider what your life would be like if you were homeless. The purpose of writing this thesis is to examine rural homelessness in northern Idaho through a national, non-profit organization known as Family Promise. Homelessness is a complex social issue that affects thousands of men, women, and children every year in the United States. In this thesis I share my personal experience with homelessness as a child in Charlotte, North Carolina and compare their techniques with those techniques utilized by Family Promise in northern Idaho. I aim to help Family Promise grow as an organization so that they may help more homeless families in northern Idaho.

Acknowledgements

This project concerning rural homelessness in North Idaho would not have been possible without the support and cooperation from many people. First, I would like to thank and acknowledge both Family Promise of the Palouse and Family Promise of North Idaho. The staff at both facilities could not have showed more kindness and support throughout my entire duration of volunteering.

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Finally, I would like to thank and acknowledge my grandmother who survived a year in the Salvation Army Center of Hope women and children's shelter with me. Though the year was difficult on our family and it is difficult for you to discuss even thirteen years later, I know that I would not be the same person I am today had you not shown the strength to climb

back to the top after hitting rock bottom. While those are not particularly fond memories from my childhood, the experience of being homeless taught me how to be strong as a woman. I thank you for having the strength and stamina to fight back when it seemed the world was against us.

Dedication

To my future husband, Kyle Gray, thank you for always supporting me in whatever endeavors I chose to partake in. You are an amazing man and I am lucky to have found you. There were times while in graduate school that I wish I simply could have cried and given up, but you always managed to make me smile and have always encouraged me to keep moving forward.

Without you I don't know that I could have made it this far.

Author's Note

To write this thesis, I spent many hours researching homelessness in the United States and in Idaho. However, a portion of this thesis was used to tell my own personal story. For this I relied on my own memories. There are several individuals who appear in my autoethnography. I have changed the names of these individuals in order to preserve their anonymity.

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List of Acronymns

CoC- Continuums of Care

FP- Family Promise

FPNI- Family Promise of North Idaho

FPP- Family Promise of the Palouse

HUD- Housing and Urban Development

IRB- Institutional Review Board

NHTF- National Housing Trust Fund

PIT Count Report- Point-In-Time Count Report

UGM- Union Gospel Mission

Chapter 1: The Project

Introduction

Take a moment to imagine your life in its entirety. I'm sure there is much to consider, many people have a plethora of belongings. Take this moment to think about your house, apartment, dorm, or even just your bedroom, think about your personal belongings, your pets, DVD collection, your vehicle, and your clothes hanging in your closet. Would you consider yourself to be a fortunate person? I know that as I look around my home I have an over abundance of things; I don't need them for survival and simply have them because I enjoy having these things. Now I want each reader to take a moment to imagine themselves without their personal belongings. Would life be as fulfilling without a television, DVDs, a closet full of clothes at your disposal? Life would continue, while you may miss having these items in your life you would survive without them. Next consider your life without your home, apartment, dorm, or bedroom. You are homeless, where would you go? What would you do? Would you go to your family, a homeless shelter, or a cardboard box for the evening? Many people do not even consider what their life may be like if they were without a home. Sadly, this is the reality for many Americans.

My intent for writing this thesis is to examine rural homelessness in northern Idaho through a national organization known as Family Promise. I specifically chose to work with the Family Promise organization due to their mission statement, to help homeless and low-income families achieve sustainable independence. It was my personal experience with homelessness as a child that led me to this research and drives me to advocate for families who are or have been affected by homelessness and for those individuals who are at-risk for becoming homeless. My experience between 2001 and 2002 as a homeless child at the

Salvation Army Women and Children's Shelter in Charlotte, North Carolina that supports my personal belief in keeping families unified as a single unit. While I lived in the women and children's shelter in Charlotte, North Carolina I began to notice that there were many types of families who lived there; whole families who separated due to shelter regulations, battered women, and even a single father with two young daughters under the age of three being forced to make the hard decision to separate due to becoming homeless. Vows exchanged at the wedding alter are often for better or worse and for richer or poorer; it is my opinion that homelessness should not be a deciding factor that breaks such vows.

Throughout my research I have worked with two separate Family Promise facilities in two different cities in northern Idaho. I observed the families over the course of a few weeks; I hoped that by volunteering my time a few hours a week that I would eventually become a familiar face. I had hoped that over time the guests would feel comfortable enough to discuss their story of homelessness with me. My ultimate goal was to aid the facilities in building their individual Family Promise and help them grow. Family Promise of the Palouse, also known as FPP, is located in Moscow, Idaho and was founded in the year 2012. I began my research at this facility as a Day Center volunteer. In 2014 I relocated and continued my research at Family Promise of North Idaho, known as FPNI, in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. FPNI is the older and more established of the two facilities and was founded in 2008.

The Project Description, Goals, and Importance

This thesis was written to examine rural homelessness through a nation organization known as Family Promise; I hope to better understand how homelessness affects a rural community and how those community members can help advocate for individuals who are in need. My research recounts my own experience with homelessness at the age of twelve. I

utilize these experiences in order to compare and contrast urban homelessness to an experience with homelessness in a rural community, such as in northern Idaho. I aimed to use an applied anthropological approach in order to better aid the Family Promise organization and help them evolve. However, before I could begin my research I began to ponder three very important questions. First, how does rural homelessness compare to and differ from that of urban homelessness? Secondly, how does rural homelessness compare to and differ from my own experience with homelessness as a child? Lastly, how can a program like Family Promise benefit the homeless community compared to other types of shelters and agencies? My research questions were primarily answered through participant observation at the Day Center in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, interviews, and through volunteering each week at the Day Center in order to aid them in completing various tasks.

Chapter 2: Defining Homelessness

The story of homelessness can begin nearly anywhere and at given any point in time; in fact, homelessness in America is not a current phenomenon. There are many individuals who believe that homeless only became an issue in the recent past with the increase of Vietnam veterans, cuts to federal housing assistance, and the closure of many mental hospitals (Rossi 2012). According to Peter Rossi, author of *Down and Out in America: The Origins of Homelessness*, “homelessness in America is as old as the country itself” (Rossi 2012:14). With that being said, the efforts to eradicate homelessness have only recently changed.

The country struggled in the 1700s with poverty and homelessness as the colonies grew and the suffered from King Philip’s War, the French-Indian War, and the American Revolution. By the 1730s homelessness had become such a prevalent problem that major cities like New York City and Philadelphia attempted to problem solve by erecting poorhouses (Rossi 1989). Homelessness skyrocketed in 1929 when the Great Depression hit the nation (Rossi 1989). This prompted a federal response; in 1933 the Federal Emergency Relief Act created the Federal Transient Service,.This aided forty thousand people with shelter, food, medical care, and job preparation (Rossi 1989). Slowly America began to recover and emerged from the Great Depression to the “rekindled economy of World War II” (Rossi 1989:15).

In the 1970s the homeless population in the United States once again grew (Rossi 1989). However, it was not until the 1980s that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services began keeping count of reports of homelessness from advocacy groups; they estimated that as many as two million people in the United States were without homes (Hope 1986). The number of homeless individuals has fluctuated throughout the years, and more

recently it has been reported that on any given night in January 2013, 610,042 people were homeless; nearly 65 percent were residing in emergency shelters or transitional housing, and the other 35 percent were residing in unsheltered locations (Henry 2013).

Each year the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocates funds to local homeless assistance programs and prevention networks called Continuums of Care (CoC) (PIT Count Report 2014). The local CoCs are in place to provide organization, delivering and reporting on housing and other various services for those who are experiencing homelessness, and to also complete a one-night point in time count of the homeless population in a given area during the last 10 days of the month of January (PIT Count Report 2014). The data that is collected determinineshow much funding a state will receive to utilize for homeless prevention and public awareness. There are currently two CoCs in the state of Idaho who aided in completing the 2014 Point-In-Time Count Report (PIT Count Report) along with the Idaho Housing and Finance Association. The 2014 Point-In-Time Count Report states that on January 29, 2014, there were 2,104 men, women, and children who were without homes in Idaho. Homelessness in the United States is therefore a pressing, long-term problem. With the amount of individuals in the United States experiencing homelessness each year it is incredible that the problem seems to be overlooked by others. According to Hombs, “the sheer visibility of contemporary homelessness is perhaps its most identifiable attribute” (1994:1). If homelessness is such a visible issue, then why is there such a lack in resources to help these individuals?

When confronted with the term “homeless,” there are many stereotypes that come to mind. The typical image of the bum in New York City or in Los Angeles ragged men hunched over next to a building begging for change. Other stereotypes include rough looking men and

women sleeping in a cardboard box, alleyway, or park bench; these are typically the mental images that come to mind.

A study was completed in 2011 by Agans, Liu, Jones, Verjan, Silverbush, and Kalsbeek, who are associated with the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to determine the public's attitude towards the homeless in Los Angeles, California. Agans, et. al. used a face-to-face survey conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, also known as LAHSA, to estimate the size of various homeless subpopulations. These subpopulations are the chronically homeless, chronic substance abusers, the mentally ill, individuals with HIV/AIDS, and lastly, survivors of domestic violence (2011). The second type of interview that was conducted was a general population telephone survey to determine two things. First, to determine if there were any hidden homeless individuals within the residence and secondly, to determine the public's attitude towards the homeless population (2011). Ultimately this study found that when adults were questioned about the causes of homelessness in their area ninety-one percent thought that drug and alcohol addictions were the primary reason for individuals becoming homeless (Agans, et. al. 2011). Mental illness placed second, with eighty-five percent of individuals who were surveyed believing this was an important factor of the homeless population (Agans, et. al. 2011). This study also listed shortage of affordable housing, release of mental hospital patients into the community, an economic system that favors the rich over the poor, lack of government aid, physical handicaps, irresponsible behavior, laziness on the part of the homeless, failure of society to provide good schools, and simply bad luck (2011).

To add to the study Agan, et. al. also examined how public attitude has changed over time. Researchers asked those surveyed if their sympathy towards the homeless has increased,

decreased or stayed the same over the past year (2011). Those who stated that their sympathy had increased were placed into the “sympathetic” category, while all others were placed into the “unsympathetic” category. According to this study, negative attitudes did not decrease drastically, however, they did find that those who were categorized as “sympathetic” had less “rigid or stereotypical attitudes towards the homeless” (Agan, et. al. 2011). For example, those who were sympathetic towards the homeless often stated that they believed the primary causes of homelessness were a shortage of affordable housing, an economic system that favors the rich over the poor, and lack of government aid (Agan, et. al. 2011). This study is interesting because the researchers chose to look beyond the demographic information of the homeless, and chose to research community opinions about the homeless that may also hold value when studying the homeless culture.

Homelessness is not something that only occurs in an urban setting. Rural homelessness is quite prevalent, but is often neglected, frequently because it is not as visible to the public like that of urban homelessness. In reality homelessness affects rural areas more often than one would like to believe; men, women, and children are all affected, and with a lack of resources they are often forced to live in "tent cities" or relocate to larger and more populated areas. Families, unless they are willing to live on the streets with one another, rarely stay together due to men having to live in a Men's Shelter and with women and children being forced into Women and Children's Shelters similar to the one in which I lived approximately 13 years ago. That is why I believe a study of a non-profit organization such as Family Promise, a 501c3 organization located in many rural areas around the country that is dedicated to solving issues of rural homelessness, is so important. When a family has lost everything remaining strong is difficult and the support of a loving husband, wife, father, and

mother can make all the difference in the world during such a stressful time. My project will examine what homelessness entails when living in a rural community compared to my own experience with homelessness in an urban setting.

Berg and Lune describe an autoethnography as a way for researchers to self-reflect while writing (2012). I utilize this method of autoethnography, similar to an autobiography (Berg 2012:208), to connect my own experiences with homelessness to better understand the homeless culture and community in north Idaho. The organization that I have chosen to study is a national non-profit known as Family Promise. This non-profit embraces its mission to aid low-income and homeless families in achieving sustainable independence (www.familypromise.org). The Family Promise organization is currently located in forty-one states and is continually expanding. Building communities and strengthening lives is accomplished through educating local people about poverty and how to best campaign against this social issue, which Family Promise specifically tailors so that the non-profit benefits the community in which it is located (www.familypromise.org).

Defining “Homelessness”

Homelessness is an extremely complex social issue. In order to better understand this point of struggle, we must define what it means to be homeless. Are homeless people just those who beg for change on the street corner? Or perhaps homeless literally means lacking a permanent shelter? The definition of homelessness has changed over the years; the most widely accepted definition by the federal government is as follows:

A person is homeless if his or her residence at night is in public or private emergency shelters, which take a variety of forms—armories, schools, church basements, government buildings, former firehouses and, where temporary vouchers are provided by private or public agencies, even hotels, apartments, or boarding homes”; or “in the streets, parks, subways, bus terminals, railroad stations, airports, under bridges or

aqueducts, abandoned building without utilities, cars, trucks, or any of the public or private space that is not designed for shelter. This definition, it should be noted, does not include people in halfway houses or long-term detoxification residences, or incarcerated persons who would otherwise be in shelters or on the streets. However, battered women are included, if they are on the streets, in a shelter, or in a group house (Hombs 1994:5).

While there are many definitions for homelessness, the above definition allows for the broadest sense of the term, while still depicting a structured sense of what homelessness is in today's society.

The definition provided above is one used by organizations like the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the United States government. However, I believe that homelessness can be stated more simply than through a paragraph long definition.

Homelessness pertains to an individual or family, including but not limited to an adult male and female, their offspring, and their pets, who reside in a residence that they do not own or rent. These homeless people are forced to find an alternative place to reside, with a family member or friend, an emergency shelter, encampment, or on the streets.

Chapter 3: My Experience with Homelessness

Everyone has his or her own story; mine is no more heart wrenching or more spectacular than any other individual's story. My story is actually very common, but also very frequently forgotten about and invisible in America. The question is can I retell my story, using ink and paper, and expect you to be able to relive these events with me? The simple answer is no, there is absolutely no way for you, as a reader, to relive my memories with me. Everyone has their own story and carries their own baggage. I can, however, attempt to paint a picture of what my life was like during my adolescence and hopefully by the end you will look at this contemporary world issue in a new light.

My life has always felt complex, especially my childhood. I was born in November 1989 to two very young parents who were not ready to care for a child of their own. As I grew from baby to toddler, my biological father abandoned me and my biological mother. My biological mother eventually married a man who was an alcoholic and eventually became a drug addict and drug dealer. As I grew from toddler to small child at the age of four my biological mother had another baby; I grew painfully aware that I would have to learn to care for my little sister and myself.

I have vivid memories of sitting in a dark bedroom with only light from the hall shining through the crack of the door. I would peer at my parental figures slumped against the sofa. When they were young they would party and stay awake all night long, and this would cause them to sleep for the majority of the day. I have other memories of climbing on counters to raid the cupboards for cereal; lastly, I have memories of leaving the apartment on occasion and being picked up by the police, who actually grew accustomed to my ritual and would wait for me at the corner of my building. There I was asked where I was going and I

would explain that my sister and I were hungry and I was going to go to Nana's house. There was one occasion where I journeyed out of the apartment naked and was picked up by the police and brought home. On a second occasion I had wandered out of the apartment away from my biological parents right after another little girl was kidnapped and murdered in our neighborhood. Parents should protect their children, feed and clothe their children; however, parenting didn't come naturally to my parents. As a result, my grandmother called Child Protective Services on my biological parents, who then came and removed my sister and myself from the home and placed us into the foster care system.

At the age of four I was diagnosed with Graves' disease and Hyperthyroidism. My condition along with my age made me undesirable for adoption, and this made me agonizingly aware of the fact that I did not appeal to many couple's idea of a perfect child. I knew that I would be considered "too old" for adoption; couples don't want to adopt a child who carried as much baggage as I did. I would eventually end up living with my maternal grandmother and grandfather in Richmond, Virginia. However, my grandfather decided that he was too old to become a parent again and abandoned the two of us when I was only seven years old. The years went on and my grandmother and I continued to live together. She would eventually adopt me in Charlotte, North Carolina at the age of ten.

In 2002 I was eleven years old. I was always fond of summer and the summer time weather in Charlotte, North Carolina. It was filled with long days spent at the pool with friends, speeding up and down the neighborhood on bicycles and Razr scooters, and buying ice cream from the local ice cream truck. However, the summer of 2002 was different than any other summer that I had experienced up until this point in my life.

The previous fall, my grandmother, who had taken me in when I was only seven, and I were living in Troy, Pennsylvania. It is a great town with a small, hometown type of feel. Unfortunately, living in a small town often means few job opportunities. With my grandmother already in her late fifties, she found it difficult to find a job. That summer of 2002 she decided that it would be best for our family to move back to Charlotte, North Carolina. I remember the day we left very well; I was extremely upset that I had to leave behind many beloved toys, including a giant stuffed koala bear and my bicycle, because we could only take what we could fit into the car. The drive down to North Carolina seems like a blur to me now and I have a difficult time recalling many details about it.

Arriving in Charlotte we had very few options as to where we could go. I had one aunt, who quickly turned us away during our time of need. My grandmother and I both knew that we needed a place to stay for the evening, my grandmother made the decision to ask a family friend if we could stay for the night. Mr. and Mrs. Drew, we'll call them, invited us inside their home. Being a child at this time left me at a disadvantage; I would not be allowed to hear the adult conversation and I quickly left the conversation to play with my best friend at the time, Natalie. When we woke in the morning we were allowed to bathe and get ready for the day, but the Drew family seemed off and distant. My grandmother and Mrs. Drew had one last conversation, which I happened to catch the tail end of: "I'm sorry but we can't." We were quickly hugged and rushed out the door, I wouldn't hear from the Drew family again until after I was in my early twenties and Mr. Drew had passed away. It seems crazy to think back on how close Natalie and I were when we were children. The Drew family always treated me like a daughter until we truly needed the help.

In a panic and unsure of what was next, my grandmother and I hopped into our white ZX2 and drove to the Salvation Army Center of Hope, a local homeless shelter for women and children. It was a large building, tan in color. The enormity of the shelter and finally realizing what we were about to endure seemed overwhelming. My grandmother led me inside the entrance, which reminded me of a giant fish bowl or aquarium tank because it was made of all glass. Sitting at a front desk, guarded by even more glass, was a woman, Terri, who would later become a friend to both of us. "We need a place to stay..." stated my grandmother, omitting the fact that we had exhausted all of our options at this point. Terri explained to us that there were currently no available beds. Despite this fact she handed my grandmother a stack of paperwork to fill out.

"Just in case something does open up in the next few hours," said Terri.

I remember thinking how nice she seemed. Unfortunately, a bed did not open up until the next evening due to a woman being kicked out for drug use. However, we were allowed to stay the night.

The first night at the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter was by far the most difficult night I had to endure while living at the shelter. Unfortunately, the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter in uptown Charlotte was full to maximum capacity, approximately two hundred and fifty-five beds (Price 2014). They did not have an open bed for either of us. However, because I was a child, the shelter felt obligated to shelter us at least for the evening. With no beds available we were given two blankets, no pillows, and put up for the night in the first floor common room. My grandmother slept on the floor while I attempted to create a bed out of four chairs. I can still recall those chairs in my mind; the frames were wooden and extremely rigid. Their cushions were light blue vinyl and very thin; all of these factors did not allow for

these chairs to create a comfortable bed, but what could I do? There was no sense of comfort or home, and for the next year of my life home felt like it was a figment of memory from the past.

While the first night at the shelter was by far the most difficult, it was also the beginning of the day in and day out routine of shelter life. The morning was called entirely too early after tossing and turning on top of my “bed” the previous evening. Terri came into the common room to wake both of us. Six in the morning our day began. We were led to the largest room in the shelter besides the cafeteria, room “E”. In this large room there were rows upon rows of bunk beds, approximately one-hundred beds total, with women and children rolling out of bed for the day. Terri led my grandmother and me to the communal bathroom; we were given towels and allowed to shower at this time. Being so young at the time I found it hard to undress in front of not only my grandmother but also complete strangers. I ducked into a toilet stall to undress, wrapped the towel around my body, and walked to one of the many shower stalls. Feeling as if my almost naked body was on display for everyone to see, I felt embarrassed and hesitated dropping the towel. I quickly did, hung it on the hook next to the stall, and got into the shower. That was just how life at the shelter was, not only was I physically naked in front of one hundred people that I did not know, but I was also metaphorically naked in front of one hundred people that I did not know. By this I mean that my life was on display for everyone, every aspect of my existence was for everyone to witness, what I wore, what I said, who I played with, what books I read, the television I chose to watch. I felt judged by every person I came into contact with, administrators, counselors, religious groups who donated their time to help, even the other residents at the shelter.

The shower and the act of taking a shower is soothing for many people. Letting the water run over your body, taking in the steam, letting your fingers and toes become pruned as you stay in the water too long, allows for the individual taking the shower to relax and enjoy the soothing effects of the event. It is a completely different experience when living in a homeless shelter. After getting out of the shower, there is really only one place to get ready. It is necessary to walk back to your bunk in order to dig through your suitcase for an hour just to find an adequate outfit to wear. Once again, I was forced to drop my towel, exposing my naked, adolescent body to 100 other people, just to get dressed.

An hour after the morning wakeup call the shelter begins to serve breakfast. Walking through the breakfast line at the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter is very similar to receiving lunch at a public school. My grandmother would lead the way through the line and I would tag along behind her and point to the breakfast items that I wanted. Walking through the line, I began to notice familiar faces behind the steam table. Women who were living at the shelter were working; it was the shelter's way of having residents earn their keep. Breakfast, if you were lucky, was pancakes and sausage. However, most days the breakfast was cold cereal and oatmeal. While the food at the Women and Children's Shelter was never superb, it was never awful, either.

The day seemed to go on forever, and it was only eight in the morning. During the summer there is not much to do during the day. It is a shelter rule that all women and children must vacate the building during the day. After finishing breakfast, my grandmother and I headed outside. Across the parking lot there is a small island with a couple of benches, a few picnic tables, some open grass, which in a North Carolina draught turned brown and eventually into a reddish colored dust, and a large shade tree. The time that everyone needed

to vacate the building was supposed to ideally be utilized to search for employment. However, this was not an easy task for someone of my grandmother's age, not to mention it is an even more daunting task when you are a single mother. I never fully understood how these women were expected to search for jobs and eventually attend a job interview with their child in tow.

My grandmother's idea of a good day did not include spending a long, hot Carolina summer's day outside of a homeless shelter. I think there still may have been some denial about the situation flooding both of our brains. She loaded me up into our white ZX2, and we headed to uptown Charlotte. On special days the main street of uptown would be flooded with a parade, with vendors from a street fair, or with NASCAR race cars; but on this particular day there was nothing special going on. On this particular day my grandmother parked in a lot behind a skyscraper that I used to call the "laughing" building. In the bottom of the skyscraper was an organic grocery store and around the outside of the building there were panels; if you slapped the panel it would light up and laugh, chortle, chuckle, or giggle at you. It was very entertaining and my favorite building in the whole city. After sprinting around the skyscraper as fast as I could my grandmother reeled me in and we walked a few blocks down to the library. I remember it well. The building was huge and made of brick. I walked in and headed back to the children's section. I usually made a beeline for the computers. You were only allotted an hour of computer time and you never wanted to be that kid who had to wait for a computer. I went to the first computer available, put on the headphones, and proceeded to play *The Oregon Trail*. My grandmother and I would begin to spend countless hours at the library.

After spending a few hours at the library, playing computer games, and mulling over stacks of books, I decided to check out a few books known as the "Dear America" series; these were stories based on historical fiction. They were my absolute favorite stories to read.

They were stories written in diary form by girls who experienced historical events like the Revolutionary War, World War II, and sailing across the ocean on the Titanic. Not only were these were my first experiences with historical events that truly captivated my interest in history, but they also allowed for me to escape in the depths of a book and forget about all of the hard knocks life was throwing my way.

After spending the majority of the day at the library and checking out a few good books, it was time to head back to the shelter. In order to make sure that we had dinner that night, we had to be back at the shelter by five in the evening. We walked back passed the laughing building, to the parking lot, and got into the car. The ride was silent except for the radio playing in the background. Nothing being said decoded everything; it explained everything we were both feeling. Neither of us wanted to go back to the shelter. The Salvation Army Homeless Shelter was not comfortable: it did not feel safe; it did not feel like a home. Unfortunately, we had to go back. It was either the shelter or the streets; we had no one to whom to turn, no friends, no family left. We were alone in this, and this feeling of aloneness was a feeling that became would become more frequent the longer we stayed at the shelter.

What I did not know at the time was that living in the shelter during the summer months was the easy part. At least I was with other people who were in the same position as I was. After living there for a few months I even began to make friends. As life began to feel relatively normal again, everything would turn into chaos once more. School was probably the hardest part of being homeless.

I did not even consider what my first day of school would be like. At that point I had completed six years of school successfully, that is six years of having a fairly pleasant first day at school. I did not even think twice about stepping on to that school bus, but as I did I

experienced something for the first time in my life: pure hatred, judgment, for something that I had no control over, for being homeless. Up until this point in my life I had not thought about discrimination or had ever felt as if I was the minority. Yet there it was, the faces of pure hatred staring back at me. Now looking back on those boys, I find it ironic that they felt so much anger towards me. In reality they lived only a few blocks from the shelter in a fairly rundown neighborhood. Yes, they had a house to which they could go home and I did not, but at the time I felt that having a house, a room, and a bed to call your own is what made them truly better than me. Perhaps they had felt discriminated against their whole lives and they finally found someone who was "below" them, someone of lower socio-economic status than they were. I am not entirely sure; in any circumstance those boys hated me and they found a way to torture me each and every day on the bus. From that first day on the bus those boys tormented me: threw things from wads of paper to sneakers to textbooks and called me names; their favorite nickname was "that white bitch." Day after day they were relentless. Their words cut deep and their actions made me feel less than human. I tried to not let the boys get to me, but as each day would come and go the boys would eventually break my spirit. I would cry, just let the tears roll down my cheeks while I stared out of the bus window. The one "luxury" item that I found solace in was my Walkman and my CDs. Eventually those boys would even take that from me. To my dismay one of the boys had snuck up behind my seat and rummaged through my bag where I kept my treasured Walkman. Luckily for me, I was using my Walkman at the time, but the boys did manage to steal my CD case with all but one of my CDs and sixteen dead batteries. Honestly, I hope that those sixteen batteries were useful to them and that they enjoyed listening to my music selection of the Backstreet Boys and the array of "NOW That's What I Call Music" CDs.

You may be wondering why the bus driver did not notice and stop all of this torture. I wondered that at the time too. Nothing was ever done, not until one day when one of the boys had gotten up the nerve to actually assault me. It took this young man grabbing my chest for the bus driver to actually pay attention to what was occurring on her bus. At that point the incident was reported to the school, where I had to sit in front of the school counselor and recall the event in detail. The boy was found guilty of the offense and was suspended. Unfortunately this only made the other boys mad; I had gotten their friend into trouble and must pay for my actions. They threw whole backpacks full of textbooks and spit at me as they exited the bus. I didn't even feel human anymore. I would ignore them, and just listened to my Walkman day in and day out. Though I could easily ignore their rude comments, throwing things at me, and their horrible gestures, it didn't make it any better. I wanted to cry everyday but I always felt that crying would somehow worsen my situation.

The bus ride to school was horrible each and every day; however, when I arrived at school it was a completely different story. No one knew my living situation, and I didn't plan on telling anyone. At school I was smart, and I made the honor roll every quarter. I was quiet but well-liked by my peers. I was in choir and the school play. School was comfortable for me and I felt at ease in the classroom. My school day went on like any other day when you're that age. Of course I had friends, but I was selective; I wanted to make sure that I wouldn't ever have to have anyone over to my "home." There would be no slumber parties at my place, no birthday parties, absolutely no reason for any of my friends to know that I was living in a homeless shelter. The summer was easy because I was exactly like every other kid with whom I interacted. School was differen;, I didn't wear the "cool" styles or have the "cool" Lisa Frank school supplies that the popular kids had; these things seem so trivial now, but back then I

wanted those things to be cool and to be popular. I was never “cool” I was kind of awkward, I had awkward curly hair, and I wore clothes that were bought from the local Goodwill and entirely too large on my seventy pound frame. However, I was at least well-liked by a small group of select girls and that was enough to make me feel normal, to feel human, and the fact that none of my friends at school knew about my living arrangements made me feel less exposed to the world.

Each day I would ride the bus to school, once at school I would have a relatively good day in classes, and eventually ride the bus home only to be tormented some more. While being tormented on the bus was most certainly the worst part of my day, returning "home" from school was just a reminder of what a horrible situation my grandmother and I were in, especially having to go through the holidays in the shelter. First it was my birthday, then Thanksgiving, and finally Christmas. It was honestly all so depressing at the time. I turned 12 in November that year; I had never really been excited about my birthday before, that year was no exception. However, it did seem more depressing only because there wasn't even the slightest possibility of having friends over for a party. I had made sure at school that no one had known it was my birthday and no one expected invitations to a party. Not to mention it was Salvation Army Homeless Shelter rules that anyone not residing in the shelter was not allowed inside. Coming home from school that day I did not expect even a "Happy Birthday" from anyone. I was surprised to see a small cake with my name on it and a few kids from around the shelter gathered to sing the happy birthday song. At least it was somewhat memorable.

After a approximately a month of living at the Women and Children's Shelter each individual woman or family would move up to the second floor of the facility. This floor

contained four separate rooms that housed approximately twenty-five women and children in each room. Rooms “A” and “D” were on the left side of the hallway and were connected by a shared bathroom. On the other side of the hallway were rooms “B” and “C”, also connected by a shared bathroom. My grandmother and I were assigned to room “A.” I have to admit, this was a much easier transition than I thought it would be, cutting the population of each room by nearly seventy-five people made life just that much more comfortable. Taking a shower, dressing, and even sleeping were easier in the smaller rooms; there were less people in general and therefore, there were less people gawking at me when all I ever wanted was a moment to myself. Life in room “E” was chaotic, the constant bustle of women and their children trying to adjust to their own new living situation. Another perk to having moved to the upstairs rooms was that each family received their own closet with drawers for personal items. It had felt like an eternity since I hadn’t been living out of my suitcase. This simple gesture of receiving a drawer felt like a momentous occasion, perhaps enough of an occasion to want to celebrate and rejoice.

As I began to make friends throughout the year I grew to be more comfortable with myself and with my living situation. I met one of my very best friends in art class that year. Jamie David was similar to me in the sense that he wasn't the "cool" kid; he was smart and funny, and though I denied it at the time he had a crush on me. His easygoing personality made him the only person with whom I would talk about my living situation. Even after knowing this information about me, he still accepted me. It was nice to finally have someone my age to talk to about this; living in the shelter had been slowly crushing my spirit, and I needed to get all of my emotions out.

Looking back on our friendship now it is incredible that I couldn't see how big of a crush he had on me. I was in denial. Jamie David was friends with Naomi, a cheerleader and basketball player and probably the most popular girl in our seventh grade class. I always thought she was more deserving of his affections than I was. Who was I? At the time I thought lame, uncool, mildly intelligent, but the bullies at the back of my bus made sure that I felt that I was most certainly no one special. That year, in seventh grade, Jamie David asked me on my very first date. Of course at the time I insisted that it was NOT a date! Naturally, being eleven or twelve didn't allow us to drive for ourselves, so his parents dropped him off and my grandmother dropped me at a local theatre known for playing foreign films. Jamie David and I went to the movies, which he paid for; I was highly impressed that someone enjoyed my company enough to want to spend their personal time and money on me. *Spirited Away* by Hayao Miyazaki was the film that played in the tiny foreign films theatre. The movie itself was strange but surprisingly good despite the fact that I was not a fan of Japanese anime or of foreign films. The night quickly became increasingly awkward when Jamie David sat in bubblegum, which smeared all over his khakis as he attempted to remove the sticky mess. After sitting through a portion of the movie with no more oafish encounters Jamie David attempted to pull a "smooth" move by pulling the typical "yawn and stretch" in order to put his arm around me. I wasn't prepared for all of this mentally and I panicked. I quickly turned to him and I remember distinctly asking if he would like to put the armrest down in between us. I pulled the armrest down in an attempt to avoid cuddling, after all this "wasn't a date!" and we were supposed to be best friends. Jamie David did manage to hold my hand, at the time my initial thought was, "Oh my god, what do I do?" followed by, "Well this is weird, why would he want to hold hands?" Looking back on that night is now laughable, but was

also wonderful and Jamie David was able to pull me out of my own mind for two hours. Two hours of bliss and not thinking about being homeless. Instead I had two hours of worrying more about if he was going to try to kiss me at the end of our night and what I was going to do if that situation should arise, these were normal pre-teen girl thoughts and I hadn't had the luxury of these types of thoughts since moving into the Salvation Army Center of Hope. Jamie David was the one person my own age that I felt completely comfortable enough around to share my homeless experience with, he was the one person I knew that I could rely on to not judge me, even if I felt like the rest of the world was against me.

Years later I reconnected with Jamie David; the one thing that I can recall from our conversations was his question inquiring if I still wore a duster sweater every day. I knew that he listened to me as my seventh grade best friend, but years later he never questioned me about any part of my life then. Could he honestly only want to know if I continued to enjoy wearing a duster sweater? Everything that I had been through at that time in my life seemed so catastrophic to me, but after reconnecting with Jamie David I realized that he hadn't even cared where I lived or why I lived there. He simply accepted me and saw me not as the homeless girl or the poor girl, but as the girl who liked to wear a red and gray duster sweater. Years later this still brought a smile to my face.

Thanksgiving and Christmas both relied on the generosity of strangers in order to occur every year. These were two holidays that were made special at the shelter. Local churches and community members gathered toys, clothes, and food in local charity drives for homeless families in the community and for the families in the shelter. There was turkey, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, and the food as a whole was delicious during these holidays; maybe it was because all of the food was prepared by a volunteering church or

charity. The shelter had even made the effort to hire a Santa Claus to visit the children that year and hand out a present to each child. The winter holidays were not magical like they used to be, but the effort put into those two holidays made them seem tolerable enough. At twelve years old I no longer believed in Santa Claus and therefore was not terribly letdown, after all I had been living in this situation for approximately six months at this point and had become accustomed to the feelings associated with the shelter and its disappointment.

One month rolled into the next and life at the women and children's shelter became routine, wake up at 6:00 A.M., take a shower, get dressed, go to school, go home, dinner at 5:00 P.M., homework, bed, and repeat. The weekends were slightly different, my grandmother and I would drive into uptown Charlotte and walk to the library where we would spend the majority of our day. Normally I didn't mind the library. I typically enjoyed the time spent browsing over the books on the shelves and playing computer games, but month after month our routine became tedious and boring. I knew that we didn't have a choice in the matter, due to strict shelter regulations forbidding residents from entering the facility between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. regardless of rain, shine, snow, or any other imaginable weather condition. If I would be forced to get up early and get dressed seven days a week I suppose the library was as good as any place to spend the day.

My life would transition once more at the Salvation Army Center of Hope. The upheaval was an unexpected one but also greatly welcomed. The final piece of the puzzle was solved when my grandmother was able to secure a job as an administrative assistant in a local pediatrician's office. Due to our recent spell of good fortune we were offered to relocate to the bottom floor of the shelter in a section reserved for transitional housing. The most fantastic element of our second relocation was that we were moving into a private room. Sharing a

room with my grandmother still proved to be a challenge, but in comparison it was drastically different and was a cakewalk from sharing a room with one hundred people or even twenty-five individuals. Even more glorious we had a private bathroom and were allowed to keep a small television for our own entertainment. There would be no more having to undress and have eyes gawking at me from every direction in the shared bathroom, and we no longer had to use the community room with up to fifty other women and children who were trying to watch television.

Privacy allowed for much of my stress and anxiety to dissipate into thin air, I felt that I didn't have to always hold it together and be strong because someone might be watching me. Even residing in room "A" with fewer residents caused a lot of anxiety for me; I have always been a relatively private person and I have always enjoyed spending time alone. Now that we had relocated into the transitional housing program I felt more at ease because during the hours my grandmother was working I was able to return from school and have one to two hours of time where I could simply be alone. The feeling of aloneness was a feeling that I was used to and that I knew well. Throughout my entire experience with homelessness I felt alone, but in the sense that I was different from my peers, I felt alone in my journey. The feeling of being alone felt more like I could participate in the activities in the shelter if I really wanted to, but I never wanted to. Being in our own room allowed for me to create the personal space I had craved for so long. This feeling of aloneness felt more like I had opted into solitary confinement; it was a welcomed feeling of aloneness because I chose it. Of course all of this privacy and freedom came with a price. Each month the shelter would deduct a percentage of my grandmother's paycheck to pay for the transitional housing room. This was the shelter's way of preparing residents to enter back into society and to teach residents about paying their

debts on time each month. However, the money spent on the private room was entirely worth the money.

The season grew warm as spring came. I knew that shortly it would become hot and summer would be upon us again. Typically I loved summer, but the previous summer was still too vivid of a memory for me to want to endure it for a second time. The previous summer we experienced losing our support system and our independence all in one fell swoop. I dreaded the upcoming, yet imminent summer days that were before me. The shelter retained its rule to keep all residents outside of the facility during the days all summer long. Therefore, my grandmother would have to find a babysitter or daycare in order to watch me while she went to work. I would certainly not be permitted to stay alone and it was against the shelter's regulations for adults to watch another resident's child. There were days when I would be sent to the local Boys and Girls Club. However, it was never my favorite place to be; I would beg my grandmother not to make me go, but of course I knew that I would have to go if my grandmother was expected to maintain her job.

If I had to continue to attend the Boys and Girls Club each day I was certain that I would pull my hair out from frustration and boredom. However, I had won the luck of the draw when I was informed that I was chosen with several other children from the Salvation Army Center of Hope in Charlotte, North Carolina to attend a summer camp in Peterstown, West Virginia. At first I was less than thrilled to attend this camp; I had never been much of an enthusiast for sleep away camps. Slowly, I grew to accept the fact that I would be attending this summer camp for a two-week period during the summer. I was lucky because I was given the opportunity to simply get away for a brief time period, an opportunity I would not have had if I had not accepted to attend the summer camp.

The Salvation Army Center of Hope arranged for the shelter's van to take the selected children to another organization where the camp's bus waited for the children in order to transport all of us to West Virginia. I had been to sleep away camp before and I thought that I knew what to expect. My version of what sleep away camp was couldn't have been more wrong in this instance. As the bus continued up the narrow mountain path I noted all of the forest on both sides of the road. As the road ended the forest cleared, I saw wide open pastures surrounded by more forest in the distance. There didn't seem to be a road any longer, and as the bus pulled over and parked I realized that this was the summer camp. The sign in front of the cabin displayed the name Scottie's Place in giant gold letters; I was in complete disbelief because I was on a farm. Being raised in the city for my entire life meant that I had never witnessed oxen, pigs, goats, or other farm animals up close and personal before. I wanted to go home, and I needed to go home because this is not what I signed up for. Scottie's Place provides a wilderness adventure program for children who have been affected by homelessness. Although I did not understand it at the time, Scottie's Place provided me with the tools I needed to help rebuild my spirit through their adventure program. As a camper I was provided opportunities that I would have never had without attending the camp. I learned how to build shelters and fires and how to grow and gather my own food. Scottie's Place also encouraged activities like archery, swimming, hiking, and canoeing. At the time I was not particularly fond of many of these activities, therefore, I spent much of my time with my nose in book after book. Perhaps one of my favorite places to be at the camp was the wooden swing that sat outside of the main cabin. There was something soothing about the gentle breeze as I swung and read. I still felt broken inside and I didn't engage with many other campers during my two weeks. I felt that I opened up slowly but it wasn't until I was chosen

to participate in a hike to the New River, this hike was started a few summers before as a challenge to older campers? The hike was a few miles of the Appalachian Trail, and it would take a few days to hike but the group would ultimately end the hike at a hostel on the trail. For such a famous trail I expected the path to be wider and perhaps more defined. It was a difficult hike for me; I needed to be a part of the group, to depend on them to help me, and they needed to know that I could help them as well. We needed to end the hike as a team and grow stronger as individuals. The moment that I most remember and am most grateful for from that trip is the view I witnessed after wandering away from the trail. The view was breath taking and had the ability to clear my mind. Nothing seemed to matter and every thought disappeared from my mind as I gazed into the canopy of trees laid before me.

As much as I thought I would disdain the camp the longer I stayed, I found that I actually found great pleasure in being there. Since my first trip as a camper I have since returned to Scottie's Place on numerous occasions. Jo-El, one of the founders of the camp, once told me that I was the first camper to complete all steps moving from camper at twelve, to leader in training at thirteen, to counselor in training at sixteen, and then finally to a full-fledged counselor at nineteen years old. Each year the challenges that I faced were different and helped me strengthen my physical body through various activities, but I also found that Scottie's Place aided me in strengthening me mentally and helped to reboot my mind. It is a tranquil place and perhaps easily one of my favorite places that I have ever had the pleasure of experiencing.

The founders, Jo-El Wadsworth and Paul Winter, are two of the most incredible individuals that I have the pleasure of knowing. They devoted their life to helping children in need. I was one of those children in need, and though I did not know it at the time my

experience at Scottie's Place helped heal the wounds from my experiences at the shelter.

These two individuals gave me hope when I had none. I idealize Jo-El and Paul. I hope that in life I can show as much devotion, compassion, courage, and strength for others so that these two were able to show me. They have affected my life in numerous ways and without their compassion I do not believe I would have turned out to be the same person that I am today.

Upon returning to the Salvation Army Center of Hope I was informed that my grandmother had found an affordable apartment and that we would be moving as soon as all of the paperwork was signed and cleared. I almost could not contain my excitement. It had been over a year since we had lived in an apartment, a place that we could call our own, and a place that we didn't have to spend every waking hour with one another. The move came and went, I honestly don't remember the day we moved, and I was too excited to have my own room again. I spent the day decorating the walls with posters of popular boy bands and making the room my own. The apartment complex wasn't spectacular; around town it had a reputation for having drug dealers, prostitutes, and a high crime rate. During our lease we did notice that there were always sirens speeding past the apartment, but I felt relatively safe and never worried that I couldn't leave my house alone. Honestly, there are probably a million apartments with better reputations, but they were also out of budget. In an effort to not end up back at the women and children's shelter we tolerated the apartment in "Little Mexico," as it was sometime affectionately referred to. Our battle with homelessness was over; we had come out on top. It was a major victory for our family. I felt that I could never take having a home and privacy for granted again. There were too many things for which I felt thankful, they seem so mundane but having a toilet that you don't have to share with strangers, being able to shower whenever you want, not having to sneak food into your room and being able to eat

whatever and whenever I chose. Those are tasks that most people never even think about, but when you are homeless and living under strict shelter regulations you begin to feel like your independence has been stolen from you.

It was my experience with homelessness that leads me to this research on Family Promise. One thing that has always stood out to me is the fact that when I lived in the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter it was solely for women and children and there was a separate shelter for men. Family Promise is one organization that strives to keep the family unit together, mother, father, and children. While I never had a father figure in the picture, many of the women I met did have a husband or boyfriend in their life. I couldn't imagine what it would have been like if all of a sudden my family broke apart. In one case, a woman named Cami who had a little boy and a little girl, moved into the shelter together in order to get out of an abusive relationship. Cami was lucky because her children were young. However, if her son had been 13 or older, he would have been rejected because he would have been "too old" to live in the shelter with women and children. What would have happened to Cami and her children in that scenario? I honestly cannot say. Losing everything that one owns is devastating and extremely stressful, many families try their hardest to keep everything as "normal" as possible. This means having both parents, if possible, and keeping all the children together. This is why organizations such as Family Promise strive to keep the family unit together as a whole.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Lens

According to Erickson and Murphy, authors of *A History of Anthropological Theory*, applied anthropology became the fifth subfield of anthropology in the late twentieth-century (2008). It has been stated by these same two authors that applied anthropology is “often set apart from its academic cousin on the grounds that it is applied, atheoretical, and constrained by ‘real world’ considerations” (Erickson 2008:198). In other words, applied anthropology is “anthropology conducted by anthropologists working outside traditional academic settings such as universities” (Erickson 2008:198). Van Willigen (2002) states that the number of anthropological research projects proposed to solve practical problems have increased drastically over time.. Rather than working in the traditional setting of academia, many anthropologists are moving towards working for governmental agencies and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) and firms in a variety of other areas (Van Willigen 2002). I view applied anthropology as Van Willigen describes it in his source book on anthropological practice: simply put an applied approach to anthropology is anthropology put to use (1991). Therefore, I have combined the two definitions and would claim that applied anthropology is anthropology that approaches real world dilemmas and takes action to aid in solving those obstacles that are burdening to a culture.

When I first began my research I had to consider what theoretical lens I would utilize during my research. It is my belief that my community and I could benefit from a reflexive approach to homelessness; I hoped that through my research I could help in solving this multifaceted problem. Applied anthropology granted my research to be defined by a specific problem and then welcomed me to put thoughts and ideas into action; applied anthropology allows for anthropologists to work on “practical problems” (Van Willigen 2002:8). “Applied

anthropology is both practical and socially useful while continuing to remain diverse, ranging from radical political action to market research” (2002:9). Therefore, I believe that utilizing applied anthropology to problem solve, advocate, and collaborate is the best possible method in order to educate and change others’ view of a social issue such as poverty. However, before jumping into my research I first need to explain the background of applied anthropology. I hoped to gain insight into the homeless population in rural Idaho and move towards a future where there will be fewer individuals living in homeless encampments or on the streets.

Historical Overview of Applied Anthropology

Historically applied anthropology developed over time through five separate stages (Van Willigen 2002). According to John Van Willigen, the five stages of applied anthropology are “the predisciplinary stage, the applied ethnology stage, the federal service stage, the role-extension/value-explicit stage, and the policy research stage” (2002:20).

The predisciplinary stage that dates to the pre-1860s and includes a small number or recorded instances in which a researcher used indigenous knowledge in order to engage in practical problem solving. One of the earliest know records of utilizing applied anthropology, although it was not known by this name, is circa 485-325 B.C. when Herodotus gathered research and data about potential enemies and/or colonial subjects (Van Willigen 2002:20). While Herodotus may account for the earliest use of this method, the earliest documented ethnographical work was actually that of Father Joseph Lafitau, a Jesuit missionary who documented about life in the North American northeast. His work resulted in the publication of *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times* in 1724 (Van Willigen 2002:21). Van Willigen continues to state that Lafitau set out on a journey to find the ginseng plant. In order to do this he worked with and interviewed a Mohawk herbalist

to obtain native knowledge about the plant (2002). While Herodotus and Lafitau are interesting in discussion, Van Willigen states, “Contemporary anthropologists have rather little to learn about the methodology of application from the predisciplinary stage” (2002:22).

The applied ethnology stage dates from 1860 to 1930, it was during this time period in which anthropology truly emerged and became a separate branch of the discipline. During this stage applied anthropologists typically worked as research specialists backing government or private foundations (Van Willigen 2002). The role of the applied anthropologist at this time was quite limited, many applied anthropologists were limited to providing data for policy making and problem solving (Van Willigen 2002). According to Van Willigen:

The applied ethnology stage sees policy research and administrative training needs of governments... Most applied anthropologists function in roles confined to research and teaching. The effects of applied anthropology on the basic discipline consisted largely of stimulating research in new areas and topics. And importantly, the potential for application was used as a justification for the establishment of many of the important academic programs (2002:25).

The founding of the Society for Applied Anthropology marked the end of this particular era (Van Willigen 1991). According to Van Willigen, it was during the researcher-consultant era in which anthropologists were utilized in various governmental roles he states: “the most striking are James Mooney’s work with the Ghost Dance among the Sioux; W.S. Rattray’s work among the Ashanti; and F.E. William’s work concerning New Guinea cargo-cults” (Van Willigen 1991:4).

The third stage Van Willigen states is the Federal Service Stage, which dates from 1930 to 1945. This stage of applied anthropology is primarily defined by World War II, “the intensification of anthropological employment in applied work reached a climax with the war” (Van Willigen 2002:26). It was during this stage that a number of organizations began to

emerge. Among these organizations was the Applied Anthropology Unit that was created in the Office of Indian Affairs. The intentions behind creating this organization was to “review the prospects of certain American Indian tribes to develop self-governance organizations in response to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934” (Van Willigen 2002:26). The era saw major changes in applied anthropology; however, the roles of the applied anthropologists at this time were still quite limited.

The fourth stage in development of applied anthropology dates from 1945 to 1970 and is known as the Role-Extension, Value-Explicit Stage. Up until 1945 applied anthropology went through very little change in “the applied anthropologist’s operational strategy” (Van Willigen 2002:30). However, it is in the fourth stage of applied anthropological development that anthropologists began to increase responsibility for providing solutions for real world problems. Perhaps my favorite John Van Willigen quote pertains to the fourth stage of development, “anthropologists were no longer merely monitors and predictors of change but came to actually work as agents of change” (2002:31).

The final stage of applied anthropology is known as the policy research stage, which dates from 1970 to the present day. This stage is defined by “new applied anthropology” (Van Willigen 2002:37). Essentially the primary difference between the role-extension, value-explicit stage and the policy research stage is the idea that the applied anthropologist conducting research in the fourth stage will take on a temporary assignment only to return to the ivory towers. However, the applied anthropologist working in this final stage typically have gainful employment through consulting firms or as a direct-hire staff member of the agency conducting the research (Van Willigen 2002).

As stated above, an important player in applied anthropology was the Society for Applied Anthropology which was founded in 1941 (www.sfaa.net). The Society for Applied Anthropology is “unique among professional associations in membership and purpose” (www.sfaa.net). The society represents the interests of professional anthropologists in a wide range of settings, including but not limited to academia, business, law, health and medicine, government, among many others. According to the Society for Applied Anthropology’s website, “the unifying factor is a commitment to making an impact on the quality of life in the world” (www.sfaa.net).

According to Miriam S. Chaiken and Ane K. Fleuret, the authors of *Social Change & Applied Anthropology: Essays in Honor of David W. Brokensha*:

We were attempting to apply our anthropological perspectives to issues of economic and social equity and resource conservation and management as well as attempting to act as advocates for unempowered people (Chaiken 1990:vii).

I personally enjoyed this quote because it shows the diversity in which applied anthropology can be utilized, however, it was the second half of this quote that resonated with me, to advocate and help to empower the unempowered. When a person loses everything and becomes homeless it is easy to feel powerless in one’s own life. Knowing that you are not alone and someone is fighting beside you and advocating for you can make all the difference in the world.

Applied Anthropology and Rural Homelessness

In today’s society, the role of the anthropologist can be as an activist and advocate for social change. Chaiken states that the past 30 years have “witnessed a change in the nature of applied anthropology” (1990:13). The new applied anthropologists have made an effort to

“develop new paradigms of planned social interventions” (Chaiken 1990:13). Traditional anthropological research, as Chaiken explains:

...included collection of local peoples’ perspectives on social and political issues, and this practice is logically continued in contemporary applied and development anthropology, with the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into development programs (1990:14).

Naturally there is rarely a better source of knowledge than the knowledge of those who live within the realm of the social issues being studied. This is why I believe that the hands-on approach of applied anthropology is the best way to obtain a fuller picture of rural homelessness in Idaho.

Applied anthropology has been utilized to study homelessness in the past. Ralph Anderson and Kyra Osmus described the homeless population of Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1985 (Anderson 1985). Ralph Anderson, an anthropologist who worked for the Department of Human Services at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, implemented an evaluation of the first year’s operation for the local shelter’s board of directors (Anderson 1985). The evaluation mainly focused on characteristics of the shelter guests, as well as, some of the shelter’s programs and issues within those programs. Lastly, the evaluation examined the volunteers working at the shelter. Due to the increasing number of homeless individuals in the Chattanooga community the shelter was regularly used and often exceeding its maximum capacity. As a result, the evaluation found that the most prevalent problem in the local homeless shelter was simply supplying enough sleeping space (Anderson 1985). However, the guests stated that they were satisfied with the shelter’s arrangements as a whole (Anderson 1985).

Anderson and Osmus (1985) deliberately utilized a hands-on approach to their research. While I intend to utilize different methods with an applied anthropological approach, I believe that this is the course of action that will allow me direct access to the rural homeless population in Idaho.

In another instance Dr. Rodney Frey presented his paper, *The Welfare "Able-Bodied" and the Displaced Anthropologist*, at the Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting. In this piece of literature Dr. Frey describes his experience of feeling "betwixt and between" (Frey 1989:2) while he was unemployed. He continues to describe how he was hired by the county to "coordinate a newly established multi-agency job training and search program known as Project Work" (Frey 1989:2).

However, what I found most intriguing about Frey's work was his curiosity to know aspirations and cultural values, economic, social, educational, and psychological considerations of the group of individuals that he was hired to help (Frey 1989). Yet, even more interesting was the way in which he described the clients at Project Work.. Frey states that the clientele valued a home, family, independence, "decent life-style," and a "meaningful" vocation (Frey 1989:3), I felt that these were the same types of guests that I was working with at Family Promise. Frey continues on to describe four types of clientele that he aided while at Project Work, I personally felt a connection to one of those types in particular. The welfare "able-bodied," as Frey describes them, are a

Disenfranchised population, isolated from family, friends and neighbors, lacking involvement in civic, church and political organizations, often living in sub-standard housing, afflicted by poor diets and health, aspiring toward middle-class aspirations but hindered by barriers of alcoholism, child abuse scars, illiteracy, low self-esteem, and fatalism or anger (Frey 1989:17-18).

These are the guests who reside within the Family Promise organization, and while society may stigmatize and judge them, these are individuals who long to have a “meaningful” job. They are not all “hard core,” “angries,” or “tramps” as described by Rodney as the other three categories. While screening for appropriate families to reside within the Family Promise organization, it is the Family Service Coordinator’s job to decide if a family has the gumption to help itself; therefore they cannot be “hard core” who Rodney Frey states can be their own worst enemy, these families cannot be “angries” and believe that society simply owes them for all the punches it has thrown their way, and finally these families cannot be transient or “tramps” who choose the homeless life-style over all other life-styles.

Chapter 5: Methodologies

Autoethnography

In similar fashion to other anthropological scholars like Paul Stoller and Ruth Behar I chose to chronicle my personal experience so that it would aid in building my ethnographic research. An autoethnography has allowed for self-reflection of the darkest chapter in my life thus far. Behar states that her reason for writing an ethnography in a vulnerable way was her regret and self-loathing for completing her summer fieldwork in Spain while her grandfather passed away in Miami Beach (1996). As you have read earlier, in this literature my experience living in the Salvation Army Center of Hope had a profound impact on my life, this is what compelled me expose myself and tell a story that made me vulnerable. It was this experience with homelessness that would inevitably led me to research homelessness. Therefore, I viewed it as a necessary part of my thesis. Writing an autoethnography to highlight my experience was a fundamental section to this research. Like Stoller, who wrote about his experience with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in an autoethnographic manner; I chose to use my life experiences as a part of my anthropology, Stoller states:

When you are told you have cancer, you find yourself rooted to a point on an existential crossroad. You suddenly realize that your life has been forever altered. You look in the village of the healthy but ruefully understand that there is no way back to your old life (Stoller 2009:127).

This is just one moment that Stoller explains that he felt he was in the “between,” somewhere between health and illness. While cancer and homelessness are two very different topics, I felt a connection to what he explained within his text, *The Power Of The Between: An Anthropological Odyssey*; it is when Stoller writes that his life had been forever altered and there is no way to go backwards. It took years for me to come to terms with my past. I was

angry, embarrassed, and even a little sad about having had gone through that experience; as a child I would rarely discuss the past. Homelessness altered my life forever, there was no way I could go back and undo what had been done, there was no way I could un-see what I had seen as a child. I felt that I could either continue to be angry, embarrassed, and sad or I could move forward with life and let this experience make me stronger. Being able to write this autoethnography was my way of letting go of this anger and embarrassment; it was here that I was able to liberate myself.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic of homelessness I had to greatly consider ethics and ethical issues that could have potentially arisen during my research. I had to take into consideration that my research could possibly cause informants psychological harm or distress. According to Berg and Lune, “concerns about research ethics revolve around various issues of harm, consent, privacy, and the confidentiality of data” (2012:61). Of course as an anthropologist attempting to conduct research my ultimate goal is to make a positive influence on those individuals with whom I come into contact; I wanted to live by the fundamental creed “*do no harm*,” which refers to *both* physical and emotional (psychological) harm (Berg 2012).

Not wanting to cause my informants distress, I was left with the dilemma on how I was going to gain the data I needed to complete my research. As an anthropologist I was extremely interested in obtaining personal stories of homelessness. I wanted to know how a family lived before, what triggered their battle with homelessness, and how homelessness affected each individual in the family.

However, before I could begin my research I needed to go through the University of Idaho’s Institutional Review Board, also known as an IRB, in order to gain approval to

complete my research. Because I was dealing with human informants, I needed to outline my entire project and the methods that I would utilize in order to gain the stories and answers that I was searching for. Though it was a tedious process I did manage to gain approval from the IRB board at the university. I have outlined the following criteria in the paragraphs below:

Applied Anthropology

First I had explained to the board the theoretical framework that I would use in order to complete my research since it is a major part of this project: “anthropology put to use” as Van Willigen refers to applied anthropology (2002). This is the use of anthropological research that is done in order to solve problems in today’s world; in this instance it would be anthropology put to use in order to bring the public’s attention to homelessness and aid in solving the issue of rural homelessness. While solving the issue of homelessness is far from being complete, I believe that standing up, as an active advocate of homelessness will aid in solving many of the issues that come with being homeless. Having decided what my theoretical framework would be I now needed to decide how I would obtain the data that would address these interests and research questions

Participant Observation

Like many anthropological legends, I knew that I would utilize participant observation as one method for my research. According to Sidky, “ethnographic field research involves developing a close relationship with the people one is studying” (2004:4). So how does a researcher develop a close relationship with individuals they are studying? Simply, the researcher must learn the language, the life-style, even live among those they are studying and take part in daily activities: completely engross one’s self into the culture. Complete

submersion was difficult for me to do. Because I was not homeless and could not be admitted into the Family Promise program, I was at a disadvantage , as I could not simply completely submerge myself into the homeless life-style.

However, I was determined to draw from other anthropological ethnographies and to submerge myself as much as I could into the culture I was studying. Sidky quotes Bronislaw Malinowski who stressed, “the ethnographer must immerse himself/herself in another culture and conduct research by means of direct engagement and firsthand observations” (Sidky 2004:166). Unlike, Malinowski, I was not dropped onto an island and forced to participate in an unknown culture. However, I do believe that Malinowski made an important point; in order to fully understand a culture the researcher must fully consume themselves in every aspect of that culture. Malinowski also stressed the importance of the researcher learning the local language (Sidky 2004); easy, I thought, everyone will more than likely speak English. Unfortunately, I was wrong. Yes, everyone I encountered spoke English, but I was at a disadvantage because there was in a sense a different language being spoken at the Day Center, the language of the Family Promise program, of caseworkers, directors, and of the families that were guests of the program. There were local resources around town that I had never heard of before and as a volunteer I was expected to have knowledge of these various resources when a guest asked or I received a phone call inquiring about such sources.

At first I felt overwhelmed, I had expected participant observation to be the easiest method I utilized. However, I was unsure of what I should write each day because during my first month of volunteering I did not interact with any of the guests; they simply did not use the Day Center as I expected. However, once families did begin to make use of the Day Center I utilized participant observation in order to gain information about the Family

Promise guest's daily routines. Throughout the research, participant observation was used in multiple locations.

The Day Center for Family Promise of North Idaho opened its doors in 1986. The Day center is currently located on the bottom floor of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. I believe the Day Center will be a prime location to observe the daily activities of the guests in the Family Promise program. While there are many areas in the United States that are considered to be rural, I chose to study rural homelessness in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho because of its proximity to larger cities and towns in the area. To the north is Sandpoint, Idaho; the south is Plummer and Worley, Idaho; the west contains Post Falls, Idaho and then moves into a more urban setting of Spokane, Washington; and to the east is Kellogg, Idaho. Coeur d'Alene is one of the largest cities in Northern Idaho, yet if one drives even five minutes outside of the Coeur d'Alene city limits beautiful forested areas, farmland, and Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation surround you.

Interviews

I could not solely rely on participant observation; this allowed me to view daily rituals, but did not grant me the personal stories for which I had hoped. Therefore, I aimed to conduct semi-formal interviews from various individuals associated with the Family Promise organization. I had hoped to conduct approximately twenty interviews. Sadly, I did not obtain all twenty interviews as I had hoped. I had not considered that there might be individuals who were not as comfortable in sharing their personal story of homelessness as I was. For various reasons several individuals for interviews turned me down; they were too busy trying to put their life back into order. The pain of becoming homeless was still too raw for them to discuss, or perhaps simply the fact that I was still an outsider to them despite having my own

story of homelessness as a child made them weary about being interviewed. The interviews were all audio-recorded and because anonymity is of the utmost importance every interview recording was to be destroyed after transcription. Also, in order to keep the identity of the informant anonymous a single sheet of paper was used to identify participants and the pseudonyms that I assigned to each. That sheet of paper was then to be locked away in a cabinet that was only be accessed by the primary researcher, myself.

Journals

The story of homelessness varies greatly from one individual to the next, and I had considered that many informants may feel uncomfortable telling me their whole story and would consequently leave much of their deep, personal feelings or embarrassing incidents out of their interview. Therefore, I thought of a way that the interviewee could record all of their experiences. I suggested to all participants that I would supply a journal and ask each person to write in it daily for a two-week period. These journals were intended to remain anonymous and would be coded and used with the pseudonyms that were assigned. Due to the content that these journals contained, they would also be protected under lock and key in a cabinet allotted for the sole purpose of this research. Unfortunately, I did not have an opportunity to utilize this method. Before beginning my research I thought that these journals would be a way for the Family Promise guests to reveal all of the nitty-gritty details about the program, and about their hardships. However, I found that many of the families were simply too busy to even attempt writing in a journal on a daily basis, while other individuals were uncomfortable expressing themselves through writing.

Ethical Issues

As a cultural anthropologist studying homelessness there are several ethical issues that I had to consider before even beginning my research. However, before I could begin I had to request permission to complete this research from the Institutional Review Board, or IRB. Essentially this board is in place to ensure that the research that is being completed is both ethical and safe for everyone who is involved, including but not limited to the participants and the researcher. My primary concern with my research was how uncomfortable I could potentially make my informants through their interviews and journaling experiences due to the sensitive topic that is being discussed, homelessness. Because I knew that I could potentially make my informants uncomfortable and embarrassed I even questioned how many FP guests would want to talk with me and tell me their story. I found that as I told them my personal experiences with homelessness as a child in Charlotte, North Carolina that they began to feel more comfortable. I don't know if they thought I would judge them for their decisions they made prior to becoming homeless.

Budget

The budget for this research was fairly simple. The primary function of establishing a budget would be to purchase journals and pens for the residents who are enrolled in the Family Promise Organization. These journals, written for a two-week period, would have allowed for me to understand the inner workings of the homeless individual's lives. Secondly, I provided compensation to the informants who sat with me, were so willing to allow me to interview them, and were so willing to tell me their stories. The compensation provided was simple because I did not want to provide something for one member of the family that could

not be purchased for others, and I believed a cup of coffee would suffice while being interviewed. Without these elements, I believe that the research may be lacking in areas that would otherwise be under examination. A friend that was used during the interview process also provided me a tape recorder. While a Family Promise guest never used the composition notebook I found it useful for jotting down my observations at the Day Center. Below I have provided a table with the prices of various items that were purchased for this research:

Item	Store	Price
Composition Notebook	Wal-Mart	\$0.94
Bic Ballpoint Pens	Wal-Mart	\$5.99
Coffee	Starbucks	\$5.99

Figure 5.1. Budget.

Family Promise as a National Non-Profit Organization

Family Promise is a non-profit organization that aims to combat poverty by helping low-income families regain their independence. Due to the fact that there is not a single fix, nor a quick fix to combat homelessness, Family Promise relies on the efforts of five separate programs that work in conjunction with one another (www.familypromise.org).

History of Family Promise

Family Promise is still a relatively young program, with only 25 years of service total. However, this organization began forming years prior to its official opening. The year was 1981 when Karen Olson was a marketing executive who developed promotional campaigns for consumer products. On her way to a meeting, she saw a homeless woman, someone she had seen many times before. However, this particular morning she decided to buy a sandwich for the woman. The homeless woman accepted the sandwich but asked for one more thing—a moment to be heard, to tell her story.

Karen and her two sons began to make trips to New York to hand out sandwiches to the homeless. Soon, the city's homeless began to become more than just a statistic to her; they had faces that she recognized, and they had names. She began to understand the immense sense of loss felt by these people. That sense understanding turned into an enduring commitment.

Learning that there were literally hundreds of homeless people, including families, in her home community of New Jersey, Olson approached the religious community to aid her in her mission. She had hoped that there would be many individuals who would share her concern and that together they could do combat poverty and homelessness. Ten months later,

Olson obtained aid from eleven area congregations who came forward to provide hospitality space within their buildings. Along with the local New Jersey congregations, the local YMCA agreed to provide showers and a day center for families.

On October 27, 1986, the first Interfaith Hospitality Network officially opened its doors. As word spread, ten more congregations formed another Interfaith Hospitality Network. The five programs for transitional housing, childcare, and family mentoring followed—grew out of increased awareness and community engagement. The success of the first two Interfaith Hospitality Networks led other congregations to develop similar advocacy programs. In 1988, the National Interfaith Hospitality Network was formed to bring the program to other areas of the country where neighbors and congregations could work together to aid poverty stricken and homeless families.

Family Promise has, to date, established 182 affiliates in 41 states using the services of more than 160,000 volunteers and 6,000 congregations. The Interfaith Hospitality Networks provide meals, a place to sleep at night, as well as mentoring and job placement to more than 49,000 homeless family members annually sixty percent of served individuals are homeless children. As a way of helping at-risk families avoid homelessness, Family Promise began training volunteers to advise and mentor families, helping them achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.

In 2003, the Family Promise organization officially became known by its current name. This name reflects a broad range of advocacy programs and reaffirms its commitment to aiding homeless families regain their independence. Currently 41 states and 160,000 volunteers are involved in the Family Promise organization. Karen Olson's mantra remains that you can strengthen one family you can strengthen a nation (www.familypromise.org).

Interfaith Hospitality Network

Homelessness is a complex social issue: a company downsizes and lays off its workers, an injury prevents a father from working, a single mother loses her job, or a natural disaster strikes. To name a few, these are all reasons as to why a family could become homeless. The Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) is a major component to the Family Promise organization. The IHN partners with local congregations in order to provide homeless families a place to eat dinner, as well as a place for the family to relax, and a place to lay their heads down for the night.

The Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) is a major component to the Family Promise organization. This portion of the organization relies heavily on local congregations and volunteers to run effectively. These local congregations provide a warm and safe environment for the families to gather and sleep at night. The families also eat dinner each evening at the church, which is provided by a volunteer.

The IHN is a partnership of congregations working together aid those who are homeless within their communities. According to the Family Promise website, www.familypromise.org, the IHN provides an ideal solution for family homelessness because it is easy to replicate the specific needs of each community (www.familypromise.org). There are five key components to the IHN program:

Hosts rotate each week amongst the ten or more congregations within the network so that no single congregation is over utilized. During its rotation each congregation is responsible for providing separate lodging for each family unit, three meals each day, and hospitality.

The **Day Center** is available to guests within the Family Promise program seven days a week from 8:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M. Here they have access to the executive director, program director, and a case manager. They also have access to various daily comforts from television and Internet. One of the most important aspects of the day center is that guests are provided with a free mailing address, making searching for employment possible.

Various **volunteer** positions are readily available for those looking to donate their time with Family Promise. Every volunteer can donate as little or as many hours to the organization as they desire. Volunteers are responsible for cooking and serving daily meals, playing with kids or helping with homework, staying overnight at the host sites with the families, providing various specialized services like resume writing, or simply just being there for the families when they need someone to just listen.

Social service agencies are also utilized as a part of the Interfaith Hospitality Network. In each community Family Promise works in conjunction with various social service agencies to ensure that the guest families are linked and connected to various companies in order to find housing, employment, or other types of assistance that may be necessary.

The final key component to the Interfaith Hospitality Network is **transportation**. This portion of the IHN is not always utilized, however, it is always available for families who do not possess transportation of their own. A Family Promise van is readily available for use to transport families to and from the host site to the day center each day.

As stated above the IHN is a network of congregations who work together to provide shelter for families in the Family Promise program. While all congregations are welcomed to

volunteer and aid in the fight against homelessness, in order to host these families each congregation needs to contain the following elements:

- Space for up to 3 families or 14 individuals to sleep for one full week at a time once every two to three months.
- A common area for meals, homework, relaxation, and gathering together.
- Two bathrooms: one male and one female.
- Space for volunteers to sleep.

Every congregation in the Interfaith Hospitality Network is also responsible for providing nutritious meals for the families, diapers, first aid kit, basic over the counter medications, utilities, linens, and various items such as soaps and toys for children (www.familypromiseNI.org). However, the cots are provided by the Family Promise organization and are relocated each week to the new host church.

Family Mentoring

Homelessness is stressful for everyone involved. Many individuals suffer from a severe amount of stress. The Family Mentoring aspect of the organization provides family members with a one-on-one mentoring program to work on short-term and long-term goals. Mentors aid families to meet goals such as developing life skills, utilizing community resources, improving housing and job situations, and lastly, supporting their children. Providing mentors allows for families to not only work on feasible goals, but also provides a committed, trusting rapport built between mentor and mentee. This also allows for the mentee

to problem solve, and the mentor to simply listen and provide understanding in a non-judgmental environment.

Just Neighbors

Just Neighbors is an interactive poverty awareness tool available to congregations, schools, and non-profit organizations. This poverty awareness program is meant to “shatter the myths about poverty, inspire service and empower advocacy” (www.familypromise.org). This program allows for one to hypothetically walk in the shoes of an impoverished individual. Unless, one is faced with financial issues it is typically not necessary to choose between things like paying rent or purchasing necessary medications, seeing the doctor when ill or fixing the car in order to go to work. These tasks are done when they are in demand in our lives simply because they must be completed. However, poverty or homelessness requires making choices and sacrificing one need or another.

The Family Promise website advertises three different versions of the Just Neighbors program. The first is the interfaith version for congregations and faith-based non-profit organizations; the second version available is the community service edition for schools and non-profits; and third and finally the Catholic social teaching edition. These allow for a wide variety of people and students to utilize this program and understand the complex issue that is poverty in America.

While the Just Neighbors poverty awareness program is a tool used by Family Promise in order to take the first steps of community based responses, it is not associated with the Family Promise organization or created by Family Promise and therefore the organization does not earn a profit from the sale of this program. This is often the first tool used by local congregations in order to connect the individuals at a future host site with the Family Promise

organization. It is not uncommon for a community to be completely oblivious to the impoverished and homeless population in their community and the surrounding areas. However, as described above this tool allows for an individual or group to interact with the program, make choices, role play, and hear stories from families and can be used in a large or small group discussion format.

While this aspect of Family Promise is not always utilized, it is available for purchase on the Family Promise website for \$135.00 and is available to congregations, schools, and non-profit organizations.

Community Initiatives

Community engagement, also known as Community Initiatives, is another important aspect of Family Promise. The Interfaith Hospitality Network provides the basic needs of a family within the program, shelter, food, and various support and connections from Family Promise employees and volunteers. However, many volunteers go above and beyond to create new programs or partnerships to solve local problems and meet the specific needs of their communities (www.familypromise.org).

Community Initiatives falls under the Family Promise umbrella due to the various volunteers working with the organization in the same format that I am. Creating parenting classes, job-training classes, tutoring programs, and a variety of other programs are all ways that volunteers come together in order to help the organization grow and develop. Family Promise supports these endeavors by providing information about how other existing programs have been developed, funded, and are currently being maintained (www.familypromise.org).

Much of my research falls under this aspect of the Family Promise organization. While my efforts at Family Promise of the Palouse were limited, I will state here that there was a discussion of starting a local parenting class by the director at that location. In conjunction with the parenting class, a childcare program was also discussed briefly. I have also suggested that the Family Promise of North Idaho start a fostering program for pets of homeless individuals, due to the fact that many individuals facing homelessness fear losing their pets during their stay at a shelter.

Voices Uniting

Advocacy for homelessness is extremely important. Voices Uniting allows for the Interfaith Hospitality Network clergy, volunteers, and former families to come together to advocate for public policies that alleviate poverty and homelessness. The Family Promise website states, “through this program, collectively raising our voices in the public policy arena, we create substantial and lasting changes that will affect the lives of millions of families in need” (www.familypromise.org). Currently Family Promise is using this program on a national level to ass The Homeless Child and Youth Act of 2015. The campaign goal for FP is to join the national effort to change HUD’s definition of what being homeless means. FP believes that the definition should include families with children who are “doubled up” and living in a relative’s or friend’s home (www.familypromise.org). FP is also fighting for families with children living from week to week in motels (www.familypromise.org).

Secondly, voices uniting is also being utilized to fund the National Housing Trust Fund, or NHTF. President George W. Bush signed this into law in 2008. This law was designed to address the affordable housing shortage, the FP website states, “for every 100 extremely low income renter households, there are 31 affordable and available units”

(www.familypromise.org). Therefore, funding the NHTF would help to create more affordable units for families and individuals in need of a home (www.familypromise.org).

Chapter 6: Rural Homelessness

Rural homelessness is a serious problem. It is estimated that approximately 9 percent of those who suffer from homelessness are from a rural areas nationwide (Archibald 2007). However, it has also been noted that true numbers are difficult to come by; unlike urban shelters, rural homeless individuals frequently rely on church groups, volunteers, or encampments in surrounding rural areas, where taking a head count is not always practiced (Archibald 2007). According to award-winning journalist Myers Reece, the nation's rural homeless rate is lofty, but it is not the ragged men and women panhandling on the corner. Rather, "it's the kid sitting next to your child in third grade. It's your co-worker" (Reece 2012). In other words, homelessness affects a number of individuals and we may not even realize who these individuals are. Homeless families are a large percentage of the nation's homeless population. Currently, rural regions are finding local solutions for local problems. Organizations helping to combat rural homelessness are popping up all over the country. Family Promise is one such organization that aims to help keep homeless families together. I chose to focus my research on Family Promise because it is not common to find an organization that chooses to help a whole family mother/wife, husband/father, and children of all ages. I stated earlier that I lived in a Women and Children's Shelter and there was also a local Men's Shelter in Charlotte, North Carolina. Tearing families apart is not the goal of these types of homeless shelters, but they are established this way for comfort and safety of the residents residing here Charlotte, North Carolina is a large, urban area, I aim to compare and contrast my experience of living the shelter in an urban setting to that of experiencing homelessness in a rural setting such as Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Homelessness in Idaho

Since 2010 the number of homeless individuals in Idaho has decreased according to the PIT Count Report. In 2010, nearly 2,346 men, women, and children were reported being without a home. That number gradually decreased for the next three years, with the number of homeless individuals reached 1,781. However, between 2013 and 2014 the number of homeless individuals spiked by 323 individuals. The question is why has there been such a fluctuation in the number of homeless individuals over the course of a few years? According to the PIT Count Results on January 29, 2014, the count identified 2,104 men, women and children experiencing homelessness in the entire state of Idaho (PIT 2014). When considering an entire state, 2,104 individuals seems like a relatively low number in comparison to an urban area such as Charlotte, New York City, or Los Angeles. However, this number represents an "18 percent overall increase from 2013" (PIT 2014:8). These numbers are still lower than the numbers reported four years prior. What is even more concerning when considering the statistics is the fact that unsheltered homeless individuals account for 30 percent of all homeless individuals in Idaho (PIT 2014). The Point-In-Time Count reports that the growth in the unsheltered population could be from the local emergency shelters and transitional housing exceeding the capacities of the organization (PIT 2014). I believe that the Point-In-Time Count may be correct in this assumption. Over the past four years more homeless individuals have come out of the woodworks in hopes of gaining assistance from local shelters for housing and food.

Thinking about homelessness on a smaller scale, Region One, consisting of Boundar, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah, and Shoshon counties, 522 individuals were reported to be homeless in 2014. There are numerous shelters and agencies in Region One aiding homeless individuals

including, Bonner County Homeless Task Force, Idaho Housing and Finance Association, North Idaho Violence Prevention Center, Post Falls Police-Victim Services Unit, St. Pius X Catholic Church, St. Vincent de Paul, Union Gospel Mission, and lastly Family Promise of North Idaho (PIT Region One: 2014). Somehow, even with eight organizations covering five counties Region One still has approximately 283 unsheltered individuals. These eight organizations, along with homeless individual's support system are able to help approximately 236 people (PIT Region One: 2014). That is *almost one half of all the homeless individuals in Region One*. One half seems like nothing when considering that the other half are sleeping in parks, alleys, or encampments; one of the largest encampments in Region One was located in Coeur d'Alene until October of 2014.

A Local Encampment in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Many Idahoans who are struggling with homelessness are forced to rely on their support networks, if they have said network. However, in the situation where there is no support system in place many individuals are forced to endure the blistering heat in the summer and the bone chilling winter nights in homeless encampments. Coeur d'Alene residents are very aware of this local encampment and affectionately refer to it as "Tent City." Located in the wooded areas near Target approximately 50 to 60 individuals reside (Cousin 2014). This encampment has been actively growing for the past nine years (Cousin 2014). Unfortunately, the encampment that became a makeshift home and a community within the forested area was recently evacuated and destroyed. The Spokane developer, Harlan Douglass plans to sell the area for unknown reasons currently.

There has been a massive effort by the city and St. Vincent de Paul of North Idaho to relocate these individuals (Cousin 2014). Jeff Conroy, executive director of St. Vincent de

Paul, stated, "The frustration that we've got is that we've known they've been back there for nine years. We understand the property owner's position and totally understand the danger that can happen back there. But after nine years, relocating them in three weeks is a struggle" (Cousin 2014). Even if Coeur d'Alene utilizes its police and St. Vincent de Paul and are able to evict and relocate all of the individuals from this space, these people may not want the help of an organization. For instance, St. Vincent is known as the "emergency shelter" in the Coeur d'Alene area, with a total of twelve beds in their emergency shelter. They do have the ability to potentially utilize their transitional housing for a brief time period, if a space is available. I found this article *Homeless to be ousted from camp near Target* to be quite intriguing because the Coeur d'Alene city councilman Dan Gookin's statement to the Coeur d'Alene Press:

Once the property owner decided that they were going to sell, they contacted the city and said 'evict these guys' and the city has an obligation to do that. We don't want to be the bad guys and go in there and roust everybody up. The last thing the police want is a confrontation. It's something that needs to be dealt with and in Idaho we don't really have the tool set to handle it (Cousin 2014).

Gookin also stated, "When you judge a culture, you always judge it by how it treats the least of its members. What you have here is a people displaced by society, and society should take of them" (Cousin 2014). If even the city of Coeur d'Alene is in agreement that these homeless individuals are worth taking care of, then why do we not have a proper emergency shelter that contains more than twelve beds?

The purpose of this research is to examine rural homelessness in Idaho, more specifically to examine an organization known as Family Promise. Idaho has a diverse population of homeless individuals ranging from residents who reside in encampments, to single mothers and fathers, to entire family units. The purpose of discussing "Tent City" being destroyed in Coeur d'Alene was to paint a more realistic picture of what homelessness looks

like in rural areas. While a majority of the residents of "Tent City" have moved on to other places rumor has it that they now reside in Post Falls. There are many individuals who are needing and wanting help, but what happens when a local area does not contain enough beds to help even half of their homeless? Jeff Conroy stated, "We're not bleeding hearts. We understand that something needs to be done. But we have to understand that they are human beings. This is not a political issue. This is not a religious issue. This is a human issue" (Cousin 2014).

Gookin has already told the Coeur d'Alene Press that Idaho is not equipped to handle this. While the events unfolding with "Tent City" are unfortunate, my question is how is this going to affect the city and the local homeless shelters? If they are already at maximum capacity at a mere twelve beds what is going to happen to those who are currently unsheltered? It seems to me that northern Idaho could benefit from building a true emergency shelter, like the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter I stayed at in Charlotte, North Carolina.

However, it is not solely about Idaho gaining an emergency shelter in an area that could desperately benefit from it. I chose to study Family Promise for a particular reason. Family Promise is an organization that aims to keep a family together during their time of hardship. They attempt to keep life as normal as possible for these families. I believe that this has a huge benefit on the family. The husband and wife remain a team and are able to rely on one another, to cry on each other's shoulders, to be strong for each other. The children, regardless of their age, remain with both parents; I believe this causes fewer stresses for the child, allows them to remain a child, and to not have to pick up extra slack that has been dropped by having only one parent.

Local Programs/Services for the Homeless

Homelessness is not an issue that can easily be solved. However, when communities work together to alleviate the problem numerous solutions can be found and utilized within that community. Many communities are working towards their 10-year plan to alleviate homelessness. Each community's 10-year plan differs slightly from other communities' 10-year plans so that each community members' and homeless individuals' needs are met by this plan. Coeur d'Alene has many local and national organizations, besides Family Promise, working together to problem solve and find a solution to end homelessness in northern Idaho.

St. Vincent de Paul is one such organization that is working towards ending homelessness across the nation. Coeur d'Alene is lucky enough to benefit from their services. St. Vinnie's, as they are often referred to in town, is the only emergency shelter program in Coeur d'Alene. Their emergency shelter programs benefit men, women, and children. The Men's Emergency Shelter began its services in 1990 and is located on First Street in Coeur d'Alene. Sadly, this shelter only contains 12 beds for men who are in need. The Women and Children's Emergency Shelter began in 1992 and can also host up to 12 women and children. Men, women, and children are permitted to stay at the St. Vincent de Paul emergency shelter from a 30-day period; during this time they have access to job-readiness training and placement, life skills classes, and of course daily meals (www.stvincentdepaulcda.org).

Union Gospel Mission opened its doors in 2012 to women and children in Kootenai County. During my ethnographic experience I was able to take a tour of the UGM site. I have to admit, I was highly impressed with their facilities and with their program overall. This is a faith-based organization and is not solely for the homeless. UGM states that they provide a warm and home-like environment for women and children who have experienced homeless, addition, and abuse. During a resident's stay at UGM they have life skills classes, job training,

parenting classes, medical and dental care within the facility. There were two factors that really impressed me about UGM. First, they do have an on-site facility for basic medical and dental care. During my tour I was informed that they have local physicians and dentists who are willing to donate their time to see the residents in the facility. Secondly, UGM provides a program that I have not heard of before; UGM refers to it as the “Auntie” program. This is where residents can take a parenting class in order to be able to babysit another resident’s child/children. I found this program impressive because it allows for the women to depend on each other for support if they need to job search, go to an interview, hunt for apartments/houses, or even if they may just need some alone time.

Fresh Start is a daily drop-in center for the homeless in the local area. This center is conveniently located in downtown Coeur d’Alene and is one of many centers that are apart of the St. Vincent de Paul network. Fresh Start provides daily necessities to the homeless such as meals, showers, laundry services, and clothing donations and has been working to aid the homeless for approximately 10 years (Dolan 2014). There is also another local organization reaching out to help the homeless in Coeur d’Alene, **2nd Street Commons** is located near downtown and is primarily utilized as a soup kitchen for the hungr., I have often heard this organization described as a laid back atmosphere and is simply an organization that allows those in need to gather and relax in the company of others.

Chapter 8: My Ethnographic Experience with Family Promise

Family Promise of the Palouse

Before beginning my research I had never heard of the Family Promise organization; it was brought to my attention by my academic advisor, Stacey Camp. My experience with homelessness as a child made me curious to know if homelessness was similar in other areas of the United States. Since my experience was in Charlotte, North Carolina, an urban city in the southern United States, I chose to look at rural homelessness in Northern Idaho in order to compare my experience to homelessness in a completely different setting.

I first began my research on rural homelessness in Idaho at Family Promise of the Palouse located in Moscow, Idaho. It was at this location that I received my information on Family Promise as a national, non-profit organization and sensitivity training on how to appropriately interact with individuals going through the program.

Though my experience volunteering at Family Promise of the Palouse was brief I found it pertinent to my research. I volunteered my time at the Day Center; my duties consisted of sitting behind a desk and interacting with families or visitors, answering the phone when it rang, and taking messages for various employees of Family Promise. While completing clerical work does not sound like the most rewarding work, I did find it rewarding to interact with the children in the program while their parents were at the Day Center.

My first day volunteering I decided that my best course of action would be to sit back and observe the ways in which the Family Promise guests interacted with their own family units, with the other family units, and how the children interacted with one another. I observed that the kids in the program were relatively happy and seemed like well-adjusted kids. While I never asked these particular children their ages, I estimated that they were

somewhere in the age range of seven to ten. Three children in total were in the program: two boys and a girl. As little kids often do, the two boys played around with one another, discussing the important things in life: which super hero had the coolest powers and how awesome it was that one little boy's family had a pet rat. I watched as the little girl attempted to insert herself into their conversation and was only tolerated by the boys because her mother had just given her permission to play with the rat at that time. I watched the kids play together and socialize for hours.

According to the Family Promise rules, children are required to be with their parents at all times. The parents were always located somewhere in the Day Center but rarely were the kids attached to their parent's hip, let alone in the same room as their parents. The parental units were apt to be anywhere at any point in time.

The Day Center for Family Promise of the Palouse is a large building. Large enough for private rooms for each family, a laundry room, communal bathrooms with showers, a full kitchen, entertainment room with television and Internet access, and a child's playroom. Even though the parents seemed to be all over the Day Center, the kids were almost always found in the playroom; this was convenient for observation since it was across from the volunteer's desk.

I found more often than not that the kids were more willing to talk to me than the adults were, while at FPP there were 3 children who were frequently at the Day Center, I did inform their parents of my research and inquired about interviewing the children. Each child had a parent sign an informed consent form and did allow for me to talk with the children for research purposes; the only request was that I not use the children's names in this literature. It was on Easter that I organized an egg dying activity for the children. This activity proved to

be a disaster due to having egg yolk cover the counters and spilling Easter egg dye all over the table, not to mention the one little boy who felt the need to smash half a dozen of the hollowed out shells while yelling “Hulk smash!” Despite the wreck that I had created I was able to talk to the little boy and little girl who were related. They did not necessarily talk about how being homeless had effected their lives; but they wanted some clarification and some comfort. They wanted to know when everything would return to normal, how long this would last, and what would happen in the future. Naturally I could not provide answers to their questions because I don’t know what the future held for that family. Even though I knew that I could not give them the answers they were looking for, they accepted my answer of “I don’t know” and asked me if I wanted to hold their pet rat.

During the course of time with Family Promise of the Palouse the executive director approached me with an idea of starting a parenting class for the local community and guest families in the program. She felt that these families could benefit from having a course like this readily available to them each week. I proposed starting a class or activity time for the children during the same time slot as her parenting class, in hopes that the parents would be able to attend the course without interruption from their children. This is one issue that my grandmother and I had run into while we were homeless. My grandmother was required to attend certain meetings and to complete chores, however, the shelter rules required me to be with her at all times. This led to constant frustration for both of us. She could be more attentive to her meeting or chore if she didn’t have to watch me, and I was old enough to behave myself for an hour while she did these things rather than tagging along and being bored.

Family Promise of North Idaho

It was late May of 2014 when I decided that I would relocate myself and my research to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Ultimately I believed that this locale would provide me with a larger research sample. Tucked in on the Idaho panhandle Coeur d'Alene is a technically a city with approximately 46,402 individuals residing there (United States Census Bureau 2014). City Center does not give off a small town vibe, however; driving even five minutes outside of the city limits you are surrounded by beautiful forests full of evergreen trees, farmland, and Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation. Due to my relocation I was unable to follow through with getting the weekly children's activity off of the ground. I intended to continue my work with Family Promise in Coeur d'Alene and after settling into a routine I found Family Promise of North Idaho.

I expected that I would fall back into a similar routine like I had in Moscow. However, Family Promise of North Idaho is an older and more established branch of the Family Promise organization. Therefore, there were fewer volunteer opportunities due to having a more established and consistent volunteer base. I decided that I would volunteer on Sunday evenings from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M, or 6:00 P.M. if the Day Center were extremely busy.

As I began to volunteer my time on Sunday evenings I realized how vastly different the two Day Centers were. Family Promise of the Palouse has a lot of space, including large windows that let in light and keep the whole building feeling welcoming: dare I say it, even home-like. However, the Day Center for Family Promise of North Idaho is located on the bottom level of St. Luke's Episcopal Church within walking distance of City Center in Coeur d'Alene. There are windows in the offices but they do not provide much natural light for the center; this means that the entire Day Center is flooded with the florescent lighting of the church, along with less light there is less space in general for the families to gather. Family

Promise of North Idaho's Day Center does not contain a laundry room, communal bathrooms with showers, or a kitchen. I began to question where the Family Promise guests would complete daily tasks like showering, getting ready, cooking, and other various daily activities.

While volunteering my duties grew to other types of clerical work, data entry, and answering crisis calls when necessary. I continued my volunteer efforts, once again hoping that over time I would become a familiar face to the families. However, I found that I was not interacting with the guest families as often. Not that they would not interact with me, but rather these families were not utilizing the Day Center as frequently as the families in Moscow. When I asked both the executive director, Cindy Wood, and the program coordinator, Mary Beth Jorgensen, about this, they both gave similar answers: the utilization of the day center all depended on the families in the program at that particular time. During my time at Family Promise of North Idaho, the guest families had a decent support system in place and this allowed for the adults in the families to maintain jobs in the community.

While the majority of my volunteer efforts were spent in the day center completing clerical work, organizing donations, or cleaning the various rooms in the day center, I did manage to help raise money for Family Promise of North Idaho by volunteering to be security staff at the local Ironman Triathlon. That morning I woke up at 5:00 A.M. to shower and get myself ready. I made it to downtown Coeur d'Alene where the event would occur by 6:00 A.M. It was technically summer but the breeze was chilly and all I could think about was how crazy it seemed to jump into Lake Coeur d'Alene while it was still so chilly outside. When I was first assigned to security detail I laughed because I could not imagine how at 5 foot 3 inches and 110 pounds could be considered security. The day moved on and the Ironman competitors moved from the swim, to biking, to the run in reality I was not security in the

sense that I had to use brute force of any kind. I was in charge of helping spectators cross the street without getting run over by competitors who were biking. Surprisingly, hundreds of those observers thought that it would be a fantastic idea to cross the street for a variety of reasons while bikes were flying down the road. Before I knew it my six-hour shift had flown by. This was my first time at the Ironman Triathlon and I was fascinated by the effort that was being put in by the competitors. I was even more impressed by the number of individuals who were there to simply volunteer and show support for the event. Family Promise of North Idaho earned approximately \$400.00 by providing volunteers for security detail.

After working with Family Promise of North Idaho for approximately seven months, I finally managed to obtain an interview from a mother, Jessica, who was currently moving through the Family Promise program at FPNI. I found that she was very open about the situation in which she found herself and her children. Jessica and her husband, Roger, moved their three children from Minnesota to Spokane, Washington because Roger was promised a job that paid well. Roger did manage to obtain that job, the unfortunate fact was that the employer would not be able to officially hire and train Roger until after the first of the year. Realizing that they had very little money left and nowhere to go Jessica and Roger made the hardest decision they have ever had to make. Thinking of their children, their oldest being 12 and their youngest being 5, they went to the Family Promise in Spokane. Sadly the program was full, but the family was able to make their way to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho where they were put up in a hotel for a three-day period by FPNI. During those three days their family was able to go through the entire entry process and were admitted into the Family Promise program.

The second interview I obtained was with a single mother, Renee, and her three children. She had also moved across country but managed to find housing and job. However,

within a two to three month period she lost her job, her car was repossessed, and she was faced with an eviction notice. At the time of her interview Renee and her family had only been with the Family Promise organization for a full week and was about to make her first transition to the next host site.

During both interviews these two women were asked how the Family Promise organization has helped them through this period in their lives, other than simply giving them shelter. Both women stated similar facts. First that the organization has helped them link to other resources in the Coeur d'Alene area. It seems fairly obvious to state that when someone recently relocates to a new area that they may not know all of the resources that are available to them in the immediate vicinity. Secondly, the Family Promise organization either helped or was currently aiding them in finding a job so that they would be able to sustain their families once they graduated from FPNI.

A second question that was asked during each interview was if there was anything that Family Promise could add to their program to make it more appealing to those who utilize it. Jessica responded that she thought the program was simply amazing and she could not have been more grateful the chance she and her family were given, however, she that if she could change anything about the program it would be simply that her family could be more stable for the sake of her children. When I asked Renee the same question her response was that she wished the program had more transportation because she did not have a car and found it difficult to complete tasks like laundry, showers, job hunting, and getting her children to various appointments. FPNI does in fact have two vans available for use but a volunteer is needed to drive. This presents a challenge because even though there are many volunteers to work in the day center and host, there are not many volunteers who drive. Also, the guests are

not given the option to utilize the van around town for activities like searching for a job or taking children to appointments. Renee suggested implementing a schedule that provided transportation for guests once a week in order to complete these various activities. I wish for the sake of the guests that I had utilized research time in order to create programs such as these; however, much of my time spent at FPNI was utilized either doing data entry and other clerical work or cleaning up and organizing the day center.

There are a number of projects that are currently in the works. Once such project is a yearly event called Cardboard Box City. On October 3rd through the 4th Family Promise of North Idaho is sponsoring the seventh annual Cardboard Box City at Fernan Elementary School in Coeur d'Alene (www.cdapress.com). This event allows for community engagement; ultimately the idea is that those who chose to participate will experience what a night of being homeless is like. Each participant will collect pledges and sponsors who will support them sleeping in a decorated cardboard box for the evening (www.cdapress.com). There will be live music for entertainment and a mock soup kitchen set up for meals. All the proceeds raised will go to Family Promise of North Idaho and will help maintain the organization and the families within the program.

Another project that I currently have the pleasure of working on is a training video for new volunteers. Of course when an individual does express interest in volunteering for Family Promise there are specific guidelines that are followed. Each volunteer fills out an application, a background check, a confidentiality statement, and lastly they watch a video on the organization itself. However, that video is fairly generic and discusses the organization as a whole. The goal for making this training video is to express how this particular branch of Family Promise works on a day-to-day basis. This video will move from how the day center is

run, who our host congregations are and how they work, how Family Promise interacts with the Coeur d'Alene community, and lastly who Family Promise of North Idaho serves.

While I do wish that I had been able to create a program in the organization that would have directly benefited the guests in the program, I do feel that my time spent volunteering was not in vain. Research does not always happen as planned and this is exactly what occurred when I was conducting my own research. This means that I simply had to learn to go with the flow. I found that it was more beneficial to Family Promise of North Idaho if I could meet them where they were at and complete various tasks that they needed completed. Although this left me with very little of my original research plan I was able to adapt and meet the needs of the organization. Though I am writing my thesis as if my research is complete, it does not mean that I am through volunteering at FPNI. I plan to continue my work with the organization in hopes of first organizing the day center and then moving on to creating more programs to directly benefit the guests in the program.

On the last day of March 2015 I was able to catch up with Mary Beth, the program coordinator at FPNI. Knowing that data was collected and recently compiled to reflect the 2014-year, I asked Mary Beth how many families FPNI helped last year. Mary Beth referred me to the pamphlet that was sitting on the front desk; she and I discussed the data within. Approximately 14 to 18 families are served at FPNI each year, Mary Beth was able to also inform me that 102 families have been served and given shelter at FPNI since 2008 when they opened their doors. It was reported by Mary Beth that of the families that have entered the program approximately 80 percent have graduated successfully and have found employment and permanent or transitional housing.

The final portion of the conversation between Mary Beth and myself was discussing the possibility of creating programs such as parenting classes, childcare, and fostering household pets. While Mary Beth agreed that while all of these sound like a good idea, the issue really is that Coeur d'Alene has other programs within the city that already provide support for families. Mary Beth stated that one of the great things about the Family Promise organization in Coeur d'Alene was that various services are not duplicated; rather all community members can utilize FPNI as a referral source. In 2014 there were 460 documented calls to FPNI, of those calls 1,156 people (including children) were involved, and most of those calls were asking for shelter. However, not all requests were for shelter, other requests were for rent assistance, energy assistance, diapers and other baby items, gas vouchers, and other types of assistance (Family Promise of North Idaho Call Log Totals for 2014). Since FPNI cannot aid all of those who asked for help; the majority of individuals were referred to other resources that would be able to assist them with their needs. However, one way that FPNI is able to help community members who are not apart of the FPNI program is through Kroc Center vouchers. Family Promise of North Idaho works closely with the Kroc Center, each month FPNI receives \$600.00 to allocate to individuals in need as seen fit. This money predominantly goes towards emergency situations where families need to be placed in a motel for up to three nights. The total amount spent in the 2014 year was \$7,050.00.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Ruth Behar states, “When you write vulnerably, others respond vulnerably” (1996:16) and “to write vulnerably is to open Pandora’s box. Who can say what will come flying out?” (1996:19). This is partly what I hoped to accomplish by sharing my autoethnography with readers. I wanted readers to know who I was as a woman and why I chose to study a subpopulation of people that seems to be considered so undesirable to others in the community. I continue to quote Behar because her book, *The Vulnerable Observer*, seemed to speak to my intentions while I wrote my autoethnography:

Always, as an anthropologist, you go elsewhere, but the voyage is never simply about making a trip to a Spanish village of thick-walled adobe houses in the Cantabria Mountains, or a garden apartment in Detroit where the planes circle despondently overhead, or to a port city of cracking pink columns and impossible hopes known as La Habana... At the end of the voyage, if you are lucky, you catch a glimpse of a lighthouse, and you are grateful. Life after all, is bountiful (1996:3).

“Always, as an anthropologist, you go elsewhere” (1996:3), but what if you have already travelled that journey as I did when I was a child? I was able to self-reflect and use knowledge from my past in order to more fully understand not only the complexity of homelessness, but the emotional rollercoaster ride that these families were presently experiencing.

Sharing my personal experience with homelessness also allowed for me to connect on a deeper level with my informants. Somehow that experience as a child allowed for these families to see me now as someone who was trustworthy, and as someone who would not judge them because of their predicament. I honestly wanted to listen to their story and to know what I could do to make life a little bit easier while they tried to pick up the pieces and put them back together.

After working the Family Promise organization for nearly a year in two locations I was able to visualize what types of programs could benefit the organization and help strengthen Family Promise as a whole. However, I realized that each facility was in need of very different programs. For example, Family Promise of the Palouse was in need of starting two different programs. The first a parenting class for the community so that guests can learn about how to effectively parent and maintain boundaries. Secondly, Family Promise of the Palouse was looking into starting a foster program for pets so that families did not lose their household pet due to their living situation. Family Promise of North Idaho was in more immediate need of cleaning up and organizing their day center so that it is more user friendly for the families and volunteers.

My intentions for this research was to aid the organization in building and growing themselves so that they can more effectively help their community. I had hoped to propose and create a program that would specifically benefit Family Promise of North Idaho and directly affect the homeless in the Coeur d'Alene community.

However, because much of my time spent in the day center was used to clean and organize I did not accomplish all that I had hoped to during my research. I did not feel that I could create a program that would have benefited the families because the facility itself was utterly chaotic. I truly wanted to organize the day center so that a new program could begin and be successful in that location without falling into the chaos around it. Once my thesis is written this does not mean that my research is finished. I plan to continue to volunteer at Family Promise of North Idaho, the guests within the organization have expressed interest in programs that could be created and would benefit the guests now and in the future.

First I would propose that FPNI hire more employees or gain more volunteers with specific experiences. While all three women who currently are employed by Family Promise are amazing women with an incredible work ethic, I believe that they could possibly be spreading themselves too thin and the organization would benefit if they could focus their attentions to specific tasks and hand off other work to either other employees or volunteers. For example, there was once a position created for an employee to complete weekly, monthly, and yearly books for FPNI. This same employee was also incredible at creating working excel spreadsheets that would automatically update to master files. This position is no longer available and I do believe the FPNI organization benefited from having this service, not to mention that this is now one more task that needs to be completed by another employee on top of all their other work.

Second, I believe that the organization could benefit from purging some of the extra donations that seem to be piling up and taking up space within the facility. There are numerous items that seem to be simply sitting around and collecting dust. Myself and two other volunteers did manage to clean up the volunteer's office, which made this into a more user-friendly space. Whereas before this room was hardly ever used due to the amount of donations taking over the room. Currently there is an over stocked donations closet, I believe it could be beneficial to gut the entire space and put donations back neatly and more organized. Many volunteers have difficulties finding items for individuals who drop in for items. Also there is an over abundance of blankets, art supplies, and other random items like birthday party plates and napkins. Many of these items are not being used, therefore, I would donate them to another charity that may need them. Or why not gather some of the blankets and drop them off at 2nd Street Commons or St. Vincent de Paul's Help Center in town? At

least these items could be used by someone who needs them and not be shoved into a closet that never sees the light of day.

Renee expressed interest in building the Family Promise organization by adding an element of transportation that does not currently exist at this particular location. She stated that since she does not have a vehicle of her own that she personally finds it difficult to do everything she needs to in a timely manner. Renee stated that instead of completing her daily errands in an hour or two, she often has to take an entire day to finish a task such as taking her children to the doctor's office, job hunting, or searching for a home. In reality it would be easy to say that I could drive her where she needs to go; however, despite feeling that it may be the right thing to do, it also seems to be unethical and that she would start to depend on having someone take her around town when she needed. Therefore, I hope to create a volunteer program that would allow for the use of the Family Promise vans to shuttle individuals around once a week so that errands that are necessary can actually be completed in a timely manner and the families can move on to more pressing matters like searching for a job.

Ultimately there is not an easy solution because the families within the Family Promise program are continuously changing as the older residents leave to find their new lives and new residents come in and are learning how to navigate resources and learning what it mean to be homeless. The programs will have to continuously change in order to fit the needs of the current families. However, after working with this program for the past year I now realize that these programs could be put into place and utilized when needed and then filed away when they are not. Everything in Family Promise is based on volunteers, as long as

there are volunteers willing to work programs like this transportation program would be able to run.

To recap my research questions; first, how does rural homelessness compare to and differ from urban homelessness? Rural homelessness is not nearly as visible as urban homelessness. My theory on this is simply when living in a small town it can be “embarrassing” for an individual or family to be seen as poverty stricken or homeless by their community, especially when everyone seems to know everyone else’s business. Therefore, families will seek out shelter with a friend or family member until they can no longer reside with their support net. Rural homelessness also is dominated by middle-class Americans who may have simply “hit a rough patch” by losing their job, getting ill, or other various reasons. In urban homelessness those who are homeless may have had some of the same issues as those suffering from rural homelessness, losing a job, becoming ill, ect. However, urban homelessness also has a larger percentage of homeless veterans, the mentally ill, and the chronically homeless. Perhaps, this is because there are more community services available for these individuals in urban settings.

My second question, how does rural homelessness compare to and differ from my own experiences with homelessness as a child? This question seems so simple for me to answer, Family Promise is a much more guest friendly organization than I had with my own experience. While I was lucky enough to have resided in a stable shelter, Family Promise does require that families move from week to week. However, during my experience as a child I saw many individuals and families leave and return to the shelter within a few weeks to a few months; however, with the Family Promise organization I have witnessed families come into the program stay for up to three months and then graduate. There is not a single family that I

have witnessed return to Family Promise because they are homeless for a second time. Family Promise is also a much smaller program than the Salvation Army Center of Hope. I believe that this allows for a more comfortable stay due to the fact that you are not forced to share a room with one hundred other individuals and their children. This also allows for guests, employees, and volunteers to really connect on a different and personal level than I had experienced as a child at the Salvation Army Center of Hope.

Finally, how can a program like Family Promise benefit the homeless community compared to other types of shelters and agencies? I believe that this is a unique program due to its goal of helping families. I have not witnessed other programs that allow for families to stay a single, unified unit. During the hardship of becoming homeless the last thing a family wants to do is split up and reside at two different shelters, i.e. the men's shelter and the women and children's shelter. While the program could be strengthened in many ways, I believe that both FPP and FPNI will be able to continue to build and grow as they continue to aid families in northern Idaho.

Unfortunately, I do not believe that there is an easy solution to eradicating the nuanced problem of homelessness. While there is a long way to go before fully solving the dilemma that is homelessness I do believe that public awareness, acceptance, and civic engagement is the first step to taking control. Little and Shackel describe civic engagement as, "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivations to make a difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes" (Little 2007:2). While their text, *Archaeology as a Tool of Civic Engagement*, discusses how to utilize civic engagement in combination with archaeology they also state that civic

engagement is not a tool solely used by archaeologists but is also used by anthropologists and in other disciplines (2007).

Public involvement could change homelessness in communities where the members in the community are highly invested in finding a solution to the problem. However, I believe that North Idaho could benefit from adding a larger homeless shelter in the area; there are obviously a large number of individuals who are in need. Whether that means adding a men's shelter and a women and children's shelter or adding more programs similar to the Family Promise organization Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and the surrounding areas, the community would greatly benefit from getting their homeless off of the streets and into safe shelters.

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APPENDIX

IRB Protocol and Sample Informed Consent Form

IRB Protocol

Protocol 14-247

Title: Rural Homelessness
 Status: Approved
 Protocol Type: IRB: Institutional Review Board
 Submission Type: New Application
 Project Type: Survey, Naturalistic Observations, Qualitative, Archival Analysis
 Other Type: N/A
 PI Expertise: PhD in field of research
 Other Expertise: Stacey Camp, Ph.D.

Purpose: The story of homelessness can begin nearly anywhere at any point in time. However, it was not until the 1980s that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services began keeping count of reports from advocacy groups, who estimated that as many as two million people in the United States were without homes (Hope 1986). The number of homeless individuals has fluctuated throughout the years, most recently it has been reported that on any given night in January 2013, 610,042 people were homeless; nearly 65 percent were residing in emergency shelters or transitional housing, the other 35 percent were residing in unsheltered locations (Henry 2013). Homelessness in the United States is a major problem. As stated above, it was not until the 1980s when the issue of homelessness began to receive national attention. According to Mary Ellen Hombs, “the sheer visibility of contemporary homelessness is perhaps its most identifiable attribute” (Hombs 1994:1). Hombs is correct, when confronted with the term, “homeless,” there are many stereotypes that come to mind. Ragged men hunched over, next to a building begging for change. Rough looking men and women sleeping in a cardboard box, alleyway, or park bench. These are typically the mental images that come to mind. However homelessness is not something that only occurs in an urban setting. Rural homelessness is quite prevalent, but is often neglected, frequently because it is not as visible to the public like that of urban homelessness. The purpose of this research is to better understand rural homelessness and the conflict that is associated with the complex social issue.

Applied Anthropology:

Design: Applied anthropology is most simply explained as “anthropology put to use” (Van Willigen 2002). This is the use of anthropological research that is done in order to solve problems in the world. While solving the issue of homelessness is far from being complete, I believe that standing up as an active advocate of homelessness will aid in solving many of the issues that come with homelessness.

Participant Observation:

In true anthropological fashion, like Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski, I will rely heavily on participant observation during my research. I aim to utilize participant observation in order to gain information about the homeless individuals' daily routines. Throughout the research, participant observation will be used in multiple locations. The Day Center for both Family Promise of the Palouse and Family Promise of North Idaho will be prime locations to observe daily activities. Participant observation will also be utilized at the congregations who host the residents over night; this will allow me to gain a better picture of the daily life of the individual within the Family Promise organization. Observations will be jotted down in a journal that will be kept on my person when observing, and locked in a secure cabinet when not in use.

Interviews:

In order to obtain a fuller view of rural homelessness, I aim to interview approximately twenty residents within the Family Promise organization. Both semi-structured and informal interviews will be used. These two types of interviews are the best options for this type of research; this will allow the residents to tell their story in their own words. The interviews will all be audio-recorded; however, because anonymity is of the utmost importance every interview will be destroyed after transcription. Also, in order to keep the identity of the participant anonymous a single sheet of paper will be utilized to identify participants and the pseudonyms that I will assign to each. That sheet of paper will then be locked away in a cabinet that will only be accessed by the researcher, Amanda Adler. The individuals selected for the interviews will be chosen based on the rapport built between the researcher and homeless individual.

Journals:

The story of homelessness varies greatly from one individual to the next. Therefore, after the investigator builds rapport with individuals, participants will be supplied a journal and asked to write in it daily for a two week period. Due to the sensitive nature of homelessness, I feel that it may be easier for individuals to record their feelings on their own terms. These journals are to remain anonymous and will be coded and used with the pseudonyms that will be assigned. Due to the content that will be stated in the journals, these will also be protected under lock and key in a cabinet allotted for the sole purpose of this research. Individuals selected to keep journals will be chosen at random.

Autoethnography:

My personal experience with homelessness as a child has made a major impact on my life and is what led me to my research. Therefore, I view it as a necessary part of my research on homelessness. Writing an autoethnography to highlight my experience will be a fundamental section to this research. Like Carolyn Ellis, who used autoethnography to publish numerous texts, I aim to use my life experiences to better connect with and understand the social issues surrounding homelessness. Ellis discusses the importance of autoethnography in her text, *Telling Secrets, Revealing Lives: Relational Ethics in Research With Intimate Others*.

Participant Observation:

In true anthropological fashion, like Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski, who relied heavily on participant observation during their research. I aim to utilize participant observation in order to gain information about the homeless individual's daily routines. Throughout the research, participant observation will be used in multiple locations. The Day Center for both Family Promise of the Palouse and Family Promise of North Idaho will be prime locations to observe daily activities. Participant observation will also be utilized at the congregations who host the residents over night; this will allow me to gain a better picture of the daily life of the individual within the Family Promise organization. Observations will be jotted down in a journal that will be kept on my person. Participants enrolled in the Family Promise program are meant to act natural and continue with their day as if I were not present.

Interviews:

Procedures:

In order to obtain a fuller view of rural homelessness, I aim to interview approximately twenty residents within the Family Promise organization. Both semi-structured and informal interviews will be used. These two types of interviews are the best options for this type of research; this will allow the residents to tell their story in their own words. The interviews will all be audio-recorded, however, because anonymity is of the utmost importance every interview will be destroyed after transcription. Also, in order to keep the identity of the participant anonymous a single sheet of paper will be utilized to identify participants and the pseudonyms that I will assign to each. That sheet of paper will then be locked away in a cabinet that will only be accessed by the primary researcher, Amanda Adler. I intend to interview select participants based on the rapport created between myself and the individual. I do intend to compensate individuals for their interview with a simple cup of coffee.

Journals:

The story of homelessness varies greatly from one individual to the next. Therefore, after the investigator builds rapport with individuals, participants will be supplied a journal and asked to write in it daily for a two week period. Due to the sensitive nature of homelessness, I feel that it may be easier for individuals to record their feelings on their own terms. These journals are to remain anonymous and will be coded and used with the pseudonyms that will be assigned. Due to the content that will be stated in the journals, these will also be protected under lock and key in a cabinet allotted for the sole purpose of this research. Selected participants will keep these journals for the two-week period and then return the journals to myself.

Research Subjects:	The participant population who will be studied throughout the course of this research will be individuals who are enrolled in the Family Promise Organization's program for homeless families. I will be working with Family Promise of the Palouse, as well as Family Promise of North Idaho. While the Family Promise located in Moscow, Idaho will be the primary location due to the fact that it is located in a rural area; Family Promise of North Idaho may be more beneficial due to the fact that it has been in use for a longer period of time. I intend to interview both men and women who are enrolled in the program, as well as, issues specific men and women journals in order to better understand their frame of mind.
Privacy Level:	N/A
Exemption Categories:	N/A
Category Rationale:	N/A
Data Collection Methods:	N/A
Other Data Collection Methods:	N/A
Experimental Method:	N/A
Participant Payment:	N/A
Number of Participants:	20
Age Ranges:	8-17 years, 18 years or older, 65+ years
Other Ranges:	N/A
Participant Types:	The location of the study will vary based on the type of research being conducted on that particular day. The majority of the research will take place at the Family Promise Organization's day center (both in Moscow and Coeur D'Alene), these locations will be utilized for participant observation, interviews, and journal entries. However, these methods may also be used at

the local congregation who is hosting the families during that particular week. Interviews may also take place in a local public setting, such as a coffee house.

Recruiting
Methods:

N/A

Flyer Locations:

N/A

Groups Sampled:

N/A

Other Recruiting
Methods:

The recruiting methods that I intend to utilize are simple. Homelessness is a sensitive subject and participants gathered through the above methods may not want to discuss their personal conflicts. Email, postal mail, phone, and confidential records may not be readily available to the individuals that I intend to study. Therefore, I intend to build a rapport with individuals who are enrolled in the Family Promise Organization's program. I feel that building a relationship with these individuals is the best way to have a person open up and want to discuss such an issue, like homelessness.

Exclusion Details:

I intend to exclude young children (ages 0-7 years of age). Simply because that children of this age group may not fully understand the issues that are surrounding their family, or why they are moving from church to church each week.

Payment Details:

N/A

Consent Checklist:

Written informed consent for individuals 18 and older, Written assent for children 8-17

Other Consent:

N/A

If individuals under the age of 18 are interviewed I will obtain parental consent, both written and verbal. Also, during the interview process a parent/guardian must be present during the interview.

Informed Consent Form

Project Title: Rural Homelessness

Principal Researcher(s): Amanda Adler and Stacey Camp

Parental Consent:

I, _____, the interviewee's full name, state that I am over 18 years of age, or under the age of 18 with parental/guardian consent, and freely and voluntarily wish to participate in the research being proposed above.

Description of purposes and explanation of procedures:

- 1.) A statement that the study involves research in the area of homelessness.
- 2.) The purpose of this research is to better understand the conflict surround

the complex social issue of rural homelessness in Idaho.

3.) As a participant in this research you may be studied for an indefinite amount of time, depending upon your enrollment in the Family Promise organization.

4.) A description of methodologies:

Participant Observation:

I aim to utilize participant observation in order to gain information about the homeless individual's daily routines. Throughout the research, participant observation will be used in multiple locations. The Day Center for both Family Promise of the Palouse and Family Promise of North Idaho will be prime locations to observe daily activities. Participant observation will also be utilized at the congregations who host the residents over night; this will allow me to gain a better picture of the daily life of the individual within the Family Promise organization. Observations will be jotted down in a journal that will be kept on my person.

Interviews:

In order to obtain a fuller view of rural homelessness, I aim to interview approximately twenty residents within the Family Promise organization. Both semi-structured and informal interviews will be used. These two types of interviews are the best options for this type of research; this will allow the residents to tell their story in their own words. The interviews will all be audio-recorded, however, because anonymity is of the utmost importance every interview will be destroyed after transcription. Also, in order to keep the identity of the participant anonymous a single sheet of paper will be utilized to identify participants and the pseudonyms that I will assign to each. That sheet of paper will then be locked away in a cabinet that will only be accessed by the primary researcher, Amanda Adler.

Journals:

The story of homelessness varies greatly from one individual to the next. Therefore, after the investigator builds rapport with individuals, participants will be supplied a journal and asked to write in it daily for a two week period. Due to the sensitive nature of homelessness, I feel that it may be easier for individuals to record their feelings on their own terms. These journals are to remain anonymous and will be coded and used with the pseudonyms that will be assigned. Due to the content that will be stated in the journals, these will also be protected under lock and key in a cabinet allotted for the sole purpose of this research.

Autoethnography:

My personal experience with homelessness as a child has made a major impact on my life and is what led me to my research. Therefore, I view it as a necessary part of my research on homelessness. Writing an autoethnography to highlight my experience will be a fundamental section to this research. Like Carolyn Ellis, who used autoethnography to publish numerous texts, I aim to use my life experiences to better connect with and understand the social issues surrounding homelessness. Ellis discusses the importance of autoethnography in her text, *Telling Secrets, Revealing Lives: Relational Ethics in Research With Intimate Others*.

5.) You may be asked questions during your interview that may be viewed as embarrassing or uncomfortable. Also, if you are asked to keep a journal for a two-week period, please note that they will be read only by the primary researcher, however, I intend to utilize journals for research only.

6.) The research that will be conducted will benefit the local community as a whole. Better understanding of rural homelessness and the conflicts surrounding the issue will aid society as a whole.

7.) Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. All interviews, journals, and other documentation will be kept by the primary researcher in a locked cabinet when it is not in use.

8.) Any questions about the research that is being conducted can be directed to the primary researcher, Amanda D. Adler.

9.) Your participation in this study is voluntary. If at any point you no longer wish to participate, please contact Amanda D. Adler.

I acknowledge that Amanda D. Adler has fully explained to me the purposes and procedures, and the risks of this research; she has informed me that I may withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice; and has informed me that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I freely and voluntarily consent to my participation in the above mentioned research project.

I waive _____ or do not waive _____ the right to confidentiality, i.e., my name may or may not be used in the research.

List any special stipulations or conditions established by the interviewee in the conduct or disposition of this project:

Signature of Interviewee: _____

Signature of Principal Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Amanda D. Adler
570-529-1852
amanda.adler677@gmail.com

This project has been properly filed as required by Federal, State, and University of Idaho procedures, and has been reviewed and approved by the University of Idaho's Institutional Review Board (Office of Research Assurances). You can contact them at:

Institutional Review Board Chair
University of Idaho
208-885-6240
irb@uidaho.edu
<http://www.uidaho.edu/ora/committees/irb>

My sponsoring faculty advisor is Stacey Camp, Professor of Anthropology. She can be contacted at:

Stacey Camp
University of Idaho

626-429-2912
scamp@uidaho.edu

Partial Consent:	N/A
Waiver of Consent:	N/A
Risks Checklist:	<p>Presentation of materials that participants might consider offensive or upsetting., Discomfort, Embarrassment</p> <p>During the interviews, participants may be asked questions that might be considered offensive, upsetting, or embarrassing. Unfortunately, the subject matter may be considered uncomfortable. However, it is not my intention to make participants uncomfortable and they can choose to not answer or stop the interview at any time.</p>
Other Risks:	
Risk Levels:	N/A
Risk Management Plan:	<p>The risks involved with this study are minimal. However, I will attempt to minimize the feeling of discomfort and embarrassment by utilizing a semi-structured method for interviews. This will allow me to keep the interview flowing, but it will also allow for the participant to tell their own story in their own way, to include or exclude any details they wish. Also, journals will be utilized in order to allow the participants to give information without feeling a sense of judgment or ridicule.</p>
Risk Mitigations:	Compensation
Risk Compensation:	I intend to compensate individuals who chose to participate in the interview process by conducting the interview at a local coffee house, and purchasing a cup of coffee for the interviewee.
Risk Counseling:	N/A
Other Risk Mitigations:	N/A
Participant Benefits:	<p>The benefits for individual participants who are involved in the study is simple. Most individuals and families who suffer from homelessness typically want someone to listen, someone to talk to, and for someone to understand and tell their story. My intention is to tell the individual stories of those who are homeless in rural Idaho.</p>
Societal Benefits:	<p>Rural homelessness is a serious problem. It is estimated that approximately 9 percent of those who suffer from homelessness are from a rural areas nationwide (Archibald 2007). However, it has also been noted that true numbers are difficult to come by, unlike urban shelters, rural homeless individuals frequently rely on church groups, volunteers, or encampments in surrounding rural areas, where taking a head count is not always practiced (Archibald 2007). According to award-winning journalist, Myers Reece, the nation's rural homeless rate is lofty, but it is not the ragged men and women panhandling on the corner, "it's the kid sitting next to your child in third grade. It's your co-worker" (Reece 2012). In other words, homelessness affects a number of individuals and we may not even realize who these</p>

individuals are. Homeless families are a large percentage of the nation's homeless population. Currently, rural regions are finding local solution for local problems. Organizations helping to combat rural homelessness are popping up all over the country. Family Promise is one such organization that aims to help keep homeless families together. Rural homelessness has not been studied to the extent that urban homelessness has been. Both society and academia will benefit greatly from having new knowledge presented on rural homelessness.

Confidential Data:	Name, Date of Birth, Audio-only recordings
Other Confidential Data:	N/A
Collection Methods:	Interview, Observation, Recording Audio, Existing Databases, Archival Data or Documents, Web or Internet (Please provide additional details in field below)
Online Methods:	Information that has been gathered via the internet and public record is solely used for the use of a literature review. These sources include the 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress authored by, Dr. Meghan Henry, Alvaro Cortes, and Sean Morris, and Abt Associates; as well as, familypromise.org.
Public Records:	N/A
Blood Draw Methods:	N/A
Other Methods:	N/A
Confidentiality:	Data will only be made available to Principal Investigator and immediate study personnel, Data collection will be confidential and de-identified (collected with identifiers, but identifiers removed), Data will be stored in a locked cabinet, Data will be coded to a master list
Other Confidentiality:	A coding system will also be utilized when conducting this research. In order to maintain confidentiality, a master list will be compiled and then coded as needed. The master list, as well as, the code will be kept in a locked cabinet and utilized only by the researcher, Amanda Adler.
Data Disposition:	Data will be de-identified and kept for future PI analysis, Audio/Video tapes will be destroyed and files deleted after transcription, Data will be retained indefinitely after de-identification for meta-analytic purposes, as a requirement for publication, and/or for longitudinal comparisons with future datasets.
Other Disposition:	N/A
Considerations:	None of the above
International:	N/A
HIPAA:	HIPAA applies to this project
HIPPA	N/A

Applicability:

FERPA: N/A

FERPA

Applicability:

I will not use information based on an individual's educational records.

Sample Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Project Title: Rural Homelessness _____

Principal Researcher(s): Amanda Adler, Stacey Camp _____

I, _____, the interviewee's full name, state that I am over 18 years of age, and freely and voluntarily wish to participate in the research being proposed above.

Description of purposes and explanation of procedures:

- 1.) A statement that the study involves research in the area of homelessness.
- 2.) The purpose of this research is to better understand the conflict surround the complex social issue of rural homelessness in Idaho.
- 3.) As a participant in this research you may be studied for an indefinite amount of time, depending upon your enrollment in the Family Promise organization.
- 4.) A description of methodologies:

Participant Observation:

I aim to utilize participant observation in order to gain information about the homeless individual's daily routines. Throughout the research, participant observation will be used in multiple locations. The Day Center for both Family Promise of the Palouse and Family Promise of North Idaho will be prime locations to observe daily activities. Participant observation will also be utilized at the congregations who host the residents over night; this will allow me to gain a better picture of the daily life of the individual within the Family Promise organization. Observations will be jotted down in a journal that will be kept on my person.

Interviews:

In order to obtain a fuller view of rural homelessness, I aim to interview approximately twenty residents within the Family Promise organization. Both semi-structured and informal interviews will be used. These two types of interviews are the best options for this type of research; this will allow the residents to tell their story in their own words. The interviews will all be audio-recorded, however, because anonymity is of the utmost importance every interview will be destroyed after transcription. Also, in order to keep the identity of the participant anonymous a single sheet of paper will be utilized to identify participants and the pseudonyms that I will assign to each. That sheet of paper will then be locked away in a cabinet that will only be accessed by the primary researcher, Amanda Adler.

Journals:

The story of homelessness varies greatly from one individual to the next. Therefore, after the investigator builds rapport with individuals, participants will be supplied a journal and asked to write in it daily for a two week period. Due to the sensitive nature of homelessness, I feel that it may be easier for individuals to record their feelings on their own terms. These journals are to remain anonymous and will be coded and used with the pseudonyms that will be assigned. Due to the content that will be stated in the journals, these will also be protected under lock and key in a cabinet allotted for the sole purpose of this research.

Autoethnography:

My personal experience with homelessness as a child has made a major impact on my life and is what led me to my research. Therefore, I view it as a necessary part of my research on homelessness. Writing an autoethnography to highlight my experience will be a fundamental section to this research. Like Carolyn Ellis, who used autoethnography to publish numerous texts, I aim to use my life experiences to better connect with and understand the social issues surrounding homelessness. Ellis discusses the importance of autoethnography in her text, *Telling Secrets, Revealing Lives: Relational Ethics in Research With Intimate Others*.

5.) A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts: You may be asked questions during your interview that may be viewed as embarrassing or uncomfortable. Also, if you are asked to keep a journal for a two week period, please note that they will be read only by the primary researcher, however, I intend to utilize journals for research only.

6.) The research that will be conducted will benefit the local community as a whole. Better understanding of rural homelessness and the conflicts surrounding the issue will aide society as a whole.

7.) Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. All interviews, journals, and other documentation will be kept by the primary researcher in a locked cabinet when it is not in use.

8.) Any questions about the research that is being conducted can be directed to the primary researcher, Amanda D. Adler.

9.) Your participation in this study is voluntary. If at any point you no longer wish to participate, please contact Amanda D. Adler.

I acknowledge that Amanda Adler has fully explained to me the purposes and procedures, and the risks of this research; she has informed me that I may withdraw from participation at any time without prejudice; and has informed me that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I freely and voluntarily consent to my participation in the above mentioned research project.

I waive _____ or do not waive _____ the right to confidentiality, i.e., my name may or may not be used in the research.

List any special stipulations or conditions established by the interviewee in the conduct or disposition of this project:

Signature of Interviewee: _____

Signature of Principal Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Amanda D. Adler
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This project has been properly filed as required by Federal, State, and University of Idaho procedures, and has been reviewed and approved by the University of Idaho's Institutional Review Board (Office of Research Assurances). You can contact them at:

Institutional Review Board Chair
University of Idaho
208-885-6240
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<http://www.uidaho.edu/ora/committees/irb>

My sponsoring faculty advisor is Stacey Camp, Professor of Anthropology. She can be contacted at:

Stacey Camp
University of Idaho
626-429-2912
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