

Civic Minds in The Seattle Times

Date: Friday, September 25, 2015

E-Edition Date: Monday, September 21, 2015

Article Title: 'Desperately needed': safe parking for homeless

Section: Main, A1

Vocabulary:

Look up the definition of ***organically***. Please write the definition and create a new sentence, using your own words.

"It's better to feel pulled to do more than pressured to do less. Let it grow ***organically***."

Comprehension Questions

1. What does it take to give a homeless person living in a car a safe place to sleep at night?
2. For the past four years, what have the members of Lake Washington United Methodist Church in Kirkland done to help?
3. The program has evolved, been reorganized, even scaled back, but there are now about _____ cars and vans parked outside the church, many with young children.
4. Pastor Kelly Dahlman-Oeth estimates the program costs about \$ _____ a year, mostly to rent the portable toilet and pay higher utility bills.
5. But as the crisis in affordable housing and homelessness continues, advocates are asking if cities can copy a successful model from Eugene, OR. What have they organized there?
6. What has the Seattle Road to Housing Program done since 2012?
7. The One Night Count of the Homeless in January found almost _____ people in King County living outside without shelter. More than _____ were people sleeping in their vans, cars and RVs.
8. Eugene's overnight parking program goes back 14 years. It pays St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County about \$ _____ a year for intake, case management, portable toilets and trash collection at city-owned and private lots, some for single men, others for women and families, for a total of about 60 spaces.
9. The charity is also the first responder to police calls involving people living in their vehicles. William Wise, director of St. Vincent's First Place Family Center, said the program has saved Eugene about \$ _____ a year because police are called less often.
10. Observers say the Seattle program hasn't taken off for a number of reasons. What are they?
11. Some churches say there are downsides to hosting homeless encampments. What are they?
12. What are some of the positive points to hosting the homeless?

Class Discussion Questions and Essay Prompts:

- *What are reasons people/families become homeless?*
- *Have you ever given money or food to a homeless person? Why or why not?*
- *Did you know the severity of homeless parking situations?*
- *Did you know thousands of families live like this every night?*
- *What impacted you most about this article?*

The article states that one Kirkland church spends \$5,000-\$6,000/year to have a safe place for homeless families and individuals to park and sleep overnight. Still, the success of that church program has not translated into many other churches opening their own parking lots to the homeless.

- Why hasn't the popularity of this model spread?

Essay

"Many city-owned parking lots are empty at night. It's really criminal that they're not being used to get more people out of harm's way," said the Rev. Bill Kirlin-Hackett, director of the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness.

But it hasn't given the vast majority of people sleeping in cars and RVs on city streets a safe place to park at night.

"I've been very disappointed," said Seattle City Councilmember Mike O'Brien, who advocated for the program after seeing the growing number of people living in their vehicles on the streets of Ballard. "I hoped that today we'd be talking about 100 spots, not a handful."

- If you were a leader in the Seattle government, what would you do? Would you sweep the issue "under the rug" or would you work to make this situation better? What plan would you create? What community groups would you bring together under your plan? Would you give any incentives to those businesses and churches that would give up their parking lots for the night?

Newspaper-related CBA activity: U.S. Policy

How the United States government interacts with the world affects people across the globe. Analyze and evaluate the causes and effects of US foreign policy on people in the United States and across the world.

- Using The Seattle Times e-edition, find an article from this week that deals with world politics or foreign policy.
- What are the main points of view from someone living in that particular country? How is that "view" similar and different than your own opinion, regarding the specific issue the article is discussing?
- Why is it important to study and learn about foreign policy? How does it help you understand the world we live in, using current issues and events?

Civic Minds in The Seattle Times is posted to the Web on Friday. Please share the NIE program with other teachers. To sign-up for the electronic edition of the newspaper please call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.