

## Great Game Huddle Notes

June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

This morning we had a guest speaker, Dr. David Brown, who along with his wife Linda founded the non-profit organization **The Gathering Tree**.

The Gathering Tree provides a safe environment for the homeless through their drop-in center, which operates five nights a week. Homeless folks can use the center to rest or use the internet, amongst other things, all while developing meaningful relationships with the Gathering Tree's Good Samaritan volunteers.

From the success of the Gathering Tree came the idea to build **Eden Village**, a manufactured tiny house community that will house 30 homeless people from the Springfield area. This is the first such community in the country to be built with manufactured homes. Eden Village is located on 4.5 acres on East Division Street, next to Shady Dell School. Once finished, there will be 30 one-person homes, along with a community center to provide services including medical treatment and substance abuse counseling. Amenities include a laundry room, food pantry, computers and offices. To be considered for residency in Eden Village, a person must qualify as "chronically disabled homeless" by HUD definition. Residents must have a history of homelessness in the City of Springfield for at least one year, and a diagnosed mental or physical disability. Homelessness is defined as a catastrophic loss of family. Once selected, residents will be required to pay a \$300 per month rent payment, abide by a set of civil laws written by a committee of residents, and help to maintain their home and the Eden Village community. The majority of the operating costs of Eden Village will be covered by the rent, and the rest will come from donations. Medical services will be provided by volunteers.

As this is a community project, the funding is primarily coming from donations. Two million dollars is needed, about a fourth of which has already been raised. The homeless community in Springfield costs the taxpayers an estimated \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year in public services including medical services, temporary shelter, and costs associated with arrests and incarceration. Helping the homeless through community outreach and projects like The Gathering Tree and Eden Village has reduced these costs by 60% - 75% in other cities. Homelessness is solved with a home, but it takes more than a home. It takes a community.

Donations can be made by visiting [www.gatheringtree.org](http://www.gatheringtree.org). For more information, please contact the following:

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