

# 1.3 Dismantling Barriers to Emergency Shelter



National Alliance to  
END HOMELESSNESS

#NAEH2022

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# 1.3 Dismantling Barriers to Emergency Shelter

The COVID-19 pandemic forced communities to reevaluate their approaches to congregate shelter. Explore how communities are assessing shelter operations to ensure that people who need shelter will access it. Attendees will also hear strategies for modifying entry protocols, service requirements and other factors impede rapid access to shelter



# Joseph Pineda

Fremont, CA






# Sunrise Village Abode Services Fremont, Ca

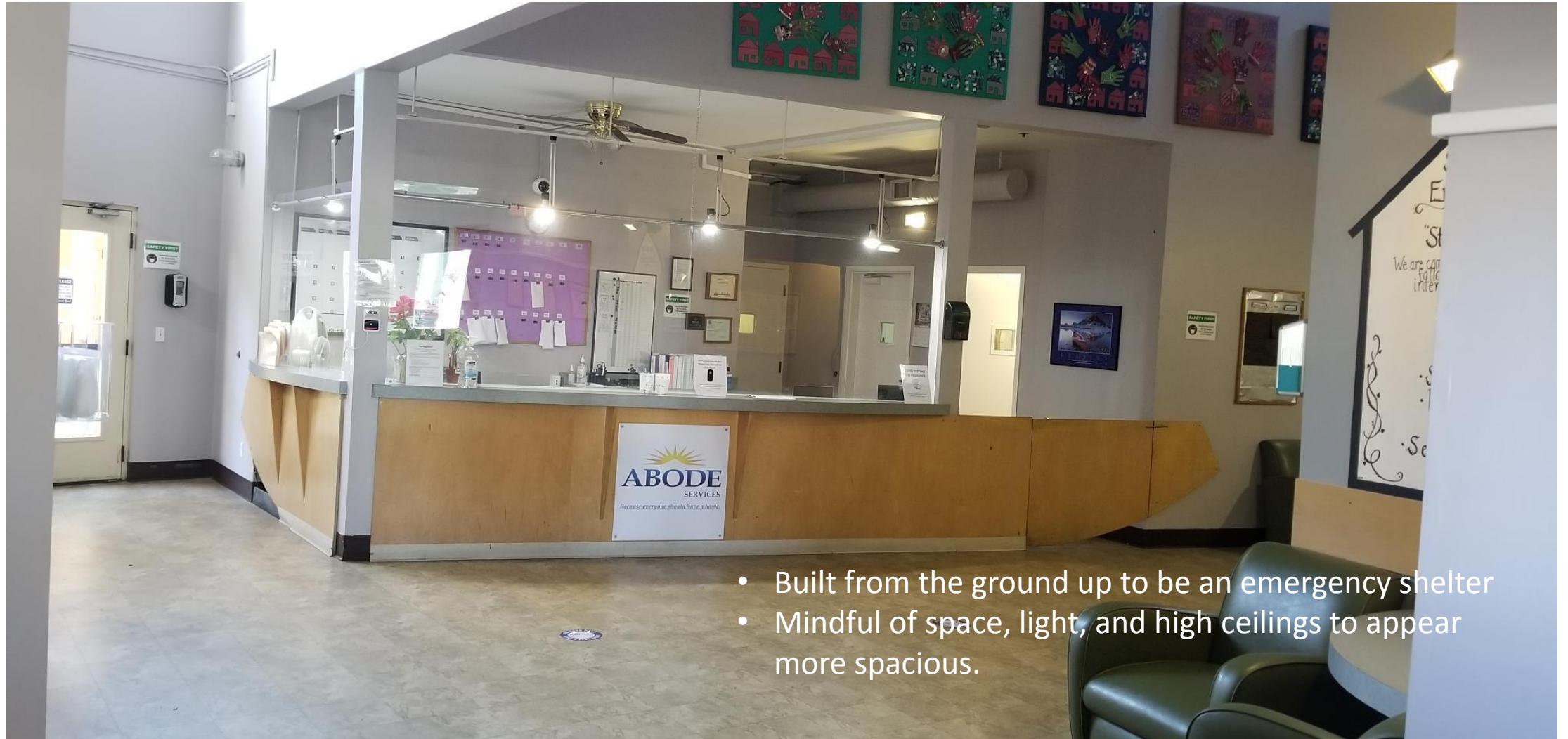
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- A photograph of two hikers walking away from the camera on a paved trail. The hiker on the left is wearing a brown jacket and blue jeans, carrying a large orange backpack. The hiker on the right is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and blue jeans, carrying a dark backpack. They are walking under a concrete bridge. The trail is surrounded by dry grass and green bushes. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky.
- Fully incorporated into Coordinated Entry for all placements into Sunrise Village targeting those with highest need and barriers to services.
  - Eliminated the barriers to services by having to call to check in daily or first come, first called, first secured. No waiting list.
  - Existing relationships with Outreach teams building the bridge between those who are unsheltered and shelter program. Including warm hand-off to shelter based service coordinator and follow-up wrap-around support as needed if participant is resistant to support services.



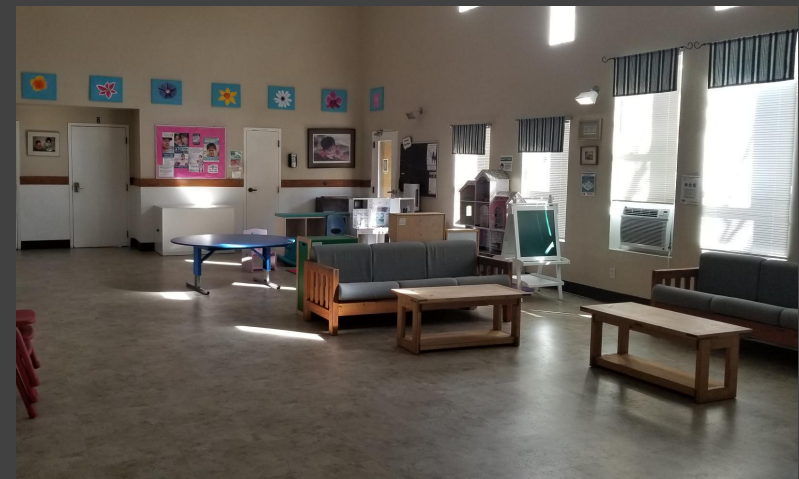


- Built from the ground up to be an emergency shelter
- Mindful of space, light, and high ceilings to appear more spacious.



Warm and welcoming shared spaces that allow participants to relax and spread out.

Spaces designated for children to play away from single adults.

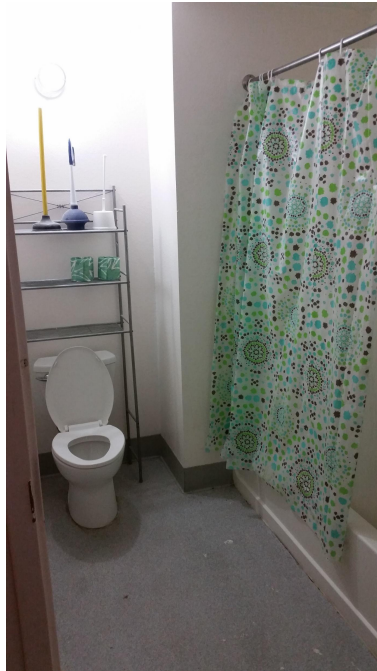




## Design of the rooms/dorms allows for as much privacy and personalization as possible.



- Families have their own private units with attached bathrooms
- Secured door locks that get changed at room turnover.
- Adjoining units have a door that can be opened to create more space and accommodate larger families.

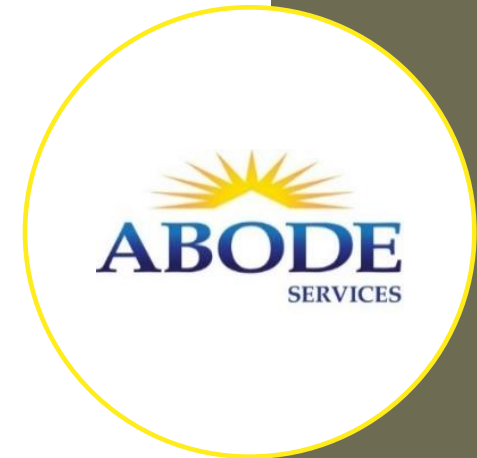


- Singles are dormitory style with 6-8 adults in each dorm
- Each person is assigned their own alcove with a physical divider between them and their dormmates.
- Allows for a defined space that provides a sense of privacy.





- Shelter was moved into the Health and Wellness Department allowing for greater clinical support and resources to support front line staff.
- Created a Crisis Interventionist position who provides clinical experience and interventions. Position provides support on evenings and weekends for shelter monitors and is on-site walking around the building looking for signs a participant might be struggling. Provides in the moment assistance for participants before an escalated critical incident may occur.
- Harm reduction in practice. Staff non-judgmental and compassionate responses. Responding in a nonpunitive manner to behaviors if impacting the health and safety of others.
- Trauma informed in language used in program agreements. We do not use the word “rules” but rather using words such as “guidelines.” “community expectations,” and “safety standards.”
- Only a few deal breaker safety standards that would result in losing their space (i.e. acts of violence). There is no hard line with curfew, leaving in the middle of the night or requiring they spend every single night at the shelter (their space will be released if no show/contact for over 72-hours). Eliminated unnecessary power struggles between staff and participants.
- Aid residents in getting service and/or companion animal support documents. This helps them not only for the shelter but in securing housing with their beloved dog, cat, or other animal.





# **Designing Emergency Shelters That People Will Use**

Jon DeCarmine, Executive Director, GRACE



The background of the image shows a school building with a green roof and a large tree in the foreground. The sun is setting behind the tree, creating a warm, golden glow. The text "GRACE" is overlaid on the image in a large, white, stylized font with a black outline.

# GRACE

**GAINESVILLE,  
FLORIDA**





WE OFFER

146 EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS



CAFÉ 131



CLOTHING



HEALTHCARE



CULINARY  
TRAINING



COMPUTER LAB



WOMEN'S SAFE  
SPACE



ALSO



**61** HOUSING UNITS





WE ARE




LOW BARRIER



TRAUMA-INFORMED



The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a man's face, showing his eye and part of his forehead. A semi-transparent blue horizontal bar is positioned below the title. The right side of the slide features a white background with a light blue grid pattern.

# CASE STUDY

Gainesville, FL

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

# CASE STUDY

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# Designing Shelters People Actually Want To Use

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- Low barriers to entry
- Prioritize safety
- Ask people what they want and need
- Reconsider how you use shelter space
  - Male/female sections, co-ed sections
  - Do shelter beds have to be inside?





# CASE STUDY

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## Closure of Dignity Village

- + **< 20% of people were willing to move into emergency shelter when the camp closed**
- + **50% would be willing to move if we allowed managed camping**
- + **63% of people were willing to use shelter services if we went co-ed**
- + **Over 70% would move in if we became pet-friendly**

# Shelters + System Design

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- One-stop model will bring people in for basic needs
- Strong coordination with outreach teams
- Outreach offices on campus; outreach workers are familiar faces
- More than half of staff have lived experience with homelessness and/or recovery from drugs and alcohol



## Final Thoughts

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- You only get one chance to bring people in. When they arrive...
  - ◆ Are you treating them like adults?
  - ◆ Are there curfews or enforced wake-up times?  
Do you make people leave during the day?
  - ◆ Can they have pets?
  - ◆ Are your expectations reasonable?
  - ◆ What tone does your staff take with guests?
  - ◆ How do you handle conflict? Theft? Safety?



# HOW WE GET TO YES

Kris Freed

LA Family Housing

[kfreed@lafh.org](mailto:kfreed@lafh.org)

# LA FAMILY HOUSING: WHO WE ARE

- 450 employees
- \$80 million annual budget
- Service Planning Area (SPA) 2 Lead = 10,000 PEH
- Outreach, In-reach, Navigation, Interim Housing, Stabilization, and PSH
- 572 IH beds in 5 sites for individuals
- 500+ IH units for families
- 778 PSH units
- 102 PSH units in the pipeline
- 236 Affordable housing



# INNOVATION AT ITS BEST

- Newer sites designed to allow couples
- Sites have designated women only, men only, and shared space so people can individually decide how to congregate
- Safes/Amnesty Boxes that allow for one-time combos (not assigned) to hold anything not allowed onsite
- Working on creation of safe usage space onsite
- Pet friendly (need to be vaccinated but we help connect to that service); have dog runs to ensure there is a space for them as well as day boarding area when pets can't accompany their owner
- Bringing encampments in together—shared rooms/hallways
- RV pilot where we can pay to haul and store RV's or cars for safe keeping
- All staff/participants are trained in Narcan usage; easy no questions asked access to Narcan for all participants
- Social workers onsite to address crisis –no actual caseloads
- Train, train and train some more. Staff need to be trained to be effective. Increased our wages to minimum \$20 for all shelter staff including janitorial, housekeeping and kitchen staff

# JUST A FEW PICS.....





# Panel Discussion

Q&A

