

Annie Hepburn-Intent 3

Final Project Approach:

I have chosen this Intent to base my final project off of. I want to create a formal proposal that would include a program guide to walk nursing homes through the steps of adopting this idea. I will also create a visual aid, either a poster or a model of what this program will accomplish.

Summary:

I have been thinking about ways our society is wasteful due to poor design, particularly the waste of abilities, talent, and wellbeing. One area that I have always been interested in is gerontology, and how broken this country's system is when dealing with elderly people.

I worked part time as an in-home caregiver, sometimes in retirement and nursing homes, and I was always saddened to see poor living conditions, severe depression, and isolation among the elders living in these homes. In talking to them, I found that they felt trapped. They had lost everything; their siblings, friends, parents, independence, home, and physical ability. Many felt that they had no purpose left in life. With this project, I want to create a program that gives them purpose. I see so much wasted talent and potential in this population, and if they were given a specific task that would benefit people in need they would feel reconnected to the world.

The majority of elderly people went to church all their lives, which had them participating in charity work and feeling that they were making a difference in the world, as well as having a sense of community. As they age and are no longer able to attend and become more dependent on others, they start to feel like charity cases.

What I want to do with this project is recreate the feeling of community, as well as connect them with a charity that they would participate in. It will give them the sense that they are *needed*, which can bring meaning back to their lives.

Description:

The charity I would connect them with is called "Life Water", which drills wells in third world countries. I chose this type of charity because it is the most efficient way to

improve and save lives. Giving clean water to a village can prevent the spread of diseases through unsafe drinking water and death from dehydration, save time and energy it would take to collect water, and allow them to grow food with irrigation systems.

Drilling a well in Haiti, for example, costs \$5,000. With a large group of people working together, raising the money is very doable.

There are a variety of ways retirement home residents could raise the funds. The first thing I thought of was gardening and selling fresh produce in the lobby of the home. Family members, doctors, and volunteers come in and out of the building all day, and it would be fairly easy to get people to buy fresh produce. Gardening can be very therapeutic, and with raised garden beds that are wheelchair accessible it would be fairly simple for residents to take turns watering and weeding the plants. It gives the residents a reason to get outside, socialize, and stay active.

Another way to raise money could be through art. I know many older people who are talented painters, knitters, and photographers. The activities director could provide supplies, and residents could meet as a group on a weekly basis to create art. Local galleries could volunteer to sell the work along with a description of the project and what the money is going towards.

Many nursing homes also host craft fairs during the holidays where members of the community come and sell their work. Residents could donate their work and the money would go towards the well.

I have thought of many other examples of where and how to raise money for the well, and all allow the seniors to create something and socialize with others. I know this would improve their quality of life, both physically and mentally. Through this project, I want to give them their identity back. I want them to feel useful and let them use their talents and abilities for good, rather than wasting away in isolation. I also want them to interact with the people they live with, and form a new family.





Budget:

At most I would say a few hundred dollars. The activities director has a budget that can be used for art supplies if necessary, and the raised garden beds already exist in the majority of nursing homes. Really all that is needed are seeds for the gardens, and someone to organize the events. I think organization would fall under the role of the activities director, so there wouldn't be an additional cost. The goal is to raise an average of \$5,000 per well. I would create a visual to hang in the lobby to track progress and keep people motivated, like a poster with a thermometer to show how much they had raised.

After they raise all \$5,000, I would want to somehow give the residents pictures or videos of people using the well so they can see the amazing impact their work had.