First Year of Tiny Homes Village a Success for Residents/Neighbors

Results of comprehensive evaluation release to the public

DENVER – The Barton Institute for Philanthropy and Social Enterprise at the University of Denver today released the results from a study of Colorado Village Collaborative’s Beloved Community Village. The comprehensive evaluation was conducted by the Burnes Center on Poverty and Homelessness at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work.

The results of the evaluation indicate that the Village is a success for both the residents themselves and for the surrounding community.

Tiny homes for the homeless are an experiment in Denver. The Beloved Community Village is the first of its kind: a village of 11 one-room houses with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities, located at 38th and Blake Streets in the RiNo neighborhood. When the Village opened in July of 2017, sceptics questioned whether the approach would keep people housed or whether the neighborhood would accept the village as part of its increasingly trendy landscape.

The key findings of the report include the following:

**People who were previously unserved are housed.**

- Despite the fact that most had been chronically homeless, 10 of the original 12 villagers are still housed 9 months after the launch of the Village.
- Of these 10 initial villagers, 3 have moved into permanent housing to be replaced by new villagers.

**The Village had no negative impacts on the neighborhood.**

- Research found that neighbors reported few, if any, challenges with the Village.
• Nearly 80% of neighbors interviewed report no impact or a positive impact on traffic, safety, and noise.
• Nearly 90% of neighbors interviewed report no impact or a positive impact on the sense of community.
• There was no increase in crime near the Village.

**People who live the in the Village are more stable.**

• Research demonstrates that the Village has contributed to a statistically significant decrease in anxiety and increase in satisfaction.
• By the end of 9 months, all of the residents were either employed or in school, with one exception (a person on disability).
• Despite the inevitable challenges of a shared living environment, BCV provides a support network to residents, and a valued opportunity to be part of something larger than themselves.

“Across the methods and participants, the message is consistent: The Village is welcome, villagers are succeeding and are an important part of the community,” says Daniel Brisson, Associate Professor in the DU Graduate School of Social Work and executive director of the Burnes Center.

The villagers have created an intentional, self-governed community, markedly different from previous experiences with the shelter system and life on the streets. According to one villager, “We decide what goes on here. It gives people back their confidence and puts people in leadership roles they didn’t know they could do and then excel at.”

Many RiNo neighbors find the Village to be a positive force in their community. “They’re good neighbors, keep the weeds down. I see them coming and going to work.”

The Beloved Community Village was launched by Colorado Village Collaborative – a partnership between the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado and Denver Homeless Out Loud. Leaders in these groups studied similar villages in Portland and Seattle, and invested years in building support through the city of Denver to test the approach here. The Village will be followed this year with a second intentional community near St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church at 20th and Glenarm in Downtown Denver.

The Barton Institute for Philanthropy and Social Enterprise at DU has invested in both villages and will continue working with village leaders to test and expand this approach to housing for people not served by the traditional shelter system.
“We believe that tiny home villages are a cost-effective way to get people housed quickly and to support them as they created self-governed communities,” says David Miller, Executive Director of the Barton Institute. “This is especially critical in Metro Denver as we face unprecedented increases in housing costs. We hope to see dozens of such villages established in years to come.”

The second tiny homes village is in process of development in partnership with the congregation of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church. A proposed site on church property recently did not receive approval from the Landmark Preservation Commission and the Colorado Village Collaborative and the St. Andrews’ congregation are working on an alternative location.

For more information and to view the results of the evaluation, visit www.bartoninstitute.org/tiny-homes. Interviews available with researchers, villagers, and neighborhood residents and business owners.

**About the Barton Institute:**
The Barton Institute’s mission is to develop or enhance projects that demonstrably improve life for people in Colorado’s communities. Visit du.edu/bartoninstitute.

**About the Burnes Center on Poverty and Homelessness:**
The mission of the Burnes Center is to educate and partner with policymakers, practitioners and the public on issues of poverty, housing and homelessness to transform the lives of people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The Burnes Center is housed in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver. Visit du.edu/burnescenter

**About the University of Denver:**
The University of Denver: Founded in 1864, the University of Denver is committed to engaging with students in advancing scholarly inquiry, cultivating critical and creative thought, and generating knowledge. The University strives to educate the 21st-century citizens and leaders needed in its organizations and communities. For additional information, visit the University's newsroom or follow the University on Facebook and Twitter.