



**Campaign for Allied Churches of
Alamance County**

Fall 2011

Parker Brown
Ariel Hall
Grace Krafte
Margaret Moran

Table of Contents

Background	4
Current Situation	13
Research	22
Plans, Goals and Objectives	35
Strategies	40
Tactics	46
Evaluation	53
Budget	59
Timetable	61
Appendix	64

BACKGROUND

Executive Summary

Allied Churches is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1982 to serve the homeless community in Alamance County. The organization was established to meet the needs of homeless individuals in the area and to provide services that are not offered at other agencies. Today, Allied Churches is dedicated to these four main programs:

- Emergency Night Shelter
- The Good Shepherd Kitchen
- Drop-in Day Shelter
- Christian Assistance Network

Both the day and night shelters are designed to provide a safe haven for homeless individuals. They are often filled to capacity, but the organization lacks sufficient funds for expansion. The Good Shepherd Kitchen provides meals to the shelter residents, as well as needy members of the community, and the Christian Assistance Network reaches out to community members who are in emergency situations financially.

The ability to fund these programs is heavily dependent upon donations from local churches and private individuals. Due to the recent economic recession, Allied Churches has seen a significant decline in donations. Fundraising remains its greatest concern as the organization strives to keep up with the ever-growing population of homeless individuals in the Burlington area.

Purpose and Objectives

While Allied Churches began out of an effort to fight hunger in the local Alamance County community, its mission has shifted to a more comprehensive approach to homelessness. The organization now sees itself also as a shelter and place where residents can take advantage of programs to help them try to become self-sufficient. Along with serving as a shelter for upwards of 75 men, women, and children per night, the organization also serves approximately 150 hot meals daily to its residents and the local homeless population of Burlington. Taken directly from the organization's mission statement, "We welcome the lonely, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and connect them with resources and support."

Through its affiliation with the Christian Assistance Network, the Allied Churches organization also allocates funds to local Burlington residents in emergency situations. These funds can be used in various situations, ranging from the purchase of medications, to assistance when one's heating, water, or electricity is shut off. Allied Churches decides where this funding will be given and in what denomination.

The objectives within the organization are varied, but they all surround the issue of homelessness in Burlington. Ultimately, the goal of the organization is to provide the homeless population of Burlington with a safe environment where they can come in from the streets for a warm meal and a bed.

Given the current economic strife, however, it seems that Allied Churches main objective is to be able to keep up and maintain itself despite the rising homeless population in the Alamance County area. For Hunter Thompson, Executive Director, the goal is to find new ways to raise funds and to seek out potential donors. Raising money, he said, is his main goal, as it is the only way that the organization will be able to keep its doors open to the near-constant flow of homeless Burlington residents.

One way that Allied Churches has worked to increase awareness of the services offered within the organization is to reach out to local news publications such as the *Times-News* of Burlington in the hopes of eliciting a human-interest piece. The organization also periodically checks in with other shelters in the surrounding areas to alert them to any vacancies or updates within Allied Churches. This provides a way to educate potential donors on the importance of its mission, but more importantly, it is an avenue to reach out to the local homeless community and alert them to the relevant services the organization provides.

Thompson tries to find as many outlets as he can through which he can accept donations. Whether it is reaching out to local restaurants or different businesses, among others, he finds organizations to donate food and other resources, while he seeks financial donations more through individuals. As Thompson explained, his goal is to "tell a story," and to make homelessness a more personal experience.

Composition

Allied Churches is a non-profit organization and like most of these types of agencies today, is struggling to make ends meet. The organization is run through the leadership of Hunter Thompson, executive director. Hunter's position was recently reinstated from a three-month furlough due to lack of funding for his salary. The Allied Churches Board of Directors also helps keep the organization running. This group is made up of community members that voluntarily hold this leadership position. The board ultimately makes the major decisions over the entire organization, and it is those decisions that Hunter will implement in order to effectively execute their goals and ideas. The organization also has 12 other staff members working within, who serve as secretaries, counselors, cooks and aids to the visitors and residents of the agency.

Thanks to a partnership with Elon University's Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement, a position known as Leaders in Collaborative Service (LINCS) has been established at Allied Churches as another part-time position that operates directly under Hunter. Currently, Eric Zelenkofske serves as the LINCS through the Kernodle Center. Hunter relies on the efforts of Eric to help him complete the leadership duties within Allied Churches.

Another partnership, with Campus Kitchen at Elon University, began in the fall of 2010 and the Elon volunteer-based organization provides more than 50 prepared and packaged meals each week to area soup kitchens, including Allied Churches. These volunteers also help staff the kitchen and the dining areas.

Volunteers typically carry out most of the daily duties. Because the residents of the organization and the individuals who rely on the Good Shepard Soup Kitchen need a stable environment where they can feel safe and secure, it is the job of Allied Churches, its employees and the volunteers to work together to serve the largest possible public.

Allied Churches currently has 13 employees as well as one LINCS student worker funded through the Kernodle Center at Elon University. The organization also relies on nearly 2,000 volunteers each year to help provide the 19 weekly meals as well as shelter for its visitors seven nights a week. Aiding 150 persons each week, this organization would not function without the large presence of volunteers. The organization is funded through general donations from groups and individuals as well as through a partnership with local Christian organizations, mostly church bodies. Typically the general volunteer base comes from church groups that volunteer on

a regular basis. Elon University students also provide key numbers of volunteers to help support its operations.

As a non-profit organization, Allied Churches gets the majority of its funding through donations, as well as state and federal grant programs which Hunter Thompson applies for on a regular basis. Due to the drop in donations from the surrounding community, the only way to keep money coming in consistently is through the grant programs. The LINCS, Eric, also provides assistance to Hunter throughout the grant application process. Funding comes in through partnerships with local churches that donate monthly percentages of their contributions to the organization through the organization's Christian affiliations—a relationship that they have been working to further separate themselves from in order to welcome all religions. Donations are also given from community members and unidentified supporters within the surrounding communities.

The food and most of the supplies for the kitchen and shelter come in through consistent volunteer donations within the community and also through partnerships with businesses and organizations that bring in unused items from meetings, celebrations, or even from stores that cannot sell particular items. There are also donations that come in sporadically from all types of organizations, such as an entire tractor-trailer load of muffins that the driver could not deliver to a local grocery store because the products had the wrong bar code and would not be accepted by the grocery store. This is just one example of the additional donations that come into Allied Churches in all types and quantities.

Relevant Publics

The Good Shepherd Kitchen is a traditional soup kitchen that serves approximately 150 hot meals daily to its residents as well as members of the Burlington community. The Christian Assistance Network serves local Burlington residents who have found themselves in emergency situations financially. Examples of assistance the organization might provide include paying for medicine, medical equipment or utility bills. The Emergency Night Shelter houses (on average) 75 individuals every night, including homeless men, women and children. Similarly, the Drop-in Day Shelter offers a safe haven for the same homeless population from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and includes a resource center. The relevant publics, then, that the organization seeks to target, are

those that are homeless and hungry in Burlington, as well as Alamance County.

While Allied Churches is dedicated to serving the needy and homeless, they rely heavily on donations from churches and private individuals. For fundraising purposes, the organization targets churches in Alamance County as well as the individuals that belong to those specific faith communities. While the organization has typically relied on faith-based organizations for a large portion of their contributions, one of the new goals of Hunter Thompson is to appeal to a new public who previously has not donated to Allied Churches. Establishing relationships with these new donors, he believes, will spread the message of need for the organization, as well as increase the donor base that will contribute, both financially and otherwise, to Allied Churches. The organization also utilizes a volunteer base of over 2000 people, with around 70 individuals coming in every day to assist in operations. This core group of volunteers is mostly comprised of university students, youth church groups or other church members. Allied Churches relies on these groups for volunteers as well as funding in order to continue serving the homeless population of Alamance County.

Funding

The economic climate in Alamance County, as well as the greater United States, has had a major financial impact on Allied Churches. Demand for its services has risen due to an increase in the homeless population because of higher unemployment, among other factors. However, because of the current economic climate, funding has not been able to keep up with the rising demand, as many potential sources of funds are being more frugal with their money.

Currently, Allied Churches is significantly underfunded. Ideally, when operating at full-capacity, 24 hours a day, the annual budget should run about \$750,000. The total functional expenses for 2010 came to \$569,367. Both operating hours and staff had to be cut as a result of being underfunded.

Allied Churches receives about 60 percent of its funding from churches or private contributions, typically from individuals within a given church. Allied Churches saw contributions from both general and religious sources decrease by about 31 percent in 2010. The remaining 40 percent comes from the Emergency Shelter Grant program (ESGP), the Emergency Food and Shelter program (EFSP), and other government programs, all of which are underfunded because of the economy. The EFSP, for example, was cut by \$14,000 this year

because of budget cuts. The government is cutting funding and/or allocating resources to more politically advantageous programs, like one for female veterans, for example. In total, the unrestricted support and revenue was \$404,388 in 2010, a decrease of almost 22 percent from 2009. On the other hand, income from fundraising was up 14 percent to \$40,331 in 2010, and it has already raised around \$65,000 this year.

Ultimately, in addition to being able to run its operations at full capacity, Allied Churches would like to build a women and children's shelter at a cost of approximately \$850,000. There is also a plan to execute a \$2.5 million renovation to the building. If these goals are to be realized, Allied Churches will need to continue to find creative ways to generate revenue in a down economy.

Competitive Frame

Allied Churches is one of numerous non-profit organizations within the Burlington area. Though there are only two establishments within the area that do at least one of the same services as Allied Churches, there are many more competitors than just those organizations. Allied Churches is competing for volunteers, funding, as well as food and supply donations among the crowded market within the Burlington community.

- **National Non-profits:** The American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, United Way, etc. These organizations are prime competitors to Allied Churches due to their well-known name and national presence here in the United States. These organizations are also operating on a much larger scale than Allied Churches, which helps spread the word for their needs even more to the communities that donate. These organizations also provide a much more “sexy” need. People want to help save lives through donating blood or helping with disaster relief. Volunteers like to do one-day service events with Habitat for Humanity. Employees enjoy being advocates for the United Way because they can give and help-out without having to think about, via partnerships with thousands of businesses nationwide through office giving.
- **Local niche organizations:** Though hunger is a huge cause and need, there are also numerous other types of smaller, niche organizations that might appeal more to the audience or supporter base in which Allied Churches rely. These organizations, once

they find their volunteers, keep them because of the very specific need and the close connection that they can create with their volunteers.

- **Schools:** People within the community often times are connected to the schools through their children or their family members. Schools are a great cause and are in much need for support, and inevitably provide a huge competition to Allied Churches. People are much more willing to give to children rather than homeless and hungry people; children are much easier to appeal to the heartstrings, in most cases.
- **Churches:** Church members are typically very loyal to their church homes, but that does not mean they want their money to be spent outside of the walls of the church. People that give to most churches are expecting that money to be spent on new equipment, new buildings and spreading that religious word throughout the church community. This inevitable truth makes it that much harder for church bodies to commit money to Allied Churches, specifically through Christian partnerships.

Allied Churches struggles to compete with all of these organizations. These markets may have strong appeal with their volunteers, but Allied Churches can tap into these markets with the right moves and positioning within its community.

Allied Churches has made significant strides in recent years to increase public awareness and increase available resources. There was an instance several years ago, when the number of homeless residents in the triad community increased significantly, and the surrounding shelters were too full to accommodate more people. Allied Churches, conversely, was not nearly half full, and was met with hostility about why the organization did not promote its shelter to the nearby homeless. This instance was one of the few events where Allied Churches received negative press.

With the dedication of the Drop-in Center, Allied Churches has begun to set itself apart from the competition, as it provides several crucial resources to its shelter's residents. It is a place for the homeless population to go during the day so that they can get in off the street. The center is unique in that it brings in local professionals, mental health experts, and other resources to the residents in order to help guide them on their way to self-sufficiency.

Because there are so many different facets within the organization, there are some areas where Allied Churches does better than its competitors, and others in which it fairs worse. The organization is currently trying to distance itself from the Church, becoming more "interfaith."

While this is a positive change, it also means that the organization could potentially lose some funding from its church donors. Overall, however, it seems that Allied Churches is viewed as an asset to the community, especially with Hunter Thompson's vision for expansion and improvement of services to the homeless population.

CURRENT SITUATION

Executive Summary

Allied Churches has come a long way since the inception of the organization tracing back to the 1970s and the CROP Hunger Walk of Alamance County. It has also been able to maintain itself through some tough financial times, which are largely a result of the economic hardships that continue to stretch the resources of the entire community. Yet the organization still has many opportunities for improvement, including finding ways to more effectively build relationships and support the community.

Allied Churches has worked for over 40 years to build an organization that targets and assists with the needs of the homeless in the community. The organization provides many useful services that cannot be found at any other agency in the county. Working with its leadership and with volunteers and donors, the organization has continued to expand its efforts to help those who are in need. Allied Churches serves the community in a multitude of ways; they not only provide shelter and food to the homeless and hungry in Alamance County, but as Hunter Thompson described while addressing our class, the organization also increases the “quality of life” for residents of Burlington and Alamance, as they provide shelter, as well as the drop-in center that keeps the homeless off the streets during the day.

Allied Churches has built strong and lasting relationships with numerous local religious institutions, as per its founding committee. The organization has also been able to make connections with other resources, such as Elon University, as well as local families and donors that have a close connection with the mission and purpose of Allied Churches. The organization understands the value of support, which is why it works hard to both maintain and continue to grow those relationships and connections. Volunteers play a vital role in the organization’s ability to carry out its day-to-day operations, which is another reason why the partnerships with local churches and Elon University are so important to the vitality and the future existence of the organization.

This current situation chapter examines the history and evolution of Allied Churches in order to provide context for the organization’s current situation and its outlook for the future. It will also highlight some previous communication efforts by the organization that help explain the organization’s current position and also reveal some problems and/or opportunities that future communication can seek to address. Lastly, the chapter will provide examples of times

and endeavors in the organization's past that were not as successful, which future endeavors can learn from.

Development

The efforts of Allied Churches have roots in the CROP Walk for Hunger, which began in Alamance County in the late 1970s. At that time, the Alamance County CROP Walk was the largest and most profitable in the nation. Since the CROP Walk is managed by a Christian organization, many local churches and pastors were very involved in the walk, and once they had hosted the event for several years, this religion-based community began to consider a full-time, ongoing effort to raise money and provide services to the hungry in the area.

With that notion of continuous service, Allied Churches was founded in 1982 by a cohort of 40 member churches. Once the churches began receiving increasing requests for services, they considered the idea of a centralized location where all the churches could support and provide assistance to the needy. This led to the establishment of an organization through the Christian Assistance Network, known as Allied Churches. Upon creation, Allied Churches had two main purposes, which were to help the needy and provide services when other agencies could not assist the clients.

History of Allied Churches

The Good Shepherd Kitchen began in 1982, though it operated as a separate organization from Allied Churches at the time. In 1991, Allied Churches and the Good Shepherd Kitchen merged to form one organization, at which time it also moved to its current facilities off of Church and North Fischer streets, in Burlington. The facility, valued at \$600,000 when it was completed, was funded largely through a generous donation from a local family who wanted to assist with the project, as well as other contributions, grants and additional funding. Prior to the construction of the Burlington Drop-In Center, the previous day shelter was in Gibsonville, which limited the way that residents of the shelter could travel to the center each day.

In 1986, the Emergency Night Shelter opened in the Burlington Police's old building after the local reaction to a homeless man's death due to freezing weather. Since December 10,

1986, the shelter has remained open 365 days a year and has never once gone unused. This was one of the driving forces behind the push to build the new facility.

In 1999, the Back to Work program began through a collaborative partnership with Alamance Community College. This program is designed to help provide employment search and development services to those receiving/participating in Allied Churches programs or services. Specifically, the program is designed to provide a place during the day for members to search and apply for jobs using facilities and equipment provided by Allied Churches.

The Back to Work program was further expanded in 2011 with the opening of the Day Drop-Inn Center. This serves as yet another place where those in need can have a place to stay and work towards rebuilding their lives during the day, since the night shelter is only open from 4 p.m. to 9 a.m. This was an important addition to the organization, especially considering the financial situation that the organization was in leading up to and past the opening date. The program is also another positive addition to the Burlington community as a whole because the drop-in shelter serves as a way to get the homeless off the streets and help recuperate their lives. *(Information gathered from Allied Churches history/informational handout)*

Currently, the Good Shepherd Kitchen Program feeds approximately 120 people each weekday, and in December 2010, it fed more than 180 people a day on several dates due to the extreme economic circumstances facing the community, such as unemployment and lay offs, among others. The Emergency Night Shelter currently provides a temporary resident for over 70 men, women and children each night. In 2010, Allied Churches housed 502 homeless men, women and children throughout the year. On several occasions in December 2010, the shelter exceeded 80 individuals per night. While the organization is largely responsible for its own finances, their affiliation with the Christian Assistance Network (CAN), offers residents a variety of resources. CAN provides financial support for past due water or electric bills for those in Burlington who cannot pay for their own utilities. Along with the Shelter, the Good Shepherd Soup Kitchen, and the positive relationship with the Christian Assistance Network, Allied Resource Center Day Shelter serves as a safe haven for homeless people. The current development of Allied Churches Resource Center into a one-stop shop for services and support for the homeless is the goal in which Hunter Thompson, executive director, is working towards creating. The problem, however, is that the poor economy has prevented some of the

organization's frequent donors from contributing to the organization (*Information gathered from Allied Churches 2010 report*).

With the non-profit world being limited by funding and financial concerns in addition to lack of staffing, organizations cannot always provide the most effective and useful strategic communication efforts. That has largely been the case for Allied Churches, though they do take a few steps in producing some communication efforts.

The organization currently releases a small amount of press releases throughout the year, specifically for special fundraising events or new ventures of the agency. Hunter Thompson typically works on producing those pieces.

The organization also has recently revamped major aspects of its website to better communicate its mission, services and needs to the community. Though it still needs a lot of work (for instance, clearer web access to the mission statement, and a clearer "about us" section), the improvements made thus far have been a tremendous help to the communications efforts of the organization.

Allied Churches also has a brochure about the overall structure of the organization that is distributed to volunteers, clients, community members and potential donors. The brochure, though fairly basic in design and content, helps paint a picture of what exactly the organization does, and the increased color and subtle inclusion of a cross has helped the organization to spread its message throughout Burlington.

Hunter Thompson also does agency presentations to different groups and organizations throughout the community as well as to potential donors. These presentations are designed to further elaborate on the needs and services of Allied Churches, while trying to promote support and respect for the overall mission of the organization.

Current Position

The strongest connection Allied Churches has to the community is through local churches and faith-based organizations. The majority of people who contribute time and/or money to Allied Churches come from these groups. Their steady donations and dedicated volunteer work serve as strong indicators of their support for the organization. Allied Churches finds itself in a unique position because, while it sees itself as an interfaith organization, their relationship to the

community is largely built on the connections that they have with local churches. Moving forward, it will be important to maintain the strong bond the organization has with this specific community in order to support the mission of Allied Churches.

Additionally, Allied Churches has developed a strong connection with the Elon community through Elon University's Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement. In particular, the Leaders in Collaborative Service (LINCS) student worker position is a direct reflection of the importance Elon has placed upon maintaining a connection between the university and the organization. This connection is unique because Elon is so committed to incorporating engaged service learning into each students' experience. Many Elon students consistently volunteer with Allied Churches through Campus Kitchen or various service learning classes. It is, however, unclear whether or not students who are not exposed to Allied Churches through programs or classes have a clear understanding of what the organization does.

Direction

If Allied Churches is to continue its services to the homeless, then it needs to address its financial difficulties. With the government cutting back and putting money elsewhere and churches/congregations unable to give as much as before, it is critical for Allied Churches to adjust its fundraising efforts. It needs to be done in such a way as to expand its target audience, while not alienating its base (the faith-based organizations and its members). Operating costs continue to rise, while donations have been on the decline. Thus, it is essential for Allied Churches to address its fundraising strategies.

Allied Churches relies on donations and grants to fund its operations. Recently, it has become even more of a challenge to make ends meet because of the domestic economic situation. That problem also sets-up the key opportunity, which this campaign must address, for the organization to both solidify its base and to expand on its fundraising efforts so that it can both finance and carry out its mission. This means finding new and more creative ways to solicit donations from a wider group of potential donors who may not be able to give as much due to the poor economy. By considering options like a smaller, incremental donation programs where individuals could donate just a few dollars a month, it is the hope of the organization that this will persuade people to donate whatever they can.

Along with seeking to introduce new donation programs and options, Allied Churches is also seeking to move towards a more interfaith model, presenting an opportunity to expand its fundraising efforts to people who might not have considered it before because of its religious aspects and affiliations, both real and perceived. This move to become more secular might also pose a problem with the organization's fundraising base—local churches and members of those churches/faith-based organizations. Such groups might feel more comfortable, or perhaps even insist on, donating to a Christian-based organization. There is likely an underlying problem stemming from a lack of understanding as to exactly what Allied Churches is and how it operates, which also means there is an opportunity to inform.

Vision

On its most basic level, the organization is in such dire need for assistance that its current goal is to remain afloat in this difficult economic period. While there are long-term visions for the organization, their current goal is to be able to house and feed the residents, and give them the best resources possible in order to help them become self-sufficient. While this may be a current goal, there is also a long-term plan in place for what the organization would like to be able to do.

After speaking with Hunter Thompson, it is clear that his vision for the organization is significant growth and development of resources. He believes that one of the most important long-term visions for the organization is the creation of a Women & Children's center, as the current shelter does not have adequate resources to house this population. He said that he is so reluctant to turn away women and children from the shelter, to the point where he has even converted offices into "dorms" for the families. This center would be the first of its kind in the state. Thompson is pursuing grants for the building, but still must find a way to raise \$300,000 to be matched.

In describing his vision for the strategic campaigns plan, Thompson told the class to, "Help me to tell the story" (Thompson, In Cass). He said that so many people do not have an accurate perception of the homeless population, and they often have a very negative stigma associated with Allied Churches. By reaching out to the community to demonstrate the importance of organizations like Allied Churches, he believes that he will be able to get more donors to help his cause. Thompson says that, if through articles and communication with

Burlington, he can demonstrate that Allied Churches increases the quality of life for its residents, and he will be able to raise more money.

In achieving his vision, one of the tasks of our Strategic Campaigns class should be to reach out to local newspapers and public figures and inform them of the constant good that the organization seeks to do. The human-interest stories, he feels, will increase awareness of the dire situation, and help to erase the negative stigma and other misconceptions associated with the homeless. “Nobody wants to give money to homeless men,” he said (Thompson, In Class). A successful strategic campaign for Allied Churches, and for the future of the women and children’s center, depends on how effectively an information campaign is accepted by the community.

Hunter Thompson seems to have practical expectations on the part of a communications effort. He understands that the most important need in order to create his vision is fundraising, and that a communications campaign is a good way to increase public awareness. He is seeking to attract new and interested donors, and is relying on the communication effort to assist him in informing the public of this need, but also of the vision of the women and children’s center. He understands the difficult economy; however, and is not expecting the communications plan to be the ultimate fundraising tactic. He views this partnership to serve more as a catalyst for change, and to spread the word to the community of the future visions and goals for Allied Churches.

The organization seems more receptive to practical and attainable goals for the organization, instead of lofty visions. Simple steps, like reaching out to local newspapers and increasing awareness in the community, as well as on Elon’s campus, illicit quicker change and observable difference. Whereas last year classes sought to increase volunteers as part of their plan, this year Hunter Thompson has requested that plans be designed to focus more on increasing funds and making the local community aware of the organization’s struggle, and less towards increasing the volunteer base. While he has not limited the ways that the campaign should seek to increase awareness, he has mentioned several times how effective he believed the human-interest pieces were for reaching out to the citizens of Burlington. Tactics like these, he feels, are a quick and effective way of contacting the public, and hopefully, informing them of the dire need and importance of Allied Churches.

Pitfalls

There are some potential pitfalls that could be encountered in mounting a communications effort for Allied Churches. Primarily, homelessness is not something a lot of people truly understand or want to talk about. There are also a lot of negative stereotypes of the homeless that can be difficult to break down.

One of the most difficult concepts in addressing the pitfalls of homelessness is that often, individuals choose to donate to service organizations that appeal to their interests. It is because of this that the issue of homelessness is so difficult to combat—there is a negative stigma associated with homelessness, and more specifically, men in homeless shelter. People are more inclined to contribute to organizations when they have some sort of personal or emotional connection to an organization, which is perhaps why some people are less inclined to contribute to Allied Churches.

One of the most significant pitfalls, however, is the poor economy nationally, but specifically in Alamance County. Because people have less money, they have less money to contribute to service organizations, and under these circumstances, the organizations that will continue to receive donations are ones with which individuals have a distinct, emotional connection.

In order to avoid these pitfalls, the communication effort must address the issues in a way that connects with people. It has to break down people's perceptions of homelessness, or perhaps even Allied Churches, and convey the benefits/importance of supporting the organization's mission. The message has to be delivered creatively as well because of people's preconceived notions about homelessness, or perhaps the redundancy of the message of previous solicitations. Additionally, solid research should also help avoid a lot of potential problems because the potential publics can offer feedback and perspective on some of the issues as well as help identify other pitfalls.

RESEARCH

Executive Summary

Allied Churches is a non-profit organization in Burlington, North Carolina, founded to help and serve the homeless community in the area. While it was started primarily as a soup kitchen in 1982, it has since expanded into Emergency Night Shelter, the Good Shepherd Soup Kitchen, and the new addition of the Burlington Drop-in Center. The organization also works with the Christian Assistance Network to provide assistance to members of the community in need of financial aid (covers gas, electricity, etc.).

This section outlines our group's research conducted as a way to gauge public perception about the organization, as well as to test out new ideas for campaigns in an effort to increase financial donations. It highlights the most important findings from our research, both through a focus group and survey, and explains the results and responses. Some of the most important findings in this chapter are:

- **Ease in Incremental Donations:** Through our research, we saw that in order for an incremental donation program to be implemented, it must be a reasonable amount so that more students would be willing to donate. Responses during our focus group indicated that students are more inclined to donate to organizations when the denomination is smaller.
- **Importance of Informing Elon Students to issues in Burlington:** One of the most significant findings of our research was just how little Elon students knew about issues in Burlington, specifically related to the growing homelessness population. These findings indicated that our campaign must have a means of increasing public awareness to serious local issues related to Burlington and Alamance.
- **A More Varied Sampling Base is Needed:** Because we utilized convenience sampling in gathering our data, our results were limited to specific demographics. If we want to ensure that our campaign represents the overall best strategies and tactics to increase donations and awareness, we must gather information from a more diverse sample.
- **Students Are Most Willing to Volunteer in Areas They are Most Interested:** All of our research has shown that for students to donate significant time or money, they must be personally interested or involved in a certain cause. Because organizations and specific causes have become more niche-based in recent years, with individuals able to donate and involve themselves with organizations in which they are most interested, we

must approach Allied Churches' in a more personal way so that students can become emotionally linked to the organization.

Situation analysis

As a non-profit organization, Allied Churches consistently seeks to increase its donations and funding to help provide more services to people in need. Due in part to the continually worsening economic situation over the last few years, the organization has seen a significant decrease in donations. This decline in funding resulted in a temporary furlough of the organization's Executive Director, Hunter Thompson, though he was reinstated at the end of summer 2011. As a result of the decreased funds, the organization has been forced to cut back on meals and thoroughness of care for the residents.

Once Hunter Thompson was reinstated, he immediately enacted several structural improvement projects that were necessary to keep the center running. The resident's bathrooms were remodeled to better accommodate the guests, two office spaces were retrofitted into guest rooms for two families with small children, and new beds and furniture were placed in the large bunkrooms for additional guests. The kitchen is still in desperate need of an upgrade, and the dining hall area is slowly crumbling due to age. The ultimate goal would be to build a completely new facility for all operations, including an area to specifically accommodate women and children.

An overall lack of funding is the overarching problem for the entire organization, so Thompson has spent a lot of his time working on increasing donations. He makes personal visits and presentations to potential donors and other community groups to help promote the efforts of the organization. Other potential fundraising events are up in the air, simply due to lack of assistance and manpower to oversee them.

Currently, the organization serves two full meals a day (lunch and dinner) and provides shelter for an average of 72 men, women and children daily, from 4:00 pm to 8:00 am. The meals, on average, feed 120+ guests each. Hunter Thompson, along with a shelter director, a head chef and a handful of other workers are the only full-time employees of the organization. Volunteers provide manpower for serving the meals and helping prepare food, while a few consistent donors provide a majority of the total funding. The primary concerns for the

organization are to increase and expand donor giving, increase grant funding, and increase its volunteer base.

Problem statement:

In order to best serve the hungry and homeless community in Alamance County, Allied Churches must expand their donor base and increase total annual giving to continue its daily operations.

Goal Statement:

The goal of this public relations campaign for Allied Churches is to increase donations from a non-traditional audience (college-age students) and increase funding for the Women and Children's center with hopes to break-ground next year.

Research Question/Hypothesis:

Throughout our research, our goal was to answer the following research questions:

1. Are students at Elon University aware that homelessness is an issue in Burlington? If so, what are their opinions?
2. Are Elon students familiar with Allied Churches? If so, do they have a full understanding of its mission and how it serves the community?
3. Would students be more likely to donate money or volunteer their time?
4. Is homelessness an issue that students feel an emotional attachment to?
5. What motivates students to participate in service or contribute to an organization?

In order to foster a connection between Elon students and Allied Churches, it is important to understand the tendencies and values of students. By analyzing their behaviors and attitudes related to service in the Burlington community, we will be able to develop a successful campaign targeting that specific population.

Many students refer to Elon as a "bubble" because it is separated from the local community. Consequently, students rarely venture far off campus and may not be exposed to current issues the town of Burlington is facing, including homelessness. We need to address this

issue when doing research so that we can better understand the student perspective on homelessness.

Next, we will find out how familiar students are with Allied Churches as an organization. Are students aware of its existence? Even if students have heard of Allied Churches, there may be confusion as to what its mission is and how they contribute to the local community. If any confusion exists, it will be crucial to address these discrepancies when formulating our campaign, so that the Elon community has a clear understanding of what Allied Churches does.

The goal of this campaign is to raise money for Allied Churches. Since students are such a specific population, we need to find out their preference for contributing to local organizations and causes. Are they more likely to donate money or volunteer their time? Narrowing in on a common consensus in terms of tactics should increase the success of our campaign.

Finally, it is essential to determine if students feel an emotional connection to homelessness as a societal issue. Since there are so many organizations in the Elon area that are in need of volunteers and donations, we need to figure out what organizations students are most likely to contribute to. If homelessness is not an issue that students feel connected to, how can we shape our campaign to create and sustain an emotional connection to the issue at hand?

Method

The techniques that we used for research in our campaign, a focus group and a survey, were developed as a way to understand students' interest in volunteering both time and money, specifically at Allied Churches. One of the first strategies that we were interested in implementing for our campaign, for example, was to establish a small incremental donation program, and so before moving forward with this idea, we wanted to see whether students reacted favorably or unfavorably to this concept. While our group saw significant benefit in establishing this program, conducting a focus group and a survey on the issue was essential in determining students' perception of the plan, and to determine whether it was a practical idea for college students.

Along with gauging opinions on the incremental donation program, we also used these research techniques to gain insight on why people choose to volunteer or not volunteer, and which organizations are most appealing to them. Unlike previous research that members of our group had conducted about Allied Churches, which was geared more towards ways to increase

the organization's volunteer base, this research was designed, instead, to determine which causes students were most inclined to donate their time and money towards, and why. We used the focus group primarily to understand students' specific views on volunteering and what drew them to causes. We also included similar questions in the survey, by asking students to provide examples of societal issues and causes that were most important to each respondent, individually, as a way of determining what students feel are the most important causes today. By asking these more open-ended questions, we felt that we could better understand what Allied Churches should do to emphasize their need for assistance; whether through personal stories, facts and figures, or specific and clearly outlined organizational needs.

For the focus group, we limited our population to current Elon students. The study population used to conduct the focus group was drawn through convenience sampling, where members of the group emailed various student organizations on campus in order to attract participants. This was a non-probability sample, as the members of the focus group were not randomly selected. Ultimately, the focus group consisted of seven Elon students, all of whom were seniors, with six female participants and one male.

Three of the participants were Communications majors, and the other majors represented were Elementary and Special Education, Human Services, Business, and Political Science. Their level of volunteer experience ranged from one student who was a Human Services major and spent most of her college curriculum volunteering in some capacity, to several students with no experience while at Elon. We recognized that selecting several participants in younger grades would have been effective and tried to recruit them for our focus group, but due to scheduling conflicts, we were unsuccessful in doing so.

Prior to conducting our focus group, we developed a list of questions we would ask in our survey, as a way to reach a larger public. For our survey research, we chose to also limit our population to current Elon students. The survey was also implemented using convenience sampling, with group members again contacting several student organizations around campus to increase response rate and variety in the participants. The survey was distributed via email, and was created using the online survey website, SurveyMonkey.com. Using a non-probability, convenience sample was the quickest way to reach the largest number of students. We emailed the survey to different student organizations and our sample size was 81 students. Asking respondents to identify their gender and year enabled them to remain anonymous, while enabling

us to see the variety of those surveyed. 62 respondents were female, and 14 were male, with five respondents skipping the question. Of those surveyed, two students were freshmen, 18 were sophomores, 20 were juniors, 36 were seniors, and five students chose not to disclose their year. The use of SurveyMonkey.com also allowed us to accurately collect, organize, and analyze the questions quickly and effectively. It was our goal to create an easy 10-question survey that was not time consuming in an effort to both increase response rate and decrease respondent error (See Appendix).

Unlike the focus group, which enabled us to ask more open-ended questions, the survey was designed with eight Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions, and only two open-ended questions. We recognized that people are often more inclined to answer shorter questions with clear answers, rather than many open-ended questions where they are asked to explain their answers, as it is a more time-consuming process. We also worked carefully to ensure that the questions were clearly phrased so that students would understand exactly what we were asking about Allied Churches. While our survey allowed us to determine the opinions of more students, it was the focus group that we felt would give us a more complete understanding of students' perceptions about donating, and enable us to ask follow up questions depending on each response.

We began the focus group with the moderators welcoming the participants and thanking them for helping with the discussion. We then had each group member and participant introduce his or herself, as a way of familiarizing the students with one another. Before providing the participants with information about Allied Churches, we asked them first if they had participated in service, either at Elon or prior to college. We did this to gauge our participants' service experience, to understand the range of students. The first part of our focus group was dedicated to how and why the participants' chose to volunteer with a certain organization, to understand what made causes important to them as individuals. We provided the group with a brief summary of Allied Churches' mission midway through the focus group, but first asked them if they were familiar with the organization, and if so, in what capacity. It was our goal to be able to understand pre-conceived notions about Allied Churches, and how well known the organization is to Elon students. After the moderators provided a short summary of its mission and role within the community, the focus group questions became more tailored specifically to the organization as well as the proposed incremental donation program.

The survey was similar to the focus group in its structure, with respondents first being asked whether or not they were familiar with the organization. It then asked them a series of ranking and multiple choice questions, where they identified challenges facing homeless shelters, identified ways in which they would be willing to get involved, and answered questions about their willingness to participate in an incremental donation program. Before asking about their demographics, the final question was open-ended, and asked them to name the societal issues and causes of most importance to them. Doing this, we felt, would give us a better idea of how homelessness ranks in terms of important causes for college students. The responses were organized using SurveyMonkey.com, and we could then analyze the data.

Analysis

After recording the focus group with a video camera, we transcribed the recording in order to better analyze the results. We looked for common themes in the conversation and interpreted the ideas the students provided. The trends we identified can be directly linked back to comments and discussions in the transcript.

Since we sent out the survey electronically, we were able to use Survey Monkey to view the results and create graphs. Through Survey Monkey, we were able to see how students responded to each question, as the results were broken down by percentages, and we could then determine the most popular responses for each question. The data provided with help us gauge the levels of interest in supporting Allied Churches, either through volunteering time or through an incremental donation program.

Findings

Through our focus group and survey we were able to gain better insight into the thoughts and perspectives of our target audience. The data collected will also assist in beginning the evaluation of our research questions.

Awareness, of the organization and its efforts, was one of the main components we sought to gauge through our research, both of the issue of homelessness in Alamance County generally speaking and of Allied Churches and its mission specifically. Many of the focus group participants were only familiar with homelessness in the area through service learning courses,

and if they had never been exposed to it through their coursework they were relatively unaware of the issue. As participant “F3” stated: “We definitely live in a bubble...you don’t see any of that [homelessness]. And even when I go into Burlington... there’s very few places I go...I go to the places where the other Elon students go. So...I see the other Elon students, [and] I don’t often see the Burlington community.” When asked what challenges they thought were facing homeless shelters and soup kitchens today, the most frequently included challenges in their responses were: lack of supplies (74 percent), lack of government funds (77 percent), and lack of volunteers (82 percent). Negative stigma surrounding homeless shelters and soup kitchens (49 percent) and fear of the homeless (38 percent) were the two challenges currently facing homeless shelters and soup kitchens that were noted least frequently (see appendix, figure 4).

In terms of Allied Churches itself, awareness was also fairly low. About 30 percent of the survey respondents had heard of Allied Churches and had at least a decent idea of what the organization does. Thus, 70 percent had either never heard of it, or had little to no idea of its mission (see appendix, figure 1). A response such as, “It sounds like a group of churches attempting to achieve a common goal, but I have never heard of it before” was pretty indicative of the 70 percent who had not heard of Allied Churches, but responded with information beyond a simple “no.” Awareness of the organization and its goals was also sporadic in the focus group. One participant was from Burlington and had heard of it a lot in high school, and others (again) were familiar with it from previous coursework. Others were quite unfamiliar: “Don’t they do like clothing drives maybe? I just always thought it was kind of like a universal ‘we give to people who are in dire need of our help,’” said “F3”. Participant F5 was more in-line with many of the survey responses, stating, “An overhead group of all of the churches in the community? I mean, the name implies...”

On whether students would be more likely to donate money or volunteer their time we also found mixed results between the survey and the focus group. The survey indicated that 62 percent of the sample population would most prefer to donate food or money if they were to contribute to Allied Churches. Forty-three percent of the respondents rated donating money as one of their most preferred ways to contribute to the organization, with 41 percent rating it as one of their least preferred, and 16 percent giving it a neutral rating (see appendix, figure 2). The focus group also indicated a split, with four saying they would rather give time, two saying money, and one saying increments of both. “F1” said she would rather give money because, “It’s

not like I'm...loaded, but it's just a lot easier [to give money]." Participant "F2" preferred time because, "...I kind of have more time than money at the moment." Another perspective on time came from "M1" who commented,

"I'd probably say time over money because I'm totally broke right now as most of us are. I mean, you can always kind of set aside some time in your life if you feel strongly enough about something. You can find time to volunteer even if it's just an hour or two a week. If it's something that's important to you rather than just make a donation. Yeah, volunteer your time I would say."

In terms of giving in small increments on a regular monthly or weekly basis, there were also mixed responses. The focus group indicated their preference was mostly in the \$10-\$20 range, with only "F3" arguing for slightly less than \$10 because, "...If it's less than 10 [dollars]...somehow it seems so much more manageable." Meanwhile, just 28 percent of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would be inclined to participate in a small, incremental donation program of less than \$10 per month, with 55 percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 17 percent stating no strong opinion either way (see appendix, figure 3).

We tried to gauge the level of emotional connections to the issue of homelessness through our research as well. 12 percent of Elon students surveyed identified homelessness as a societal issue and/or cause that is important to them. Civil rights and/or sexual orientation tolerance/rights issues were the most popular responses. Some felt less of an emotional appeal, related to a potential lack of awareness/exposure to the issues in Alamance County, as "F5" explains:

"...I feel like people in cities obviously, unless they're stupid, no offense, know there's a lot of homelessness. Like here, you might call me ignorant, but I know there's homelessness but I have no idea the severity of it because this isn't a big city. Like it's not ranked in the top of North Carolina cities. So I have no idea how big it is...I just wouldn't think it was the biggest problem on the list of Burlington's problems, and like that's how I would look at it no matter where I was...If I was in New York, [homelessness] might be higher up on my list."

We also tried to gain some insight into what motivates Elon students to participate in service or contribute to an organization, such as Allied Churches. The survey indicates that 53

percent of the sample is involved in volunteer programs (financially or otherwise) at Elon, and 70 percent place at least some importance on volunteering (see appendix figures 6,7). Focus group participant “F6” shared what motivates her: “...For me, I think that things that catch my attention are when it connects on a personal level. So I think if [Allied Churches] really want to get people to volunteer then [it] need[s] to find those stories about a single person... because just shouting information at you is just never going to get someone to volunteer.”

Application/Interpretation

After analyzing the research obtained through our focus group and survey data, we have a better understanding of Elon students’ perception of Allied Churches and how to better connect and build relationships with them.

As stated in the findings, 70 percent of the survey respondents reported that they did not have a clear understanding of Allied Churches, or they had simply never heard of it. This is a trend that needs to be reversed in order to foster a better connection with the Elon campus community. Students who expressed interest in serving the community or donating money will choose an organization that they are familiar with to contribute. If the majority of Elon students are not aware of Allied Churches or the extent of their services to the community, the organization will not receive recognition, donations or volunteers. The students will be more likely to donate their money or volunteer their time to an organization that they are familiar with and have a personal connection to.

Through the survey we found that 62 percent of respondents would prefer to volunteer their time rather than give money. Since Elon provides so many opportunities for service learning through classes and organizations, it is not surprising that students would be receptive to volunteering. However, through the focus group we were able to get a realistic perspective on what stops students from volunteering. Seniors tend to be more focused on themselves, preparing for graduation and dedicating their time to organizations they are already involved in. Even though many students expressed interest in volunteering in general, they agreed that service was not a priority their senior year. But if Allied Churches is able to connect with underclassmen that are still exploring different organizations and clubs, they will have a better chance of recruiting volunteers and connecting with students. Getting students involved in their freshman or sophomore years will increase the likelihood that they will form a connection and stay dedicated

to the organization throughout their time at Elon. Creating a better interaction process and harnessing a better understanding of the organization amongst the freshmen and sophomore age groups will provide a sounder support system to continue in the future. A tactic to do this would be poster or outreach campaign that provides the key message of “Hunger and Homelessness is a prominent problem in Alamance County,” which will not only spread the word, but also help these younger students become more acclimated to the surrounding communities in which they will be a part of during their time at Elon.

Focus group participants were receptive to the idea of donating money in small increments. This would be a tactic that would be more aimed at upperclassmen that are too over-committed with other organizations to volunteer their time to Allied Churches. The appeal of this idea is that students can contribute and make a difference without putting much effort in. Although we spoke only with Elon seniors, they provided much insight into the fact that had they been introduced to volunteering when they first entered Elon as freshmen or even sophomores, then they would likely be more inclined to participate in volunteer opportunities as well as donation programs.

Based on the data collected, we have narrowed in on two specific ways to better connect with Elon students. When planning the campaign, we must keep in mind that it is more practical for upperclassmen to donate money than it is to depend on them to volunteer. If we want to increase student donations, we will need to provide opportunities for students to make recurring monthly donations in small increments totaling less than \$20 per month. Providing this opportunity will allow more students to be indirectly involved with Allied Churches without over-committing themselves. These donations, though small, would add up to provide Allied Churches with a steady income of donations.

Additionally, since it was brought to our attention during the focus group that many Elon students are unaware how prevalent homelessness is in Alamance County; we must make it a priority to educate them about the issues that affect the community. With this aspect of our campaign, we will target the younger student population on campus, as this age group will be more likely to commit time to the organization.

When looking back on our research, it must be acknowledged that we did not have a representative sample of the overall student population. Since our focus group consisted entirely of seniors, we relied on the survey to receive feedback from underclassmen. However,

incidentally, the majority of the respondents to the survey were also seniors. The gender breakdown in our samples for both the survey and focus group were not indicative of the roughly 60:40 ratio of female to male students at Elon. Both samples were predominately female, but the ratio was more severely skewed towards women in the sample, relative to the population. For example, we only had one male participant in the focus group, which limits our ability to determine the differences in attitudes and behaviors based on gender. Even though we had students from many different majors and backgrounds, those two factors could have influenced our findings.

PLANS | GOALS | OBJECTIVES

Executive Summary

Despite being severely underfunded and understaffed, Allied Churches is dedicated to helping the homeless community of Alamance County. It has come to our attention that some of the financial and human capital shortfalls are largely due to a lack of awareness in the Elon University and Alamance County communities. There is a lack of public understanding in terms of Allied Churches itself and its mission, as well as the larger issue of homelessness in the area. Thus, our plans, goals and objectives for this campaign center on generating more awareness of the issue of homelessness and the important work of Allied Churches.

This campaign will seek to make a connection with Allied Churches' publics in order to motivate them to give their time and/or gifts to help fulfill the organization's mission. Homelessness is typically not very high on a person's priority list in terms of causes that are important to them, which is why our campaign will attempt to make the issue more personal. Executive Director Hunter Thompson has said himself that he generally has the most success with donors when he is able to establish a connection with them. This campaign will attempt to replicate the power of these personal relationships on a larger scale to help Allied Churches carry out its mission.

Statement of Policy and Intent

The problem this campaign will address is that a majority of Elon students are not familiar with Allied Churches and are unaware of the prevalence of homelessness in Alamance County. Even if students have heard of the organization, they do not know the full extent of Allied Churches efforts to assist the community, or how much it relies on donations and volunteers to sustain those efforts.

The goal of this campaign is to raise awareness on the Elon campus and in the surrounding community about the issue of homelessness in Alamance County. In order to cultivate and sustain a consistent donor and volunteer base for Allied Churches, it is crucial for the community to understand the severity of hunger and homelessness.

Our plan is to make the issue of homelessness more personal, and consequentially inspire students and residents to connect to Allied Churches and contribute to the organization. Allied Churches needs to have a more substantial presence on campus so that students have an

opportunity to gain a better understanding of the organization and its mission.

This plan will meet its goals because it will bring the cause to life. Individuals who are not currently contributing to the organization most likely do not realize the potential they have to make a difference. If we present an opportunity for them to participate in a simple and manageable way, they will be more likely to join the cause.

The overall theme of the plan is to raise awareness in the community about how homelessness affects individuals and families in Alamance County. People will be more likely to donate if they feel an emotional connection to the cause, and presenting the issue in a personal way will inspire them to start building a lasting relationship with Allied Churches.

Contribution to Organizational Goals:

The basic goals of Allied Churches, as outlined in its mission statement, are to shelter the “homeless, hungry, and hopeless,” to act as a “sanctuary for those seeking spiritual renewal,” and to serve as “a catalyst for personal responsibility and transformation” (AC Mission Statement). While these represent long-term, overall goals, it has also established several short-term objectives. The most critical short-term goal the organization is working to accomplish is to increase both its donor and volunteer base. Under Hunter Thompson’s leadership, Allied Churches is working to appeal to new donors. It seeks to do so by making homelessness a more personal issue for potential donors. Thompson said that if he and the organization can get people emotionally connected to Allied Churches, then there is a better chance of attracting new benefactors.

Our group will focus primarily on raising awareness within the Burlington community. Through the research obtained through our focus group and survey, we found that students are most likely to volunteer time and money at organizations with which they have a personal connection. Since our research also showed that students are not very familiar with some of the socio-economic problems in Alamance County, and the benefits of organizations like Allied Churches, we will focus on helping students to understand their proximity to these important issues, such as homelessness. As we begin to move into the holiday months, we feel that increasing the public’s emotional connection to homelessness will directly increase the number of donations Allied Churches receives. While our primary goal is to increase financial

contributions to the organization to meet its growing need, we also have an underlying goal that the awareness campaign, specifically at and around Elon, will increase volunteer participation. Hunter Thompson has clarified that the organization needs financial assistance more so than volunteering, but we hope that by informing students of the growing issue of homelessness in Burlington, students will feel emotionally connected to the organization and thus be more inclined to volunteer.

Our hope for the campaign is to increase the endowment and number of financial contributions to Allied Churches. Since non-profits rely heavily on their donor base, we must increase the amount of donations the organization receives. Establishing an awareness campaign is an effective and practical way that we feel can help accomplish that goal. We hope that by generating an emotional response, the campaign will persuade people to contribute to Allied Churches.

Statement of Objectives

This plan will work to increase organizational awareness by 50 percent within the Elon campus community. It will also seek to increase donor participation throughout the community by 15 percent. The plan is intended to raise awareness and increase financial contributions in the Elon community, with the possibility of expanding to the greater Alamance County community. While we are realistic in understanding that it would be extremely difficult for the organization to implement this campaign in time for the holiday season, our group agreed that the holidays are a time that individuals would be more inclined to participate.

The increasing awareness objective will be measured through recorded increases in student participation at Allied Churches or for the overall hunger and homelessness cause. The organization can record this measure by tracking volunteers and also by working with on-campus student organizations to track student participant numbers with organizations and events that are similar to Allied Churches. Methods of evaluating our campaign also include reply cards, which would be sent with donor forms, in which individuals would be asked to indicate why they chose to contribute to the organization. This will help the organization to develop an understanding of the reasons that some elements of the campaign are more effective than others (the emotional connection to the poster campaign, the ease of the donation program, etc.). The increasing financial contributions objective will be measured through monthly reporting of total donations

compared to the past year's donation numbers. This tracking will take place for a span of six months, upon which time the average increase, or decrease, in donations will mark the effectiveness of the increasing financial contributions objective.

STRATEGIES

Executive Summary

Our campaign will reach out to the larger Alamance County community as a whole. Through our research we found that the most significant need that the organization has, other than lack of funding, is the lack of awareness of the issues in which they serve. Our focus group participants emphasized their lack of knowledge in regards to hunger and homelessness issues present in both Alamance County and right outside the walls of Elon University. This will lead us to work towards building awareness specifically on Elon's campus, as well as further reaching out to the Burlington community to help build familiarity with the organization's name as well as its efforts.

The goal of our awareness campaign is to build a stronger, more committed volunteer and donor base. One of the strategies for achieving this goal will be through a poster campaign, which will take moving images and quotes on the issues of hunger and homelessness and use their powerful messages to evoke a response, such as volunteering and donating money to the organization. This poster campaign will also work to change the overall perception of homelessness, which is currently based on a lot of misinformation and speculation rather than fact, for the most part.

A main obstacle that this campaign faces is trying to address, and confront, the misconceptions that tend to arise from the name, "Allied Churches." Our campaign will have to help ensure that the publics understand that the name is not necessarily indicative of the organization's overall mission and goals. The name itself does not necessarily promote what the organization is about, or what it does, so our messages will have to help the audience make that connection in order to build a stronger, more informed, volunteer and donor base.

Publics Addressed by the Plan

The audiences being targeted by our campaign are fairly broad because of the general lack of awareness across much of the Elon and greater Alamance County communities. More specifically, we want to target Elon University students, local churches, and local public schools as the campaign seeks to build and strengthen relationships with these publics in order to further the mission of Allied Churches.

Elon University students represent perhaps the largest growth-potential for volunteers and new donors as well. While there is some familiarity with the organization through volunteering and service learning courses, our research clearly indicated a shortage of awareness regarding Allied Churches and homelessness in general. Our communication with Elon students will also serve to target faculty and staff, which can help advocate for the organization and perhaps develop a service learning relationship with Allied Churches.

While the campaign seeks to raise awareness and expand the organization's base of volunteers and donors, it is also important to not alienate the current base. Local churches represent the core group of volunteers and donors. We also want to target them, and re-emphasize the need for their generous contributions. Money is tight for churches as well, and it is important for them to keep Allied Churches in mind as they allocate outreach funds. It is also crucial to continue to communicate with the individual members so that they realize the need, as well as the continued importance of their gifts of time and/or money to Allied Churches. Churches, and its members, are typically among the largest contributors to the organization and cannot be ignored as we execute this campaign.

Another important audience is local public schools. As one focus group participant pointed out, schools such as Williams High School in Burlington have an existing relationship with Allied Churches, but those relationships could be stronger. Many high school students are looking to serve the community in order to further their college applications, and Allied Churches could provide them with such an opportunity. Additionally, many organizations, such as the National Honor Society, are almost always looking for service opportunities in the community. Even individual classes, of all ages, are likely to be receptive to the prospect of community service. As future leaders of the community, it is important for the public school population of Burlington to be aware of the socioeconomic troubles that their county faces as well.

Strategies

In order to achieve our objectives we must educate the local community about hunger and homelessness. Our strategies must evoke an emotional response from our audience and provide a reasonable and easy way for individuals to participate in the cause and contribute to Allied Churches. We will use three strategies throughout the duration of this campaign.

1. *Printed promotional materials*

2. *Online incremental donation program*

3. *Digital promotion*

The first strategy will be comprised mainly of posters distributed around Alamance Community, specifically on the Elon University campus and at local churches. We want to communicate two specific messages through these posters.

The first is that homelessness is a personal issue that affects people in our community. The printed materials will be used to achieve our objective of raising awareness about Allied Churches and educating the community about the issue of homelessness by including statistics and stories. Elon students are unaware that homelessness is an issue that affects Alamance County. The posters will need to demonstrate that this is a local problem that cannot be ignored. The second message we want to communicate is that it is easy for everyone to get involved and make a difference. The posters will direct people to the Allied Churches website and Facebook page, where they can find more information about volunteering or donating.

The second strategy will consist of an online incremental donation program to raise funds for Allied Churches. The program will make it easy for individuals to donate money to Allied Churches. It is especially important to communicate to students that this option of giving is manageable, affordable and impactful. People do not have to donate large amounts of money to make a difference. Even just a dollar a week can help the organization. Since this is a recurring donation, it requires no work or maintenance.

Third, we want to connect all aspects of our campaign through digital strategies. We will capitalize on utilizing Allied Churches social media accounts and website to strengthen the message, reach a larger audience and foster a dialogue with the community.

Obstacles

In developing our campaign, we wanted to ensure that we took into consideration some of the major problems that could arise, so that we could modify our plan accordingly. Because our campaign is centered on raising awareness about Allied Churches throughout Elon and Burlington, we understand that one obstacle will be finding a way to measure any increase in awareness and any change in volunteers and donations as a result. Awareness is not something that can be tangibly measured very easily or accurately, and we recognize that it will be difficult

to determine for certain how far our campaign reached.

When considering the obstacles that could arise in distributing our posters and materials to various organizations and churches in the area. We understand that there may be some businesses and churches that are unwilling to hang the posters, because perhaps there are already service organizations with which they are affiliated. Some organizations might also feel obligated to donate (whether it be food, money, or volunteer time), and thus be less inclined to display our posters. There are also many organizations and businesses within Burlington that may have specific religious ties or that may be unwilling to support our campaign because the name of the organization, “Allied Churches,” sounds as though it would be religiously affiliated. We also recognize that there could be a potential obstacle in working with the local schools, because they may already have connections with service organizations in the community, or would simply not be willing to participate.

For the local businesses and churches, our group feels that it is especially important to reassure them that, though the organization sounds as if it would be religiously affiliated, it is a non-denominational organization that serves the homeless. Many organizations try to avoid committing to one specific religion or belief, in order to remain objective for their consumers, so it is important that we stress the organization’s policy for acceptance of all beliefs. We also would want to stress to the businesses and churches that we do not expect them to donate their time or money to the organization if they agree to hang the posters. We feel that there may be some businesses, restaurants, or churches that would feel obligated to donate to the organization if they displayed our posters. We want to highlight the fact that our goal is simply to raise awareness about the presence of homelessness in Alamance County. Some more specific obstacles that could arise include issues with people defacing the posters, or simply being unreceptive to the message of the posters.

For the schools, we would want to establish some easy ways that students can participate and get involved with Allied Churches. We can speak with different teachers and schools to gauge which organizations receive the most attention, and see if there might be some potentially more effective means to increase student awareness and eagerness to contribute.

Many of these obstacles can be addressed by further explaining the organization and making our campaign as simple as possible for business owners and churches to utilize. Simplicity, we have found, is an extremely important factor for increasing both the volunteer

base and donations, as individuals do not want to go out of their way in order to volunteer. As long as we articulate the goals of our plan, and why we are increasing awareness, we feel that businesses and restaurants would be more receptive to our cause.

We also understand that we need to make our posters and poignant as possible. We want to connect on an emotional level with the largest possible population, especially approaching the holiday season, when more individuals are inclined to donate to service organizations. We need to make the posters' message concise and easy to understand, so that it can reach the largest audience. Also, by making a list of where we hang each poster, we can monitor them frequently to ensure that they have not been defaced or destroyed. Overall, the most important way to combat potential obstacles is to ensure that our campaign is easy to understand, and that we highlight the easiest possible ways in which people can contribute to the organization.

TACTICS

Executive Summary

Allied Churches is a non-profit organization in Burlington, North Carolina, founded to help and serve the homeless community in the area. This section outlines our group's tactics and plans we will utilize in producing our campaign. It will highlight the objectives of the organization, and how they are aligned with our plans and goals. It features the different steps we will take as a way of increasing awareness, our group's primary goal, and also addresses the obstacles that could arise as a result of trying to meet all of these objectives. Some of the most important aspects of this chapter are:

1. **Implementing a poster campaign to increase awareness:** We hope to evoke emotion from both the Elon and Burlington publics, by providing personal stories about the homeless in Burlington, and how Allied Churches helps them.
2. **Creating an incremental donation program:** Our group has brainstormed about this tactic and introduced the idea in both a focus group and survey. We hope to adapt a program where individuals can set up a small, monthly donation program to Allied Churches.
3. **The poster campaign must be clear and easy to understand:** If we hope to attract the largest possible public to our campaign, then we must ensure that our message is easy to understand and fast to read.

Objectives

This public relations campaign is centered on the following objectives:

- Increase donor participation throughout the community by 15 percent
- Increase organizational awareness by 50 percent within the Elon campus community

The overall goal of our campaign is to increase awareness and promote the organization's message throughout the Elon and Burlington communities. We feel that if we are able to evoke an emotional connection between the public and Allied Churches, then people will be more inclined to donate, both their time and money. Because we, as college students, are not capable of donating huge sums of money to the organization, our group believes that the best campaign

we can develop is one that spreads the organization's mission and importance throughout Burlington, and in doing so, hopefully helps increase donations to Allied Churches.

After hearing executive director Hunter Thompson speak in class, as well as during our meeting with him on-site, we understand the importance of increasing financial contributions to the organization. He explained how crucial the need was for more money, and how he has had to cut staff as a result of lack of funding. Our client has expressed that while they have a fairly steady volunteer base, their list of donors is less constant, and that Allied Churches is constantly searching for new donors and fundraising ideas. Because it seems that every aspect of the organization would benefit with more financial contributions, we feel that our awareness campaign aligns with the ideals of the organization and its mission to help the homeless in Burlington.

Proposals for Meeting Objectives

In order to achieve the goals and objectives laid out for our campaign, we will execute the following tactics:

1. Network for Good
2. Poster Campaign
3. Social media and website promotion

All three tactics will be used to raise awareness of homelessness in Alamance County and increase donations to the organization.

Network For Good

Our campaign will begin with the set-up of an automatic recurring donation program using Network for Good. Network for Good is a website that provides a secure donation system, making it possible for individuals to make recurring donations to any charity. Their system processes donations and also allows organizations to send out emails to donors. The program we propose would allow individuals to donate the same amount to Allied Churches each month. For example, if a student at Elon wanted to donate a dollar every week to Allied Churches, they would be able to sign up using Network for Good, and four dollars would be withdrawn from their account each month.

Network for Good offers three packages. The first, DonateNow Lite, is a basic tool for online fundraising. There is a 5 percent fee charged per donation and the donation page would be generic. With the second option, DonateNow, organizations receive a branded donation page but have to pay \$49.95 per month. DonateNow Deluxe is \$99 per month and adds quarterly fundraising templates and direct access to fundraising experts. For this campaign we suggest starting off with the DonateNow Lite package until it is determined how successful the program is and if upgrading to the DonateNow option would be profitable. There is no cost for signing up. Network for good would also provide reports tracking donations, designations and recurring gifts. Donors would receive an automatic, personal thank-you receipt for tax purposes immediately after making their donation. EmailNow is an additional service offered by Network for Good. If the program is successful after a trial period, EmailNow could be added to the package for \$29.95 per month and Allied Churches could send e-newsletters, fundraising appeals and advocacy alerts. Up to 20,000 emails can be sent per month.

For students, we will market this campaign as being simple, hassle-free and life changing. Donating a dollar every week is not a daunting task. It will allow students to contribute to the organization without taking time out of their busy schedules or donating a large amount of money. In order to get the word out on campus, we will collaborate with Elon University's Campus Kitchen to put flyers around campus and send emails out to students, faculty and staff. It can be advertised on the Allied Churches Facebook page as well.

We will market the same campaign in the Burlington community, specifically in the local churches. In a newsletter, Allied Churches can explain the new program and reach out to potential donors. When signing up, participants will have the option of donating a dollar a week or a larger sum. The main point we want to communicate to each audience about this program is that it is an effortless way to make a difference. The recurring donations will continue on a monthly basis unless the individual cancels their account. People will be able to sign up for this service on the Allied Churches website.

Additionally, we could market the program with different themes corresponding to the time of year. For example, if the program launches in February, we could promote a "Give to a New Valentine" campaign on the website and using social media. Another theme could be marketed at the end of the school year and be called "Collect Your Change." Having themes throughout the year would be a helpful way to keep people interested, attract new donors, and

stay relevant.

Poster Campaign

Our group will also launch a poster campaign to raise awareness about Allied Churches. The posters will incorporate pictures of individual people and help educate the viewer about hunger and homelessness. We will make use of personal stories and statistics about the local area to strengthen the power of the campaign. We will put the posters up on the Elon campus and at local churches, and also utilize social media and the Allied Churches website to promote the stories and spread the messages to a larger audience.

Since the students at Elon University are not fully aware of the severity of homelessness in Alamance Community, the posters on campus need to connect them to the issue. We will do this by featuring individuals who have benefited from Allied Churches services and, in doing so, bring the issue to life. We need to put a face to the organization and communicate to Elon students that this is an issue threatening their community. It is not something that can be overlooked or ignored. The same posters will also be placed in local churches.

It needs to be communicated through these printed materials that it is possible to help and contribute, no matter who you are. We will communicate that message by using pictures and guiding people to the online incremental donation program. The text on the posters needs to be simple and brief, but compelling.

One poster, for example, could have a picture of a small child and say, “Aaron is 4 years old. He loves baseball and is the oldest of three. Aaron is homeless in Alamance County. Can you help him? Donate today.”

Another poster could feature a young mother, and read, “Everyday my toddlers ask me when we are going home. We are homeless in Alamance County. Can you help us? Donate today.”

A third example could feature a man in his fifties, and read, “Sam lost everything in an apartment fire. Now he is homeless in Alamance County. Can you help him? Donate today.”

At the bottom of each poster, there will be information about the incremental donation program. For example, “Donate as little as \$1 a week to Allied Churches and help families like Sarah’s get the chance they deserve. Visit www.AlliedChurches.org for more information.” That will hopefully drive people to the website to learn more about the organization and be able to

make a donation using Network for Good.

We will print 200 color posters that are 8.5 inches by 14 inches. These are the posters that will be put up around campus and in the community. Additionally, we will print 12 larger posters that are 18 inches by 24 inches. These will be dry-mounted and put up in busy areas where they will be seen by the most people. For example, the posters could be placed at student centers at Elon University, such as Moseley, the bookstore, or Koury Business Center. The rest of the larger posters will be placed in local churches and businesses.

Digital

The individual stories that appear on the printed posters can continue on Allied Churches social media pages and website. Feature stories could be written and placed on the website, and short video interviews or photos could be uploaded to Allied Churches Facebook page. Photos and videos especially would help viewers realize that these are real people in our community who just need some help. We want students and individuals in the community to connect to the people and the stories, rather than be intimidated by the overarching issue of homelessness. By incorporating a digital campaign that is connected to the printed posters, we will reach a greater audience and be able to send a stronger message. The digital options for content are endless and having photos and interviews to upload a few times a week will keep Allied Churches content updated and keep people interest in the stories.

Obstacles

In developing our poster campaign, we recognize that problems could arise in the content, and in making sure that the posters evoke emotion in the largest number of possible publics. We first understand that problems can arise in gauging ways to measure our campaign's effectiveness. It could be challenging to accurately determine whether or not it was our campaign or something else that caused individuals to volunteer either their time or money.

Another problem that could arise is in finalizing the exact wording and content so as to make our message clear to the largest possible public. We want as many people as possible to empathize with the organization and its mission and donate as a result. There could be problems if we do not make our message clear enough, or if the wording or phrasing could offend a certain public. The posters must be as easy to read as possible so that people do not feel burdened by

reading them and learning about the organization. We also want to ensure that we plan the proper wording and content so as to attract the largest public.

Another challenge that we could face in our poster plan is in businesses' and churches' possible unwillingness to display our posters. Perhaps they already have a philanthropy or service organization with which they have ties, or perhaps the values and mission of Allied Churches does not align with the specific business or restaurant, and we would then not be permitted to hang our posters. Another smaller issue that could be encountered is with our posters being defaced or destroyed as we have sometimes seen with posters and content throughout the Elon and Burlington community. If we can make a list of where each poster is displayed, and check them periodically, we feel that we will be able to avoid this problem.

A problem with the Network for Good incremental donation program is also in accessibility. If we do not display the service widely enough, then it will not be as successful as we believe it could be. If people are not aware of the program, then they will not donate. By utilizing many forms of social media (the organization's website, Facebook, and Twitter page), we feel that we will be able to better spread information about the incremental donation program, and hopefully increase awareness and involvement.

EVALUATION

Executive Summary

In order to measure the success of this campaign, we must determine whether sufficient funds have been raised through the incremental donation process, as well as whether or not awareness of Allied Churches and homelessness has increased in the surrounding community.

The success of the incremental donation program through Network for Good will be measured through the calculation of the amount of people who use the service as well as how much money has been donated collectively through Network for Good users.

Gauging whether or not the poster campaign raised awareness presents more of a challenge, due to the lack of accessibility to communicate with community members who are seeing and responding to the campaign. Thus we determined that a community survey would be the easiest and most efficient way to reach a random assortment of community members. We will send out two different surveys at three different points in time to determine whether the community has a better understanding of hunger and homelessness issues and thus desires to contribute to the efforts within this community. The first two surveys will go out six weeks after the initial launch of the new plan, then the second survey will go out again, six months after the initial launch and then again, one final time, one year post initial launch period. The surveys will be sent to donors in the mail, available on the Allied Churches website, sent through the volunteer database to any volunteer to the organization within the last five years, as well as sent electronically throughout the Elon University student and faculty/staff community. By asking similar questions to those addressed in our initial survey, we will be able to determine whether or not our campaign was successful in educating the viewer about the cause. If awareness has increased in the community, it should be evident through the survey data and responses.

Evaluation Criteria

The success of this campaign will be evaluated using a content analysis and a random community survey. The poster campaign and the online donation program will provide raw numerical data from monetary donations collected, which will be analyzed by the Allied Churches staff. The analysis of basic effectiveness will be evaluated using the following numbers: how many posters placed compared to number of people (estimate) that pass by posters daily; money collected through online donation program; number of volunteers participating in

the organization compared to past numbers; and overall support for the organization (money, volunteers, food donations, etc.). These numbers will provide the information to perform an analysis of basic effectiveness of the campaign by comparing that data to the raw numerical data of monetary donation tracking. This evaluation method will provide numerical evidence of success or lack thereof, which will allow the Allied Churches staff to analyze the success of the campaign.

We will also distribute a survey, which will provide a random assortment of community member participants who will be asked basic questions based around Allied Churches and their efforts in the hunger and homelessness cause. The survey distributed to each Allied Churches donor in the current donor database, to each volunteer in the Allied Churches volunteer database active within the last five years, to each Elon student listed in the Kernodle Center's database, as well as being posted on the Allied Churches website to possibly catch those people that may have seen the campaign and in turn visited the Allied Churches website. This survey will consist of 10 questions that will gauge the participant's overall awareness of the organization and then ask whether the participant has seen the new poster campaign or heard about and/or participated in the new online donation program. The survey will also ask how effective the poster's messages are in conveying a true sense of urgency to help the hungry and homeless in the surrounding communities. The responses to this survey will be analyzed using the raw data of the results generated online.

The criteria analyzed in this evaluation will help gauge the reach of the campaign, both on Elon's campus and throughout the community while also recognizing any changes in volunteer participation and donations post-campaign implementation. The organization needs to have a better understanding of whether or not it has received a return on investment upon the conclusion of the campaign. The survey of Elon students and community members would be the easiest way to measure change in a larger population sample, thus the reasoning for this method.

The goals of this campaign are to increase awareness of the issues in which the organization pushes to solve, to increase donations as well as increasing volunteer participation amongst Elon University's campus as well as throughout the local community, and it will do so through a creative poster campaign used to share real-life stories of those struggling to survive and also a new online, small incremental donation program. This evaluation process will measure both donations and volunteer participation as well as awareness in the surrounding

community. The organization needs more money to operate and desires a better relationship with the Elon student community, which could ultimately increase donations as well as volunteer participation. This campaign reaches out to both Elon and the surrounding Alamance County community, and this evaluation process will measure all of these elements, to determine its success.

Method

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of our campaign, our group recommends several different methods to Allied Churches. It will be easier to measure the success of the incremental donation program than our awareness campaign, as the organization will be able to simply see how much money is raised through the donation program and measure its impact on organizational effectiveness. The success of the awareness campaign will be measured through both online and mail surveys for donors, volunteers, community members and Elon University students and faculty/staff. We believe that the organization will be able to determine the success of the poster campaign and its message through this form of evaluation.

Although both a survey and focus group were used when researching public opinion of homelessness and Allied Churches, a survey would be beneficial in evaluating the success of the campaign. Conducting a focus group would only provide minimal results of the participating small group which would lead to overall generic conclusions, and since one of the main goals of this campaign is to reach the largest possible public with the organization's mission a survey as the evaluation method would reach a larger public, and thus providing the most efficient and valuable response towards the campaign.

The first simple survey would be included in donor mailings, which would ask each donor to indicate the reasoning in which to give money to Allied Churches. The survey card (see Appendix) would include two basic questions, requiring basic responses that would likely encourage more people to respond. The first question, "How did you become familiar with Allied Churches?" asks individuals to "check all that apply," and then lists six specific options, and an "other" section, where they would be asked to specify the different ways in which they learned about the organization and its mission. "Posters" would be an option so that the organization could evaluate how the donor base is responding to the new posters throughout the

area. The second and final question, “Why did you choose to donate to Allied Churches?” would give the organization a clearer understanding of the type of content which caused most individuals to donate. This response card would only target those individuals in the organization’s donor database and those who had expressed interest (either online or by phone) in donating to Allied Churches. While it would not reach as large a public as our second survey, it will help gauge what causes *likely* donors to contribute towards the mission of the organization.

The second survey would reach a larger public, as it would be accessible to all who visit the Allied Churches website, be sent to each donor, each volunteer in the organization’s database whom have been active within the last five years, and would also be sent to each student and faculty/staff on Elon University’s Kernodle Center volunteer database. The survey would generate a random sample of participants that are at least engaged in service whether through donating or participating in service efforts throughout the local community as well as being directly accessible on the organization’s website. This survey would include ten questions, none of which would be open-ended, in the hopes that its simple structure would encourage more individuals to respond. The survey will provide data to further determine the effectiveness of the poster campaign. It will ask participants whether they have seen an Allied Churches poster, where the posters were seen, how effective the posters are at conveying the organization’s message, and suggestions for better places to host the posters. The survey will also ask participants to critique the posters by identifying the pieces of the posters that need to be changed or improved and it will also ask each participant choose a different method for reaching the community rather than a poster campaign. Lastly the survey will ask the gender of the participant which will determine the effectiveness on males versus females and it will also ask age and affiliation in order to further provide data to the organization in regards to who and how the poster campaign is reaching.

The two surveys will first be distributed six weeks after the initial launch of the poster campaign. The second survey will be sent two more times, six months after the launch of the campaign and again, after one year from the initial campaign launch. This timeline provides ample time for the campaign to reach a large audience within the community while not extending too long to lose attention of participants.

The success of the incremental donation program will be significantly easier to evaluate as the organization will have viable, raw data numbers to analyze and rate accordingly. It is recommended that Allied Churches establish the program, and wait three months for an initial gauge of its success which would include looking at total donations and comparing that new figure to past years reports. The organization will promote the program through its website and various social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), and allowing the three month “test period” to determine its effectiveness. If the organization sees that the costs of running the incremental donation program are too great when compared to gross donations, they can re-evaluate its effectiveness.

Analysis

The data collected should be clearly organized and formatted to be easily presentable for it to be a valuable tool for evaluation, thus including collecting the responses to the surveys in a concise document and/or spreadsheet, and also creating charts that graphically display the results found in the evaluation process. This can be accomplished through the use of Microsoft Excel, or similar software.

From there, the data can be analyzed and compared with the campaign’s initial research in order to provide perceptions, awareness, and willingness of participants to participate in the organization and provide evidence for other categories of evaluation that may have changed as a result of the campaign. Simple statistical analysis such as mean and median can be utilized as a method of comparison for the financial components. Other than simply reading and interpreting responses, the change in awareness/perception could also be analyzed through coding for different words that would indicate a change and/or baseline for awareness and perception in a more quantitative manner. This can be easily organized in a spreadsheet with different key terms as column titles and the evidential words listed below those titles according to where it best fits.

If the analysis is thorough, and presented in a clear, concise manner, it will serve Allied Churches well because both current and future staff members can refer back to it in the future to further analyze trends over a longer period of time. Ultimately, the data collected and analyzed for this campaign should provide feedback for future efforts, and these methods should provide a solid framework for the organization’s next campaign.

BUDGET

Because Allied Churches operates on a very tight budget, our campaign was designed to be fairly cost efficient. The awareness posters are the only planned activity that requires funding. While they will require a fairly significant investment up-front, they should provide a decent return in terms of volunteers and donations. However, it is almost impossible to speculate exactly what that return might be. The poster investment, on the other hand, is much more concrete.

Materials/Costs for the Poster Campaign:

- 200 color prints (8.5x14) at 44 cents each = \$88
 - These are smaller prints on regular printer paper to be spread throughout Elon University's campus, on community bulletin boards and at different indoor locations throughout the community.
- 12 posters (18x24) at \$11 each = \$132
 - These posters will be spread throughout the community at different locations and are of higher quality and durability than the other 200 prints.
- 12 stakes (3 feet) at \$6.73 for 25-pack = \$6.73
 - These stakes will be used to post the higher quality posters throughout the community. Found at Lowe's Home Improvement.
- 3 rolls of all-weather duct tape at \$7.78 per roll = \$23.34
 - Found at Lowe's Home Improvement.
- Six hours labor (volunteer time) plus gas at \$3.20 per gallon for poster distribution and check-ups = \$25
 - Connect with Elon University's Kernodle Center to have students distribute and post the different posters throughout Elon's campus and the community.

Tentative expenditures estimate: \$275.07

Another source of expenditures would come from donations through the Network for Good service. It is difficult to estimate exactly how much revenue it will bring in. Also, the site charges a fee of either 5 percent of all donations for the service or a flat fee of \$49.95 per month. In our estimation, the 5 percent option would probably be in Allied Churches' best interest, so the exact amount that will have to be returned would vary based on the gross donation revenue.

Final 1-year tentative expenditures estimate (including monthly service fee): \$874.87 for one year

TIMETABLE

Calendar

- January 9, 2012
 - o Hunter Thompson meets with Kernodle Center Director Mary Morrison, LINC student leader, and Campus Kitchen Program Coordinator and student director to discuss partnerships and spreading word of Allied Churches on Elon's Campus.
- January 16, 2012
 - o Hunter Thompson signs contract with online donation service and pays fees due at sign-up (see monthly online donation fee in Budget section). Connect with LINC student leader and begin discussion on spreading word about online donation sign-ups throughout Elon's campus and the community.
- February 13, 2012
 - o BEGINNING OF PROJECT
 - o Launch online donation sign-ups with Valentine's Day theme ("give to a new Valentine").
 - o Spread posters throughout Elon's campus and community businesses. (212 total)
 - o Launch digital campaign on Facebook and Allied Churches website.
- March 26, 2012
 - o Initiate first evaluation session to analyze the overall effectiveness of the poster campaign one month in. (two week evaluation period)
- April 23, 2012
 - o Site check each poster location for fresh posters or replacements where needed. (included in labor/gas charge in budget)
- May 7, 2012
 - o Launch "end of year" online giving campaign ("Collect your change").
- June 18, 2012
 - o Initiation of the final stage of evaluation. (Analyze return on investment of both campaigns)
 - o END OF PROJECT
- August 2012
 - o Partner with Mandy Gallagher's next semester of service learning classes for the next PR campaign planning process.

Schedule

1. Schedule meeting with Mary Morrison, Director of the Kernodle Center, LINCS student leader, Campus Kitchen Program Coordinator, Campus Kitchen student director to discuss new launch of program to better involve Elon's campus with Allied Churches.
2. Hunter Thompson to sign contract with online donation program and pay fees for the program.
3. Hunter Thompson meets with LINCS student leader to discuss best way to distribute posters on Elon's campus and how to best spread the word about the new initiative with Elon.
4. Hunter Thompson possibly schedule a meeting with Chamber of Commerce leaders to find best ways to partner with local businesses and find partners in the community to host posters.
5. PROJECT BEGINS: Launch online donation campaign with Valentine's Day theme.
6. Spread 212 posters throughout Elon's campus and local community businesses.
7. Launch digital campaign on Facebook and Allied Churches website.
8. Begin first two-week evaluation session to find initial level of success of the campaigns.
9. Check each poster site for fresh posters or replacements, etc.
10. Launch "end of year" online giving campaign "Collect your change" to gather change from moving college students.
11. Begin final evaluation stages to find return on investment and overall success of the campaign.
12. END OF PROJECT: Hunter Thompson begins discussions with Mandy Gallagher to work on the next PR campaign planning.

APPENDIX

Research

Survey Results/Responses:

1. Are you familiar with Allied Churches? If so, what do you know? If not, what are your perceived thoughts?

Responses:

- Yes—Allied Churches works with hunger and homelessness in Alamance County. It is also one of our LINCS sites.
- No
- Some sort of group of churches
- No
- No
- No
- It sounds like a group of churches attempting to achieve a common goal, but I have never heard of it before.
- No. I think it might be about different types of churches joining together to teach.
- I've heard of them & know nothing about them. My guess is that they are a network of churches...who are allies of course.
- No, I am not familiar with Allied Churches
- No
- No...churches that are formed together with the same belief
- Not really. They help people who are homeless?
- Not very much. I know that we do a lot of service learning classes with them in the Comm school, and that there are 2 branches-the church and the homeless/food? Shelter?
- No
- I know Campus Kitchen at Elon is affiliated with the organization and it serves individuals who are impoverished.
- I have heard of it. I think it has an emergency homeless shelter as well as a food distribution center.
- Yes, that it is extremely unorganized and in need of help
- No
- Yes, I know it's a homeless shelter
- Yes. I know that they are a three-tiered homeless shelter. They serve meals, but also have an overnight shelter for families. They have a drop in shelter as well.
- No, I am sure they are a group of churches that share funds and do fund raising together.
- No, but I think of someone helping someone else when I think of the word 'allied'
- Yes. Homeless Shelter
- I don't know too much about it, but perceive it as a place with a good mission to provide help to those in need.
- No idea.
- No. It's churches that are allied together?

- I know that it is a homeless shelter in Burlington that provides a place for people to stay for 90 days and gives food. Our volunteers donate meals to them.
- No, I do not know what it is.
- No, I am not.
- Yes, I know they need help.
- Allied Churches is a homeless shelter that provides shelter, food, job training, and Christian guidance (if asked for).
- Yes I heard of it but never volunteered
- Yes, I know the different services it offers, how it is used, and that they are lacking funds
- Yes, I know that Allied Churches serves the hungry and homeless populations of Burlington
- Yes—they are a homeless shelter/soup kitchen in Burlington. They do a lot of really good work, but they are currently strapped for cash. They don't have a ton of room so they can't shelter that many people, and they are over crowded as it is. Campus Kitchens partners with them in providing meals.
- Not familiar. Assuming it is churches that work together to complete mission projects
- I'm familiar with Allied Churches, but am not exactly sure with their mission. If I had to guess, I'd say they're involved with mitigating hunger and homelessness.
- No
- No
- No. I would think it's a community service organization involving churches though...
- Yes. I know that they struggle with having a negative reputation, and they are broke nonetheless.
- No. Are they churches with the same affiliation?
- Different religions that work together?
- No
- No
- No
- Yes. I know it is a homeless shelter and has a food kitchen. Needs to be redone and has terrible funding.
- No
- No.
- No, but I'm assuming it's a group of churches that work together to serve a common purpose
- I'm not religious
- I am not familiar
- No
- I have no knowledge of Allied Churches
- No
- No
- No
- Yes—helps homeless people

- No. Maybe it's an alliance between the churches of the Burlington area that work together to help the community through shared resources.
- No. I would think it's a Church without a denomination? Or an alliance of churches? I have no idea.
- Yes, I know that Campus Kitchen delivers food there once a week for homeless people.
- No. I would assume it has to do with service of some sort.
- Yes, they are a homeless shelter that helps out people in the Burlington area but they are virtually bankrupt and have horrible facilities.
- No, I'm not familiar but maybe it's a group of churches that are united by a certain goal.
- Yes, a bunch of churches came together to form this nonprofit that gives homeless people in Burlington hot meals.
- Medium, I heard some students talking about volunteering there but I do not really know what it is
- Yes! I am a cooking shift leader for Campus Kitchen and we prepare meals for them on a weekly basis.
- No
- They are difficult to work with.
- I think they do stuff with homeless people.
- No. That they help people in the community.
- No, but I assume it has something to do with different churches/denominations/religions in the area working together.
- No
- No

2. Rank the following ways to contribute to Allied Churches in terms of your preference (5 = least favorite 1 = most favorite)

	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Avg	Response Count
Donating Food	41.3% (31)	21.3%	8.0%	12.0% (9)	17.3% (13)	2.43	75
Donating Money	20.3% (15)	23.0% (17)	16.2% (12)	23.0% (17)	17.6% (13)	2.95	74
Preparing Food	11.1% (8)	27.8% (20)	26.4% (19)	23.6% (17)	11.1% (8)	2.96	72
Servicing the Food	10.4% (8)	19.5% (15)	31.2% (24)	29.9% (23)	9.1% (7)	3.08	77
Cleaning up the Food/Kitchen	17.1% (13)	9.2% (7)	19.7% (15)	11.8% (9)	42.1% (32)	3.53	76
Answered Question							78
Skipped Question							3

3. Indicate your Level of Agreement with the following statement: I would be more inclined to participate in a small, incremental donation program (less than \$10 per month) than to volunteer my time.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	7.8%	6
Agree	20.8%	16
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16.9%	13
Disagree	39.0%	30
Strongly Disagree	15.6%	12
Answered Question		77
Skipped Question		4

4. What do you think are some challenges facing Homeless Shelters and Soup Kitchens today? (Check all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of Supplies	74.0%	57
Lack of Volunteers	81.8%	63
Lack of Government Funds	76.7%	59
Negative Stigma Surrounding Homeless Shelters & Soup Kitchens	49.4%	38
Fear of the homeless	37.7%	29
Other (please specify)		4
Answered Question		77
Skipped Question		4

5. Indicate your level of agreement to the following statement: I would be interested in donating my time to Allied Churches.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Disagree	1.3%	1
Disagree	11.7%	9
Neither Disagree nor Agree	27.3%	21
Agree	50.6%	39
Strongly Agree	9.1%	7
Answered Question		77
Skipped Question		4

6. How important is volunteering to you as a College Student?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Most Important	2.7%	2

Very Important	24.0%	18
Important	42.7%	32
Neither Important nor Unimportant	16.0%	12
Unimportant	12.0%	9
Very Unimportant	1.3%	1
Least Important	1.3%	1
Answered Question		75
Skipped Question		6

7. Are you currently involved in any volunteer programs, financially or otherwise, either at Elon or in your hometown?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes (Both at Elon & at Home)	26.3%	20
Yes (at Elon, NOT at Home)	26.3%	20
No (at Home, NOT at Elon)	25.0%	19
No (Neither at Home nor at Elon)	22.4%	17
Answered Question		76
Skipped Question		5

8. Please identify societal issues and causes that are of most importance to YOU (example: Civil Rights Issues, Sexual Orientation, etc.) Why?

- Religion, civil rights, and all equality.
- Helping children in need
- Nature Preservation, Civil Rights
- Unemployment, Education
- Civil Rights- Inequality needs to be a thing of the past, as a society we are more educated than that at this point and everyone deserves equal treatment
- The issue of people being strongly against Gay marriage, because it's their lives and it's not affecting ours.
- Education/tutoring because I think this is one of the most important and sustainable ways to provide opportunities to improve livelihoods & society in the long-term. Definitely civil rights issues as well because discrimination based on gender/race/sexual orientation/religious belief/etc. is never acceptable.
- All of them. Read your Bible.
- Climate Change.
- Sexual orientation issues are most important to me. Unfortunately it remains to be a major source of social stigma and prejudice.
- Aids

- Helping people with disabilities. Most of the time these people did nothing to deserve the situation they ended up in, but they accept it, and persevere through tough times. It is always rewarding to see that drive in somebody and it is rewarding to help them.
- Civil rights, education, poverty
- Don't really have any
- Women's rights, racial discrimination, depression, children suffer from ADHD and ADD, breast cancer. All have affected myself or a family member.
- Civil Rights because I believe that everyone should be treated equally.
- Sexual Orientation.
- Sexual orientation
- Environmental issues and low income families
- Gay rights—most timely
- I am most interested in literacy issues. I think that if people are well educated they can be more independent.
- Hunger & homelessness, human rights, modern day slavery.
- Underprivileged children and animals
- Equal opportunities for disabled.
- Hunger and homelessness because it affects people everywhere. More specifically, children living in poverty or being abused.
- Human rights issues.
- I think it doesn't make sense how people can still hurt and fight each other.
- Homelessness, environmental issues, Poverty, and Education.
- Environmental issues, civil rights.
- Civil rights, equality rights.
- Not sure
- Economic crisis and sexual orientation.
- Civil rights issues because preferential treatment to one group over another is a disadvantage when working together and getting problems solved/things done
- Education, civil rights, lower income families and communities.
- Women's rights
- Rights for undocumented people and the LGBTQQIA community, basic human rights and needs for all, understanding of oppression/injustice with all types of prejudice on a personal, structural, and institutional level, and the brain-drain of the South and how to prevent it. I am interested in each from personal experience with each issue.
- Sexual orientation. I have friends who I support this for.
- Education Reform/Equity for all because I believe better public education can help relieve almost all social issues.
- I'm not sure exactly how to answer this question, but issues that I find most frustrating are those where human beings are denied personhood and a voice. Examples of populations affected by this include individuals experiencing mental illness, homelessness, or even LGBTQ individuals. I am also passionate about hunger and nutrition disparities.
- Helping the homeless
- Fairness
- N/A

- N/A
- Civil rights; no one should be discriminated against for any reason.
- Civil Rights issues
- Student financial aid—who can afford to go to college without leaving some sort of debt?
- Environment
- Animal rights
- Unemployment
- Racial Issues
- 1) Spreading educated and awareness of world issues in general 2) Increasing access to healthcare around the world
- Gay marriage, abortion (pro-choice)
- Civil rights issues—everyone deserves to be treated equally
- No real issues, but causes that support the homeless and battered women/domestic violence victims are a big concern of mine.
- Civil rights issues.
- Civil rights issues and diversity
- Homelessness, Hunger
- Sexual Orientation, Volunteering, Bullying
- Racial issues are very important to me because I come from a multiracial family.
- Financial issues.
- Sexual orientation.
- Literacy, poverty
- Gay marriage, I have a lot of gay friends.
- Sexual orientation
- Sexual orientation
- Civil rights, Child abuse, lack of education for certain areas.
- Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Drug/alcohol dependency
- Educational inequalities (urban schools)
- I think disaster relief for people in need is very important because until it happens to you, you cannot understand how damaging natural disasters can be.
- Feeding/housing the homeless, equal rights to all (no matter your sexual orientation)
- People still discriminating and using words like retard, faggot, and the n word.
- Homelessness because it is sad that we can live such satisfied lives while others are struggling.
- Abortion
- Body image and how perception has changed due to today's media. I have many friends with eating disorders.
- Poverty, education, health benefits for different groups of people.

9. What year are you?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Freshman	2.6%	2
Sophomore	23.7%	18
Junior	26.3%	20
Senior	47.4%	36
Answered Question		76
Skipped Question		5

10. What is your gender?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	18.4%	14
Female	81.6%	62
No Response	0.0%	0
Answered Question		76
Skipped Question		5

Survey:

1. Are you familiar with Allied Churches? If so, what do you know? If not, what are your perceived thoughts?

2. Rank the following ways to contribute to Allied Churches in terms of your preference (5 = Least Favorite to 1 = Most Favorite)

- a. Donating Food
- b. Donating Money
- c. Preparing Food
- d. Servicing the Food
- e. Cleaning up the Food/Kitchen

3. Indicate your Level of Agreement with the Following Statement: I would be more inclined to participate in a small, incremental donation program (less than \$10 per month), than to volunteer my time

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

4. What do you think are some of the challenges facing Homeless Shelters and Soup Kitchens today? (Check all that apply)

- a. Lack of Supplies
- b. Lack of Volunteers
- c. Lack of Government Funds
- d. Negative Stigma Surrounding Homeless Shelters & Soup Kitchens
- e. Fear of the Homeless
- f. Other (Please Specify)

5. Indicate your level of agreement to the following statement: I would be interested in donating my time to Allied Churches:
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither Disagree nor Agree
 - d. Strongly Agree

6. How important is Volunteering to you as a College Student?
 - a. Most Important
 - b. Very Important
 - c. Important
 - d. Neither Important nor Unimportant
 - e. Unimportant
 - f. Very Unimportant
 - g. Least Important

7. Are you currently involved in any volunteer programs, financially or otherwise, either at Elon or in your home town?
 - a. Yes (Both at Elon & at Home)
 - b. Yes (at Elon, NOT at Home)
 - c. Yes (at Home, NOT at Elon)
 - d. No (Neither at Home nor at Elon)

8. Please identify societal issues and causes that are of most importance to YOU (example: Civil Rights Issues, Sexual Orientation, etc.). Why?

9. What year are you?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior

10. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. No Response

Focus Group Questions:

1. Have you participated in service before or during your time at Elon?
2. Where and what causes have you volunteered for and/or donated money to?
3. What specifically attracted you to that cause?

4. How would volunteering and donating money rank among your values right now as college students?

5. Are you familiar with the Allied Churches organization or aware of their general mission?

6. Now, I'm just going to explain a little bit about Allied Churches which is the direct organization that we're working with as part of our class. So, while the name would suggest that it has a religious tie, it's not directly associated with any specific religious organization. That being said, it does have an affiliation with the Christian Assistance Network. When it opened in 1982 its primary relief came through the Good Shepherd Kitchen, which is its soup kitchen, which worked to serve food to the area's homeless population. In 1985, the organization expanded to include emergency night shelter, their homeless shelter. It provided free nightly accommodations for the homeless residents of Burlington. They've just recently added a Drop-In center for the homeless residents to go to during the day, whether they don't have a job or don't have a place to go during that time. So they are in the process of expanding, it's obviously just due to lack of funds that they haven't been able to accomplish as much as they had initially hoped. Knowing all of this, would you be interested in volunteering with Allied Churches? If so, in what capacity?

6a. A lot of the older generations today are talking about how we as a generation aren't volunteering as much. Do you think that's the case or do you think that's a societal thing or do you think it's where we're located? Do you think that it's true that it's gone down generationally or, you know, why do you think that as a community we are less inclined to go to an organization where we don't have that connection more so than generations ago?

7. We understand that we are not in a position, as college students, to donate large sums of money. Would you be more inclined to participate via small, incremental sums?

7a. What would you consider to be a reasonable amount if you were to give something once a week or month?

8. Would you consider yourself well-informed of issues in the Burlington and Alamance community? Specifically Homelessness?

9. Are you more inclined or less inclined to volunteer somewhere you are more or less comfortable?

10. After having learned new information about this organization, and hearing about some of the options we have offered for volunteering, what are the changes that this focus group has sparked a desire to volunteer, or is it just not very likely because of all of the other tasks that you have as a college student? If there were an easier way, would you be more likely to participate?

“That's really all we have for questions right now. Thank you all so much. You've exceeded our expectations and your insight is so appreciated. Thank you for volunteering your time. Is there anything else you want to talk about?
Thank you again.”

Posters



Evaluation

Survey 1:

Allied Churches Donor Response Card

How did you become familiar with Allied Churches (Check all that apply):

Church Newspaper Article Poster Website Friend
 Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) Other (Please Specify) _____

Why did you choose to donate to Allied Churches?

Mission Statement: Through God's love and grace, Allied Churches is a shelter for the homeless, hungry, and hopeless; a sanctuary for those seeking spiritual renewal; and a catalyst for personal responsibility and transformation.

We would like to thank you for your contribution! Your donations continue to make a difference!

Survey 2:

The participants in this survey will be Allied Churches donors, active volunteers (service within last five years) and Elon University students, faculty and staff.

1. How familiar are you with the organization, Allied Churches?
 - a. Very familiar.
 - b. Somewhat familiar.
 - c. Not really familiar.
 - d. Never heard of the organization.
2. Have you seen an Allied Churches image poster in the local community or on campus?

- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure; didn't notice specifically.
3. Where have you seen one of these posters?
 - a. Community bulletin board.
 - b. Business in the community.
 - c. Side of the road, while driving/walking.
 - d. On Elon's campus.
 - e. In Allied Churches building.
 4. How effective do you find the posters at conveying the organization's message and overall mission?
 - a. Very well conveyed
 - b. Conveyed
 - c. Somewhat visible
 - d. Ineffective to most
 - e. Useless
 5. Please identify better places to post the Allied Churches posters. (check all that apply)
 - a. Restaurants
 - b. Parks
 - c. YMCS
 - d. Chamber of Commerce
 - e. Governmental buildings
 - f. Community churches
 - g. Hospitals/Doctor's offices
 - h. Activity locations (movie theaters, bowling allies, show venues, etc.)
 - i. Car dealerships
 6. Please identify which parts of the posters you would change in order to make them more effective. (check all that apply)
 - a. Image
 - b. Story
 - c. Font
 - d. Allied Churches logo location
 - e. Color
 - f. Size
 7. Please identify different types of campaigns that would be effective at spreading Allied Churches message throughout the community. (check all that apply)
 - a. Facebook/Twitter campaign
 - b. E-mail newsletters to anyone that visits the organization and/or its website
 - c. TV commercials
 - d. Radio commercials
 - e. Documentary on hunger and homelessness issues in the community
 - f. Speakers bureau of experts on the issues
 - g. Speakers bureau of community members currently struggling with homelessness
 8. Please choose the option which best identifies you.
 - a. Male
 - b. Female

- c. Prefer not to respond
9. Please choose the age range in which your age is listed.
- a. 15-22
 - b. 23-28
 - c. 29-35
 - d. 36-48
 - e. 49-60
 - f. 61+
10. Please identify which organization or group is most applicable to you.
- a. Church member in the community
 - b. Allied Churches donor
 - c. Allied Churches volunteer
 - d. Elon University student
 - e. Elon University faculty/staff member
 - f. Community member
 - g. Not affiliated