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And Now I'm Here: An Ethnography of Communication Inquiry into Asking for Help Practices at a Homeless Shelter'

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"AND NOW I'M HERE": AN ETHNOGRAPY OF COMMUNICATION INQUIRY INTO "ASKING FOR HELP" PRACTICES AT A HOMELESS SHELTER

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Abstract

At a particular faith-based nonprofit homeless shelter located in metropolitan area in the Southwest region of the United States, here called *the Little City*, this ethnography of communication used one hundred hours of observation, eighteen interviews and two social artifacts to reveal the complex nature of personhood, norms for, and consequences of communicative interaction between homeless individuals and volunteers. Homeless individuals were depicted by themselves, staff, volunteers and the organization as persons who are "broken," "addicted," and as "the new poor." Once homeless individuals joined the Life in Christ's Power program at *the Little City*, they were "depersonalized" as they became students of Christianity, of self and of opportunity. Additionally, homeless individuals also become a person who was either a "giver" or a "user of the program." In contrast to homeless individuals, volunteers were perceived as "just people" but still "outsiders" who were "manipulatable" by homeless individuals. Sometimes perceived as "a joke" to homeless shelter guests, volunteers were also noted as persons that "invest" in the homeless shelter. These aspects of personhood corresponded to different norms of communicative interaction. More specifically, homeless individuals abided by socially constructed norms of communicative interaction that instruct homeless individuals to not approach, to not yell at, to not fraternize with, and to not ask a volunteer for things,

specifically cigarettes. The outcome of these norms of communicative interaction between homeless individuals and volunteers created two "regimes" as homeless individuals felt "left out" by volunteers. Some individuals evaluated situations in which violating the norms for communication were appropriate while still accepting that the consequences of their actions may result in the homeless individual jeopardizing their "privilege" to stay at *the Little City*. In light of potential consequences, the different dimensions of personhood for volunteers and homeless individuals influence how norms of communicative interaction affect whether homeless individuals can or cannot ask for help from volunteers within the speech community at *the Little City*.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In September of 2011, a homeless woman in her late 40's or early 50's shared with me the following pieces of advice:

> If I knew at 26 what I'm going to tell you now, my life would be different. Don't care what anybody else thinks. You have to do what you need to do or want to do. Don't be ashamed or apologetic for anything that you do. You are human you will make mistakes…

She continued by reflecting that she was not always homeless:

> I've spent my life in service to other people, and now I'm here. Nobody gives a shit about me, not even my own children…

Then, she shared the last piece of advice:

> Don't pretend you care. If you don't give a shit, then don't give a shit. I can respect that. But, don't pretend you're going to help me and then leave me at the welfare office for seven hours with no food so that I'm eating ketchup packets and sugar packets for lunch. That happened yesterday. Oh well, I'm homeless. Who gives a shit?

With children and family who do not care, this homeless woman spoke openly about her mistakes and her past experiences volunteering to help other people as well as her most recent experience of "help" that left her stranded at the welfare office with nothing to eat. Now a homeless person living at a homeless shelter, this woman is one of the increasing number of individuals experiencing homelessness in the United States.

Only two years after declaring an economic recession in the United States in December of 2007 (Isidore, 2008), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (2009) reported a 7% increase in homelessness from 2007 to 2009. The most recent statistics from the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2009) estimated that 3.5 million people in the United States experienced a state of homelessness during the course of a year while approximately 664,000 individuals experienced homelessness per night (Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2010). Within the state of New Mexico, the most recent data estimated that 17,000 individuals experience homelessness per year (New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness, 2005). In determining who counts as a homeless individual in these statistics, research establishes two distinct types of homeless persons: the "hidden" and the "visible." Hidden homeless individuals may sleep at a hotel or in a car while visible homeless individuals sleep on the streets or in homeless shelters (Erickson, 2007; Hopper, 2003). For the purposes of this study conducted at a particular faith-based homeless shelter in the Southwest region of the United States, the definition of homelessness focuses on the category of "visible"; that is homeless individuals who utilize public and/or private spaces as well as temporary and transitional facilities, such as homeless shelters, for nighttime residence (United States, 42 CFR 119.1§11302).

With statistics demonstrating that homelessness is on the rise and public policy is unable to prevent homelessness (Blau, 2007), a persistent question remains: How do homeless individuals obtain the most basic human necessities needed to survive while being homeless? We have some, but not all the necessary answers. For example, we know that while living on the streets, some homeless persons utilize interpersonal

relationships with other homeless people and/or with domicile or housed individuals (Hodgetts, Hodgetts & Radley, 2006) to access substantive items such as, food, water, personal hygiene items, or a warm place to stay on the colder nights (Stablein, 2011). However, not all visibly homeless individuals stay on the streets because many stay at homeless shelters, which serve as "a crossroad for those who receive assistance and those who provide assistance" (Lundahl & Wicks, 2010, p. 272). Focusing on the the process of receiving assistance at a homeless shelter, this study specifically explores the nature of homeless individuals "asking for help" from volunteers as a communicative phenomenon.

In this study, communication is defined as "the relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response" (Griffin, 2009, p. 6). Explained through an example, the message of asking for help is constructed by homeless individuals staying at a homeless shelter. This message utilizes symbols to communicate needs to volunteers that may have the resources capable of meeting that need. Upon hearing this message from homeless individuals, volunteers interpret the meaning of the words that were spoken by the homeless individual. Sending a message that is interpreted by and responded to by the volunteer, this process of exchanging messages between individuals establishes a meaning between them. The meaning is constructed between the people participating in the communication and is not based solely upon the words being spoken by the communicators.

One premise of communication states that "words don't mean things, people mean things" (Griffin, 2009, p. 7), implying that socially constructed meaning involves understanding who is speaking. More specifically, within this study, understanding who

is speaking at a homeless shelter relates to the personhood of both homeless individuals and volunteers. As a term, personhood includes "beliefs about persons, loci of motives, sites of consciousness, and links to history" (Carbaugh, Berry, Nurmikari-Berry, 2006, p. 206). These elements of personhood provide answers to the question, "Who am I?" (Carbaugh, 1996). From the communicative perspective, the answers to this question incorporate the personal answers as well as the answers from others because personhood is constructed by individuals involved in communicative interaction (Carbaugh, 1996) communicating within the constraints of organizational policies (Carr, 2011). By investigating the "asking for help" practices between homeless persons and volunteers, this communicative interaction not only highlights the personhood of individuals but also the relational connection between homeless individuals and members of a community, the volunteers, at *the Little City*.

Rationale

In the context of homeless shelters, research has demonstrated that the needs of homeless individuals are not always met. Specifically, Lundahl and Wicks (2010) demonstrate that volunteers at a homeless shelter may fail to meet the needs of homeless individuals due to two possible factors: (1) "lack of understanding about what homeless shelter residents need" and (2) "the lack of communication between the giver and those in the role of advocating for the receiver" (Lundahl and Wicks, 2010, p 273). Here, both a "lack of understanding" and a "lack of communication" are communicative acts involved in homeless individuals having unmet needs. Because meaning and understanding are socially constructed through communication (Philipsen, 1997), a "lack of understanding" reflects a lack of mutually intelligible meanings between volunteers and homeless

individuals. Lundahl and Wicks (2010) call for an increase in communication between volunteers and individuals "advocating" for homeless individuals. Challenging the idea that volunteers need to develop a shared understanding with an "advocate" of homeless individuals, this study focuses on how homeless individuals do and do not ask for help from volunteers in the absence of an advocate (i.e. homeless shelter staff).

With several decades of scholarship on the subject of homelessness, such as life on the streets (see Anderson, 1999; Baggett, et al, 2010; Dollar & Zimmers, 1998; Duneier, 1999; Hopper, 2003) and life in a homeless shelter (see Campbell, 1995; Desjarlias, 1997; Hopper, 2003; Jewell, 1993; Lyon-Callo, 2000), very little research exists regarding how homeless individuals enact communicative practices to ask or not ask for help at a homeless shelter. Research specifically engaging the concept of "asking for help" has been studied within the context of completing work tasks (Chung, 2005) or solving reasoning problems (Alea & Cunningham, 2003); but, "asking for help" has yet to be investigated within a homeless shelter as a communicative phenomenon.

In order to understand the communicative processes in evaluating why volunteers may fail to meet the needs of homeless individuals, this study focuses on the symbolic and rhetorical process of communication (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997). Symbolically mediated, fulfilling, or at least helping fulfill the many basic needs of homeless persons, requires communication that is mutually intelligible and interpreted as beneficial by homeless individuals and volunteers within the context of a homeless shelter. This study investigates how homeless individuals and volunteers make sense of the appropriate and acceptable ways to ask for help within the constraints and allowances at *the Little City.* Manifesting as a rhetorical process, interlocutors, such as givers and receivers of

assistance, utilize communication to achieve their desired ends, or goals and outcomes (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997). Since not all outcomes are considered appropriate within all cultural contexts, it is necessary to consider the "situational, conversational, and cultural contexts" (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997, p. 456) deemed acceptable and appropriate for homeless individuals to ask for help from volunteers.

Sharply contrasted with the socioeconomic differences between volunteers and homeless individual, communicative enactments of asking for and receiving help may or may not be based upon the type of person speaking, specifically a homeless person or a volunteer person. When thinking of homeless individuals and "the impoverishment of homelessness, it may be easy to assume that homeless people receive gratefully any support offered to them at any time. This is not the case" (Wright, 1999, p. 240). On the other hand, volunteers "are often unaware of the ways they could meet the need for self-sufficiency or self-worth" (p. 287) of homeless individuals staying at a shelter, such as *the Little City*. If volunteers attempt to maintain an appearance of equality with homeless individuals staying at a shelter as demonstrated in Holden's work (1997), then giving may actually accentuate socio-economic differences in the construction of personhood.

Through the theory and method of the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972; Covarrubias, 2009; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005), this study seeks to fill the gap in research to understand communicative phenomenon that either enable or restrict how homeless individuals do or do not ask for help from volunteers at a particular homeless shelter. This study focuses on communicative enactments of "asking for help" between homeless individuals and volunteers at a faith based homeless shelter that shall be called *the Little City* (TLC). As a faith-based family homeless shelter in the southwest region of

the United States, TLC provided a location to investigate communicative practices between two particular types of persons, homeless individuals and volunteers. More specifically, this ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972) investigates how individuals, possessing distinct types of personhood socially construct norms for communicative interaction that affect how homeless individuals can and cannot ask for help from volunteers. Additionally, this study explores the consequences of abiding by and violating these norms of communicative interaction.

Context

Preceding my present investigation, I spent approximately seven months volunteering at this homeless shelter that is located in a metropolitan city in the Southwest United States. This experience shaped and influenced my desire to understand communicative interaction and its meanings between volunteers and residents at *the Little City*. A faith-based nonprofit organization devoted solely to assisting homeless individuals, this privately funded organization provides shelter to approximately 300 men, women and children per night and serves approximately 16,000 meals per month to homeless individuals staying at the shelter as well as throughout the community.

As a brief anecdote, when first arriving to stay at the homeless shelter, one participant in this study perceived TLC as "Waco, TX," referring to the closed religious community located outside of Waco, TX that was seized by the United States government in 1993 (see Wood, 1993). For this participant, *the Little City* was symbolically reminiscent of the closed religious community in Texas because the buildings are similarly enclosed with barbed wire fencing and have security check points.

Though there are many buildings owned by TLC, this study includes only three locations: (1) the Multi, (2) the barracks and dormitories, and (3) the thrift store. The Multi is named as such because of the numerous functions that occur within it. It contains a large open room with a concrete gymnasium floor that was recently resurfaced with tile. At breakfast time, white folding tables with metal folding chairs are arranged around the room (as indicated in Figure 1.1 in Appendix C). Immediately after breakfast, the floors are routinely swept, mopped and tables are rearranged for the classes (as indicated in Figure 1.2 in Appendix C) that are held Monday through Friday for the Life in Christ's Power Program (a pseudonym, herein referred to as the LCP program). After classes, the Multi is once again rearranged for meal time (Figure 1.1) and remains that way until after dinner. When dinner is finished at approximately 6:00PM, the Multi is swept and mopped and transformed into an empty room, making room to lay down blue mats approximately 1 ½ inches in depth for homeless individuals to sleep upon. This building also serves as a sleeping area for homeless family units, and single females, and is partitioned off into separate sleeping areas for families, heterosexual partners and single women. Single males are placed in the "classroom," which is a room adjacent to the open gymnasium floor. In the morning, the mats are stored in the classroom; linens are taken to the laundry facility. The tables and chairs that were placed outside for the evening, are once again brought back inside to set up for breakfast.

The final locations used for this study consist of the barracks and dormitories and the thrift store. Each of these locations serve distinct functions for the homeless individuals staying at the shelter. A select group of homeless individuals participating in the Life in Christ's Power program, may sleep in barracks designated for family units or

the dormitories designated for single males and females. The barracks are located south of the Multi and the dormitories are located southwest of the Multi. Should homeless individuals staying at the shelter need clothes, coats, books to read, or toys for children, they may ask a staff member for a voucher to go shopping at the thrift store. Located north of the Multi, the thrift shop is stocked with items donated by the individuals in the community.

Homeless individuals stay at TLC for varying lengths of time depending upon their voluntary enrollment in the Life in Christ's Power program (LCP program). This program is available to approximately 80 out of 300 homeless individuals staying at the shelter at any given time. The LCP program is a nine-month program based on *Life Recovery Bible* (Tyndale, 1998) developed to assist homeless individuals as they address a variety of problems, that will be discussed later in the study. Within this program, homeless individuals must work approximately 30 hours a week around the shelter, attend two hour classes Monday through Friday, and attend required activities, such as musical performances or arts/crafts set up by volunteer(s). Homeless individuals not participating in the LCP program are termed "overnighters" because they are at *the Little City* only for the night. Overnighters who specifically sleep in the Multi may arrive on the property at 3:00PM and must leave the next morning by 10:00AM.

Although homeless individuals participating in the LCP program perform many daily tasks, such as cleaning bathrooms, cleaning the Multi, washing dishes, and providing security details around the homeless shelter, volunteers are encouraged to come help at TLC in various capacities. For example, some of these volunteers arrive once or twice a week to host arts/crafts activities, to serve a meal, or to teach a class. Some

volunteers may only come once a year to serve a meal, and some volunteers may come once and never return again.

In contrast to volunteers, staff members at this particular homeless shelter spend much more time at TLC, with some staff members available by phone even when no longer at the shelter. According to one staff member, approximately "95% of the staff" (TLC staff, Shari) have experienced homelessness at one point in time and have also completed the Life in Christ's Power program at *the Little City.* Of the many staff members at this homeless shelter, participants in this study referenced three particular job positions. First, both the case manager and chaplain manage needs of homeless individuals, such as mental, physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Second, floor supervisors ensure that homeless individuals staying at *the Little City* abide by organizational policies. Third, a volunteer coordinator organizes and manages all volunteers coming on and off the property. Through the work of the staff members, volunteers and LCP program participants, the organization provides meals to approximately 16,000 individuals per month and shelter for up to 300 individuals per night.

Research Questions

Because homeless individuals, volunteers and staff members at this homeless shelter are experts on their own ways of speaking, this study utilizes the term communicative resources that are defined as knowledge of the appropriate and acceptable ways of speaking within a variety of contexts (Howard & Lipinoga, 2009). Knowledge, or communicative resources, is understood and used to produce communication that "is required and hence will be recognized as meaningful" (Maryns & Blommaert, 2002, p.

13). Specifically, these communicative resources are utilized by individuals within the speech community to know how and when it is appropriate and acceptable for a homeless individual to ask for help from a volunteer. Individuals in this speech community then utilize these communicative resources to understand dimensions of personhood, norms of, and consequences of communicative interaction in conversation.

This ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972) focuses specifically on the communicative interactions between homeless individuals and volunteers within the speech community located at *the Little City*. Specifically, this study will identify the socially constructed dimensions of personhood reflected in the communication between the volunteers and the homeless individuals at TLC. Additionally, this study investigates the norms and patterns of communicative interaction that affect how homeless persons can or cannot ask for help from volunteers at *the Little City*. Finally, this study seeks to understand the consequences for individuals abiding by or violating these norms for communicative interaction.

RQ1: How are communicative resources used to differentiate dimensions of personhood between volunteers and homeless persons at *the Little City?*

RQ2: What are some key norms influencing how communicative resources are used in interaction that affect how homeless persons can or cannot ask for help from volunteers at *the Little City*?

RQ3: What are the consequences of the ways that communicative resources are used at *the Little City*?

Definitions

With the many terms at use within this study, such as culture and homelessness, this section provides a brief summary of the definitions being used for each term.

Culture. Culture involves "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which [individuals] communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz, 1973, p. 89).

Speech Community. A speech community, as defined within Hymes (1962, 1972) ethnography of communication, is defined as a community of individuals actively sharing an understanding regarding the rules for speaking and the interpretation of speaking.

Speech Code. As a theoretical framework (presented within the section Review of the Literature) and a term, a speech code is "a system of socially constructed symbols and meanings, premises, and rules, pertaining to communicative conduct" (Philipsen, 1997, p 126).

Personhood. As a succinct definition of personhood, this study utilizes the following definition: "Beliefs about persons, loci of motives, sites of consciousness, links to history" (Carbaugh, Berry, Nurmikari-Berry, 2006, p. 206). Personhood investigates how individuals and others discursively answer the question, "Who am I?" (Carbaugh, 1996).

Volunteerism. Volunteerism, the planned act of giving one's time to a specific group of strangers (Penner, 2000), holds different implications than simply donating

financially or materially to an organization (Putnam, 1995), and consists of investing time and energy (Wuthnow, 2003).

Homelessness. For the purpose of an ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972) within the context of a homeless shelter, the definition utilized for homelessness is "*An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations* (42 CFR 119.1§11302). Accepting this "literal" (Burt, 2007) definition of homelessness does not intend to delegitimize the experiences of "hidden" homeless individuals (Erickson, 2007) sleeping in a car or hotel room. Instead this definition corresponds to the location of this site, a homeless shelter, where homeless individuals are "literally homeless" (Aron, 2007).

Help. The definition of what it means to "ask for help" emerged within the study as participants presented situations in areas which they either actually asked for help or saw a potential for individuals to help them. This includes, but is not limited to, help as a form of encouragement or requests for a bus pass, vocational training, money, or even a homemade chocolate chip cookie.

Faith-Based Organization. As noted, *the Little City* is a faith-based non-profit organization. As a faith-based organization, this is an "organization whose expressed central purpose is to provide products/services which highlight religious/spiritual values, issues or needs" (McNamee, 2011, p. 424).

Preview

Within the next four chapters, this study will provide a theoretical framework and methods used to interpret and describe the personhood, the norms and the consequences

of communicative interaction affecting "asking for help" practices at *the Little City*. In chapter two, the literature review explores previous studies on the topics of homelessness, volunteerism and homeless shelters and provides the theoretical frameworks within the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1972; Philipsen & Coutu, 2005; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005) and speech codes theory (Philipsen, 1997; Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005). Chapter three presents the methods of qualitative research used to gain an understanding of the means and meanings of asking for help at *The Little City.* The fourth chapter presents a descriptive-comparative analysis of the data collected through participant observation, interviews and social artifacts. Finally, chapter five discusses recommendations for possible ways of improving communication between volunteers and shelter users at *The Little City.* In the final chapter, I also present a self-reflection regarding the ethical challenges I faced as a volunteer and researcher at *The Little City.*

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This investigation into the communicative practices at a particular shelter examines not only what people say, but *how* what is said impacts the meaning of and within conversation. Through the process of communication individuals are involved in creating meaning through human interaction intrinsically attached to the surrounding circumstances (Ryle, 1971), such as the circumstances and context extant at *the Little City* (TLC). This particular homeless shelter is a faith-based organization operating solely off of private contributions, meaning no federal funding is received by the organization. Based upon the work of Covarrubias (2002), this organization provides a location for a speech community, and more specifically a context for cultural interaction. Thus, this study investigates whether homeless individuals can or cannot utilize everyday conversations to ask for help from volunteers. By simply starting with an everyday conversation, such as "Hi, how are you?" one is able to begin communicative interaction that is full of meaning (Geertz, 1973). Focusing specifically on cultural aspects of "asking for help" practices at a homeless shelter, this study seeks to identify cultural ways of understanding the meaning embedded within the personhood of who is speaking, the norms to speaking, and the consequences of speaking in everyday life and for everyday communication at a particular homeless shelter.

This chapter addresses the theoretical and contextual demands of exploring communication within a homeless shelter as a cultural phenomenon. The first few sections within this chapter address the means of how to meaning is created and constructed within a culture through communicative interaction. First, a definition of

culture and two theoretical frameworks used for this study are presented: the ethnography of communication (Covarrubias, 2002; Dollar & Merrigan, 2002; Hymes, 1972; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005; Philipsen, 2005) and speech codes theory (Philipsen, 1997; Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005). Following these theoretical frameworks, previous research on homeless shelters, homeless individuals, and volunteers is presented.

Culture

A remarkable component of personhood and community, culture transcends the boundary of *a* religion, *a* race, *an* individual because culture focuses on contextual elements that make communication and symbols used during human interaction understandable and meaningful (Philipsen, 1992; 1981). Inextricably bound to meaning, this section explains the constructs of culture defined as "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which [individuals] communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). This section includes a discussion of the following key components extant to culture as a socially constructed system of symbols, meanings, premises and rules historically transmitting and shaping meanings in the past, present and future.

First, a *system* consists of parts that function together to create a whole. Inasmuch as a clock is a functioning system with all of its parts working together, culture is a system of four components that work together during communication – the construction and interpretation of meaning between and among individuals in society. Within the cultural system, the following four components: (a) symbols, (b) meanings, (c) premises and (d) rules function together to create a whole. The first part of this system is marked as

symbols, those "vehicle[s] of conception" (Geertz, 1973, p. 91), such as words or gestures that carry symbolic meaning of things such as relationship and selfhood (Philipsen, 1997) from one person to another. Second, *meanings* stand for not just denotative definitions but connotative definitions of those symbols in creating shared understanding about notions and beliefs (Geertz, 1973; Philipsen, 1997). Thus, symbols consist of meaning and meanings compose symbols in a symbiotic relationship. Within the topic of homelessness, such as the scenario presented at the beginning of this paper, the term "homelessness" within the cultural system extant to the domicile community may associate or give rise to meanings such as lazy or mentally ill (Lewis & Nelson, 2007; Lyon-Callo, 2000). Also, when one encounters an unpleasant odor emanating from a person sitting on the curbside with torn and dirty clothing, those symbols combine to establish a meaning that that particularly aromatic individual sleeps on the streets, is homeless.

When used in communication, these symbols and meanings contain rules and premises relevant to the distinctive culture of the distinctive speech community. *Rules* guide behavior by providing an explicitly spoken, while frequently implicitly understood, understanding of how individuals should initiate and respond to interlocutors – those participating in conversation (Philipsen, 1992). Philipsen (1992) labels these rules prescriptions, while proscriptions mark social consequences for not following rules (Covarrubias, 2005). The rules of a particular culture emerge from *premises* extant to "beliefs of existence (what is) and of value (what is good and bad)" (Philipsen, 1997, p. 125). Asserting underlying cultural beliefs and values, premises within communicative interaction establish a foundation for making symbols intelligible within the system

according to established rules. Therefore, in conversations between homeless users and volunteers, the rules inform the conversational partners of what is acceptable to do during conversation, and the premises inform the conversational partners about what is real and valued in the speech community.

Consistent with a system of socially constructed meanings, cultural meanings of the present emerge not only through negotiating meaning in the present, but also through understanding *historically transmitted* meanings and understandings of social interaction (Geertz, 1973). Best explained with historical events, two political events are utilized to make sense of Lyon-Callo's (2000) work extant to homeless shelters. Within the nation of the United States, the deinstitutionalization of state hospitals in the 1970s left many mentally impaired individuals no other place to go than the streets, leading to a sharp increase in homelessness (Blau, 2007; Carr, 2011; Hopper, 2003). Emerging as a cultural meaning, Lyon-Callo (2000) identified that homeless shelter users were 'medicalized,' seen as needing treatment to recover from not just mental illness but other factors such as joblessness, which moves into a meaning that emerged in the 1990s. In 1996, the Welfare Reform Act signed into effect by Bill Clinton declared homeless individuals as dependent upon welfare (Blau, 2007; Carr, 2011), known as Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), subsequently limiting a lifetime assistance maximum of five years. Within the context of this homeless shelter, the residual impact of the deinstitutionalization of state hospitals and the concept of "dependency" surfaced because TLC provides shelter to any homeless individuals, regardless of psychiatric condition.

Although the claims about dependency and medicalization are examples of meanings established through the use of public policy in the United States,

communicative meaning is also established within much smaller speech communities. During human interaction, individuals and groups of individuals create a common understanding of how to interpret communicative symbols as understandable and intelligible. Because meaning is developed through the process of human interaction, meaning and subsequently culture is "public" (Geertz, 1973, p. 12), and, therefore, observable by others. Both public and observable, cultural beliefs and values are not only made intelligible to members of a culture through use but beliefs and values are also made intelligible to researchers observing patterns of speaking and interpreting speech. Public meaning does not eliminate freedom for unique interpretations of symbolic meaning, but public meaning does indicate that shared meaning exists among members of a speech community, with each member possessing a unique personhood (Philipsen, 1992). Therefore, socially constructed meaning is evidenced in forms of communication due to the public nature of culture and communication, and these symbolic values and beliefs extant to a culture are also influenced by historical values and beliefs.

Historically transmitted meanings influence the socially constructed system of communication within a particular culture. .Geertz (1973) addresses the association between past, present and future meanings by stating that individuals "communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (id: p. 89). From the past, historically transmitted systems of meaning are transferred into the present through social interaction. When mechanisms for sense-making no longer function, new avenues for understanding social interaction emerge through communication.

For example, this study takes place within the context of a faith-based organization. Thus, one may pre-assume that the presence of religion precipitates

religiously oriented ways of speaking. However, a few of these initial presumptions require attention. Although the LCP program consists of Christian teachings, it is important to highlight that homeless shelter users are not required, nor forced, nor coerced to adopt Christian based religion in order to receive food, shelter or hygiene items. Additionally, homeless individuals, volunteers, and staff may enter the speech community with a historically transmitted reservoir of religious ideologies, but not all homeless shelter users and volunteers enter with the same religious background. Shelter users may stay at the shelter simply because they need a place to stay, regardless of their orientation towards religious belief systems. At the same time, "religion may motivate volunteers to volunteer (Allison, Okun & Dutridge, 2002), but research has demonstrated that five out of the six primary motivations for volunteering mentioned previously (Clary et al, 1998) derive from a desire for personal gain instead of a desire to be religious or altruistic person.

Even though "religion is sociologically interesting" (Geertz, 1973, p. 119) and is an element within this particular faith-based organization, this study recognizes that Christianity possessed varying degrees of influence for individuals within this study. Although the organizational context is expressed as religious, the cultural values and beliefs may be distinctly different for individuals interacting within the speech community. Although not all individuals within the speech community abide in the system of Christian or other any other religious beliefs and values, the elements of religion that do arise will be addressed *in situ,* if and when they are relevant to naturally occurring communication within the data.

With this foundation of culture as a system of historically transmitted socially constructed symbols, meanings, rules and premises, the investigation into homelessness returns the discussion to the systemic component of culture. As a system, culture exists within a distinct speech community that employs speech codes because speech codes provide a better understanding of cultural values, premises and rules than a basic "geographic or political unit" (Philipsen, 1992, p. 125), such as a country, or political boundary. Although the study looks to identify culture at a homeless shelter, the perception of culture is not based upon *a priori* differences resultant through socioeconomic status or class (Carbaugh, 1991). Instead the distinctiveness of culture emerges *sui generis*, "as something on its own, for its own sake" (Carbaugh, 1991, p. 338) from the perspective of the speech community itself (Fitch, 1994; Geertz, 1973; Hymes, 1972; Philipsen & Coutu, 2005), and from the utterances of persons from the community. Speech communities establish socially constructed meanings through communication rituals in everyday conversations (Philipsen, 1997). As homeless users communicate with volunteers, opportunities exist to socially construct new meanings of who they are as persons, the norms for communicative interaction between volunteers and homeless individuals, and learn the consequences for abiding by and/or violating norms of communication.

Ethnography of Communication

The theoretical framework utilized within this study is the ethnography of communication (herein referred to as EOC; Hymes, 1962; 1972; Philipsen & Coutu, 2005) that provides the essential link between culture and communication. The EOC scholar identifies how individuals use communication to "activate processes wherein

culture and communication are constructed while simultaneously reflecting the very cultural and communicative resources they are constructing" (Covarrubias, 2002, p. 10). In other words, it is the aim of the EOC to demonstrate that individuals "communicate, perpetuate and develop" (Geertz, 1973, p.89) cultural beliefs, practices and values, researchers working within the framework of the ethnography of communication (herein referred to as the EOC) seek out naturally occurring communicative events to observe patterns of interaction towards the aim of identifying culture. As such, the theoretical assumptions within the EOC establish that as people communicate and interact with each other, cultural values, beliefs and practices are revealed during everyday communication and as communication takes place, careful analysis of communication unveils cultural values, beliefs and practices extant within the group of individuals.

By focusing attention on culture within a *speech community* and individuals as the unit of observation, a researcher working towards an EOC unpacks the hierarchical nature of meaning through the process of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973; Ryle, 1971). Conceptually originated by Ryle, Geertz provided the definitional parsimony of the term "thick description." Ryle defined *thick description* by contrasting the concept to *thin description* saying, "The thinnest description of [what somebody] is doing is roughly the same as [an] involuntary eyelid twitch; but its thick description is a many layered sandwich of which only the bottom slice is catered for by the thinnest description" (1971, p. 482). Therefore, the smallest details observed during communicative interaction provide the context necessary to understanding the hierarchy of meanings produced and interpreted within that "fleck of culture" (Geertz, 1973, p. 6; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995) extant within culture.

Through the process of "thick description" ethnography of communication accomplishes three purposes in the final product: an *interpretation* of *the flow of social discourse* in *perusable terms* (Geertz, 1973, p. 20). Observations of context and holistic communication (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005) provide an interpretation, or a descriptive account of communication from the perspective of the community (Phililpsen & Coutu, 2005; Geertz, 1973). By providing an interpretation, this ethnography of communication accounts for the flow of social discourse by presenting the common ways of speaking in the midst of complex and nuanced cultural accounts in *perusable terms*, or coherently for readers (Carbaugh, 1991; Philipsen, 1991; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005). These nuances of cultural beliefs and practices reveal meanings and understandings of how different parts of the cultural system take precedence at particular times depending upon contextual cues, such as speaking on a street corner (Philipsen, 1975), at a public city meeting (Dollar & Zimmers, 1998), in a college classroom (Covarrubias, 2008), or at a Mexican construction company (Covarrubias, 2002).

One of the primary tools of providing a descriptive account of a speech community in *perusable terms* incorporates the use of the EOC theoretical framework. Originally named as the ethnography of speaking, Hymes (1962, 1968, 1972) focused the description of culture on speech acts defined through the mnemonic SPEAKING (Scene/Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequences, Keys, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genres). With all communicative phenomena, communication requires *participants*, also termed as interlocutors. Identifying participants required not only noting the exchange of words but also determining the "potential for an encounter" (Orr, 2008, p. 328) as interlocutors navigate the possibility of conversation through eye contact and body

positioning. Interlocutors interact within a *scene/setting* consisting of time, place, location, physical conditions surrounding interlocutors, and emotional conditions surfacing within and between interlocutors (Hymes, 1972). During the course of conversation, the EOC attends to the *act sequence*, noting the topic of conversation and how interlocutors managed changes in topic, drawing attention to the frequency and stylized use of ways of speaking (Hymes, 1972). Stylized ways of speaking link communicative phenomenon to the personhood of interlocutors of the speech community. During a given act sequence, the type of *instrumentality*, or channel through which communication occurs, such as face-to-face, mediated or other forms of communication, may influence the progress of communication events. Within this study, the scene/setting for communication occurs at *the Little City* between the participants of volunteers and homeless individuals employing the instrumentality of face-to-face communication, and contextually defining appropriate and inappropriate act sequences during communication. As a location for a speech community, *the Little City* provides a particular place with particular individuals who negotiate cultural norms through face-to-face communication.

Rules that guide conversations between interlocutors link communicative phenomena to personhood. These rules guide individuals regarding what should and should not be said as well as how to interpret, or generate meaning from, the spoken and unspoken symbols employed during an act sequence. Highly contextual, these guidelines for communicative interaction and interpretation correspond to the *norms* of speaking that enable empirical observation of outward expressions of the inward "belief system" within a speech community (Hymes, 1972). These rules for interpretation frequently depend upon the *key* of communication, which is the "tone, manner, or spirit in which an

act is done" (Hymes, 1972). These rules for interaction also vary depending upon the *ends* of communication, that consider the motives of interlocutors and the cultural or group expectations, which Hymes (1972) defined as goals and outcomes, respectively. As communication rituals (Philipsen, 1997), or ritualized patterns in ways of speaking emerge within a speech community, the *genre* identifies a label indicative of the value the speech community places on the observed pattern of communication (Hymes, 1972). For example, genres extant to the setting of a faith based organization may include events such as prayer, meditation, sermons/teachings, and sharing personal experience as a journey of faith (referred to as a testimony). These events are patterned in such a way and defined by interlocutors as distinct communicative phenomena as events with a predictable sequencing of acts.

Linking communication and culture, Hymes' EOC (1962; 1972) communicative events are the moments that individuals make sense of the underlying beliefs and values within the culture at the homeless shelter surrounding the beliefs about people, the norms, and the consequences surrounding the genre of "asking for help" practices between homeless individuals and volunteers. To further understand the ends of communicative interaction, this study also describes and explains communication in such a way to anticipate patterns and outcomes of speech between homeless individuals and volunteers. Connecting patterns and outcomes, Philipsen's speech code theory (Philipsen, 1997; Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005; Covarrubias, 2009) makes sense of the patterns and consequences of how homeless individuals can and cannot ask for help from volunteers.

Speech Code Theory

Emerging from the theory, practice and influence of Hymes' EOC, the speech code(s) theory (Philipsen, 1997; Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005) begins with a *speech code,* a "historically transmitted, socially constructed system of symbols and meanings, premises, and rules" (Philipsen, 1997, p. 138). Generally speaking, "codes reveal how particular people view the world and how they speak particular lives into being" (Covarrubias, 2003, p. 87). Speech codes theory enables to researcher to expand the description of a speech community (obtained through the EOC) to explain and predict how cultural rules and premises guide interaction and the interpretation of interaction. These interactions and interpretations of interaction are the codes that establish social consequences within a distinct culture (Philipsen, 2001). These speech codes emerge as patterned thematic value systems routinely placed upon communicative interaction (see Philipsen (1997) code of "dignity" and code of "honor" and Covarrubias (2002) code of "*respeto"* and code of "*confianza*." Further, Covarrubias' work claims that every organization has at least one speech code enacted (Covarrubias, 2003). Although this study focuses attention to the third and sixth proposition within the theoretical framework, the other four propositions provide the structural foundation.

Within the assumption that particular organizations possess particular cultural ways of speaking (Covarrubias, 2002), this distinct speech community at TLC, the first proposition of Philipsen's (1992, 1997; Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005; Covarrubias, 2009) speech code theory is contextually relevant to this study. This proposition states that *"wherever there is a distinctive culture, there is to be found a distinctive speech code*." As established earlier, communication reflexively produces and

reproduces cultural beliefs, values and practices evidenced through ways of speaking. Distinct cultural systems emerge through communication, and the cultural systems present themselves with the distinct patterns and ways of speaking to evidence a distinct cultural system, or speech code. However, according to the second proposition, *any given speech community makes use of a multiplicity of speech codes.* The multiplicity of speech codes, or ways of speaking enable individuals within a speech community to vary their ways of speaking dependent upon the contextual situation in which individuals find themselves. For example, homeless persons may speak differently while staying at a homeless shelter than while staying on the streets; also, homeless persons may speak differently to another homeless individual within their community than a domicile person. Variation in speech codes furthers the justification that ways of speaking are highly contextual and vary depending upon the any of the eight components extant to the SPEAKING framework presented within the EOC (Hymes, 1962; 1972; Philipsen, 1997).

Third, different cultures value different manners of speech establishing distinct values on communication, and these distinct values on speaking lead to the third proposition that speech codes "*implicate a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric"* (Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005; Covarrubias, 2009). Speech codes guide how people think of themselves, of relationships, and ways of speaking, respectively. As a key component of this study, proposition three gives way to the concept of personhood, defined previously in the introduction, is one's perception of oneself built upon the components of personal history, personal motivations, as well as what others perceive one to be as a person.

When conducting research on homelessness, the concept of personhood requires much consideration when considering the individual's perception of their personhood as well as the perception of the community and organization in which they currently reside. When exploring personhood, one must first identify distinct patterns of communication to then identify "deep within them, deep cultural meanings about communication itself, the nature of persons, social relationships, [and] emotions" (Carbaugh, Berry, Nurmikari-Berry, 2006, p. 206). Throughout the United States, previous work reveals much about what various locations throughout the nation perceive about the personhood of homeless individuals. Homeless individuals have been documented to be perceived by domicile individuals with such reductive labels as deviant (Nelson & Lewis, 2007) and mentally ill (Lyon-Callo, 2000) to name a couple of stereotypes. Prior to experiencing homelessness, homeless individuals understand how domicile individuals perceive their personhood because homeless individuals were once domicile, which leads to an experience of embarrassment of who they are as a person (Shier, Jones & Graham, 2010). Shier et al (2010), all of the 65 homeless individuals interviewed were either working or possessed a work history. Some individuals maintained a positive self-image despite the judgment, or stereotypes, imposed by domicile individuals. For example, one homeless individual stated, "Me, I am not a bum, and I am not an idiot…There are hundreds of people like me that do not deserve to be stereotyped. They deserve a second chance. They deserve someone who thinks they are better" (Shier et al, 2010, p. 22). In the midst of positive and negative evaluations of personhood, homelessness, as state of experience, introduces a unique element of personhood that is not experienced by a large number domicile individuals, specifically volunteers at a homeless shelter.

Because of the organizational context surrounding the cultural ways of speaking and constructing personhood at *the Little City,* this study also addresses the concept of *policies of personhood* defined as "policies that appear to respond to (rather than imagine or produce) particular *types* of people" (Carr, 2011, p. 25; original formatting preserved. Established by the work of a linguistic anthropologist, Carr (2011), who studied a treatment program within a network of agencies providing services to homeless females, policies of personhood considers how policies impact personhood as institutional and political policies constrict personhood through imposing rules and consequences for rule violations. Policies of personhood emerged as a concept through analyzing the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, which emerged as an essential component of programs for homeless individuals staying at homeless shelters as well as any individual receiving welfare. Dependent upon assistance, homeless individuals needed to develop means of gaining or regaining independence, more specifically regain independence within the five year limit of welfare assistance provided by the United States (Blau, 2007; Carr, 2011). Considered a contributing factor in asking for help, this study takes policies of personhood from the level of public policy down to the level of organizational policies created to respond to a specific type of homeless person.

In addition to discursively composing personhood, speech codes theory also provides guidelines for observing, describing and analyzing what interlocutors can and do achieve through communication, which is stated within proposition four: *the significance of speaking is contingent upon the speech codes used by interlocutors to constitute the meanings of communicative acts* (Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005). Focusing on interaction between homeless and domicile individuals as key participants in the

communicative phenomenon of asking for and receiving help, this study understood that domicile individuals and homeless individuals are unique persons with ways of speaking that may stand diametrically opposed to each other. Homeless individuals do not frequently speak with domicile individuals (Desjarlias, 1997; Hopper, 2003). This silence, so to speak, additionally points to the need to explore speech codes enacted between domicile and homeless individuals because speech codes contain *terms, rules, and premises* that *are inexplicably woven into speaking itself,* proposition five (Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005). For example, rules may influence whom a homeless individual may speak to and the terms, or conditions of conversation, as well as beliefs regarding what communication will accomplish for the homeless individual. Therefore, by speaking one does not only transmit the historical system of symbols, meanings, premises and rules but continues to socially construct those meanings extant within the immediate, present day surroundings by employing the historically patterned rules of speaking. However, these rules are not simply guidelines for interlocutors.

Quintessentially, abiding by the speech code within a distinctive speech community holds cultural, social, personal and other consequences (i.e. financial or socioeconomic) as specified in the sixth proposition: *The artful use of a shared speech code is a sufficient condition for predicting, explaining and controlling the form of discourse about the intelligibility, prudence and morality of communication conduct* (Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005). Therefore, individuals within a speech community must confront social consequences when not abiding by the speech code within that particular community. For example, Philipsen's (1975) failure to speak like a man in Teamsterville resulted in his categorization as a "homosexual" by the speech

community in which he worked. Covarrubias (2002) found Mexican construction workers' that failed to abide by the code of *tú* and *usted* stood the risk of job security not just for themselves but also for their family. Katriel & Philipsen (1982) found for some members of the United States failure to participate in *real communication* to work on interpersonal relationship lead to either a successful or failure of the relationship. Because speech codes are distinctive and frequently emerge through particular sites and locales of speaking, homeless shelters set in motion a possibility for a unique speech code that is as distinct as the speech codes for the Teamsterville men, the Mexican construction workers and the code of the streets.

This study does not seek to establish and declare a specific speech code; instead, the aim of this study is to identify elements of speech code at *the Little City.* This study recognizes that homeless individuals and volunteers in the speech community are speaking within a particular speech code with particular terms rules and premises that need to be artfully utilized to avoid consequences of violating the norms of communicative interaction (Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005). More specifically, the term "communicative resources" identifies that individuals in this particular speech community are aware of the types of communicative interaction that are intelligible, prudent, and moral between homeless individuals and volunteers.

A Place for Giving and Receiving Help

Homeless shelters are designed to provide assistance to homeless individuals (Lundahl & Wicks, 2010). Because the homeless shelter extant to this study is a faith-based, non-profit organization, volunteers have been referred to, though perhaps a cliché, as the "life blood" of a non-profit organization (McNamee, 2010). Therefore, this section

explores previous research on homeless shelters, homeless individuals and volunteers, respectively, to provide a contextual understanding of the location and people engaged in the process of asking for, giving and receiving help at *the Little City.* As a final component, this section also reviews previous research on interactions between volunteers and homeless individuals.

Homeless Shelters. Although homeless shelters are designed to provide help to homeless individuals, research indicates that homeless shelters are not always perceived by homeless individuals as desirable places to stay (Hopper, 2003; Shier, et al, 2010). Of the 3.5 million individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the course of a year (US Conference of Mayors, 2008), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (2010) estimated that only 1.56 million people stayed at a homeless shelter during the year of 2009, staying anywhere between 51 to 70 days at emergency shelters or 175 to 223 days at transitional housing locations (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). With less than half of homeless individuals seeking help from a homeless shelter with varying lengths of stay, this presents a problematic situation for organizations designed to provide assistance to homeless individuals because homeless shelters are not being sought out by a majority of homeless individuals. This presents a unique situation of studying individuals who are seeking assistance at a homeless shelter.

Existing research has highlighted multiple perspectives of why homeless individuals choose to not receive help from homeless shelters. Hopper (2003) reported the experience of one man who explained his choice to not go to the men's shelter for the night during the early 1980s:

> Another, subtler kind of violence that preyed on one's spirit and sense of identity, was even more pervasive [at the shelter]. The whole routine at the Men's shelter….operated as though it had been designed to break rather than salvage any man fool enough to venture there for help. It was one unremitting degradation ceremonial. (p. 98)

In Wright's (1999) work on homeless shelters, homeless individuals reported that homeless shelters were "no good" and disliked the "lack of physical space," "curfews," "being kept up all night by…other shelter users," as well as the "condescending treatment of shelter workers" (p. 150). Young homeless adults are reported to "rarely" stay at homeless shelters (Stablein, 2011, p. 300). Hence, even though homelessness is considered an embarrassing "residential state" (Wright, 1999, p. 262), homeless individuals still contend that staying at a homeless shelter is an embarrassing experience as well (Shier, et al., 2010). Because homeless shelter organizations vary depending upon the types of services provided to individuals and the type of structure, one should also consider how different elements of the organization may influence the pattern of seeking help at a homeless shelter.

Within one of the metropolitan cities located in the southwest region of the United States, Robertson (1996) conducted an ethnographic study of the fourteen organizations exclusively serving homeless individuals, exploring the Religious component of homeless shelters in the area. Of these fourteen homeless shelters, thirteen declared religious affiliations; hence, "religious groups have been the backbone of, and major force behind provision of, basic services to the area's homelessness" (p. 105). Eight shelters were determined to fit within the category of *Christian fundamentalist* while the

other five fit within the category of *Religious mainstream* (Robertson, 1996, p. 107). *Christian fundamentalist* shelters were characterized by "a desire to change people's lives and a strong belief in their need for rehabilitation" (p. 111), which target temporary homeless individuals with their annual budget funded entirely by private contributions from donors in the community. In stark contrast, *religious mainstream* shelters focus less on "religious careers of homeless persons" accepting public (government) money as well as private donations as they focus services toward "basic, immediate needs" (p. 113) of "chronic" homeless individuals.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to re-evaluate the classifications, these findings suggest that the speech community extant at *The Little City* may respond to and incorporate religion in different ways within their speech code(s). Thus, when approaching a study within the context of a homeless shelter in such a predominantly religious environment, it is important to be prepared for and to address when and where Religion surfaces within the context as a component of the speech code. Additionally, through associating the physical hardships that occur in the life of a homeless individual as a form of suffering, then the association between Religion and suffering has been previously viewed as "paradoxically, not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer, how to make a physical pain, personal loss, worldly defeat…something bearable, supportable" (Geertz, p. 104). When viewed in this light, Religion may actually defeat the goals of the organization if the culture perpetuates the bearing of homelessness instead of the remedy of homelessness.

Regardless of one's belief's surrounding the conceptualization and influence of a homeless shelter's orientation to Religion (either *fundamentalist* or *mainstream*), it is

important to note that these "religiously based organizations figure so prominently in emergency assistance that if they ceased offering services direct aid in most cities would be seriously diminished" (Robertson, 1996, p. 106). These fourteen homeless shelters offer "basic or emergency services," such as food and a place to sleep, as well as offering additional services such as "advocacy and personal assistance" (p. 107). At *The Little City,* part of the additional services provided to homeless shelter users includes the LCP (Life in Christ's Power) program, structured around the Life Recovery Bible (Tyndale, 1998). As an influencing factor in determining help seeking behavior, this study presents a descriptive analysis of the LCP program influences help seeking behavior by exploring how a homeless personhood is constructed at the outset of joining the LCP program.

Drawing upon the third proposition of speech code theory, where *a speech code implicates a culturally distinctive psychology, sociology, and rhetoric* (Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005) in such a way as to define personhood and produce policies of personhood, speech codes do emerge within an organization, not necessarily as an organizational culture but as a culture extant to the speech community. Covarrubias (2002) highlighted that organizations do not necessarily establish culture but function as sites, as contexts wherein speech communities are formed in and through the deployment of particular speech codes. In this inquiry, *The Little City* serves as a site where homeless and non-homeless persons interact on a daily basis, and those interactions socially construct personhood uniquely for homeless individuals and volunteers. The following sections detail the personhood and actions of both homeless individuals and volunteers, respectively; then discusses previous research detailing how homeless individuals and

volunteers interact make sense of their personhood and actions while at a homeless shelter.

Homeless Individuals. Prior research on the personhood of homeless individuals may be categorized into three different primary communicative influences: Mass media, prior perceptions as a domicile individual, and personal experience as a homeless individual. Although this study does not specifically focus on the representation of homelessness within mass media, it stands to mention that research has demonstrated that "groups who are marginalized cannot simply locate themselves within their own discourses. Homeless people face the dilemma of being compelled to act in accordance with the expectations of more powerful groups who name and define 'the homeless'" (Hodgetts et al, 2006, p. 499). Hodgetts et al (2006) refer to the "more powerful groups" as mass media produced by domicile communities. In other situations, homeless individuals reiterated negative stereotypes generated by "the larger society" (Jewell, 1993, p. 498) when referring to their personhood. Forms of media at *the Little City* consist of social artifacts, such as the application to join the LCP program. These social artifacts discursively present policies that further establish personhood through the concept of policies of personhood (Carr, 2011) by instructing individuals who they are perceived to be within organizational policies responding to the type of personhood extant to a homeless individual. Thus, these social artifacts serve as just one role in the cultural ways that individuals "communicate, perpetuate and develop" (Geertz, 1973, p. 89) what it means to possess the personhood of a homeless individual.

As a second communicative influence, research has also documented intrapersonal communication, or internal communication within a homeless individual.

Although "homelessness is a residential state and not a type of person nor a type of behavior" (Wright, 1999, p. 262), behavioral attributes are typically placed upon homeless individuals. Domicile individuals perceive homelessness "as a social abyss to be avoided at all costs" (Wright, 1999, p. 264), and individuals may recall prior perceptions they held while living the domicile life. In other words, an individual may recall a perception of homelessness and then apply it to their current experience of homelessness (Shier, et al., 2010). Most adequately explained by a respondent in the study conducted by Shier et al., this homeless individual stated:

> The first time I felt really depressed. I felt, "Oh, I am a drunk." That's always what I thought a drunk was —an alcoholic, a person on the street who didn't have a home. I thought, "Oh, no! I am a drunk." (25)

Thus, while reflecting upon prior perceptions and meanings of the personhood of homelessness held while living in the domicile community, this particular individual made sense of their current experience of homelessness by resourcing prior (mis)conceptions established while living as a domicile individual.

The third component influencing help seeking behavior involves the personal experience as a domicile individual and interaction with domicile individuals within the community. Although homeless individuals need to find ways to meet their basic needs, such as food and shelter, they also "seek friendship, support and community" (Hodgetts, et al., 2006, p. 510), social interaction with other individuals. Dollar and Zimmers (1998) drew attention that homeless individuals considered themselves as *house-less* to indicate that even without a *house* (a permanent place of lodging), they still had a *home* (a place of belonging). Just because individuals experience homelessness does not mean they

desire “to be eclipsed by one material facet of their lives, no matter how influential lit is for their daily lives” (Hodgetts, et al., 2006, p. 510). Domicile individuals may panic (Shier, et al, 2010) or experience any of the eight emotional responses detailed in the introduction of guilt, fear, scorn, cynicism, compassion fatigue, “there but for the grace of God go I,” and harshness (Blau, 2007), and these responses may during interaction may also influence why homeless individuals experience embarrassment and shame (Shier, et al., 2010; Wright, 1999). Additionally, homelessness does not mean a life of misery twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Many homeless individuals may be miserable, but some homeless individuals “also have fun when sharing their time on the street” (Hodgetts, 2006, p. 507). However, homeless individuals do not necessarily want “to be homeless because of its physical, social and emotional hardships” (Wright, 1999, p. 149), which influences how individuals socially construct something other than simply being without a typical residential living situation but an integral part of personhood.

Volunteerism. Diametrically oppositional, volunteers who represent the domicile community while at a homeless shelter are perceived in a much different light by domicile individuals and homeless individuals. Donating one’s time has been termed an act of compassion by Wuthnow (2003). This compassion involves more than helping individuals in need. This compassion serves as “a value, a means of expression, a way of behaving, a perspective on society” (Wuthnow, 2003, p. 308). While Tompkins (2006) associates typical volunteerism at a homeless shelter with the term charity, the act of volunteering is perceived to reflect positively upon the personhood of a volunteer (Holden, 1997). Thus, within homeless shelters, volunteers typically are perceived positively while homeless individuals are typically viewed negatively.

While volunteers donate their time to help advance the homeless shelter's goals and the homeless users therein, research noted that not all efforts of volunteers is appreciated nor desired, highlighting the importance of studying communicative meaning of volunteerism within homeless shelters. Volunteers desired the symbolic gift of praise in exchange for their giving (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998; Lundahl & Wicks, 2010), but the act of giving to someone as a means to acquire praise was deemed offensive by homeless shelter administrators (Lundahl & Wicks, 2010). Lundahl & Wicks (2010) also noted that volunteers offended shelter users by being insensitive, violating boundaries, and pushing personal values on the homeless during conversations. According to administrative staff at homeless shelters, insensitivity occurred when volunteers sought recognition for their help or labeled homeless individuals "in a pathological manner…acting superior and being disrespectful" (Lundahl & Wicks, 2010, p. 282). For example, insensitivity may consist of a volunteering telling a homeless individual face-to-face that the homeless individual is lazy, deviant, or a statement such as, "There must be something wrong with you." Boundary violations on the interpersonal relationship level consisted of breaking confidentiality, and asking deep and probing questions. Advancing personal values such as religion, self-sufficiency, and health regiments on the homeless all served as offenses to the homeless individuals.

Though volunteers at homeless shelters have been documented as communicating offensively in research, not all studies reported these negative behaviors demonstrated by volunteers. For example, Holden (1997) reported that volunteers at one particular homeless shelter acknowledged that insensitivity towards homeless was "a moral crime" (para. 8). Of the "most creative and helpful projects," the third highest ranking activity

for volunteerism consisted of "direct interactions with users," which included volunteers who played games or simply sat and talked with shelter users (Lundahl & Wicks, 2010). More specifically, the staff of homeless shelters reported appreciation when volunteers simply befriended users. Therefore, somehow while interacting/sitting and talking, a relationship emerged. Volunteers perceived that friendship with shelter users equalized socio-economic status differences, so volunteers strived to become the type of person to whom shelter users would speak (Holden, 1997). To achieve friendship status, volunteers communicated equality through nonverbal communicative speech acts such as dressing down and verbal communicative speech acts such as avoiding issues of privilege and poverty during conversation, such as not mentioning going to the movie theater or other events that may cost money. Wells (2002) reported that volunteers "who spent the longest amount of time with homeless [at the shelter]" experienced a higher level of comfort during personal contact with homeless individuals (p. 35). However, establishing this friendship status with homeless persons is not as communicatively simplistic as it sounds.

Individuals may volunteer for a variety of reasons and motivations, but when volunteering at a homeless shelter, there are certain volunteer efforts that are valued over others. Within the United States, Lundahl and Wicks (2010) found that "regular volunteer activities" were valued 91% of the time as highly important while "one-day volunteer projects" were valued 26.9% of the time as highly important. In this study, the concept of *regular volunteer activities* was defined by activities that included "regular volunteering [in] tutoring in math, English; and contractors who would stop by every month to do quick, [miscellaneous] repairs (e.g., sink, sheetrock)" (B. Lundahl, Personal

Communication, February 14, 2012). Whereas, *one-day volunteer projects* involve activities completed in one-day or only requiring one-day out of the year for volunteers. This study seeks to highlight the work of "regular volunteers" as these individuals who volunteer consistently on a regular basis possess not only a commitment to the organization (Hustinx, 2005), but they also have a greater opportunity to take part in consistent and regular interactions with homeless shelter users, leading to the final section in the discussion surrounding homeless shelters.

Homeless Individuals and Volunteers Together. Focusing on the socially constructed dimensions of personhood, this study explores the critical component of how cultural meanings are negotiated through human interaction, through communication. This study emphasizes the face-to-face communication that may take place between individuals within a speech community because it creates a community conversation, or a communal conversation (Philipsen, 2003). As defined by Philipsen, communal conversation exists when "participants in the life of a social world construct, express and negotiate the terms on which they conduct their lives together" (Philipsen, 2003, p. 37). Referenced during the introduction, homeless individuals have asked for domicile individuals to spend time with them, so that a real understanding of homelessness may be created (Reynolds, 2006). Because through "meaningful meaningful conversations with such [domicile] people, [homeless individuals] claim status as local residents and attempt to become one of 'us'" (Hodgetts et al, 2006, p. 506). Thus, through human interaction, homeless individuals may communicate with domicile individuals the experience of "embarrassment and how this feeling affects their behavior and their interactions with other people and within the community at large" (Shier et al, 2010, p. 23). One particular

study demonstrated that as interpersonal communication takes place between homeless shelter users and volunteers, changes in the attitudes of domicile individuals can take place in as little as 15 hours (Hocking & Lawrence, 2000). Additionally, this creates a space for homeless shelter users to seek help from domicile individuals to gain access to resources outside of the homeless shelter.

Although encouraging discourse between the volunteers and homeless individuals within the context of a homeless shelter is desirable, barriers to communication do exist in at least two forms. First, homeless shelters provide services to homeless individuals who may have grown accustomed to the loneliness of the streets, demonstrated by David (informant in Hopper, 2003) "you get used to [the loneliness on the streets]...but it's not good…You get funny without people to talk too" (p. 108). For David, participating in Hopper's (2003) study was the "first extended conversation he'd had 'with a regular person' for about a year" (p. 108). Therefore, homeless shelter guests may not step out of isolation to engage in conversation. Second, the tasks volunteers perform, such as mopping, sweeping, cooking, and serving food, have been demonstrated to uniquely impact communication between shelter users and volunteers (Witschger, 1991). According to Witschger's findings, volunteers communicated more with homeless users while "working" instead of during *lull time*, or free time between tasks that allows time for conversations between volunteers and shelter users. Most importantly, not only did volunteers *not* engage in communication with shelter users during lull time, but some volunteers *refused* to engage in conversation especially when a volunteer experience an event of mistaken personhood, such as being seen as a homeless shelter user instead of a volunteer (Witschger, 1991). Having one's personhood mistaken, such as being viewed

as a homeless person instead of volunteer, precipitates a volunteer experiencing embarrassment while volunteering (Desjarlais, 1997; Hopper, 2003; Witschger, 1991). In response to mistaken personhood which dissolved positions of a socio-economic hierarchy between shelter guest and volunteer, it was reported that volunteers expressed loathing towards users, refusing to interact with homeless, and attempting to re-establish hierarchy through speaking like a boss or teacher (Witschger, 1991). Aligning with the EOC framework, these expressions of volunteers identified by Witschger may not create the ideal key (tone or manner) for a homeless individual to approach a volunteer for help.

Asking for Help

The act of giving holds specific social ramifications (Eckstein, 2001) as individuals participate in the *norm of reciprocity* (Gouldner, 1960) in which "giving generates its own rewards: Giving and getting are intertwined" (Eckstein, 2001, p. 834). Gouldner's (1960) norm of reciprocity consisted of two essential components utilized to explain the patterns of society in which giving places "minimal demands." First, one ought to help those who helped oneself. Second, one ought not to cause harm to those who have helped oneself. Wuthnow (1991) confirmed that the reciprocated gift emerges at least symbolically if not in a material form with bows and ribbons. Although the exchange of help may not be equal in monetary value, the process of giving and receiving help involves obligation and constraint (Eckstein, 2001).

Mazelis (2006) identified that poor individuals frequently do not ask for help if (a) they are not able to participate in the tangible cycle of Gouldner's norm of reciprocity or if (b) they blame themselves as the source of their poverty. While homeless individuals do not directly correlate with the sample of "poor individuals" indicated in

Mazelis study, this study reveals the need to look at how individuals communicatively participate in the norm of reciprocity. As the first component indicates, homeless individuals have indicated that they desire to be able to give back to whoever was providing assistance, or help (Wright, 1999). As the second component indicates, the shame and embarrassment of being homeless may lead individuals to not ask for help "from friends" because they are "too ashamed to admit that they were homeless" (Wright, 1999, p. 151) and in a position of needing assistance. Additionally, prior to asking for help, an individual considers whether another person will be able to give appropriately in response to asking for help (Eckstein, 2001). Interestingly, in a study conducted by Solarz and Bogat (1990), 16.1% of homeless individuals in the sample felt that they provided more support than they received, and almost half of the sample felt they received support and gave support equally.

In addition to the complexities of knowing the appropriate and inappropriate individuals to ask for help from, homeless individuals do not necessarily just accept any and every offer of help. Wright (1999) documented three situations in which a homeless individual explicitly refused to accept help. First, homeless individuals refused help "altruistically" because they "worried about detrimental effect that their problems might have on others" (p. 162). Second, homeless individuals refused help from others as an expression of personal independence and pride. Third, homeless individuals would refuse help because they desired to "hold [the help] in reserve in case of emergency" (p. 163). However, in some situations help is not to be refused. In one homeless shelter, "if a homeless person openly questions shelter helping efforts, he or she is understood as a

problem" (Lyon-Callo, 2000, p. 329), and being seen as a "problem" may result in consequences such as being asked to leave the shelter.

In summary, existing research highlights that investigating the art of asking for and receiving help is essential in understanding how homeless individuals are being helped, and the three particular questions emerged within this speech community at *the Little City*. First, this ethnographic inquiry investigated how communicative resources are used to construct and differentiate dimensions of personhood for both volunteers and homeless individuals. Second, this study explored norms of communicative interaction that affected how homeless individuals can or cannot ask for help from volunteers. Third, the study identified the consequences of how communicative resources are used by volunteers and homeless individuals within this particular speech community.

Chapter 3

Methods

Previously presented as a theoretical framework, the method of the ethnography of communication abides by particular methods of data collection (Carbaugh, 1991; Hymes, 1972; Leeds-Hurwiz, 2005; Philipsen, 1997, 2005). Ethnographic data, such as interviews, observations and social artifacts, provides a descriptive inscription (Geertz, 1973) of patterns of communication and the contextual components that impact the means and meanings of "asking for help" practices at *The Little City*. Data for this study includes a total of 100 hours of participant observation, 18 interviews, and the collection of two primary social artifacts. Each of these forms of data come together to provide a descriptive presentation of aspects of personhood, of communicative norms, and of consequences for communicative interaction between volunteers and homeless shelters within this particular speech community at *the Little City* (TLC).

Collecting naturally occurring components of communicative phenomenon, this ethnographic study seeks to decipher patterns of communication enacted within the speech code at TLC. Within culture, patterns of communication are etched into the ways of speaking that participants employ on a daily basis, and thus, observable. In this study, participants are deemed as the experts regarding their own socially constructed means and meanings of speaking within their speech community. Additionally, Towards that aim of understanding the speech community from an *emic* perspective (Philipsen, 1997), the following sections elaborate upon the methods of ethnographic data collection used for this study : (1) sampling techniques, (2) participant observation, (3) interviewing, (4) social artifacts, and (5) data analysis.

Sampling Methods

Sampling the individuals in this study presents unique challenges due to the fluid nature of the population, for both homeless individuals and volunteers. First, homeless individuals may stay anywhere between 51-70 days at an "emergency shelter" or 175-223 days in "transitional housing" (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Although *The Little City* promotes itself as an "emergency shelter" facility, the Life in Christ's Power program requires individuals to stay a minimum of nine months, or 240 days, to complete the program. Some shelter users complete the entire program, sometimes multiple times, but shelter users are constantly looking for "a way out" (Staff Informant #1). Second, t*he Little City* estimated that 9,000 individuals volunteered once during 2011, but observations revealed that very few of those 9,000 volunteers returned to TLC on a weekly basis. From an ethnographic perspective, observing and interviewing members of a fluid speech community does not ease the task of collecting data; however, these methods capture the speech community holistically, as it naturally exists. Accepting this concept of fluidity within shelter users and volunteers, the methods of criterion and convenience sampling assisted in dealing with the temporal nature of participants within this study.

Criterion Sampling. At a shelter that houses 300 homeless individuals per night and receives help from thousands of volunteers per year, criterion-based sampling techniques limits participation of individuals through imposing particular criteria defining who may participate in this study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Framed as criteria of inclusion, this study imposed three standards for inclusion that simultaneously established standards for exclusion of individuals at *The Little City*. First,

all individuals in this study needed to meet the criteria of being legally consenting individuals over the age of 18. Second, individuals needed to be English speaking because a large majority of activities taking place at the homeless shelter occur in English. Because the focus of this study involved two distinct interlocutors (shelter users and volunteers), the third standard criterion required participants to have participated in or observed interactions taking place between shelter users and volunteers. Three distinct types of individuals emerged that actively participated in maintaining the values, rules and norms of *The Little City*: Shelter users, volunteers and staff members at *The Little City*.

Shelter Users. As mentioned previously, *The Little City* provides shelter to no more than 300 users per night because of fire code ordinances. According to the staff, *The Little City* meets this occupant capacity consistently throughout the year, but these 300 individuals compose two separate types of individuals with different levels of participation in the speech community at *The Little City*. At the first level, "overnighters" staying at *The Little City* need to "be off property" by 10:00AM every morning and could "return to property" at 3:00PM. When leaving the property, "overnighters" need to take all of their belongings with them. When arriving back to the property "overnighters" may only bring two standard-sized, plastic shopping bags of belongings.

At the second level, "programmers" emerged as a critical group of focus for this study because they fulfilled the primary inclusion criterion for homeless individuals to participate in this study. "Programmers" include a select group of up to 90 shelter users who applied to participate in the 9-month Life Recovery program. During these 9-months, "programmers" must attend classes Monday through Friday from 9:00AM to

11:00AM, work in a "volunteer" position for approximately 30 hours per week, and attend "required activities" that arise throughout the course of the week. When entering the program, "programmers" cannot leave the property for 30 consecutive days and they are also placed on a waiting list to receive a dorm room in either the dormitory (for single men and single women) or the barracks (for family units and partners). Not all "programmers" completed the 9-month life recovery program before they voluntarily, or involuntarily, left the property. Additionally, some "programmers" did not leave the property after graduating the 9-month program.

Volunteers. Similarly to shelter users, volunteers also needed to meet inclusion criteria because of the overwhelming number of volunteers at *The Little City*. As mentioned previously, an estimated 9,000 individuals volunteered at least once during the year 2011. Based upon my personal experience as a volunteer at TLC prior to commencing this study, it seemed necessary to focus on volunteers who volunteered on a *regular basis,* or once a week for a specified amount of time. Regular volunteers seemed to develop a specific purpose in volunteerism and knew a few names of homeless individuals staying at TLC. The definition of *regular basis* means that individuals need to volunteer at least once a week over the previous six months and had been seen having a conversation with at least one shelter guest. This time frame is illustrated by Hustinx (2005) to identify core and critical volunteers within an organization. Core volunteers volunteered at least once a week, and critical key figures demonstrated a lifelong commitment to the organization. Within this study, the criterion of "six months" proved ambitious because only four individuals consented to interviews and only a few additional volunteers of "six months" were on the property for observation.

Staff. Although interviewing staff members, paid employees of TLC, may appear unnecessary when studying interaction between volunteers and programmers, staff members are the individuals responsible for enforcing policies and procedures at *the Little City*. Therefore, as final group of individuals to be interviewed, staff members needed to meet one additional inclusion criterion in addition to being English speaking, legally consenting adults. This criterion required staff members to have direct interaction with volunteers or programmers. As the only criterion for inclusion, it subsequently excluded staff members working at the corporate office, located away from the 52 acres of *The Little City*.

Convenience Sampling. For the second layer of sampling methods, this study also utilized convenience sampling techniques. Convenience sampling includes individuals who are "most readily available" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) to participate in the study. Because participants for the interview phase of this study required face-to-face recruitment strategies, all volunteers, programmers and staff needed to be present at *The Little City* to be included within the study. Additionally, because observations could only be conducted within the Multi, only individuals who were present, or "readily available" while I was on property were included. Although convenience sampling techniques purportedly "save time, money and effort" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 28), one hundred hours of observation during the most typical hours for volunteering at TLC provided a variety of individuals to be interviewed and to be included in observational data.

Participant Protections. According to the Institutional Review Board (herein referred to as IRB), homeless individuals are considered a vulnerable population,

therefore three initial protections ensured confidentiality, privacy and reduced the risks of deception. First, all participants received the guarantee of confidentiality, meaning that all participants would be assigned a randomly selected pseudonym in the write-up of the data. Programmers were also assured that no information would be released to the organization or used for publication until all programmers either left TLC or graduated the Life in Christ's Power program. Second, all documents containing the names of the participants – the signed consent form – were kept secure and separate from the de-identified field notes and transcribed interview data. The third IRB protection pertained to obtaining informed consent without coercion and deception. Given the vulnerability and the possibility of working with adults of impaired decision making processes (Desjarlais, 1997; Hopper, 2003; Lyon-Callo, 2000), the case manager on site assured me that all programmers were capable of signing the informed consent document. Avoiding the appearance of deception, all participants were recruited through face-to-face communication.

Because "programmers" submit an application to the organization as part of the admission process into the life-change program, four additional precautions emerged as essential in securing anonymity of participants in this study. On the application to the program, programmers provide the organization with complete history of the individual including age, biological sex, date of entering the program, personal pathway into homelessness, a brief medical history, religious beliefs, and history with alcohol and drug addictions. The first additional precaution states that "programmers" are not identified distinctly by age. Second, no reference to previous work history of "programmers" is mentioned within the write up of this study. Third, the specific month of entry into the

program for each "programmer" is not provided. Fourth, with a limited sample size, no reference is made regarding marital status.

Typical to qualitative methods of data collection, this study provided measures to protect confidentiality and privacy of participants during the process of participant observation, interviews and data analysis. In regards to the final four protective measures referenced, it may be noted that all participants were over the age of 18, had work experience in a variety of vocations, two participants were married, and, at the time of the interview participants had stayed at the shelter for anywhere from 4 months to 1+ years. All participants who were observed and/or interviewed met all the pre-established conditions for the criterion and convenience sampling methods. The following section clarifies the process and details of participant observation at *The Little City.*

Participant Observations

As a term, ethnography implies an extensive amount of time in the field to grasp *an understanding* of the culture (Geertz, 1973; Leeds-Hurwiz, 2005). During this time spent in the field, the researcher collects observational data to gain an understanding of the ways of speaking as participants accept the researcher into their world and share details of their social life relevant to the research questions (Philipsen, 1975). Participant observation requires that the researcher participate in activities at the location to "gain insight into the obligations, constraints, motivations, and emotions that members experience in…everyday activities" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 3). Previous ethnographic work has demonstrated reliability with collecting observation from "several days" (Kennedy & Fitzpatrick, 2001) to over 600 hours of observation (Lyon-Callo,

2000). Variation exists because participant observation continues until no new patterns of communication appear (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011).

For the 100 hours of participant observation completed during the course of this study, I established a record of field notes extant to communicative phenomenon observed while at *The Little City*. When possible, I wrote field note jottings in a notebook, which are brief notes to help cue one's memory about important events that occurred during that day in the field (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995). Occasionally I was able to take notes on a mobile tablet device of lecture material covered during the Life in Christ's Power program classes. However, this strategy proved inappropriate in the setting as individuals kept trying to watch me type on the touch screen. Because jottings could not always be taken while at the site, "head notes" or mental reminders of phenomenon were taken and rehearsed in my mind until I was able to transfer head notes into jottings as soon as leaving the shelter. From these jottings, field notes were transcribed as soon as possible upon leaving the site (Emerson et al, 1995). (For a sample of jottings and field notes, please see Appendix A.)

The SPEAKING mnemonic, discussed in the Review of Literature, bounded the collection of observational information relevant to whom, what, when, where and why of speaking (Hymes, 1972; Philipsen & Coutu, 2005). The scene of observation and of communication was primarily located within the Multi and on occasions in the Children Center. Participants in this study, or interlocutors remained the same throughout as (1) programmers and (2) volunteers. When staff members participated in the act sequence, that information was determined necessary to understand the progression and context of that particular communicative interaciton. The instrumentalities also remained consistent

as this study focused on the face-to-face component of human interaction. The final outcome of communication (Ends), the manner in which meaning was created and communicated (Key), and the rules (Norms) frequently necessitated follow-up questions of participants to double check the validity of these components because the risk of misunderstanding is high when a researcher enters into a new speech community. As the final component, the genre frequently emerged as a theme identified by the organization, such as arts/crafts, tutoring, teaching, and serving lunch. Along with each genre, the Multi frequently had a distinct special arrangement which was noted in field notes as the arrangement of tables and chairs seemed to influence the flow of communication.

Location. Considering the fact that *The Little City* is a homeless shelter that spans over 50 acres of land, there was only one location that observations were conducted. As detailed in the introduction, *The Little City* owns multiple buildings, each with a specific purpose. At the beginning of the project, I was informed that a previous researcher at the site was determined "intrusive" because the individual would follow residents around the property and into the dorm rooms. Therefore, I agreed with the staff that I would only observe individuals in common areas, such as the Multi, or the playground or the outdoor picnic tables. During the holiday season, the children center building was included as a public building as staff, volunteers, and programmers organized a room full of newly purchased toys, books, clothes, shoes and games were organized and wrapped as Christmas presents for children at the shelter. Because the playground is for children, which are excluded from participation in the study due to age requirements, this location was excluded as a location for observation. Because programmers who sleep in the multi may only venture out as far as the picnic tables when

not working, attending class or sleeping, I considered this location a private space for participants who desired to not participate in observations at the moment. Thus, aside from a few hours of observation in the children center, the Multi served as the solitary location for observations. As described in the beginning, the Multi enabled the collection of observational data because the Multi is the location where all volunteer activities that enable interaction between volunteers and programmers, such as serving meals, General Educational Development (GED) tutoring, live music performances and arts/crafts activities.

Role of the Researcher. Prior to commencing this study, I had volunteered at the organization for several months. Similarly to a situation provided by Carr (2011), "these early experiences not only provided the first of many lessons I learned…They were also the way I gained access to places and people" (p. 21). Thus, previous experience of volunteering once or twice a week for several months enabled me to understand how to negotiate some of the rules of the organization as well as become a familiar face to several individuals within the program. However, researchers are always considered an "outsider" of the culture regardless of the participation in the community prior to observation and regardless of the quantity of hours spent at the site of observation.

Throughout the course of participant observation, I took on the role of a *participant-as-observer,* defined by Lindlof & Taylor (2011) as an individual who "openly acknowledges his or her professional motives to site members" (p. 146). Within this role, I participated in volunteer activities while simultaneously observing interactions and reminding programmers, staff and volunteers of my role as a "researcher." Within my role as a participant-as-observer, "I was there to notice by taking part, trying to

observe and retain information that others in the setting often thought unimportant or took for granted" (Duneier, 1999, p. 336). Thus, I took part in volunteer activities simultaneously as an announced researcher and as a volunteer.

A theme extant to several studies with homeless individuals and homeless communities, several scholars (Hopper, 2003; Robertson, 1996, Dollar & Zimmers, 1998) have either attempted to "pass" as a homeless individual or to live the experience of a homeless individual by sleeping on the streets or in a shelter as a means to gain access to information. Despite the numerous recommendations made by shelter users for me to "spend a few nights," participatory experience as a shelter guest would require taking up space from someone who quite literally needed a warm place to sleep off the streets, and not just trying to "hang out" at the shelter. This study took place during the winter months that was duly noted by Robertson (1997) as a time that all shelters within the area reach capacity. Thus, instead of staying a few nights at the shelter, I spent anywhere from two to eight hours at the shelter from 9:00am to 7:30pm.

This decision was also due to Hopper's (2003) observation that while making the attempt of "passing" as a homeless individual instead of a researcher "conversations were invariably more discursive and less informative about the specifics of an individual's life history" (Hopper, 2003, p. 70). Thus, it was necessary for me to remind individuals of my research frequently in order to obtain information critical to the research questions. Hopper's (2003) work within the homeless community also informed the practice of terminology needed when routinely informing homeless shelter users of my role as a researcher. When identifying oneself as a "researcher," "it soon became clear that this was a role neither recognized nor easily fathomed by many of our prospective

informants…Confusion often ensued…expressions of disbelief, suspicion, incomprehension, or disinterest" (Hopper, 2003, p. 69). In order to avoid a similar form of confusion within this study, I employed the term "student" who was working on "my thesis project" or "my project" instead of referring to myself as a "researcher."

Taking on the role of *participant-as-observer*, I gained access to participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994) without "seeking either to become natives or to mimic them" (Geertz, 1973, p. 13). As a volunteer, I participated in volunteer activities through either hosting the activity, such as GED tutoring, or through participating in activities, such as an arts/crafts project making Santa Clause faces out of small paper plates, red and pink construction paper, and cotton balls, throughout the course of participant observation enabled me to not just experience the task but to ask shelter users their perspective on the activity *in situ,* in the moment as a natural part of conversation. By participating in this way, the researcher immerses themselves as much as possible in an attempt to learn ways of speaking and being in a homeless shelter; thus, understanding emerged as a learning process (Schwandt, 1999). Immersing myself into the community as a participant as observer, I participated "as fully and humanly as possible in another way of life, [to] learn what is required to become a member of that world, to experience events and meanings in ways that approximate members' experiences" (Emerson et al, 1995, p. 2, para. 3). Although this study focused on the members of shelter users and volunteers, my experiences aligned with the volunteers. As a volunteer, much of my time at *The Little City* consisted of sitting in the Multi engaging shelter users in conversation as I passed the time waiting for a volunteer to arrive to the site in order to observe communication between volunteers and shelter users.

Initial Introduction. After receiving approval from both *The Little City* and the IRB, the study began on September 8, 2011. It was requested by staff at the shelter for me to make an announcement during one of the weekday class times that go from 9am to 11am, Monday through Friday. I was scheduled to announce my research project and pass around a signup sheet for programmers to sign if they desired to participate in the interview process. Because I came in on the second half of the class, at 10am, I received a formal introduction by the staff member. This introduction consisted of the staff member highlighting "the importance of education" and "the importance of getting a high school diploma, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, even a doctoral degree." While speaking, the staff member walked around the room standing on the inside of the tables arranged in a "U" to stop in front of specific individuals and speak directly at them. He stopped in front of me several times to say, "There's a young lady here." While talking about and looking at me while never saying my name until it was time for me to stand up. After highlighting how I had been coming to serve food, clean tables, and talk with "you [programmers]," the chaplain asked me to come up and stand with him. However, he was not yet complete with the introduction. He was intent on highlighting that I had a "BS in mathematics*"* and graduated "summa cum laude*."* At the same time he was trying to build me up, it was humiliating for me to have my credentials accentuated in such a manner before a group of homeless shelter users.

Handing the microphone to me, I shared with all of the programmers present that day the research process of observations and interviews. Completing the explanation of the study in approximately eight minutes, LCP program participants where then asked if they had any questions. Individuals asked if I would "still play my guitar and sing,"

"when the interviews start" and one final question about who "the volunteers" were. This last question of "who are the volunteers" was asked by a programmer who had just joined the program that day. After answering those three questions, I sat back down and turned the microphone over to the chaplain. Much to my surprise, he indicated how I would "come back up and give my testimony." He proceeded to talk about how volunteers have "their own hurts" and sometimes "we [programmers/homeless individuals] can help." He drew the distinction of "the outside" the people from the community who come "here to help" and "sometimes they need help too."

As he wrapped up that portion, I was requested to come back up and share my testimony, my journey of faith through trials and tribulations. After disclosing my testimony, prayer requests were collected as the chaplain lead me around the "U" shaped arrangement by my hand. Once he released my hand, I lagged behind him a few more steps. Two of the programmers asked to put me and my project on the list of prayer requests. One of the programmers offered a "praise report" because his family had been reunited. As he spoke, he looked directly at me to say that families can be reunited, which was a theme within my testimony.

After that initial public explanation of the project, I continued to routinely remind programmers that I was working on my project while at *The Little City.* Volunteers and staff necessitated individual face-to-face conversations regarding recruitment and participation, but on that initial day eleven programmers signed up for an interview. Although the signup sheet was passed around to all individuals, programmers came up to me after class was dismissed to add their name to the list. Additionally, a couple months into the study, as programmers asked me about the progress of my "paper" some of the

programmers would ask, “Why haven’t you interviewed me?” Due to the fluidity of the population, these individuals were offered to be added to the interview list to replace names of programmers who transitioned out of *The Little City* during the four month time span of data collection.

Interviews

Interview techniques for ethnographic methods range from ethnographic interviews to loosely structured interviews (Dollar & Merrigan, 2002). Unstructured, also frequently referred to as ethnographic conversations, provide the researcher flexibility to explore emergent themes in data (Fontana & Frey, 2000). In addition to ethnographic conversations , a total of 18 in-depth interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. For this study, a larger number of interviews were collected from shelter users than any other group of participants “because their voices are particularly difficult to hear. They are spoken of more than they speak” (Champaign, 1999). These ethnographic conversations assisted me in understanding not simply the linguistic components of language, but being socialized to a certain extent into the speech community a key element in interviewing (Briggs, 1984).

Although the initial semi-structured interview guide was developed via the aid of existing tools (Sherzer & Darnell, 1972) and verbal guidance (P. Covarrubias, Personal communication), the semi-structured interview questions presented an issue of access to information (Harrington, 2003). Programmers did not speak openly about the issue of receiving help. Avoiding open discussion of this issue may be a means of vying for respect (Sandberg, 2008) from individuals within the speech community of the homeless shelters, as well as fearing retribution from the organization (LCP program application,

Appendix E). At the beginning of the study, the first interview began with a list of semi-structured interview questions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011), such as, "Can you tell me of a time that you asked for help?" Adapting to the component, the semi-structured nature of the interview guide shifted immediately into a loosely structured, negotiated text (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Leeds-Hurwiz, 2005; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) as the researcher gradually moved the conversation towards the concept of "help" as a means to build rapport (Harrington, 2003). (For a complete interview guide, please see Appendix B.)

Location of Interviews. A homeless shelter is a unique experience not just for volunteers and homeless users, but also for researchers. In this study, it became apparent that different participant's required different locations for interviews. For volunteers and staff participants, they possessed the liberty to select a location off site for the interview, in an environment that they felt most comfortable for sharing their perspectives. Some of these locations included office spaces, libraries and other business establishments. For the programmers, certain requirements of the life-change program restricted their ability to meet off-property for interviews. Therefore, the use of on-site interviews was required for these individuals. Most of the interviews were conducted either inside the classroom at the Multi, or the Children's Center. When these locations were unavailable, participants selected picnic tables and locations outdoors at a time of day when very few individuals were around. The first interviewee was interviewed in the Multi at a table during a time of day when only a handful of other shelter users remained in the Multi. On-site interviews in common areas at homeless shelters have been utilized in previous ethnographic studies (Campbell, 1995; Desjarlias, 1997; Jewell, 1993). While these on-site interviews are not optimal in maintaining privacy and confidentiality, it was

necessary to address the situation where programmers cannot leave property for the first 30-days of the program, and much of their free time is restricted and filled with mandatory program activities. Additionally, asking programmers to purchase bus passes for transportation to an off-site interview location personal funds, was deemed an unreasonable request by the researcher. Thus, on-site interviews were completed with programmers.

Consenting participants. Because all participants received face-to-face recruitment to participate in the study, only individuals who participated in the interview phase signed consent forms. Although interviews are strategically designed to obtain signed consent forms prior to commencing the interview, many programmers began to answer "sample questions" before signing the consent form and expressed nonverbal cues of frustration if I repeated the question later in the interview, such as deep sighs and rolling of their eyes. To adapt to this situation, the audio recording device was placed on the table in front of the interviewee. Once they nodded in agreement that it was permissible to record the interview, the recording device was turned on and informed consent was obtained. Because participant observation took place in a public area where staff engages in observing volunteers and programmers, written consent was not required. However, all individuals under observation received verbal notification of the observations taking place and were granted the opportunity to withdraw on a daily basis. Shelter users, staff and volunteers frequently initiated the consent process by asking for an update on the progress of my paper.

Several programmers desired to participate in the interview process, but left *The Little City* prior to completing the interview. Because individuals who left *The Little City*

did not leave behind contact information for the researcher, no further endeavors were made to pursue those individuals for an interview. Only two individuals are considered to have withdrawn from participation in this study because while attempting to schedule an interview, they stated that they had "changed their mind." I honored this request to withdraw from the study, and their choice to withdraw remained confidential.

Social Artifacts

In addition to the participant observations and in-depth interviews (9 shelter users, 4 volunteers and 5 staff members), the organization also provided several social artifacts, such as documents produced and distributed to either volunteers or shelter users. These social artifacts include: the volunteer application, the LCP program application, organizational gazettes (high-gloss color documents printed quarterly) and newsletters (newspaper quality paper produced once a year). Because these documents frequently reiterated the ways of speaking within the speech community, these social artifacts assisted in identifying and naming themes (Dollar & Merrigan, 2002; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) emerging within the data analysis.

Data Analysis

Altogether, the combination of 18 interviews (9 programmers, 4 volunteers and 5 staff), 100 hours of observation, and several social artifacts provided well over 300 pages of data for analysis within this study. Hymes (1972) states "an adequate descriptive theory would provide for the analysis of individual communities by specifying technical concepts required for such analysis and by characterizing the forms that analysis should take" (1972, p. 53). The following analysis provides a descriptive and analytical exploration into the communication between volunteers and shelter users. Regarding

participants as experts on the ways of speaking within their speech community during all phases of data collection, and through observing naturally occurring communication, the speech codes emerged for asking for, for giving and for receiving help surfaced within the context extant to the speech community at the homeless shelter, *The Little City*. To obtain this *emic* perspective, I asked participants to reflect on their communicative behavior and subsequently their culture through in-depth (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) and ethnographic conversations (Fontana & Frey, 2000) while simultaneously searching for consistency within data collected through participant observation. As a final component to analyzing communication within a cultural context, the data also included social artifacts, public documents produced by the speech community, to consider how these social artifacts influenced and guided norms of communication between volunteers and LCP program individuals. Thus, patterns of speaking between volunteers and LCP program individuals at a homeless shelter emerged through examining patterns in data collected through participant observation, interviews and social artifacts (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005; Lindlof & Taylor, 2011; Philipsen & Coutu, 2005).

Following the guidance of Emerson et al. (2005), the entire corpus of data consisting of interview transcripts, social artifacts, and field notes collected from September 2011 through January 1, 2012 was read from beginning to end. By reading the entire corpus, the researcher is able to view the study as a complete entity to understand a few elements.

After reading the corpus of data, the process of coding begins. Codes "are essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story that, when clustered together according to similarity and regularity – a pattern – they actively facilitate the

development of categories and thus analysis of their connections" (Saldan, 2009, p. 8). Codes are established through the process of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), a process that involves constantly reviewing all previously established codes prior to coding the new segment. If a previously established code exists, then that code is applied to that segment of data. If the segment does not fit the previously established code, then a new code is created. After the creation of codes, the next step of analysis will be to establish categories, or groupings of codes with similarities.

Because of the SPEAKING framework of the EOC (Hymes, 1972) the codes shall be organized into the categories of scene/setting, participants, ends, act sequences, key, instrumentalities, norms and genres. Then patterns and variations within each category shall be analyzed to identify the ways of speaking for the speech community. Through identifying themes arising within the SPEAKING framework through the process of constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the prescriptions and proscriptions for the particular ways of speaking in this speech community emerged in the data collected through participant observation and interviews.

Validity and Reliability

When considering qualitative data such as 100 hours of participant observation, 18 interviews and several social artifacts, validity and reliability are based upon a point of saturation. In this sense, *saturation* refers to the point at which no further patterns emerge (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Validity is achieved through the collection of multiple perspectives from multiple participants that reporting similar speech codes that support the collection of data in field notes. In this study, three different groups of individuals

were interviewed – programmers, volunteers and staff – to obtain multiple perspectives. Because homeless individuals are a marginalized group, a larger number of interviews collected from LCP program participants enabled them the opportunity to receive perhaps an over-representation deemed necessary to establish patterns in the interpretations of asking for and receiving help from volunteers at *the Little City*. Reliability of the data occurs when the data to the "coherence" presented in the "cultural system" (Geertz, 1973, p. 17). Therefore, reliability of the study accounted for the complexity of the cultural system extant at *The Little City* through negative case comparison and the process of member checking (Miles & Huberman, 1994), to be discussed in greater detail below.

Elements of qualitative study provide not only validity and reliability, but also demonstrate the following eight criteria proposed by Tracy (2010): (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. As demonstrated through the introduction, the study investigates a *worthy topic* by the investigation into the growing issue of homelessness, a topic that requires *rich rigor* in the hours spent in the field and the quantity of interviews collected. Reflexive of the impact the researcher had on the community, whether good or bad, the study will demonstrate *sincerity* of the conscious effort to present an *emic* versus *etic* interpretation of the culture. In the process of constructing "thick description" of ethnography, the experience of multiple individuals within the speech community to obtain *credibility,* for a study that will *resonate,* or "ring true," with volunteers and homeless individuals who have partaken in the speech community of a homeless shelter. The benefits of the study shall be relevant to the speech community, demonstrating a *significant contribution* to the community, while

abiding by IRB protocols of confidentiality and privacy, the researcher maintains an *ethical* stance in answering the proposed research questions, *the meaningful coherence* (Tracy, 2010). By addressing the eight criteria, the study addresses the issues of validity and reliability applicable to the qualitative methods of collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Chapter 4

Results

Prioritizing utterances spoken during participant observation, interviews and participant observation, this chapter provides a descriptive portrayal of cultural values and beliefs within the speech community at *the Little City* (TLC). This descriptive analysis addresses the research questions presented in chapter one, reiterated as follows: *RQ1:* How are communicative resources used to differentiate aspects of personhood between volunteers and homeless persons at TLC? *RQ2:* What are some key norms influencing how communicative resources are used in interaction that affect how homeless persons can or cannot ask for help from volunteers at TLC? *RQ3:* What are the consequences of the ways that communicative resources are used at TLC?

Aligning with Hymes' (1962; 1972) SPEAKING framework, these results address how the personhood of participants holds distinct implications on the norms and rules for communicative interaction between homeless individuals and volunteers within the genre of "asking for help" practices at the scene, *the Little City*. These results also speak to elements of a speech code (Philipsen, 1997; Philipsen, Coutu & Covarrubias, 2005) that constitute proscriptions and prescriptions for how homeless individuals can or cannot speak with volunteers. Within these norms for communicative interaction, consequences exist, both relationally and organizationally, for homeless individuals and volunteers who abide by or violate these regulative norms of communicative interaction.

Research Question 1

Aspects of Personhood

Following the framework provided by the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972; Leeds-Hurwiz, 2005; Philipsen & Coutu, 2005), this research question considers how communicative resources are used by individuals to differentiate aspects of personhood between volunteers and homeless persons within the context, or scene at the shelter described in chapter one.

Initially this study distinguished volunteers and homeless individuals into two distinct groups of interlocutors, but the participants in this study provide a complex range of dimensions, speaking to how personhood at TLC is constructed and shaped by organizational policies as well as through communicative interactions taking place at the homeless shelter. Some of these dimensions of personhood reflect communication contained solely within application materials to volunteer at TLC as well as to join the LCP program. Some aspects represent constructions of personhood based solely upon communication of and about homeless individuals and volunteers. In addition, other dimensions represent constructions of personhood through a combination of policies and communicative interactions. Therefore, throughout the descriptive presentation of aspects of personhood for homeless individuals and volunteers, I specifically indicate whether sayings are quoted from the "LCP application," the "Volunteer application," a "TLC staff" member, a "TLC volunteer" or an "LCP participant." This distinction enables me to demonstrate the reductive and highly nuanced ways that personhood is constructed first for homeless individuals and secondly, for volunteers.

Homeless Individuals. At *the Little City* one of the complexities of being a person in a state of homelessness is that one's personhood is described in multiple ways.

When applying to the Life in Christ's Power (LCP) program, the very first page that homeless individuals and staff read contains the statement: "While homelessness occurs for many reasons, one stands out above all: the **breakdown of family**" (original formatting preserved). Despite this reductive category presented by TLC, participants in this study disclosed that there are "10,000 reasons why people are homeless" (LCP program participant, Josh). The additional dimensions of personhood identified by participants within this study consist of the following six categories: (1) "new poor," (2) "depersonalized," (3) "addicted," (4) students, (5) "givers," and finally (6) "users of the program." For a total of seven dimensions of personhood, these components reveal the complex nature of a particular set of homeless individuals participating in the Life in Christ's Power program at *the Little City.*

Broken. As referenced previously, homeless individuals complete a 32-page application to the LCP program that constructs a distinct type of personhood for homeless individuals, targeting the poignant cause of homelessness. "While homelessness occurs for many reasons, one stands out above all: the **breakdown of family**" (original formatting preserved).

This "breakdown of family" is attributed to the following "contributing factors": (1) the "inability to establish and or maintain healthy priorities," (2) a "lack of purity in relationships," (3) a "lack of financial management skills" and finally (4) "option blindness." In regards to the "inability to establish and or maintain healthy priorities," *the Little City* explains within the application materials that families who are homeless are sometimes the result of parents who are incapacitated by drugs result in children taking care of themselves and the incapacitated adult, and the child, not the parent,

realizes that homelessness is near, "again." When a "lack of purity in relationships" contributes to "the breakdown of family," *the Little City* means that homeless individuals may have been unable to maintain monogamy within their heterosexual relationship. Third, when a "*lack of financial management skills*" leads to a "breakdown of family," families are homeless as a result of overspending, overwhelming credit card debt leaving no money to cover rent and food expenses. As a final contributing factor to the "breakdown of family" is labeled as "option blindness" which is explained more specifically as individuals being blind to options available to resolving conflict within the family. Unable to resolve conflict, the individuals or family units find themselves homeless. Although these "contributing factors" do not directly surface through communicative interaction, the factors provide a contextual background for the additional six dimensions of personhood for homeless individuals.

"New Poor". Another aspect of personhood addressed in this study, the descriptor "new poor" speaks to the financial condition, in a similar but distinctly unique manner presented earlier. Instead of portraying homeless as "broken" individuals incapable of managing their finances, homeless individuals described as members of the "new poor" are portrayed by a staff member as a direct outcome of the current economic recession in the United States.

> Because of the economic recession, a guy went without a job three years [and now] he's in a depression. But, because of the economic recession being as deep as it is and as long as it's been, we've got an awful lot of people now that you would consider among the new poor. That's folks that at one point in time had a good job someplace, lots of benefits, mortgage. Well, once the job was gone, the

> rest of it was lost. Consequently that has rendered some people homeless that otherwise would not even look at a homeless shelter, under any circumstances. But, because of their circumstance, they got themselves in that environment now. (TLC staff, Gary)

Labeled as "the new poor" due to the economic recession, LCP program participants were once holders of jobs with benefits and owners of homes. Once losing their job, the individuals also lost the benefits provided through the job and then eventually lost their homes and possibly their cars because there was no income to pay the mortgage or car loan. As Gary says, "new poor" are now homeless and destabilized "through nothing they did wrong, not a thing they did wrong." Adding that "the economy went south on us, and the jobs took off. And, those jobs didn't come back." As part of the Life in Christ's Power Program, Gary continues:

> We love to see people be able to stabilize, honey [sic], and you're living in an economy as unstable as this one is. There are a lot of people that have been very stable throughout their lives and just because the economy went south, that's what destabilized. (TLC staff, Gary)

In an unstable environment of homelessness, TLC attempts to re-stabilize homeless individuals through many large and small detailed ways. For example, one of the primary ways presented by staff member Gary was through the way that meals are served:

> We do not feed them on trays; we feed them from a plate. We do not give them plasticware, we give them silverware. We do not give them a paper cup; we give them a porcelain cup. They do not stand in line in our window to eat; they are

> served at their table. Beginning with children first, then the adults. And, that's the way we do it here.

Simulating how domicile individuals may eat when at home, these minute details attempt to bring stability to homeless individuals. However, some of the other communicative interactions do not receive as much personal and individual detail. For example, homeless individuals do not receive copies of TLC policies to keep with them. Instead, policies and procedures are posted in a general area, leading one volunteer to comment on how homeless individuals were "de-personalized" the next category of personhood.

Depersonalized humans. Making reference to how policies are displayed at TLC, Jonathon, a volunteer at the shelter was not the first person interviewed who gave me instructions on what to observe, as he said:

> Go to the office, and you'll see. They've stuck up a list of rules. I thought that was very de-personalizing actually. I think if you're going to do this, you need to give it individually, not stick it up all over the place. Telling women what underwear they can wear-- I mean, it's outrageous. And, I was surprised actually they were that unthoughtful. I would have thought that they would have been more personal than that. It's not really a very nice thing to be doing. (TLC volunteer, Jonathon)

Of the many lists of rules at the shelter, the particular list of rules that Jonathon referred to is the "Dress Code" for homeless individuals living on property. The dress code for homeless individuals on property provides detailed instructions of what LCP program participants may wear, such as the appropriate private undergarments (i.e. bras and underwear for females). For Jonathon who noticed the list "Dress Code" posted on one of the walls in the Multi, he felt that posting this reminder was "de-personalizing" for

homeless individuals. Instead, this volunteer felt that homeless individuals should be approached individually to be reminded of the dress code policy.

Part of the 32-page application for the Life in Christ's Power program, Sam, an LCP participant, said, "They let you review the rules when you go into the program, that's about it." Homeless individuals are not given a copy of the rules after accepted to the LCP program. Perceived as "depersonalizing" way of communicating these rules, specifically rules pertaining to how bras should be worn and the acceptable types of underwear worn by females, homeless individuals must read rules posted on the window of the LCP office that provides individuals with items such as towels, toilet paper, hygiene products, and baby food.

Jonathon and I discussed the process of how many individuals staying at the shelter receive vouchers to purchase their clothing at the thrift store on property owned and operated by TLC. For those individuals who purchase all of their clothes at this thrift store, these rules add an additional layer of depersonalizing detail in that homeless individuals are wearing donated clothing that was sorted by and given to them by the organization while also being told exactly what to wear. In the midst of experiencing this "depersonalized" and "unthoughtful" form of communication, participants in this study also recognized that they received yet another dimension of personhood – addicts.

Addicted humans. For homeless individuals participating in the LCP program, this category of personhood addresses all individuals participate in the same program designed to address circumstances of addiction through *Life Recovery Bible* (Tyndale, 1998) regardless of their differences. Through implementing a standardized program specifically designed to address the 12-step process of recovering from addiction,

participation in this LCP program groups all individuals together into the same category of addiction. As Richard (TLC staff) states, "All have the same addiction." Richard continues to explain, that "some of them have mental abuse. Some of them have drug abuse. Some of them have domestic violence abuse." With all LCP program participants going through the same program designed for addiction, those who are victims of domestic violence abuse are grouped with substance abusers into one category.

While interviewing Steven (LCP participant), I asked him whether or not homeless individuals had to be "addicted" in order to be admitted into the LCP program. Steven's response was, "That's what they're saying." Even though Steven was participating in the LCP program, he clarified that he was not an addict. Instead, he sorted through a multiplicity of perceptions about addiction in the following excerpt:

> But, I don't have an addiction. I don't have an alcohol or drug addiction, but I had to be in the *Life Recovery Bible*. Well, they say I have other issues. Well, what other issues? Financial? Ok, well how's the Life Recovery Bible supposed to help financially? Does it give me a formula in the Life Recovery on how to make money? No. N'K. Emotional? My emotions that I'm homeless? Yeah, I have emotions that I'm homeless, but is there anything in the *Life Recovery Bible* that's supposed to help my emotions because I'm homeless? No. (LCP participant, Steven)

Here, Steven speaks to the definition of "addiction" that addresses how the LCP program groups all individuals into the personhood of an "addict" due to the standardized nature of needing "to be in the *Life Recovery Program.*" In the context of this speech community, this category of personhood speaks to all individuals "in the *Life Recovery*

Bible" who may have experienced any of the following: "substance abuse," "domestic abuse," "mental abuse," "financial" problems, and "emotions" of experiencing homelessness.

Revealing the complex nature of personhood at an organization trying to "stabilize" homeless individuals, these contrasting meanings are intrinsically attached to the "biblically based curriculum" of the *Life Recovery Bible*, reducing homeless individuals into the category of addiction. Step one of the 12-step program listed in the LCP program application states, "We admitted that we are powerless over our dependencies." Here, the term "dependencies" is distinctly different from the term "problems" within the *Life Recovery Bible* (Tyndale, 1998, p. 5), further highlighting the emphasis at *the Little City* on addiction as a dependency upon someone or something instead of "problems."

With the common element of participation in the LCP program, some individuals accept this perceived similarity of "addiction" between and among homeless individuals.

> If we are in the program going through an addiction of--- does not matter if it is alcohol or drugs, we all have similar stories. And, it actually helps if people understand where a lot of the addiction comes from in people. (LCP participant, David)

Coming from the perspective of a homeless individual, addiction does not have to be simply alcohol or drugs.

Josh, another LCP program participant said, "There are a thousand and one addictions. It doesn't have to be alcohol or chemical, and I didn't have either. When they said it was a program, I realized mainly alcohol and drugs are most cases." Within a

program designed for "mainly alcohol and drug" addictions, all homeless individuals must submit to random drug test analysis. After the random drug tests, "I find there are a lot of people that when they start doing drug testing, they're gone. Then they're gone for 30 days" (LCP participant, Lauren). Subject to random drug testing, persons participating in the Life in Christ's Power program may or may not have an addiction, but by joining the LCP program at the shelter, all homeless individuals become students as a result of participating in the program, the next dimension of personhood for homeless individuals at *TLC*.

Students of Christianity, self and opportunity. When participating in the Life in Christ's Power program (LCP) homeless individuals attend classes Monday through Friday for two hours every week for nine months until graduating from the program. According to Shari (TLC staff), this program requires much of participants.

> It's not easy. You are expected to go to class. You are expected to do your homework. You are expected to do your job assignment. You are expected to come to all the activities. You are expected to keep your area clean. You are expected to participate in your life here.

With high expectations, LCP program participants become students that attend class and complete homework assigned as part of the 12-step *Life Recovery Bible* (Tyndale, 1998), containing an adaptation of the original 12-steps developed for Alcoholics Anonymous for the Christian Bible. During these classes that students attend and homework completed within a *Life Recovery* workbook, or study guide, homeless individuals progress through the 12-steps towards the following end:

> By the time you complete step twelve [in class], you know more about yourself than you've ever known before. You know more about how you can help someone else less fortunate than what you are. And, because we deal with the homeless situation, there are always opportunities [to help]. (Gary, Staff)

According to the 12-steps of the *Life Recovery Bible* (Tyndale, 1998) taught as part of the LCP program, step ten states. "We continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it." At *the Little City,* a "personal inventory" receives further description within the LCP program application where homeless individuals are requested to create a list of "things I do NOT like about myself" as well as "things I like about myself." Through this process of personal inventory and a "biblically based curriculum," homeless individuals in the LCP program are not simply students of Christianity, but students of self as they learn by itemizing their positive and negative characteristics of personhood.

In addition to being students of Christianity and self, Life in Christ's Power program participants are also students of opportunity. Returning back to Gary's statement, through learning about one's personhood, homeless individuals know how to help other individuals "less fortunate" than themselves. As a student, LCP program participants "are trained to look for opportunity for service" (TLC staff, Gary). As students receive training to know how they may help other homeless individuals, homeless individuals are not simply students, but givers, the next dimension of personhood for homeless individuals in the LCP program.

Givers. Prior to experiencing homelessness, Vanessa recalled, "I've always been the one *to* help." Now as a person participating in the Life in Christ's Power (LCP) program, Vanessa may continue to help by being perceived as a giver.

> Our little folks, our residents, they just give all the time. They may not have much to give, but they can give a little time. They can give a little talent. And if they got any resource at all, they even love to give a little resource. (TLC staff, Gary)

When giving time, homeless persons in the LCP program are required, as part of the program, to give approximately 30-hours per week within their assigned "volunteer LCP position" (TLC staff, Richard).

> Just because our people our residents are homeless, they still have to volunteer to go into that if a volunteers going to do something out here, they have to voluntarily participate. See that volunteerism? How that can work? (TLC staff, Gary)

Through donating their time in a "volunteer" position, individuals are donating talent to the shelter through completing job tasks. According to Lauren (LCP participant), "the LCP participants, we basically do the day-to-day stuff, you know? We all have jobs." Aligning with the concept of "talent," these jobs are not randomly assigned to homeless individuals. Instead, homeless individuals are "placed" into a position by a staff member at TLC who meets with each person in the LCP program to "get a feel for what they would be able to do around the shelter" (TLC staff, Andi).

Giving time and talent, homeless persons also recount moments of giving "resources" back to the shelter when possible. With limited monetary resources, such as the $25 weekly gift check or Social Security income, Lauren (LCP participant) stated, "I

have money, so I give back, you know? I've always been that way. It makes me feel good." For example, Lauren purchased cleaning supplies to donate to keep things clean; Melissa (LCP participant) made a point in using the coin-operated washers and dryers at the shelter instead of using the free laundry services offered to LCP program participants on Tuesday and Thursday.

> Well, you see, I have partial income, but not enough to pay for an apartment that I can afford. Ok? I feel I can pay for my own, so I will. Like I don't have any income from *the Little City*, so I could use their free laundry. But, there are literally people here with no income who do not have the advantage of: "I can pay for my own, so I will." There are people who literally have nothing. (LCP participant, Melissa)

Regardless of their limited financial resources, homeless persons still find ways to give back to the shelter and help other homeless individuals. However, not all individuals enrolled in the Life in Christ's Power program are the considered "givers." Some individuals receive a contrasting category of personhood established by LCP program participants for a particular set of LCP program participants.

Users of the Program. Unique to individuals participating in the Life in Christ's Power program, interviewees participating in the LCP program referenced the following distinction between them and some other LCP program members:

> I mean they've been here for a long time; some of them have been here for years. And, they're still acting like they don't have Christ in their life, and it's hard for someone [like me]. Because I want to be here in the program, and the other ones are just using the program.

According to Lauren, “it’s more common” for individuals to be seen as “users of the program,” who have been at the shelter for a long time, do not act like Christians, and do not “want to be here in the program.” Although the term “a long time” at reflects individuals who participate in the program for more than a year, considering the LCP program is a 9-month program, time was not the only way to determine who was “using the program.” Instead, individuals needed to demonstrate the additional factors of “acting like they don’t have Christ in their life” and not “wanting to be in the program.” When evaluating an individual’s desire to be in the program, it is distinctly different from desiring to stay at TLC. An element that Katie (LCP participant) elaborates upon:

> Some of them just want a room. You are not allowed a room unless you join the program. Some will do it to get a room. Some are really sincere. They want to go through the program. They want to better themselves. They want to get away from their bad habits, from their drinking, from their alcohol. You know, help them with their drug addiction. They want to try to come clean.

In order to have a room in the barracks (for family units) or the dormitories (for single individuals) at *the Little City*, individuals must join the LCP program. Subsequently, some individuals were perceived as “using the program” to get a room, instead of wanting “to better themselves.” Not sincere about trying “to come clean,” these users of the program were not utilizing the program to work on their “addiction.” Lauren, previously portrayed as a “giver” by donating cleaning supplies to the shelter, is an individual in recovery due to an addiction to prescription pain medicines.

> The ones that are just here because they have nothing. They are earning $25 a week. They are happy with their $25. They have a place to sleep, and they want

> to complain about the job. Or, they do not "do" their jobs. They do the bare minimum and that kind of ticks me off. But, that's their program, not mine. (LCP participant, Lauren)

Individuals who use the program to earn $25 gift check, who complain and who eventually leave her more work to do by only doing "the bare minimum" creates contrasting emotional for Lauren. In the above quote, users of the program that "complain" and "do the bare minimum" tick her off. However, individuals using the program who do not "want" to be in the program and who "still act like they don't have Christ in their life" (as quoted previously) "is a little heartbreaking."

As a category of personhood evoking emotional responses, users of the program may not apply to the program to "come clean" from addiction, but may apply to the program for a place to sleep off the streets. One particular homeless individual openly admitted during the interview:

> I actually used the program. I had a little bit of money. I didn't want to be stuck here sleeping under a bridge. I didn't want to be an overnight guest and have to take my stuff with me every day, so I talked to them [the staff] about the program.

While I personally never observed Josh complain about his job(s), he knew prior to entering the program that he did not have an addiction to alcohol or drugs. He recognized that "a thousand and one addictions" exist, but for him, he needed a place to keep his belongings during the day and a place to sleep at night, benefits of applying to and joining the LCP program.

Summary. Demonstrated by their own expressions, being a homeless individual at *the Little City* involves utilizing communicative resources to create and manage a

complex array of personhood(s) for a homeless individual. A homeless person may fit the negative categorizations of individuals who are "broken" or "addicts." Because all homeless individuals in this study need to meet the criteria of participating in the Life in Christ's Power program, the homeless individuals participating in this study enacted the personhood of a student, specifically a student of Christianity, of self, and of opportunities. Experiencing communication that may or may not be "depersonalizing" and "unthoughtful," homeless individuals identified another category of personhood for "users of the program," that get a place to stay and a $25 weekly gift check. As a final category of personhood, individuals in this study were also framed as "givers" who voluntarily donate resources as well as time and talent to work the required 30-hours per week at the shelter.

As the next section addresses the personhood of the second group of interlocutors, the dimensions of personhood for homeless individuals and volunteers provide a nuanced understanding of what it means to be a homeless person interacting with volunteers at *the Little City*. Aligning with the theory and method of the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2005), the SPEAKING framework identifies how specific participants speak within a particular act sequence within this genre of "asking for help" practices. With communication representing a "relational process" that "elicits a response" (Griffin, 2009), this study investigates the personhood of participants that may be responding to homeless individuals, creating and reflexively constructing how homeless individuals, other volunteers and TLC staff may perceive volunteers.

Volunteers. Previously defined within the literature as individuals who donate time to the organization, the personhood of a volunteer at *the Little City* demonstrates

how policies and communication enact a variety of contrasting and unique meanings for the person of a volunteer. First aspects of personhood are presented by exploring the comments that volunteers are "just people," "outsiders," and "manipulatable." In addition to these three attributions, two additional characterizations of volunteers are juxtaposed: those who "invest" and those who are "a joke" here termed "inane" for the purposes of this study. Descriptively portraying how volunteers may be perceived by individuals within this particular speech community begins to demonstrate how the personhood of participants are differentiated based upon whether one is a homeless person or a volunteer person.

"Just People". As perceived by homeless individuals participating in the Life in Christ's Power program, the fundamental type of personhood for volunteers consists of being "just people. People with homes that's all, but they're just people" (LCP participant, Katie). Nothing more, nothing less, volunteers were perceived to be "just people" laying a foundation of similarity of humanity with homeless individuals even though volunteers had a home. Phrased in a different way:

> I would perceive they [LCP participants] don't look at them as volunteers. I think they just look at them as people, and they take them for what they are. If they are happy-go-lucky and friendly, then the residents going to be like that. If they are going to be standoffish, then they are going to be avoided. And I can only speak for myself, but I don't look at you as a "volunteer" I look at you as an "individual." (LCP participant, Josh)

Seen as "individuals" with particular personalities, such as "happy-go-lucky," "friendly" or "standoffish," the act of volunteering does not make a volunteer anything more than an

"individual." As "individuals" volunteers were not perceived as any better than a homeless person. As Steven (LCP participant) puts it, "Now, when the homeless people come in, they don't look at the volunteers as, 'Oh, you're better than we are.'" Not "better than" a homeless individual, Lauren, another LCP participant, commented that volunteers "come dressed like everyone. They don't dress up or underdress or overdress."

For Jeanette (TLC volunteer), homeless individuals "just accept me, and they are like, 'Well, Jeanette is like one of us.'" Accepted as "an individual" that may be "like" a homeless person, volunteers are "just people" that are not "overdressed," "underdressed," or "better than" homeless individuals. Placed into a category of equal status with homeless persons, these volunteers are still individuals with "homes" and part of the domicile community. As Katie stated earlier, volunteers are "people with homes." This concept of "home" established a difference between homeless individuals and volunteers, termed as "outsiders," the next category of personhood for volunteers.

Outsiders. As a differentiation between the personhood of volunteers and the personhood of homeless individuals, Steven (LCP participant) explained the difference by telling me, "Take for instance you—you on the outside. You're on the outside. You live off property." Being on the "outside" and "off property," a volunteer has "their own car, their own apartment, their own job, their own phone. They come and go. They are out here volunteering, but they've got all the things made" (LCP participant, Steven). Even though some homeless individuals at the shelter may possess transportation, income, and cell phones, it was the distinct component of having an "apartment" or "home" that distinguished volunteers as outsiders that enabled volunteers to "come and go." Further explained by one of the staff members:

> The volunteers are usually people in the community who, for whatever their reason, want to be here on property to be a volunteer, or to give something to the ministry, so the vast majority of your volunteerism side now comes from the outside to the inside. (TLC staff, Gary)

As "outsiders," coming from the "outside," or the community, to volunteer on the "inside," the shelter, one of the LCP participants, Sam openly expressed his categorization of these outsiders, "I consider them a pest." These "outside" volunteers became "a pest" to Sam as volunteers attempted to interrupt his mealtime with conversations, a time when Sam would prefer to not be disturbed. Quite different from "just people" these "outsiders" coming to *the Little City* "to give" are not only considered "a pest" to some homeless individuals, but volunteers are also considered "manipulatable," the next category of personhood for volunteers.

Manipulatable. "*Be cautious!* Some of our residents may employ manipulative tactics in an effort to take advantage of you for personal, and, in some cases, individual agendas" (Volunteer Social Artifact). This is one of the first precautionary statements written into the volunteer application form completed by volunteers when first arriving to *the Little City*. During the interview Shari (TLC staff) stated, "I don't think they know what to expect when they first come because first of all they don't know where we are (located)." Although an orientation process is designed to help familiarize volunteers with TLC, Andy (TLC staff) indicates that volunteers are also not prepared for interpreting manipulative communication from homeless individuals:

> I think that just coming as a volunteer, you wouldn't know unless volunteers have family members or friends that have been addicts and familiar with the addict

> behavior, or mentally ill. If they're exposed to mentally ill people, and I'm not saying they're manipulative. However, they, you know, they have their own issues of being sick. But I don't think they would really know just coming in as a volunteer.

These "manipulative" individuals are homeless persons already categorized as "addicts" going through the LCP program to recover from addiction through the 12-step program contained within the *Life Recovery Bible* (Tyndale, 1998). This perspective of homeless persons in the shelter as manipulative addicts was also recognized by other individuals.

One LCP participant, named Josh, provided the following recommendation and example for how volunteers may prepare themselves for identifying manipulative tactics:

> I realize being a volunteer they don't know who they are actually talking to, so just [be a] good judge of character or first impression. Consider the source, who you're talking to. I know several people here are just lies. I'm not going to mention a name, but he's a master chef. He's this, and he's this. He's got a house, and he's got all this. But, why is he in the shelter? I'm sorry. If you're a master chef, there is work out there. If you got a home, why are you staying here? So, consider what they are telling you they are. (LCP participant, Josh)

In light of this propensity for being manipulated, one LCP program participant indicated that an identifier or volunteer badge would provide

> …Protection for them (volunteers) in a way. Not isolation but insulation, yeah, because volunteers don't really understand…those people out there [i.e. volunteers] coming across that security gate, they don't know what they're doing here. I think they would be appalled. (LCP participant, Vanessa)

More specifically, volunteers would be appalled by the sexual use of language, such as a man licking his lips every time he spoke to a female. Because, according to Vanessa, an LCP participant may speak in this sexual manner with another LCP participant "but, there's a different line that you cross or don't cross depending on if they are one of us [LCP] or one of them [volunteer]."

As a means to "insulate" and "protect" these manipulatable volunteers from sexual language, lies and manipulative tactics of some homeless individuals staying at the shelter, a few of the LCP program participants felt volunteers should wear a badge or identifying marker to distinguish volunteers as "volunteers" and not "just people." By distinguishing volunteers as different, homeless individuals would be able to know whether or not they could "cross" that "line" between the two distinct types of persons. Differentiated from homeless individuals as manipulatable instead of "manipulative addicts," the next category of homeless further describes how volunteers are differentiated from LCP program participants.

Investors. As a category of personhood for "the volunteers that come back" (LCP participant, Katie) and for those that are in search of the right place to volunteer, Gary (TLC staff) described volunteers as investors:

> Because what they were looking for were opportunities, volunteer opportunities, whereby they could invest in that opportunity time, talent and resources. And when they found, that organization that could utilize time talent and resource, they became involved. (TLC staff, Gary)

When giving "time," one volunteer invested time in such a way that she lost track of time:

> By the time I leave, I now have to ask the guys to ask me to leave because I can't leave on my own. Leaving is not a thing that I can do automatically. I have to ask either the floor supervisor to tell me, "Ok in 5 minutes you need to go." I have to go [to work]. (TLC volunteer, Jeanette)

When giving "resources," none of the volunteers indicated that they gave cash to LCP program participants. Jonathon (TLC volunteer) says, "Nobody is getting a dollar off me." Most of the volunteers interviewed indicated that they simply did not bring money with them when coming to the shelter.

For Karen**,** she knew not to bring money with her because, "I'm a little bit of a sucker sometimes." Acknowledging that she is capable of being manipulated and consistently acquiescing to individuals who ask her for money, Karen brings a different type of resource. Instead of bringing monetary resources, Karen brings 20 plastic bags each containing three homemade cookies to give out every other week. During the holiday season, Karen used money she received from selling her broken gold jewelry to purchase materials to make tins of fudge and cookies to distribute to residents.

Finally, when giving "talent," volunteers provided their skills to give to homeless individuals. Karen used her skills in baking to offer fudge and cookies to individuals. Jonathon used his skills as a certified teacher to help homeless individuals study for the General Educational Development (GED) test. Lance used his knowledge and skills in nutrition to help homeless individuals learn how to improve their health by looking at what they ate; and finally, Jeanette used her skills in working with children to provide games and activities for homeless children. Each of these volunteers in this study

demonstrated themselves to be investors in the lives of not just the organization, but homeless individuals by communicatively interacting with individuals.

As investors, volunteers are also contributors, through donating talent and resources, and dependable, through consistently donating time. As contributors, staff persons ask that volunteers "contribute to the overall mission of *the Little City*," a mission of helping homeless individuals "achieve productive and independent lifestyles through healing and positive change" (Volunteer social artifact). As dependable, staff persons tell volunteers, "Remember, we depend on you" (Volunteer social artifact). Additionally, as dependable, Gary (TLC staff) highlights the importance of volunteers "prioritizing" homeless individuals:

> A volunteer prioritizes what they are going to do. If something more important than volunteering comes up, they'll let volunteering go for something else that they put in a higher priority… With volunteers you have to have the combination of the volunteer knows what they are doing, knows what the material is that they are going to work with but they are consistent and persistent.

Without dependability of these volunteers, these "investors," homeless individuals would face "rejection" by volunteers who did not prioritize their "investment" in homeless individuals.

Contextualizing this concept, the staff member utilized me as an example:

> It's a balancing act, and see, I'm sure that even in your case, with this project that you're on, you have some people kind of look at you, "Well, is she coming back?" See, the fact that you stayed faithful. The fact you stayed with your project as you promised that you would do. That counts.

As a concept of dependability, time "counts" when looking at volunteers who come back. During the study, one homeless individual came up to me to clarify, "You're back. I thought you were one of those that comes and doesn't come back that is why I said, 'If I don't see you again, Merry Christmas.'" As I became a person who came back to volunteer again at *the Little City,* I began to understand the importance of understanding the next category of personhood for those who "do not come back" to *the Little City.*

Inane. With research for this ethnography of communication taking place during the holiday months of November and December, there were ample opportunities to observe when there were more volunteers on property than homeless individuals. When encountering this inversion of numbers, I asked Melissa (LCP participant) for her opinion on regarding what she thought of so many volunteers. Responding *in situ* Melissa says, "love them," a sentiment echoed by Shari (TLC staff) describing it as "awesome" to have so many volunteers present throughout the day. Emphasized as an action that makes volunteers lovable and "awesome," two LCP program participants provided a different interpretation of this situation:

> I think it's a joke. It's just so people see the numbers, and I think it's selling out to the almighty dollar. So, I think the more volunteers you are getting here, it's for their (*the Little City's*) own purpose. It's not looking at you (a volunteer) giving of your heart. It's looking at what you may give down the road. That's my impression. (LCP participant, Josh)

Referring to these volunteers as "a joke" this category of personhood is identified with the term "inane," reflecting that this inversion of volunteers and homeless individuals "lacks significance, meaning, or point" (Merriam-Webster, 2012) coming from the heart

of a volunteer. Instead inane volunteers, provide this privately funded faith-based organization to increase donation that these persons "may give down the road," or a later point in time. Implicating to Josh that *the Little City* is "selling out to the almighty dollar" instead of looking at the "heart" of volunteers.

Referencing how the many volunteers serve meals to the few homeless individuals at the shelter, Steven (LCP participant) says, "I don't want somebody waiting on me like that. I don't like being waiting on. I'm not an invalid." Steven wanted to be able to take his plate back to the kitchen when he was finished with his meal instead of being waited upon like an "invalid," an invalid unable to take care of a dirty plate.

Although these overwhelming numbers of volunteers were perceived by another volunteer as "here to do a good deed" (TLC volunteer, Jonathon), inane volunteers did not appear to demonstrate a desire "to invest" the combination of "time, talent and resources" with homeless individuals. In the words of Jonathon (TLC volunteer), "People don't stick do they? They come and do a bit and then go out." Another volunteer named Karen said, "I've only seen two [volunteers] come back and stay for a while." These were the volunteers that "do not come back."

Summary. Volunteers seen as persons who are "manipulatable" "outsiders" and "just people" that either "invest" in the lives of homeless individuals or make "a joke" whereas homeless individuals are constructed as persons that are "broken," as the "new poor," that are "depersonalized" struggling with an "addiction" they may be "givers" and/or "using the program." Unique individuals, the personhood of volunteers was evaluated as desirable as Steven reflected, "If I had [a job], I wouldn't be homeless. I would be a volunteer because I would come back here. I'd make donations; I'd make

contributions." Even though persons participating in the Life in Christ's Power program were perceived as "givers," it is a different type of personhood than the volunteers who "invest." Steven (LCP participant) made it clear that even though volunteers are "not better than" homeless individuals, he would be a "volunteer" if he was no longer homeless.

Differentiated as individuals with unique dimensions of personhood, homeless persons and volunteer persons are also individuals possessing distinct ways of communicating. As the EOC (Hymes 1962; 1972) helps reveal, there are various rules informing interaction at *the Little City* that are socially constructed within interaction, influenced by whether an individual is a homeless person or a volunteer person. Within the next section, this ethnography of communication investigates the subtle norms and rules of communicative interaction between volunteers and homeless individuals, distinctly unique types of persons.

Research Question 2

Communicative Norms Affecting Help Seeking Behavior

As individuals with distinct constructions of personhood, this section addresses some key norms influencing the use of communicative resources that affect how homeless persons can or cannot ask for help from volunteers at *the Little City*. Defining "asking for help" practices as a particular genre of speaking within this speech community, the policies of the shelter as well as people socially constructed four rules for communicative interaction. Within this study, rules are defined as "a prescription for how to act under specified circumstances, which has some degree of force in a particular social group" (Philipsen, 1992, p. 8). In this particular social group, or speech

community, these four rules of communicative interaction are publicly observable as well as spoken of in policies and in interviews.

While policies influence some of these rules for communicative interaction, most of these rules are socially constructed during ways of speaking because TLC does not present volunteers with instructions on how to interact as indicated by Jonathon, a volunteer, in the following statement:

> Oh, they'll take you through a tour of the site when you want to volunteer, but they don't sit you down and say, 'Look, we have a few ground rules here for volunteers.' You know-- interactions with residents and things like that there just simply aren't any. So, I just sort of basically made my own [rules].

Neither are these norms for communicative interaction with volunteers explained to Life in Christ's Power program participants according to Andi, staff at *the Little City*:

> We usually explain the program. We go over the application packet, and we let them know what our rules are, what we expect of them, what is expected as a participant in the program. We don't really talk about volunteers necessarily with them. You know, it's always known to be respectful to the volunteers.

As socially constructed rules of communication, the following norms of communicative interaction contain data collected through observations of communicative act sequences, norms of interaction and of interpretation provided by homeless individuals. LCP program participants speaking of these norms for communicative interaction are tacitly accepted as required ways of communicating within asking for help from volunteers.

Rule #1: Do not approach a volunteer. As a first rule of communication, homeless individuals participating in the Life in Christ's Power program stated that LCP

individuals should not approach volunteers to even start a conversation in seeking assistance. As stated by Katie, an LCP program participant, "I don't really think LCP participants do that. We don't approach them in any way. No."

Even outside the context of asking for help, Steven indicated that he was personally reprimanded by a staff person at *the Little City* when he approached a volunteer to thank them for donating their time to come serve a meal at *the Little City*. Although Andi (TLC staff) said that homeless individuals should not be penalized for approaching a volunteer, Steven's response is regarded as valid as he indicated that staff responses may vary depending upon who is working that day.

With homeless individuals waiting to be approached by a volunteer, Steven questioned me on whether or not I initiated conversations with LCP program participants: "Do you approach? Do you yourself approach because that is just the way you are? But, a lot of volunteers won't go near a person; they will not even approach a LCP person" (LCP participant, Steven). Being questioned on my own practices of approaching homeless individuals for conversation, Steven's observations of volunteers matched observations of staff and myself. According to Shari (TLC staff), volunteers may not approach to interact with homeless individuals:

> Maybe the first time. But, once they volunteer a couple of times and start getting to know the residents, it's different. Volunteers will start saying, "Hi, how are you doing?" Volunteers will see the same residents, and the residents will see the same volunteers, and say "Hi how you doing?"

With homeless individuals restricted from approaching volunteers, this statement highlights how volunteers do not approach homeless individuals until they "start getting

to know" homeless individuals. After volunteering "a couple of times," a volunteer may then begin approaching a homeless individual for conversation. However, it is important to remember the words of the volunteer referenced earlier who commented that volunteers "don't seem to stick" (TLC volunteer, Jonathon), meaning that some volunteers who come from the "outside" to the "inside" may never approach a homeless individual if they do not come back those crucial "couple of times." If a volunteer continues to return "a couple of times" and begins a conversation with a homeless individual, LCP program participants must abide by the next norm.

Rule #2: Do not yell at a volunteer. In the event that a volunteer approaches a homeless individual at *the Little City*, one norm of behavior is that homeless persons should not "yell" at a volunteer. For the two times that Katie, an LCP participant, recalled observing the end of a "difficulty" between homeless individuals and volunteers:

> What basically happened is there wasn't a fight or a real argument. The homeless individual pretty much just yelled, "Leave me alone!" or "Stay away!" or whatever. But, these homeless people were just a little too rude, you know what I mean? And the homeless individual just wanted to be left alone, and (the homeless person) just did not handle it the right way.

Not aware of the circumstances leading up to the homeless individual yelling at the volunteer, Katie clarified:

> It was not the volunteers fault. It was the resident's. I just wanted to make sure there was an understanding there. And, the thing is that you know a lot of people come in here with a lot of problems, and they were rude and out of place. The resident not the volunteer.

Dealing with “problems” being “rude” and yelling “out of place,” homeless individuals were determined to be at fault when encountering a “difficulty” with a volunteer in the situation spoken of here. However, according to staff at *the Little City,* Richard informed me that when conflicts occur between volunteers and homeless individuals, he speaks to both parties in resolving the conflict. Recalling an example of a conflict between a resident and volunteer needing resolution:

> Just for little piddley stuff, like “I didn’t get my plate first when they’re volunteering to serve” or “I didn’t get a chocolate ice cream when we’re making ice creams,” "the volunteer missed me.” You know just little things, and when they start trying to have a conflict with the volunteer over something simple like that, I go out and try to resolve it the best I can.

According to Richard, these types of “conflict” were insignificant, but in need of resolution requiring him to speak to both the volunteer and the homeless individual.

With only one participant out of 18 interviewees recalling an incident of a homeless individual “yelling” at a volunteer, I observed a particular occasion of a volunteer being “yelled” at by an LCP participant. In this situation, four LCP program participants, Jonathon and I served lunch. Jonathon walked away from the kitchen carrying two plates of food to a table across the room where a LCP person was standing wearing a neon yellow mesh vest with her hand raised high to direct servers, such as Jonathon and myself, to the next person to be served.

The LCP person told Jonathon, “We need one here,” loudly enough to be heard from across the room where the rest of us stood by the kitchen window. The LCP person was pointing to a mother and child family unit, where one plate of food had already been

placed. Jonathon did not move to put a second plate in front of the child, who still appeared to be an age of being bottle fed. Instead, he walked towards a different child at the same table. Repeating herself, the LCP person said a little louder, "We need one here!"

Starting to create a commotion, everyone else in the room started looking towards this table to see why all of the five remaining servers stopped serving food, as all five of us were occupied with observing what was happening on the floor between Jonathon and the LCP person in the neon yellow mesh vest. Taking place on the other side of the room, the four other LCP program participants standing beside me said to each other, "I would never yell at a volunteer."

Interrupting them, I asked, "Would you call that yelling?"

The response I received was, "You can hear it from here," from one individual while the other three shook their heads in agreement. "The volunteer coordinator would not be happy to hear about this" (LCP participant).

As I looked back to Jonathon, I watched as he set the plate down in the exact spot where the LCP person was yelling for him to put it. Then, he walked away back to join the five of us standing in line by the kitchen window without saying a word or even looking at the LCP person who had been yelling at him.

In this situation, a staff member did not come out to resolve the conflict, but it was made clear by LCP program participants standing that a homeless person at the shelter should not yell at volunteers.

Rule #3: Do not be seen as fraternizing. In addition to not yelling at volunteers, homeless persons and volunteers at *the Little City* need to avoid fraternization, a

quintessentially gendered communicative type of interaction. Persons participating in the Life in Christ's Power program must abide by the following policy at *the Little City*: "FRATERNIZATION IS NOT ALLOWED!" (Original formatting preserved, LCP program application). This formally written directive implicates and impacts communicative norms at TLC, and depending upon how "fraternization" is understood and enacted can vary depending on who is defining the term. For example, one staff member defined fraternization as "being within arms distance of the opposite sex." On the other hand, an LCP program participant perceives definitions of fraternizing as a subjectively defined notion, depending on the particular disposition of particular staff persons:

> Who is defining fraternization? If that LCP person is not well liked, or if they're not performing---How do I say this? If they're just here doing LCP, or if the supervisor on duty doesn't like them, or if the supervisor really just has nothing to do, the supervisor calls it fraternization. A male and female talked.

From this explanation, Steven continues to state that staff members utilize this "catch-all term" for situations involving persons "using the program" as well as when the supervisor "doesn't like" an LCP person, or the supervisor has nothing to do.

To elaborate his viewpoint, Steven provided the following example drawing upon his own personal experience:

> Supervisor: "Did you know that's a volunteer you're talking to?"
>
> LCP: "And?"
>
> Supervisor: "Well you know you're not supposed to be talking to--- not supposed to be fraternizing with a female."

LCP: “She’s a volunteer. She’s not LCP.”

Supervisor: “That doesn’t mean anything. You’re fraternizing with a female.”

With definitions ranging from “talking” to “being within an arms distance,” fraternization is a term also applied to conversations between volunteers and homeless persons of the opposite sex.

With respect to manipulatable volunteers, one volunteer describes how he approaches communicative situations carefully if a homeless individual suggests a sexual invitation to him:

> You’ve got to be careful. There’s a few ladies in there that make it pretty obvious there’s a lot more to offer than just a conversation. As a guy you’ve got to be pretty careful of these kind of things. As I was telling you about giving LCP persons rides somewhere, if somebody I knew very well asked me for a lift, I might consider it. But, if somebody who may be interested asks me for a lift, then definitely not. No way. (Volunteer, Jonathon)

For Jonathon, he considered how much he knew about a homeless person before considering that a homeless person might be fraternizing with him, a type of conversation that needed him to exercise caution and discernment, especially in situations where an individual is “interested,” or potentially implying a sexual interest in him.

Being able to recognize some forms of “fraternization,” some homeless individuals may also “inadvertently” fraternize with individuals of the opposite sex. According to Sam (LCP participant):

> One of them wasn’t really attempting to, but inadvertently he broke the rules by what they consider fraternizing, which means passing phone numbers out just to

> see people on the outside, you know, meet up with volunteers outside and go to different places. (LCP participant, Sam)

As explained by Sam, even if a person, whether as an LCP person or a volunteer, "inadvertently" fraternizes by exchanging phone numbers or meeting each other "outside" of *the Little City*, these communicative interactions are still termed as fraternizing. This rule of communicative interaction is enforced by policies at *the Little City*, but also socially constructed as a term in definition and interpretation for individuals within this particular speech communication. Outside of the realm of policy, the next rule for communicative interaction directly impacts the genre of "asking for help" at *the Little City.*

Rule #4: Do not ask volunteers for things. A foundational rule for communicative interaction between homeless individuals and volunteers is the norm that homeless individuals are to *not* ask volunteers for "things." Intentionally vague in reference, "things" is inclusive of encouragement, pens, paper, money, and even cigarettes. As quoted previously, Katie, an LCP program participant, said, "I don't really think LCP participants do that (ask for help). We don't approach them in any way. No." According to staff person Andi, "It's always known to be respectful to the volunteers. But, specifically, like don't ask them for things? I think it's known, but do we say it every time they join the program? Probably not." As a socially constructed norm of communicative interaction and not stipulated by policy, it is "known" that homeless persons should not ask volunteers for "things," especially cigarettes.

While interviewing Richard (TLC staff), he said that homeless individuals asking volunteers for a cigarette is a "touchy situation." Although homeless individuals may ask

for cigarettes from other homeless persons (LCP participant, Sam) and from staff members that "they feel really comfortable with" (TLC staff, Andi), however, asking for cigarettes from a volunteer is different. According to Andi, "With the volunteers I think it's different. I don't think they should be intruding and asking them for cigarettes. I wouldn't agree with that at all." Phrased in a different way, Josh, an LCP participant, asking for cigarettes from a volunteer was termed "crossing the line:"

> That's crossing the line…Well my line personally. Probably one of my downfalls is that I don't seek people for something. If I have it, I have it. If I don't, then I don't. I've come to realize that I can't have everything I want in life, so I just do without. (LCP participant, Josh)

Framed as a possible "downfall" of his personhood, Josh would rather "do without" than "cross the line" by "intruding" on a volunteer by asking for cigarettes.

As a "touchy situation," one LCP participant (Anonymous to maintain confidentiality) provided the following example of how he received cigarettes from a volunteer without "asking":

> I had a [person] get out and light up a cigarette. I said, "Oh you, shame on you."
>
> "What?" The guy says, "What?"
>
> LCP: "You're smoking a cigarette in front of me?"
>
> Volunteer: "You want one?"
>
> LCP: "Well, I can't ask for one."
>
> Volunteer throws a cigarette away and says: "You didn't ask for it. I just dropped it here."
>
> LCP: "I didn't ask for it."

Volunteer: “Here have two.”

LCP: “Thank you.”

Volunteer: “We all need cigarettes every once in a while.” (LCP participant #3)

For clarification, this LCP participant said:

> I was joking with him. I didn’t ask him, but he gave me two cigarettes. Now, if I’d been caught with those two cigarettes or somebody walked out and saw him give me those two cigarettes, I would have been in trouble. I’d been in totally trouble. I’d been probably bounced off of [my job]. Probably be packing my bags and moving off property right now.

With homeless individuals unable to specifically ask for volunteers for a cigarette by saying, “Can I have a cigarette?” LCP program participants still received cigarettes and other items from volunteers through the following type of communicative interaction:

> If volunteers happened to see a need and they feel like filling it, they do. But, LCP workers cannot beg. They can’t even ask the volunteers for anything, donations or otherwise because they’re already donating their time. So, we’re not allowed to ask for anything. But if they feel like volunteering it, besides their time --- as long as it’s their idea, sort of even through a conversation. Through conversation stating that there’s a possibility that *the Little City* might need this, that or the other thing. That’s not necessarily begging it. (LCP participant, Sam)

Here asking for things for oneself may be viewed as “begging,” but by asking for things for *the Little City*, the homeless individual is no longer considered “begging.” Homeless individuals should not intrude upon volunteers by asking for things. Instead, if a volunteer “sees” a need during conversation with a homeless individual and willing

chooses to meet that need without being specifically asked by the homeless individual to meet that need, then that is considered "their idea" not the homeless person's idea.

For the volunteers participating in this study, they were able to identify ways to help homeless individuals through this general form of conversation framing needs as those of *the Little City* instead of as needs for a homeless person. Jonathon discovered through conversations with "people on the floor" that there was a need for a GED program. Karen began bringing 20 plastic bags, each containing 3 homemade cookies because she observed while serving meals that there were rarely any "sweets" being served, which was confirmed through conversations with residents. Justine stated that although homeless individuals did not ask her for anything, she would initiate conversations with parents at the shelter for input on what types of activities she could host for homeless children.

This type of giving help to homeless individuals was termed "proactive" giving by Gary (TLC staff), meaning volunteers give help without waiting to be asked for help. In future studies, this "proactive" form of giving may emerge as a distinct norm of communicative interaction; however, data in this study is unable to support a pattern of homeless individuals being helped "proactively" by volunteers. Only a select few, provided examples of how homeless individuals had received "proactive" help without violating rules of communicative interaction by receiving "things," such as a cigarette, a sweater, or encouragement.

Summary. At *the Little City*, four rules for communicative interaction exist between homeless individuals and volunteers, in that homeless individuals do not approach, do not yell at, do not fraternize with, and do not ask for things from volunteers

within this speech community. These four rules of communicative interaction elucidate the problematic nature of communicative interaction between volunteers and homeless persons. As socially constructed rules, homeless persons understand that homeless individuals are not to approach a volunteer, but instead should wait for a volunteer to approach them. Through observations of staff, LCP participants, and myself, it is clear that a majority of volunteers struggle in approaching homeless persons to start a conversation. Should a conversation begin, the second rule regulates the behavior of homeless individuals who should not yell at a volunteer, regardless of the circumstances. Third, homeless individuals and volunteers in conversation also need to be aware of the biological sex of the other person to avoid the appearance of fraternization during communicative interaction. Finally, and specifically, homeless individuals are to not to be intrusive to volunteers by asking for help with "things," especially cigarettes, because the volunteer is already donating time to *the Little City.*

Research Question 3

Consequences of Communicative Norms

With the scene, participants, norms, act sequences descriptively analyzed within the genre of "asking for help" at *the Little City,* this final section of the chapter addresses the consequences, or ends, of communicative interaction between volunteers and homeless individuals. This study identified the following consequences of communicative norms: (1) the construction and reinforcement of two separate "regimes," (2) homeless individuals "being left out," (3) risks for breaking the rules, and finally, (4) situations appropriate to break rules.

Two Separate "Regimes". Poignantly stated by Steven (LCP participant), the norms for communicative interaction result in the following outcome: "It's like they're a regime, and we are our own regime. We are LCP people. They're the volunteers." At *the Little City*, the separation of volunteers and homeless individuals into two separate "regimes" was frequently observed as a physical separation at meal times, especially when there are more volunteers than homeless individuals, a situation previously referred to as "a joke."

For example, one time a group of approximately 15-20 volunteers completed a volunteer tour and orientation. While waiting fifteen minutes for food to be served, the volunteers huddled in clusters of two to three people glancing out across the room with homeless individuals sitting at tables in the Multi. Initially separate from homeless individuals, volunteers will move away from the walls of the Multi to serve plates of food or mugs of beverages to homeless individuals sitting at tables. Once all homeless persons in the Multi are served their meals, volunteers may also take a plate of food to sit down and eat with homeless persons they just served. However, most groups of volunteers will sit on the floor of the stage at the front of the Multi or sit with other volunteers at an empty table, or choose to not eat the same meal that was just served to homeless individuals.

As described by Steven,

> I watch the volunteers, and the volunteers stand there… Once the plates are served, whether they want to eat or not, they offered to eat. But, 9 times out of 10 you see volunteers all filing out the door, out the office to their cars and gone.

Steven's words describe a particular type of separation. "9 times out of 10" one will see volunteers standing near the walls of the Multi while homeless individuals sit at tables set up in the middle of the room. Creating an invisible partition between homeless individuals and volunteers, volunteers may easily circle around the outer walls of the Multi to slip outside to their cars to once again return to the state of being "outside" *the Little City* without having to approach a homeless individual to engage in communicative interaction. Even though LCP program participants described the personhood of volunteers as "just people," this particular consequence to communicative norms separates volunteers and homeless individuals into a "regime" of volunteers and a "regime" of homeless persons.

"Being Left Out". Reacting to this separation between volunteers and homeless individuals at *the Little City*, some of the LCP participants presented an experience of "being left out" by volunteers.

> I think a big thing is having more volunteers come in to interact with the adults. As opposed to volunteers just coming in and doing activities with the kids. Because the adults sit there, and we're like "We're here. Hello?" You know, because we actually get bored sometimes and want something productive to do, and the volunteers are all wrapped up with the kids. (LCP participant, Theresa)

Not being able to approach a volunteer, LCP program participants "sit there" waiting for a volunteer to approach them so that they may have "something productive" to do with their time.

In the situation discussed by Theresa, she provides an example of occasions when volunteers come to *the Little City* and provide arts and craft activities, such as making a

holiday card, or game activities, such as water balloons. Some of these activities that are designed for children, such as building baskets to fill with Easter candy for children staying at *the Little City,* are considered mandatory for all LCP program participants to attend, regardless of whether the LCP program participant has a child. Theresa clarified that it was important for volunteers to hold activities for the children, in fact "there's always a need" for volunteers "to sit down with the kids" (LCP participant, Theresa). However, the adults staying at *the Little City* also desire something "productive" to do as well, and did not want to be sitting in a chair in the Multi thinking to themselves in a room of volunteers, "We're here. Hello?" (LCP participant, Theresa).

As an additional component to homeless individuals "being left out," homeless individuals may also experience an emotional response of "animosity" towards volunteers. Steven said, "The adults seem to be left out, and there's an animosity to being left out. Adults like to have interaction; in other words, they're here too" (LCP participant, Steven). In this situation, "being left out" when liking interaction, homeless individuals felt the emotional response of "animosity." However, one particular LCP program participant did not seem to mind the separation between volunteers and homeless individuals.

For Sam, he shared that he did not talk with volunteers "by choice" because he did not like being "disturbed during meal times." Sam did not want to be bothered with "conversation" because he went to the Multi "to eat." If a volunteer approached him to start a conversation, Sam indicated that he would "blow off" the conversation depending on the "subject," particularly "subjects they don't allow" or "language they wouldn't allow." Inquiring for Sam to provide examples of "subjects" and "language" not allowed

at *the Little City*, Sam replied, "I'd almost rather not have that stuff recorded." Vague in reference, Sam provided an understanding of communicative rules at *the Little City* as well as an example of caution in having a violation of communicative norms recorded. In order to understand the caution demonstrated by Sam, the following section provides a descriptive account of a variety of consequences a homeless individual may receive when violating rules at *the Little City.*

Risks Associated with Breaking the Rules. At *the Little City,* homeless individuals may face a variety of consequences from receiving a verbal reprimand up to removal from the homeless shelter. Within the application materials for the Life in Christ's Power program, homeless individuals are informed that their "stay at Joy Junction is a **PRIVILEGE**" (Policies & Procedures Item One, original formatting preserved). Counting shelter and three hot meals a day a "privilege" at *the Little City,* LCP participants receive additional instruction that when breaking the rules, individuals are considered to be "choosing" to break the rules and to be "choosing" to accept the consequences. As categories of consequences enforced by staff at *the Little City*, some of the LCP participant interviewees referred to interactions that did not include volunteers, as they did not have enough communicative interactions with volunteers to draw upon. However, these types of consequences provide an understanding of what a homeless individual may experience should communicative norms be violated and enforced by staff at *the Little City.* The consequences that homeless persons provided during the interview process as well as during participant observation established the four following categories: (1) having a "conversation" with a supervisor, (2) being "chewed out" by a

supervisor, (3) sleeping in the Multi, (4) or being removed from property for 30-days, or permanently.

First, the consequence of receiving a "conversation" from a supervisor, one LCP participant provided the following scenario, for a homeless individual who kept asking for cigarettes:

> LCP: "If they make a pest out of themselves and the supervisors hear about it they end up having a conversation with the supervisors."
>
> Interviewer: "Is it like a warning the first time?"
>
> LCP: "Definitely. They're told, 'If you royally keep it up, you're going to end up being off property for a while, or permanently.' And, usually it only takes them one time with a supervisor for them to shut up."

In this case, Sam was saying that the homeless individual would "shut up" in the context that the homeless individual would no longer ask for cigarettes, or for whatever else the individual was asking. However, not all LCP participants interpreted the consequence received by a supervisor as a "conversation."

As a second category of consequences, one LCP program participant identified that sometimes homeless individuals were "chewed out" by a supervisor for talking to a volunteer.

> Nobody's going to talk to a volunteer because one person got chewed out by one supervisor because that supervisor did not like the idea that he was having a good time talking to a volunteer. So, he chewed him out. You're "fraternizing." (LCP participant, Steven)

This experience of being "chewed out" by a supervisor for "talking" to a volunteer resulted in a ripple effect for other LCP program participants. Steven concluded that when LCP program participants observed another homeless person being "chewed out" by a supervisor, "nobody was going to talk to a volunteer." This reaction reflects an understanding regarding a statement quoted earlier that, "If you royally keep it up, you're going to end up being off property for a while or permanently" (LCP participant, Sam). However, sometimes an individual may receive the consequence of sleeping in the Multi before being removed from property, the third category of consequences at *the Little City.*

Although none of the participants in this study connected this third category to communicative interaction with a volunteer, this consequence of sleeping in the Multi provides an understanding of the possibility of an intermediary consequence between being "chewed out" and "being bounced off property." When sleeping in the Multi, homeless individuals may only enter their room (located in the barracks or dormitories) once a day to collect items they may need, such as clothing, a book, or a 2-liter bottle of soda pop. Homeless individuals experiencing this consequence must keep their belongings with them throughout the day. For the handful of LCP program participants that were made to sleep in the Multi during the course of this study, one LCP person who violated a fire code regulation by hanging her clothes on a fire exit was required to sleep in the Multi for next seven days. Unfortunately for this particular individual, before she completed her seven days of consequences, she received the final consequence. She was asked to leave *the Little City.*

Previously mentioned by Sam as a consequence for individuals "who royally keep it up," homeless individuals may be required to leave *the Little City* for 30-days or

permanently. The final category of consequences presented within this study, LCP program participants indicated that a homeless individual *may* receive this final consequence if seen as "fraternizing" with a volunteer. Steven provided the following example using me as a volunteer and a hypothetical male homeless person at *the Little City*:

> The next thing you know, he is fraternizing with you. They start moving him around in jobs or moving him off property, so he's not around no more. They (*the Little City* staff) aren't going to chase you away because you're a volunteer. But, they can get rid of him because he was fraternizing with you. (LCP participant, Steven)

Beginning with explaining how homeless individuals who "fraternize" are moved to different job assignments within the Life in Christ's Power program and then no longer on property, Steven ends the example contrasting consequences for volunteers and homeless individuals.

Homeless individuals may be removed from property for 30-days to permanently but volunteers are not "chased away." Shari (TLC staff) stated that in the past six months she observed only one volunteer being asked to not come back to *the Little City.* However, for a volunteer who has a job and or a place to live, these consequences are not equal in severity for homeless individuals removed from property for 30-days or permanently who may or may not have another place to go. Where do homeless individuals go when not able to stay at *the Little City?* One homeless man slept under a bridge for a bit. Another homeless man found a place to stay at another homeless shelter in the area. One female went to a domestic violence shelter in the area.

Altogether, these four categories of consequences for homeless individuals at *the Little City* who "choose" to break the rules provide a descriptive portrayal of a selection of consequences identified within this study. Not intended to be conclusive of all kinds of consequences homeless individuals may encounter when breaking rules nor intended to be linked or associated directly with particular rules, these four categories of consequences provide an understanding of risks associated with breaking the rules at *the Little City,* specifically for homeless persons. LCP program participants understand these possible risks when evaluating situations in which to break the norms for communicative interaction.

Situational Rule Breaking. When Theresa told me in the interview that she had exchanged phone numbers with a volunteer whom she would text and call occasionally throughout the month, I asked her to respond regarding what it meant to her when breaking the rule that volunteers and homeless individuals are not supposed to exchange phone numbers. She responded "I guess it depends on the situation. Rules are meant to be broken. Shh! You didn't hear that from me." For her, the situation involved the following details:

> Once you get to a point where you develop somewhat of a friendship, like with me and this particular volunteer, we actually exchanged phone numbers. And, we'll keep in touch. She'll text me. I'll text her. Hey this is what's going on. She'll tell me what's going on with her life. But, we keep in touch not just when she comes out here. That's actually a friendship that when I first met her I was like "Ok. It's a volunteer. So what?" Now it's completely different. Now it is like, "She's here. Wow. I've missed her."

In this situation, Theresa violated a rule categorized under "fraternization," but it was permissible to break the rule due to the relational context provided by friendship with the volunteer.

In addition to the situation provided by Theresa, other interviewees shared with me times that they had violated a variety of rules at *the Little City*. Jonathon, a volunteer, indicated that he had provided a ride to an LCP program participant to a nearby town. In this situation, Jonathon was already going to that town, and he felt that he knew the LCP participant well enough to feel comfortable offering a ride to another town. Rhonda, another volunteer, indicated that she too had developed friendships with three LCP program participants over the time span of two years spent volunteering at *the Little City*, and for these friends, she exchanged contact information with them as well as gave them rides to the store once the LCP participant left *the Little City*. In the example provided in the section above exploring the normative ways of asking for help, the situation of asking for a cigarette was changed by the LCP participant "joking" as the LCP participant explicitly stated, "I can't ask for one."

However, these situational contexts only provide an interpretation of volunteers and homeless individuals when it may be acceptable to violate the normative ways of speaking. These interpretations of situation do not take into consideration the perception of rules and rule violations by the staff members at *the Little City*, more specifically the perspective of staff members who are in a position to enforce rules of communicative interaction. As demonstrated in the example of asking for cigarettes where a particular volunteer provided two cigarettes to an LCP participant, the LCP participant picked up the cigarettes and placed them in his pocket fully aware of the possibility that this

violation of rules may result in him being “bounced off property.” The key for Steven was that he was not “seen” with the cigarettes.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Focusing on the three influences of homeless shelter, homelessness and volunteerism, this ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972) provides a descriptive interpretation of how the personhood of participants, or interlocutors, differentiates how individuals with distinct dimensions of personhood can or cannot speak and the consequences of specific norms for communicative interaction. To understand the communicative phenomenon of "asking for help" practices at *the Little City,* this study investigated the three following research questions: *RQ1:* How are communicative resources used to differentiate aspects of personhood between volunteers and homeless persons at *the Little City? RQ2:* What are some key norms influencing how communicative resources are used in interaction that affect how homeless persons can or cannot ask for help from volunteers at *the Little City*? *RQ3*: What are the consequences of the ways that communicative resources are used at *the Little City*? As the final chapter for this study, this investigation into "asking for help" practices at a homeless shelter concludes with the following sections: (1) Summary of findings, (2) limitations of this study, (3) contributions, (4) implications for future research, and (5) reflections on researching at *the Little City*.

Summary of Findings

Although asking for help and giving help may appear to be an ordinary and simple genre of communicative interaction, the scene provided at *the Little City* as well as the personhood of participants provides a much different perspective on what is considered appropriate and acceptable ways to speak with volunteers if homeless

individuals value a warm place to sleep for the night and a hot meal. According to Philipsen (1997), "One premise of ethnography is that, in revealing something about a culture that is alien to its readers, it can then be used to reveal something about speech that is ordinarily heard as culturally innocent" (Philipsen, 1997, p. 60). Established as a distinct location for the existence of a particular speech community (Covarrubias, 2002), *the Little City* is a place where homeless individuals and volunteers possess different dimensions of personhood. Differentiated through personhood, the norms of communicative interaction from initiating an act sequence to the outcome of an act sequence holds different consequences for homeless individuals and volunteers, summarized and reiterated within this section.

Differentiating Between Personhood of Homeless Individuals and Volunteers. For this study, the first research question explored concepts of personhood for the two particular interlocutors, or participants: volunteers and homeless individuals. Focusing on socially constructed dimensions of personhood, this study included how these interlocutors spoke of each other as well as how policies at *the Little City* reflected ideas about both volunteers and homeless individuals. According to Carr (2011), policies of personhood address how personhood for individuals is constructed. These policies are created to respond to particular types of persons. Reviewing dimensions of personhood for homeless individuals and volunteers, this section discusses how homeless individuals and volunteers are similar yet distinct and separate from each other.

Homeless individuals. "Depersonalized" in the way that staff at *the Little City* reminded homeless persons about what types of clothing were considered appropriate and acceptable, homeless individuals were perceived as having six dimensions of personhood.

Three components of personhood focused on the homeless individual's life prior to entering their current state of homelessness. The remaining three components of personhood reflected the life and habits of homeless individuals once they joined the Life in Christ's Power program. For the three dimensions of personhood referencing prior experiences as a domicile individual, homeless individuals received the following reductive components of personhood: (1) "Broken" (2) "addicted," and (3) the "new poor." Contextually situated at *the Little City*, policies of personhood instruct homeless individuals within the application materials to the LCP program that they have experienced a "breakdown" within their family. Generalizing all homeless individuals into the category of "addiction" this study supports previous studies on homelessness (Lyon-Callo, 2000) such that at *the Little City* "all (homeless individuals) have the same addiction" (TLC staff, Richard). Uniquely, this study introduces that "addiction" became a reductive category for not simply individuals with issues of substance abuse or a history of mental illness (Lyon-Callo, 2000) but also individuals who had issues of domestic abuse and "emotions" about being homeless. These two concepts brokenness and "addiction" relate to policies of personhood (Carr, 2011) in that organizational policies construct personhood through policies designed to respond to particular types of individuals.

The third category of personhood reflecting on experiences prior to homelessness, the "new poor," responds to the economic recession in the United States that began in December 2007 (Isodore, 2008). Approximately four years and six months after the beginning of the recession, *the Little City* perceives that a lot of homeless individuals staying at the shelter used to be individuals with jobs, health benefits, retirement

packages, cars and mortgages, and due to losing their job, they lost their health benefits, their retirement packages, cars and mortgages, to find themselves in the "destabilized" environment of homelessness. Not associated with "addiction," the "new poor" may also join the Life in Christ's Power program to regain stability in their life (TLC staff, Gary), an idea contested by Steven who explicitly stated that the LCP program was not designed to help him with his "financial" issues.

Although Steven rejected the idea that the Life in Christ's Power program would help him financially, he still applied to join the program, introducing three unique aspects of personhood not indicated in previous research: (1) Students of Christianity, of self and of opportunity, (2) givers, and (3) "users of the program." When joining the LCP program, homeless individuals must attend 2-hour classes Monday through Friday. During these classes, LCP program participants become students of Christianity with a "biblically based curriculum" using the *Life Recovery Bible* (Tyndale, 1998). Completing the 12-steps within the *Life Recovery Bible* (Tyndale, 1998) adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous, homeless individuals also become students of self through the process of completing a "personal inventory" that itemizes what individuals "like" and "do not like" about themselves learning the 12-steps. Learning about one's self, LCP program participants are then taught how to recognize opportunities that they may help other homeless individuals.

Through learning ways to help others, some LCP program participants may also become "givers." At *the Little City,* homeless individuals who are "givers" donate their time to sweep, mop, wash dishes, wash bedding, work security, or any other task assigned to them by staff members. These jobs are assigned based upon an evaluation of

an individual's skills, or "talents" when joining the LCP program. Although "required" to work 30-hours per week as part of the LCP program, this time is considered a "voluntary" donation of time as individuals "voluntarily" joined the program. Confusing the definition of "required" and "voluntary" with giving "time" and "talent," when some LCP program participants give "resources" this is a purely voluntary contribution as homeless individuals use their personal sources of income to purchase items, such as cleaning supplies, to donate to *the Little City*. Despite her limited monetary resources, Lauren reflects that giving "resources" back to *the Little City* made her "feel good" because she wanted to be at *the Little City* and to participate in the LCP program, a sentiment that was not reflected by all homeless individuals who had joined the LCP program.

The final dimension of personhood for homeless individuals was constructed specifically by homeless individuals participating in the Life in Christ's Power program. These individuals distinguished themselves as separate from or confessed to being an individual who was "using the program." Homeless individuals who join the program to receive benefits, such as a more private place to sleep in the barracks (for heterosexual family units) or dormitories (for single individuals), a $25 weekly gift check, or a place to keep their belongings are individuals who are "using the program." Volunteers could identify homeless individuals "using the program" because these persons would be the one's asking volunteers for things. Those "using the program" were not students of self, so they were unable to identify between needs, wants and items one can do without. Introducing volunteers into constructions of personhood for homeless individuals, participants in this study had several unique constructions of personhood for volunteers.

Volunteers. Initially perceived to be no more than "just people," volunteers were also "outsiders" who were "manipulatable" to communicate with homeless individuals, the first three dimensions of personhood, volunteers could also become persons who were either "investors" or "a joke." Evoking the term "just people," homeless individuals equalized the socio-economic status that may differentiate them from volunteers, echoing Holden's (1997) work stating that volunteers at homeless shelter worked towards creating "equal ground" between volunteers and homeless individuals. However, in contrast to Holden's work on volunteerism, homeless individuals still perceived volunteers as "outsiders" with jobs and places to live, and specifically asked volunteers about things like whether the volunteer had gone to the movie theater, reinforcing instead of equalizing socio-economic differences as LCP program participants may or may not have available time or money to attend.

For "outsiders" who came to the "inside" to volunteer at *the Little City*, organizational policies as well as homeless individuals constructed volunteers as "manipulatable." Responding to types of people, policies of personhood (Carr, 2011) at *the Little City* instruct volunteers to "*Be Cautious!"* of manipulative homeless individuals staying at the shelter. Some LCP program participants felt that these "manipulatable" volunteers needed to be identified by some type of distinguishing badge, similar to the neon green name tag with the words "Community Service" that that community service workers wear, to "insulate" volunteers from homeless individuals. With this distinguishing identifier, homeless individuals felt that volunteers could be protected from the vulgar ways of speaking used between homeless individuals.

With these three initial aspects of personhoods identifying volunteers as similar yet dissimilar from homeless individuals, volunteers at *the Little City* could also be identified as "investors" or "a joke," the two final aspects of personhood for volunteers. Contributing "time, talent, and resource" to homeless individuals staying at *the Little City,* volunteers who contributed similarly to "givers" were differentiated from homeless persons through the use of the term "investors." Giving less "time" than homeless individuals who are "voluntarily required" to give 30-hours per week to *the Little City,* volunteer "investors" had the potential to provide skills that homeless individuals may or may not have, such as resume building workshops or GED training, as well as provide potentially more "resources" to *the Little City* than homeless individuals. With three dimensions of investing, "investors" needed to communicatively enact all three dimensions of giving "time, talent and resources" to *the Little City*.

At times when there were more volunteers than homeless individuals at *the Little City,* volunteers may also be perceived as "a joke," the final category of personhood for volunteers at this particular speech community. Although these volunteers may desire to "do a good deed," considered "awesome" by staff members, and loved by some LCP program participants, these volunteers did not provide particular skills and/or resources to homeless individuals staying at the shelter. This category of personhood resonates with the work of Lundahl and Wicks (2010), such that volunteers with resources and willingness to share "fail to grasp what is really needed by the homeless" (p. 273) and "are often unaware of the ways they could meet the need for self-sufficiency or self-worth" (p. 287) of homeless individuals.

Different yet similar, individuals in this study helped to differentiate the personhood of volunteers as distinct from the personhood of homeless individuals at *the Little City.* Volunteers are "just people" able to donate "time, talent, and resources" similar to homeless individuals. However, the personhood of volunteers does not consist of persons who experienced a "breakdown of the family," an "addiction," or entered a destabilized environment like the "new poor." Not participating in the Life in Christ's Power program, volunteers are not students of Christianity, self and opportunity nor are they able to "use the program." As "outsiders" coming to TLC *to* help rather than *for* help, volunteers may be perceived as "a joke," specifically when there are more volunteers than homeless individuals at *the Little City.* Additionally, volunteers do not experience the same "depersonalizing" forms of communication in regards to the general postings about dress code policies. More specifically, volunteers are not instructed about how and when to wear a bra, and how and what types of underwear are acceptable. For these two interlocutors, the differentiation between the personhood of homeless individuals and of volunteers holds implications for communicative norms between the two persons.

Norms for Communicative Interactions. Focusing on a particular genre of "asking for help" at *the Little City,* this study investigated the key norms and rules of communicative interactions affecting how homeless persons can or cannot seek assistance from volunteers at the homeless shelter. According to Lundahl and Wicks (2010), one of the ways to improve the helping efforts of volunteers at homeless shelters is to improve communication between volunteers and those who advocate on behalf of homeless individuals. Questioning the role of this "advocate," I sought to identify how

homeless persons and volunteers may communicate directly with each other. Presenting the problematic nature of communicative interaction between volunteers and homeless individuals, this study identified that a homeless person staying at *the Little City* is not supposed to approach, yell at, fraternize with or ask volunteers for things, particularly cigarettes and money.

As the first norm of communication, a homeless individual is supposed to wait to be approached by a volunteer to engage in conversation. However, participants in this study indicated that volunteers sometimes struggle with approaching homeless persons until perhaps the second or third time volunteering at the shelter. Additionally, homeless persons identified that very few volunteers continue volunteering after their first time. Considering that approaching an individual is the first step in an act sequence at *the Little City*, this norm of communicative interaction restricts communicative interaction between the two interlocutors.

If communicative interaction occurs between a homeless individual and volunteer, homeless individuals are to not yell at volunteers. Yelling is defined at *the Little City* as speaking loudly enough to be heard by individuals standing on the other side of the room. If a homeless individual yells at a volunteer, then the source of the problem leading to the yelling is blamed on the homeless individuals who are learning to deal with their "issues."

Presenting a gendered norm of communication, homeless individuals are not to fraternize with volunteers. Perceived as a "catch all" term, fraternization holds a multiplicity of meanings. First, it may be defined as standing within arms link of an individual of the opposite sex. Second, fraternization may be interpreted as males and

females who are "just talking" to each other, without romantic intentions. Finally, fraternization may be a label applied to interlocutors if the homeless individual is not "liked" by the supervising staff member.

While these first three norms of communicative interaction restrict initiating an act sequence, progression of an act sequence, and labeling of an act sequence, the final norm of communicative interaction explicitly states that homeless individuals are *not* to ask volunteers for help. Homeless individuals must wait for volunteers to proactively find opportunities to help homeless individuals through a conversation about needs of *the Little City* and not the needs of an individual person. Because the first norm of communicative interaction states that homeless individuals are not to approach volunteers, this "conversation" is supposed to be about what *the Little City* might need, not what the individual might need. By removing the personal element of the individual for the sake of the organization, this communicative norm further depersonalizes the needs of homeless individuals by framing the individual, and possibly unique, needs as "organizational" needs.

This final norm of communicative interaction is even more problematic when staff at *the Little City* do not ask homeless individuals staying at the shelter what types of things volunteers can do to help them (TLC staff, Shari). Lundahl & Wicks (2010) stated that one reason why volunteers "fail" to meet the needs of homeless persons staying at a homeless shelter may be due to a "the lack of communication between the giver and those in the role of advocating for the receiver" (Lundahl and Wicks, 2010, p 273). However, at *the Little City*, even if volunteers increased communication with staff members, those in the position of advocating for homeless individuals, the needs of

homeless individuals may still not be met due to a lack of communication between staff and homeless shelter guests about needs.

Consequences of Communicative Norms. With restrictive norms guiding communicative interaction between homeless individuals and volunteers, these norms of communication create unique relational and very real consequences for homeless individuals. The four themes identified during the course of this study consist of three relational consequences and one tangible consequence. Relational consequences for homeless individuals and volunteers involve the separation of both interlocutors into distinct "regimes," homeless individuals feeling "left out" and occasionally choosing to break the rules to establish positive relationships with volunteers. For homeless individuals "choosing" to break the rules at *the Little City*, they may experience very real consequences that put their ability to stay at the shelter at risk.

With homeless individuals not approaching volunteers and very few volunteers approaching homeless individuals, the relational consequence of this norm establishes two "regimes," one for homeless individuals and one for volunteers. An observable separation between these two interlocutors, volunteers generally stay near the outer walls of the Multi, unless taking a plate of food or a mug filled with water, juice, tea or soda to a homeless individuals sitting at a table located toward the middle of the Multi. Crossing this invisible partition surrounding the tables to feed homeless individuals, volunteers may slip out the front door without saying more than, "Here you go" to a homeless individual.

Divided, homeless individuals in this study expressed that they felt "left out" by volunteers that would cross the invisible line to interact with children staying at the

shelter. Saying, "We're here. Hello?" homeless individuals feel the relational consequence of not being approached by a volunteer. Steven (LCP participant) clearly stated, "Adults like to have interaction too." Phrased in another way, David (LCP participant) said, "Sitting and talking is the most important thing. It makes us part of life. We're still important in the world." Relationally, communication with homeless individuals is important in reminding individuals that even though they may be homeless they are still "part of life."

For several participants in this study, both LCP program participants and volunteers, they expressed that they would break the rules if trust or a friendship developed between the homeless individual and the volunteer. Despite organizational policies instructing volunteers to not give rides to homeless individuals, one volunteer would give rides to particular homeless individuals. Another volunteer would break health code regulations to bring 20-bags containing 3-homemade cookies each to give to homeless individuals at *the Little City.* Individuals would exchange phone numbers, violating the rule that one should *not* fraternize. However, individuals who broke the rules may experience consequences enforced and implemented by staff members at *the Little City.*

Addressing the consequences of communicative norms for both homeless individuals and volunteers, this last category of consequences highlights the risks associated with breaking rules at *the Little City.* Homeless individuals may need to have "a conversation" with a supervisor that reminds them of the rules. Second, homeless individuals may be "chewed out" by supervisors for violating the rules that may have been unintentionally broken. The type of consequence may result in LCP program

participants being forced to sleep in the Multi for a time span of 7-days to 30-days to permanently. As a final consequence, homeless persons as well as volunteers may be asked to leave property for 30-days or possibly permanently.

At *the Little City*, staying at the homeless shelter is considered a "privilege" according to policies of the organization. As a "privilege" individuals who break the rules are considered to be "choosing" to break the rules and "choosing" to accept the consequences of their communicative interactions. Although volunteers may be asked to leave and not come back to *the Little City*, the personhood of volunteers demonstrates that these individuals on the "outside" have a place to live. On the other hand, homeless individuals may be staying at *the Little City* because they have "nowhere else to go" (Vanessa, LCP). A volunteer who provides LCP program participants with a cigarette may be asked to not come back, but LCP program participants may be "bounced" (LCP participant, Steven) from the property permanently.

Limitations of this Study

As a qualitative investigation into the cultural ways of speaking within a particular speech community, this study set out to meet the following eight criteria of validity and reliability necessary for qualitative studies: (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence (Tracy, 2010). This section on limitations of this study will focus on seven of these criteria, as the criterion of significant contribution is discussed separately.

As a worthy topic, this study explored "asking for help" practices between homeless individuals and volunteers at a homeless shelter located in the southwest region

of the United States in order to reveal the problematic nature of communicative interaction between homeless individuals and volunteers, a topic that to my knowledge has not been investigated from a perspective that highlights the role of communication.

Demonstrating rich rigor (Tracy, 2010), this study contains data obtained through 100 hours of participant observation, 18 interviews from nine homeless individuals, four volunteers, and five staff members, and two specific social artifacts: The application to the Life in Christ's Power Program and the application to volunteer. This study obtained over 300 pages of data to code and analyze. Through the process of obtaining rich rigor, data was collected until no new patterns of communication emerged.

Providing sincerity, credibility and resonance (Tracy, 2010) this study provided an *emic* perspective through methods that employed techniques of member checking. By making a sincere effort to provide the readers with an *emic* perspective instead of an *etic* perspective of this speech community, this study presented the elements of the SPEAKING framework with as many words as possible spoken by participants in this study. Even though I had spent months volunteering at the homeless shelter prior to embarking on this study, I still conducted member-checks (Miles & Huberman, 1990) to confirm or deny information collected through participant observation to reduce the "possibility of misunderstanding" as I explored a "speech behavior in a community whose culture [was] alien" (Philipsen, 1997, p. 39). To enhance credibility, "thick description" was used when presenting field note data to support the statements of the interviewees. In regards to resonance, this study provides data and observations that will "ring true" for both homeless individuals and volunteers at this particular shelter. As an ethnographic study, these findings are not meant to be generalized to other speech

communities in other homeless shelters located within this metropolitan city, this southwestern state, or in the United States. Therefore, resonance also transpires when the reader understands the problematic nature of communication between homeless individuals and volunteers at *the Little City.*

When demonstrating ethics and meaningful coherence (Tracy, 2010), this ethnography of communication faced a unique challenge. As an issue of ethics, I chose to withhold particular details regarding personal narratives of homeless persons participating in this study to protect their confidentiality as they spoke candidly about the restrictive nature of living at this particular homeless shelter, communicatively and otherwise. Because the organization maintains files on each of these individuals, inclusive of medical history, work history, and family history, these details may have enhanced understanding for the reader while placing homeless individuals at risk for being removed from property by speaking negatively of *the Little City.* To accentuate this need, one homeless individual expressed toward the end of the interview lasting one hour and forty-two minutes that the interview process would be considered "fraternization" by staff persons. This individual was not the only individual who raised concerns about maintaining their confidentiality, but they willing shared honest details of the organization with me for the sake of "helping" (LCP participants, Steven and Lauren) me as a student and researcher. Connected to ethical decisions, in the presentation of data sometimes pronouns needed to be replaced with "volunteer" or "homeless individual" to provide clarity for the reader. Towards the goal of providing meaningful coherence (Tracy, 2010) for the reader, the presentation of data accounted for individuals who disagreed, as a form of negative case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1990). These counter-

statements offer a nuanced understanding of the complexity of understanding cultural ways of speaking that reflexively construct new and maintain extant ways of speaking within a speech community.

Contributions

Through exploring ways of speaking, this study provides a significant contribution (Tracy, 2010) to the field of communication theoretically, methodologically, and practically.

Theoretical. Incorporating policies of personhood (Carr, 2011) into this ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972), this study enhanced the theoretical frameworks of exploring cultural means and meanings of a speech community located within an organizational context. By not prioritizing organizational policies over socially constructed forms of communication, or vice versa, this study does not address a relationship as to whether one creates the other. However, this study highlights that organizational policies and socially constructed norms work together and should be investigated jointly as cultural elements of what it means to be a person, how one should speak and the consequences of communication within a speech community *the Little City.* Additionally, by presenting how homeless individuals construct the personhood of volunteers, this study specifically speaks to the weaknesses of volunteer typologies (Clary et al, 1998; Allison et al, 2002) that focus solely on the statements and or intentions of volunteers.

Methodological. This is also one of the first ethnographic inquiries to include and/or at least differentiate the statements from the perspectives given by staff, volunteers, and homeless individuals within the context of a homeless shelter. In contrast

to this study, Lundahl and Wicks (2010) focused on the input from administrators from homeless shelters, and Wetschger (1991) focused on the statements of volunteers. Numerous other studies focused on the input from homeless individuals (see Desjarlias, 1997; Dollar & Zimmers; 1998; Hopper, 2003; Wright, 1999), I have prioritized a variety of perspectives as well as organizational policies at a particular speech community.

Practical. Although this study does not provide homeless individuals with housing or highlight effective pathways out of homelessness, this study does offer practical value through highlighting the problematic nature of communicative interaction between homeless individuals and volunteers at *the Little City.* This ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972) provided homeless individuals an opportunity to share what they would like to see changed at *the Little City* between homeless individuals and volunteers. Vanessa, an LCP program participant, suggested that *the Little City* attempt a "buddy system" where volunteers are assigned to work alongside homeless individuals while that LCP program participant is working their 6-hour shift. By removing the possibility for volunteers to remain standing along the wall, volunteers could then be placed in a situation where communication may occur. In Wetschger's (1991) study, volunteers spoke more to homeless individuals when completing a task, such as handing out soap. Steven (LCP program participant) echoed the need to "intermingle" volunteers and homeless individuals in order to "let the volunteers see." For example, if volunteers stayed after serving dinner at *the Little City*, volunteers could work alongside homeless individuals in cleaning up the Multi and laying out the blue mats on which homeless people sleep. According to Steven, by letting volunteers "see"

volunteers would not only be helping to speed up the process of converting the Multi into a sleeping area, but volunteers would also begin to "understand what we go through."

In addition to the recommendation of the participants, the practical findings of this study indicate that change needs to occur at *the Little City*. With homeless individuals not able to approach a volunteer and volunteers not typically approaching a homeless individual, homeless individuals do not get to experience the conversation that "makes us part of life" (LCP participant, David) that reminds homeless individuals "that people actually do care about them, or they wouldn't be coming here and volunteering their time" (TLC staff, Shari).

Implications for Future Research

As one out of countless studies on homelessness, this ethnographic inquiry highlights the need for further investigations into homeless shelters, homelessness and volunteers, from a communicative perspective. Focusing on communication, this study demonstrates that communication can create and/or mitigate social inequalities within the specific problem of homelessness. Future studies in homeless shelters can further explore the influence of "fraternization" as a highly gendered form of communicative interaction between homeless individuals and other members within their particular speech community. Additionally, studies may expand upon the concept of "proactive giving" to provide proscriptions and prescriptions involved in asking for help. This study demonstrates that communication can serve to separate types of individuals, and future studies should explore how communicative interaction can possibly unify instead of divide homeless individuals and volunteers. Focusing a study within a different speech community or other homeless shelters may provide a culture where there are fewer

reductive aspects of personhood, less restrictive norms for communicative interaction leading to positive ends, and/or fewer consequences of communicative interaction.

Conclusion

This ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1962; 1972; Philipsen & Coutu, 2005) utilized the SPEAKING framework to explore how communication reflects and reproduces cultural beliefs and values within a speech community. For this study, the location for the speech community and the scene for communicative interactions between homeless individuals and domicile individuals to take place is the Multi, a building owned and operated by *the Little City.* With a defined setting for communicative interaction to occur between persons who are homeless and domicile, the first research question explored how interlocutors utilized communicative resources, such as organizational policies and ways of speaking of and with each other, to construct dimensions of personhood differentiating homeless individuals from volunteers.

Understanding the personhood of participants in the speech community, the second and third research questions explored the communicative norms and consequences for two particular types of persons: Volunteers and homeless individuals. Focusing on act sequences to identify rules for communication between homeless individuals and volunteers, four distinct norms for communicative interaction emerged that effects, either positively or negatively, the genre of homeless individuals "asking for help" who use the instrumentality of person-to-person communication with volunteers. In particular, these norms of communicative interaction bear relational and organizational consequences, or ends, for homeless individuals and volunteers. By investigating these seven components of the SPEAKING framework (scene, participants, ends, act sequence,

instrumentalities, norms and genre), this study reveals the problematic nature of communication between homeless individuals and volunteers within the rule-ridden speech community at *the Little City.*

Reflections on Researching at *the Little City*

When beginning this project, Vanessa, one of my first interviewees, took a moment at the beginning of our conversation to give me a little piece of advice:

> If I knew at 26 what I'm going to tell you now, my life would be different. Don't care what anybody else thinks. You have to do what you need to do or want to do. Don't be ashamed or apologetic for anything that you do. You are human you will make mistakes. (LCP participant, Vanessa)

Instructing me to ask what I needed to ask, to speak what I needed to speak, Vanessa challenged me in ways that will forever stay with me. I even saved the transcription of that particular interview for last, fearful that it would once again make me re-evaluate my readiness to take on the challenge of presenting the material in such a way that appreciated the work of volunteers while simultaneously addressing the problematic nature of experiencing the personhood of a homeless individual.

Over the course of this study different roles emerged that provided me with different types of access and different ways to establish rapport with homeless individuals. Initially, I volunteered at the shelter for approximately six months before beginning this ethnographic study. Beginning the research project, I took on the role of a student and a researcher asking homeless individuals to help me with my project by participating in the interview process. During the time of conducting participant observation, I assisted with the start of a GED program at *the Little City*, shifting my role

into that of a teacher. Then, by the end of the study, one the LCP program participants introduced me to another homeless individual saying, "She's not a volunteer anymore. She's family." In that moment, I recognized that "my charge as an ethnographer was to account for the complexities of speech events, however much I, myself was implicated or involved in them" (Carr, 2011, p. 21).

Going from volunteer, to researcher/student, to teacher, to family, these roles provided different opportunities to engage with different individuals at the shelter. Some individuals I invited to participate in my study were receptive saying, "People don't know enough about homelessness" while others homeless individuals rolled their eyes. However, for the most part, staff, homeless individuals and volunteers seemed to be supportive of my project despite not knowing for certain what I would actually be able to find about communicative interactions between homeless individuals and volunteers.

During the hours that I spent waiting in the Multi for volunteers to arrive to *the Little City*, homeless individuals invited me into their lives in a variety of ways. We talked about politics, history, about the weather, my family, their family and where we were from. In retrospect, I think I ended up updating homeless individuals at *the Little City* about the progress of this thesis more frequently then my advisor because I spent so much time at *the Little City.* Some residents shared with me candy, chips, and soda as we "feasted" on junk food that they had purchased. Homeless individuals at the shelter also encouraged me to participate with them in arts and crafts projects hosted by large groups of volunteers, as well as to "take a stocking" for myself when the adults were receiving stockings filled with soap, socks, and other hygiene items.

As a result, LCP program participants frequently made reference to conversations they held with me. These reflections on our conversations humbled me as I realized how I tiptoed around saying the word "homeless." Thankful for their honesty, their reflections lead me to "intermingle" and stay after dinner to clean and prepare the Multi for sleeping. When graduate classes overwhelmed my schedule, making it impossible to go volunteer and conduct observations, at least one staff member or one homeless individual would ask me, "Where have you been?" to subsequently ask me "You're still here?" when leaving *the Little City* at 7:00pm. Despite the trials and struggles of prioritizing the integrity of data while simultaneously valuing participants in this study, this study provided an invaluable opportunity of learning how to help, from the most important perspective – homeless individuals.

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Appendices

Sample Participant Observation Field Notes

Sample of Day #1

Recruitment day – this is the day that I arrived at the homeless shelter site to be announced as a researcher to the CIPP participants.

This class runs Tuesday through Friday 9-11am and is typically instructed by the chaplain on staff.

As I arrived to the site and passed through the guard check, I informed the security guard that I was a "volunteer" and that "I'm here to give a presentation"

Guard: "Sorry I'm going to miss it" – "I hope you don't get too nervous"

Me: "Thanks"

I drove into the parking lot and parked my car.

As I signed in at the front desk, the office staff informed me that they "had been waiting" for me. When I left my house I thought I was running a few minutes late, but when I arrived the shelter a few minutes before 10am, as I was going to be speaking at 10am, I originally thought that I was right on time. "Oh, thanks" I replied as I walked from the office to the Multi.

As I walked into the room the staff member (1) saw me and headed my way. Meeting him along the south end of the room, behind the left arm of the "U" shaped arrangement of the tables and chairs for class, he pulled me aside and then to his side, in a congenial manner as a grandpa would with his hand on the opposite side of my waist in a snug grip as we stood side by side so he could speak in hushed tones:

Staff member: "[One of our programmers] had a seizure" and "we had to call the ambulance" so "I released class for break early." "We will wait a few more minutes before starting" this would give the CIPP participants more time to get back from "break"

This is a challenge of the Multi: Because it is part of the sleeping and living arrangements for LCP participants until a room becomes available and it is also the main location for all events of meals, entertainment, classes, etc. it becomes problematic when an individual experiences a health issue that necessitates privacy and emergency response teams.

As we waited to begin the class again, and I waited for my presentation to begin I sat down beside a familiar face. One male, *Sam,* was sitting across the table from me, and another young lady was sitting to my left. At the next table adjacent to the right, there was *Katie* who is always so joyful. She has a smile that makes her look like she is laughing on the inside about something. It makes me curious what her story is.

Field Note Log

Field Note #	Observation Date	Observation Time	Hours in Field
1	September 8, 2011	10:00AM-11:30AM	**1.5**
2	September 13, 2011	11:45AM-2:45PM	**3.0**
3	September 15, 2011	12:00PM – 1:45PM	**1.75**
4	September 20, 2011	11:50AM-2:20PM	**2.5**
5	September 22, 2011	11:45AM-1:45PM	**2.0**
6	September 24, 2011	11:45AM-2:45PM	**3.0**
7	October 8, 2011	10:00AM – 1:30PM	**3.5**
8	October 18, 2011	12:00PM – 1:00PM	**1**
9	October 25, 2011	12:00 – 1:00PM	**1**
10	October 29, 2011	12:00PM-1:45PM	**1.75**
11	October 30, 2011	12:30PM – 1:00PM	**.5**
12	November 1, 2011	11:30AM – 1:15PM	**1.75**
13	November 5, 2011	12:00PM – 5:45PM	**5.75**
14	November 8, 2011	9:00AM-2:30PM	**5.5**
15	November 10, 2011	9:00AM-2:45PM	**5.75**
16	November 12, 2011	10AM-12:30PM; 1PM -6PM	**7.5**
17	November 26, 2011	11:50AM – 1:10PM	**1.33**
18	December 4, 2011	11:50AM – 3:50PM	**4.00**
19	December 10, 2011	4:50PM – 6:50PM	**2.0**
20	December 11, 2011	11:55AM – 7PM	**7.0**
21	December 13, 2011	5:00PM – 7:00PM	**2.0**
22	December 17, 2011	11:00AM-6:00PM	**7.0**
23	December 18, 2011	5:00PM – 7:00PM	**2.0**
24	December 20, 2011	11:30AM-7:05PM	**7.33**
25	December 21, 2011	11:30AM-6:45PM	**7.5**
26	December 22, 2011	9:00AM-5:00PM	**8.0**
27	December 27, 2011	5:00AM-7:15PM	**2.25**
28	December 28, 2011	12:00-2:50PM	**2.83**
29	January 1, 2012	3pm-7pm	**4**
		TOTAL	**104.99**

Interview Instrument for Homeless Individuals

STEP ONE: Before starting to explain the consent form, place the recorder in front of the individual. "I will be recording the conversation so I can type it up later. Is that ok?" *This is because individuals start talking right away about volunteers and do not like to repeat what they said later on in the interview. They already have heard the purpose of the interview*

STEP TWO: With verbal consent, start recording and begin going over the revised script in Appendix B.

"Thanks for volunteering to be interviewed. I am really interested in the communication between volunteers and programmers. I just want to let you know that I understand volunteers are coming here to give, but sometimes we don't always do it well. I believe that conflict can tell us as much about communication as the good conversations. Your words are safe with me, so feel free to share as much as you desire. While I am at *The Little City*, I am not only asking for interviews, but also observing conversations between programmers and volunteers. I plan on observing conversations until January.

"I am really interested in the words and the manners volunteers express in conversation with you, so I may ask you to give me as many details of a conversation that you can remember. If a question makes you uncomfortable, you don't have to answer it. You can also stop the interview at anytime and withdraw from the study."

"Right now, I need to go over this form for the interview." (Explain Consent Form.)

"Before you sign the form, do you have any questions for me?"

Sex: Male Female

Time in the Program: _____

No other identifying information can be obtained as per IRB requirements.

Volunteers **Asking for Help**

What was it like for you when you first arrived to *The Little City*? What is it like now?

I know volunteers are curious about your story, do you feel comfortable sharing it with them?

Do you see any value in a volunteer coming in to sit down and have a conversation with you?

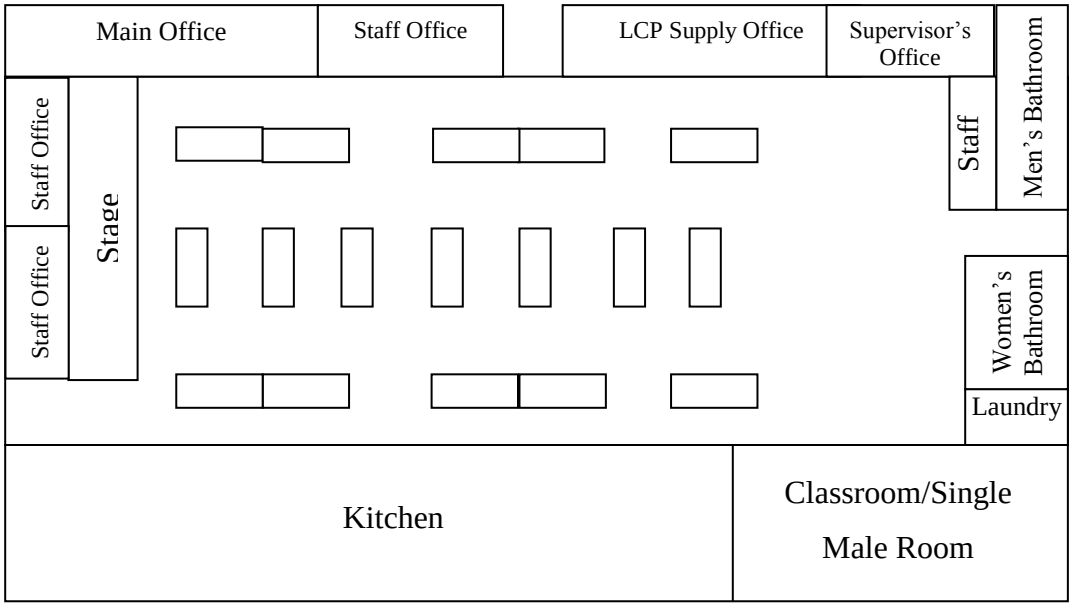
Can you recall a time that you asked for help? If not, can you tell me of a time that you gave help?

Is there anything that volunteers could do to help you while you are at *The Little City?*

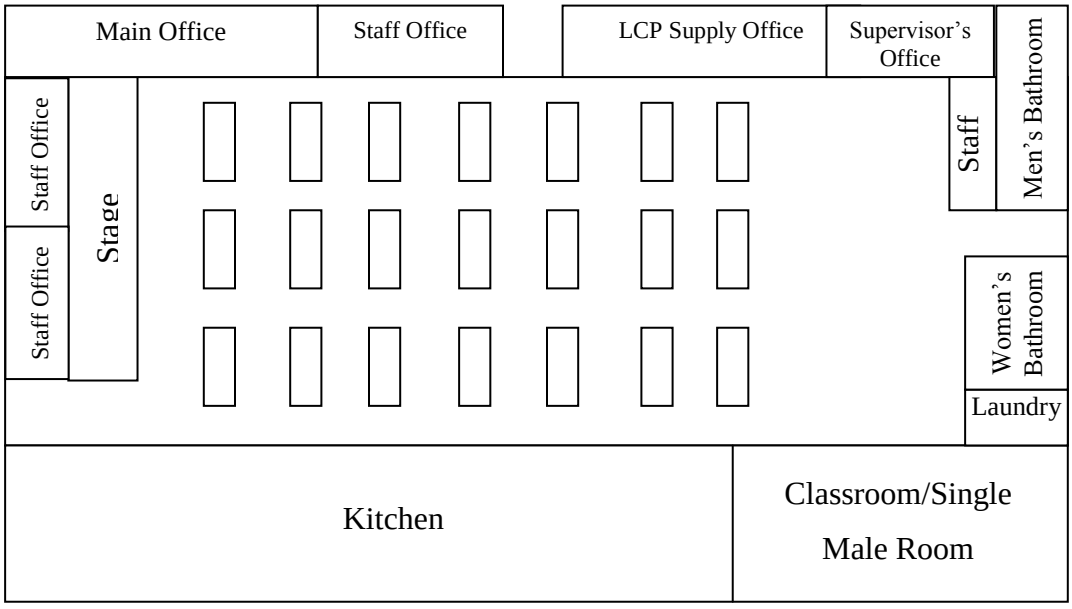
Diagrams of the Multi

(Figures not drawn to scale)

Mealtime (Figure 1.1)



Class Time (Figure 1.2)



Volunteer Social Artifact

Volunteer Guidelines

1. Please contact the main office if you are unable to volunteer on the date and time you selected so we are aware you won't be coming. Remember we depend on you
2. We ask that you contribute to the overall mission of TLC. We are dedicated to helping homeless women, children and families achieve productive and independent lifestyles through healing and positive change.
3. *Be cautious!* We want our volunteers to get to know our residents, however please be careful. Some of our residents may employ manipulative tactics in an effort to take advantage of you for personal, and in some cases, individual agendas. Please be sure you understand and comply with the following requests.
    a. Do not give money to anyone at TLC for any reason.
    b. Do not give a ride to any resident of TLC anywhere.
    c. Do not leave your belongings unattended.
    d. Do not make any decisions for residents. Always refer them to a staff member.
    e. Do not fraternize with residents.
    f. For your own protection, immediately report to staff any behavior you feel is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
4. We ask that no pictures be taken of TLC residents without permission from the main office.
5. As a general rule we ask that you dress conservatively. Please observe the dress code below:
    a. No short shorts, skirts or cut offs (Shorts should be to fingertips with arms down).
    b. No shorts allowed in the kitchen.
    c. No ripped jeans or shorts.
    d. No tank tops, halter tops, low cut shirts, tube tops, T-shirts with offensive messages or pictures.
6. If you are working with children please follow the appropriate guidelines.
7. All equipment should be handled with care, ensuring its proper and safe operation and storage.
8. Avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest with the residents and/or TLC.
9. Always check in at the main office before beginning your volunteer work.
10. Please smoke in designated areas. Please do not give residents or minors tobacco products.

LCP Social Artifact

The Little City has observed an alarming trend develop as more and more families have become homeless. It is not enough to feed, cloth, and shelter these lost and broken people. We know we must address the reasons for their homelessness and find ways to stop the cycle in its tracks!

Life In Christ's Power Program is a three-phased program to help those individuals and families who find themselves trapped in the cycle of homelessness to learn new strategies for using choices and challenges for experiencing self-sufficiency through biblical counseling and life skills training.

While homelessness occurs for many reasons, one stands out above all: the **breakdown of family.** Here are four factors contributing to that breakdown with case examples for each.

Inability to establish and/or maintain healthy priorities
Cheryl's drug addiction prevents her from caring for her children. Cheryl's 8 year old daughter makes sure her little brother is fed and clothed by taking money from her mother's purse, shoplifting or asking neighbors for help. Many nights, the child tucks in Cheryl, as she lies on the couch in a drug-induced stuper. The scariest times for this child are when the landlord comes for the rent. One day she knows they'll be homeless…again.

The family breaks down when it no longer functions as a unit, roles are blurred ans misused, and spiritual and emotional health is not safegaruded. Family members must choose to initiate and maintain corrective measures that will ultimately bring healing.

Lack of purity in relationships
For years, Mike was unfaithful to his wife and children. Finally, his wife divorced him and won custody of the children. Mike bounced from relationship to relationship until he landed at a mission. As a member of a transitional living program, he seems to be making life-changing choices. He wants to reconcile, but his wife isn't sure she wants to "rock the boat" now.

Nothing jilts an otherwise stable family like overt moral or ethical impurity, the very foundation of the family trust. Actions that destroy trust destroy the family. Many homeless tell us they no longer have contact with family because they have repeatedly breached their trust. Generational family breakdown occurs when children follow their parents' example. Families cannot stabilize until members maintain pure relationships.

Lack of financial management skills
Martin's family sought out emergency shelter when they were evicted for nonpayment of rent. Martin had racked up thousands of dollars in credit card debt from purchasing video and stereo equipment, new clothes, and restaurant meals. Now the family couldn't even pay for rent and groceries. Their only hope was a homeless shelter.

Managing money is a learned skill. Controlling spending habits is a trainable talent. Learning to delay gratification as a result of finding happiness and security in God rather than following the advertiser's message that "it's available now for just 12 easy payments."

Option blindness

Roger and Tammy had lived together for years. Without a marriage contract, both felt free to leave whenever there was a conflict. Their two children never knew what to expect. After becoming Christians, the couple decided to marry. Just days after the wedding, the two argued. Tammy threatened to leave, saying, "I told you it would never work out!"

Whether it's lack of training, the school of hard knocks, low self-esteem or high stress, families who find themselves homeless rarely have the ability to see realistic options to their problems. Option blindness locks the door that leads to finding healthy solutions. As a result, family members often make tragically destructive choices that effect adults and children alike.

LCP Policies and Procedures

1. Because TLC is neither federally, state or city funded, your stay at TLC is a PRIVILEGE. You are allowed to stay only as long as the staff feels you are benefit from the services that we have to offer.
2. To comply with health department recommendations, the first day you are in residence you, and every family member with you, **must** take a shower and wash all your clothing, thereafter, you must take a shower every day. Laundry facilities are available.
3. Smoking is allowed **only** outside of buildings in designated areas: in front of the Multi and on porches of other buildings for those staying there. Smoking inside **any** building may be cause for termination of your stay at TLC. Proper disposal of all wrappers, cigarette butts, etc., in appropriate containers is required.
4. A. Medicines or mouthwash containing alcohol will not be allowed on property.

   B. If you are found to be under the influence of any banned substance, or **if you appear to be,** you will be tested and your stay at TLC may be terminated.
5. A. Profanity of **any** sort is prohibited.

   B. Verbal or physical abuse toward anyone **will NOT be** tolerated.
6. Only Christian or classical music may be played on radios or tape players.
7. A 6:00pm **Curfew** is mandatory for all residents who are not working at verifiable employment. All family members are required to be on property at 6:00pm. If you are unable to return to TLC by curfew, you must call and inform the shelter of your ***emergency*** reason for missing curfew. All residents working after 6:00pm will need to have a *WORK SLIP* issued by the Manager's office. **LIGHTS OUT AT 9:00pm DAILY. Only calls to the office are acceptable.**

8. No one may be in a room except those persons assigned to the room. Visitors are required to check in **first** at the Front Office before seeing any resident. Visits **must** be held in the Multi or other common areas. Visitors **must** leave by 7:00pm and must check out in the Front Office.
9. **Sitting in cars is not permitted.** No "hanging out" around parked cars.
10. Individuals and families are **EXPECTED** to clean up after themselves. Parents are responsible for their children, including any breakage or destruction of property. Frequent, unannounced room inspections may be held.
11. Cooking is **not** permitted in any room. This is a County Fire Marshall requirement and TLC shelter policy. The Kitchen serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. **No outside food or drinks are allowed in the Multi at any time.** Outside food consists of any snacks, beverages from the store or McDonald's, Taco Bell, KFC, convenience stores, etc.
12. Chores are to be completed in a satisfactory manner as defined by Resident Services Manager and Resident Services Staff. More than one chore a day may be assigned. Refusal to perform chores will result in your being asked to find somewhere else to stay. A written note, including a legible name and telephone number, from a doctor is required to excuse you from chores and/or work requirements. **Failure to abide by a doctor's instructions or to follow shelter guidelines voids any medical excuses.**
13. **Selling food or drinks to other residents is <u>PROHIBITED!</u>**
14. All men, single women and couples without children must leave property by 8:00am daily, Monday through Friday, to seek employment, and may not return before 4:30pm. ONLY individuals on disability or under doctor's medical orders will be allowed to remain on property. Husbands and wives are considered individuals. The only reason a husband or wife would need to be accompanied by the other to the doctor or hospital is if an ambulance is necessary for transporting THE INDIVIDUAL.
15. **NO** gossiping concerning TLC residents or other shelters in town will be tolerated.
16. I am aware that TLC is involved in various public relations and fund raising activities to support the services that are provided to homeless individuals and families like myself. By signing in as a resident of TLC I authorize the use of photographs and/or videotape recordings of mean and/or my children by TLC or its authorized agents. As a resident I also release my TLC, its employees, or agents from all responsibility and liability that may arise from taking and/or the use of.
17. You must dress properly, following the TLC dress code while on property. Final decision rests with TLC staff.
18. There will be NO baby-sitting of another resident's child(ren) without authorization by staff. Permission will NOT be given except for medical emergency or employment reasons.

19. School attendance is MANDATORY for all school age children at TLC.
20. Failure to appropriately check out when leaving may result in denial of services at TLC.
21. FRATERNIZATION IS NOT ALLOWED! (Apperance of romance is fraternization). Excessive kissing, fondling, and/or close physical contact are NOT allowed.
22. Mandatory church services are held Wednesday at 6:45pm, and Saturday at 7:00pm and on Friday we have Bible Study at 7:00pm. Other services are held as announced. Appropriate behavior is required. If you choose to not attend or display inappropriate conduct in these services, you will have chosen to NOT utilize the services at TLC.
23. Unless you are working or using the restroom you **must** remain in your assigned area or room from 9:00pm (Bedtime) to 6:00 am (Wake-up).

Dress Code

1. Bandanas are not allowed to be worn. Hairnets can only be worn by kitchen staff while on duty.
2. The health department requires shoes be worn at all times.
3. Inappropriate messages on clothing, jewelry, etc. are not allowed. Examples are as follows:

a. Sexual messages, explicit or implicit.

b. Drug or alcohol messages or photographs.

c. Any messages displaying violence or profane language.

d. Any messages that display or promote disrespect and/or bigotry toward any group.

4. No gang related attire will be permitted.
5. **Underwear must be completely covered and cannot be shown above or below any outer clothing.** Underwear shall include but are not limited to boxers, briefs, **bras** and sports bras.
6. No muscle shirts, tank tops, halter tops, tube tops, or short shirts. All shirts must have sleeves and must be long enough to not reveal your midsection or underwear. Jackets are not considered a remedy for this situation.
7. Shorts must be as long as a person's fingertips when standing with hands to your sides. Skirts and dresses must go to the top of your nees.
8. **No excessively tight, baggy or saggy clothing can be worn on the premises.** Tight clothing would include but is not limited to clothing made from **spandex** materials.
9. **All women MUST wear a bra and the bra must be covered by an outer garment.**
10. All men must have shirts on while on the premises.

Zero Tolerance Policies

1. Violence or threats of violence on property
2. Use, possession, or distribution of drugs or alcohol on property
3. Sexual misconduct or possession of sexually explicit material on property
4. Damage to TLC property
5. Visiting with anyone not registered as a resident, guest, or visitor of TLC on property

In the event you *choose* to violate one of these policies you will be making the *choice* to be no longer stay at TLC. **"ZERO"** means **"ZERO."** No exceptions will be made for persons *choosing* to violate one of these policies. If you *choose* to violate one of these policies you will be *choosing* to gather all your personal belongings and leave TLC immediately. Those individuals *choosing* to leave will be placed on TLC's "30-day Denied Services List."

I understand the Zero Tolerance Policies and realize the *choice* I will be making if I *choose* to violate them.