

Homelessness



Group members will learn about homelessness and create balls of plastic yarn (PLARN) for use in making plastic mats/blankets to distribute to homeless shelters in the community.



OBJECTIVES:

1. Group members will be reacquainted through a warm up activity.
2. Group members will draw pictures of their homes and discuss the importance of having a home.
3. Group members will understand the causes of homelessness.
4. Group members will use plastic bags to create balls of PLARN that will be donated to a local organization whose volunteers will crochet the PLARN into plastic blankets to be distributed to homeless shelters throughout the community.



MATERIALS:

1. Recycled plastic bags
2. Scissors



ACTIVITIES:

I. INTRODUCTIONS AND WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- a. Introductions of new F.I.I.V.E. group members, staff, and guest speakers (if applicable)
- b. Warm-Up Activity (See Appendix A: Warm-Up Activities)

NOTE: Don't forget to pass out nametags!

II. PRESENTATION

(See Appendix B: Volunteer Activity Session Scripts for presentation materials on *Homelessness*.)

III. PROJECT: RECYCLED PLASTIC MATS (PLARN)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Lay recycled bag out flat.



2. Fold in half lengthwise then fold in half again.



NOTE: This activity only involves making the PLARN balls. The project coordinator must locate an organization whose mission is to crochet the PLARN into the mats/blankets.

3. Cut off top handles.



4. Cut bag in strips about 1 inch wide or as desired.



5. Set aside the end of bag where bottom edge was glued. The ends and the handles can be recycled either as stuffing for other projects, packing material for shipping, or taken to your local recycling bin for plastic bags.

6. Tying strips together

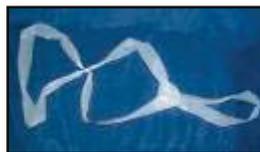
6A. Take two strips and inter-twine together as shown.



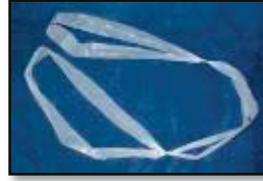
6B. Gently pull on ends to knot two strips together.



6C. Connect next strip to last strip in the same manner.



6D. Continue connecting strips until you have a large ball of plastic “yarn.”



6E. Tips:

Pull ends evenly to create a smooth and flat strip. If you find your strip doesn't lie flat between knots, you didn't pull evenly which creates a bunched strip. Just make sure your strip is even before you pull your knot tight between the two connected strips. To fix a bunched strip, just loosen your knot between the strips then pull on the ends again to make your strip flat and smooth.

7. Deliver the PLARN balls to a local organization whose mission is to crochet the PLARN into plastic mats/blankets to be delivered to homeless shelters.

IV. REFRESHMENTS AND DEBRIEFING

While group members enjoy a small snack or refreshment, use the following questions to facilitate a debriefing discussion about the day's activity:

NOTE: Ask another staff member or an older adult volunteer to take notes!

1. What is something new that you learned about homelessness?
2. What was your favorite part about the PLARN activity?
3. What do you think is the most important thing to do to prevent homelessness?



Additional Tips or Suggestions:

- Weeks or months in advance, ask your participants and volunteers to collect plastic bags from home to bring to this activity.
- Ask a local grocery store or department store to donate some plastic bags.
- Invite an employee of a soup kitchen or a homeless shelter to serve as a guest speaker. Ask a representative from a homeless shelter to help you find a previously homeless individual to come speak to your group. A personal story can be very powerful!
- Alternative or additional activities:
 - Coordinate a supply drive for homeless shelters.
 - Contact Habitat for Humanity to seek out ways your group can support their mission.

V. CALENDAR CORNER/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Prepare the group for the next F.I.I.V.E. volunteer activity session.
 - ~ Date/Time/Location
 - ~ Advertise guest speaker (if applicable)
 - ~ Supplies (if applicable)
 - ~ Recommend appropriate attire (if applicable)

VI. RECORDKEEPING

(See Appendix C: Recordkeeping Materials to use with each volunteer activity session.)