



*For the holiday season, the CARE Champions team received community donations of shoes, clothing, and additional supplies that we have been distributing to unhoused individuals in Garden Grove city during our street outreach sessions. If you would like to make a donation or send us referrals, please reach out to us at the contact above.*

## Building Bridges and Establishing Trust

by Nathan Le

With unhoused individuals being an underserved and hard to reach group, strengthening connections with them will take lots of care, persistence, and patience.

For instance, one recent encounter highlights the need to be flexible and meet each person where they are at. One of our team members had received a voicemail from an interested individual, asking about our services and requesting to call them back. However, upon returning the call, there was no pick up several times. Near the end of our business day, we decided to give them another call back, which was picked up almost immediately. This individual, newly unhoused, was looking for shelter and a place to charge their mobile device the entire day. They had reached out to a multitude of housing support agencies for help before contacting us without receiving any response. In order to best work with our clients and maintain our relationships, we must understand that these individuals may be experiencing challenging life circumstances that may make them more difficult to reach. Instead of being deterred by this, agencies serving the unhoused community should be persistent with outreach efforts and understanding of all situations.

This foundation of trust is crucial, as it transcends mere transactions and nurtures genuine connections. In an environment and field where desensitization can be a common defense mechanism, we must choose empathy and understanding as our guiding principles.