

**Agency Presentation: Street LIFE Ministries**

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## STREET LIFE MINISTRIES

### **Introduction**

Street LIFE Ministries (SLM) is a faith-based, non-profit organization that holds Christian beliefs and values. Its founders David and Robin Van Fleet established this organization after finding themselves lost with drugs, alcohol, and sex as their lifestyle. God, as merciful and loving as He is, called them to His Kingdom and gave them an important mission, which will be discussed later in this paper. Since that dramatic moment of their lives, they have continued to follow, obey, and fulfill God's purpose through SLM. Therefore, this paper will discuss some of the agency's most relevant features, including its mission, official and unofficial goals, target population, history, organizational structure and staff members, sources of power, values, and relationship with the community.

### **Mission**

SLM's mission is to serve the people who are outside of God's eternal family whom He longs to be brought home to Himself, so that He may give them true life. With compassion and creativity, the agency seeks to engage and embrace the lost with the power and relevance of the Gospel, connecting them with resources, and inviting them into a community to learn and grow. This is clearly a *client-oriented* mission because it is inspired on and for the people, pointing to meet their needs and support them in the process of finding solutions to their issues.

### ***Official and Unofficial Goals***

Once the agency's mission has been stated, it is relevant to mention their official and unofficial goals, which could be understood as smaller purposes or actions that would help the

agency to accomplish the mission. Matthew 25:35-36 (NIV) was the main reason and motivation for SLM to set the following goals:

1. Provide food, clothing, hygiene kits, referrals to housing, employment and drug or alcohol rehab programs.
2. Being available for emotional & spiritual concerns by offering dialogue and service, a listening ear or an encouraging word, and Biblical counsel and prayer.
3. Seeing people raised from a despairing, dysfunctional position to a stronger and more self-sustaining posture that can lift them up from the pit.

### **Target Population**

The agency's target population does not require much description because, as it was stated above, they seek to help the homeless and poor people, all characteristics included, in New York City. However, regarding their socioeconomic demographics, it would be significant to mention that about 90% of the client group identifies as Asian, Black or African American, and Hispanic or Latino with low or zero income.

### ***History***

SLM's history starts in 1990, with David's and Robin's prayer stations as pioneers, proving that this activity was quite effective, needed, and appreciated by the lost in New York City. Prayer stations are basically spots where they sought and offered prayers and/or free Bibles to those walking by. Then, in 1991 the first New Year's Eve Outreach was held at Rockefeller Plaza. This activity involved serving free hot chocolate and offering prayer to the crowd that usually gathers in the area. In 1997, both the Mobile Resource Center Program at Tompkins Square Park and Summer International Outreach were launched. The program consists of

distributing basic supplies to feed and satisfy the needs of the poor and homeless that gather at the park, while the outreach consists of traveling to destinations such as Venezuela, Jamaica, Haiti, Ukraine, and Brazil, in order to spread the Gospel and God's love to the poor. Finally, in 2003 the Queens House of Prayer, which offers 24/7 worship and prayer gatherings to all in Flushing, was established. This program addresses various themes such as the youth, America, and human trafficking.

### **Organizational Structure**

The organization has six main positions that make up their organizational structure: two founders (David and Robin Van Fleet), an executive director (David Van Fleet), a general manager (Carol Werronen), a missionary (Jim Werronen), two ministers (Glenn Ferro and Paula Herling), and many volunteers (including Maria). That being said, the management style of the agency is affiliative as the leaders work hard to create harmony and build emotional bonds, put people first, focus on empathy, building relationships, and communication, heal rifts in a team or to motivate people during stressful circumstances, and have a positive impact on climate. Now, the structure influences practice because it is highly respected and followed at all moments. As an illustration, David and Robin are in charge of making the decisions, Carol gives instructions, and the rest of the staff tell their opinion and follow the instructions provided. On the other side, practice influences structures because no matter the position, teamwork is essential for practice.

### ***Main Sources of Power***

Regarding the agency's sources of power, these fall into two categories: formal and informal. Some of the formal sources of power include their values, mission, programs, and management. By comparison, some of the most relevant informal sources of power are

teamwork, passion, and credibility. Another important aspect to discuss regarding the agency's functioning involves how the program is funded. Funds come from different types of donations, including donations from individuals, institutions, and organizations. World Vision, NYPD, New York Cares, churches, fundraisings, online debit or credit card donations are some of the ways that SLM collects the funds or resources needed to help the community.

## **Values**

SLM holds five core values as a Christian non-profit organization: 1) faith as the basis, 2) generosity as a commitment to give from what has been received from God, 3) teamwork as an essential tool to represent Jesus Christ and His Kingdom to every person they meet, 4) compassion as a commitment to caring, assisting, and loving the forgotten of this world, and 5) excellence as a way to do their best and serve the community in any possible ways. Moreover, the agency addresses racism, sexism, homophobia, and ethnocentrism by serving and assisting people of any characteristics because God sees no race, age, sex, language, disability, status, or any other characteristics; He loves us ALL. In addition to this, discrimination is not allowed in SLM's services, programs, or among staff. Last, this organization is accessible for anyone who is homeless, hungry, disabled, rejected, unemployed, or lost.

## **Relationship between Agency and Community**

Exploring the relationship between the community and SLM leads to describing three main facts:

1. SLM's staff offers a warm, welcoming, caring, and friendly environment for everyone who reaches out.

2. Strong friendships and bonds have arisen as a result of 24 years of service to the homeless community at Tompkins Square Park.
3. The community finds SLM to give them hope, happiness, love, and support.

This strong and love-based relationship has positively impacted service delivery because it is outstanding seeing how excited the community gets every time they see SLM's truck. The Mobile Resource Center Program has definitely changed and inspired the community, making them feel important, loved, appreciated, and cared of. This does not mean that everything is always perfect, but the positive image and feelings that people have created about SLM has facilitated service delivery to returning and new members of this community.

### **Conclusion**

Street LIFE Ministries has a significant impact in the homeless community, both in New York City and other countries that were previously mentioned. By being a faith-based organization, SLM has been able to help the poor and most vulnerable individuals in several ways. Not only many members of the community have been able to find housing or rehab from addiction, for example, but they have also had the opportunity to be saved by accepting the Lord as their savior, and receiving eternal life through God's never-ending love and grace. It has been 24 years of hard work, effort, passion, and challenges, but they (SLM staff) have certainly seen and proved how much worth the sacrifice has been.

References

SLM. Street LIFE Ministries. <https://streetlife.org/>