

# Interview with Allen Childs

This is an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved research study surrounding the encampment of people experiencing street homelessness in South Bend, IN. This research will inform the creation of a dynamic digital case study for poverty studies students and others interested in exploring the causes, consequences, and potential interventions to address encampments of people experiencing homelessness in any city. The case study will include perspectives from various stakeholders to encourage students to develop empathy and understanding for everyone impacted by this complex issue.

## **Allen Childs**

### **Case Manager**

**Indiana Health Centers, Inc.**

**1. Please describe what homelessness means to you.**

What homelessness means to me is someone is struggling and needs assistance with getting back on their feet. Examples would be getting and maintaining housing, struggling with substances/mental health issues, employment, education, clothing, and food, etc.

**2. When and how did you become aware of the encampment?**

I learned about the encampment in 2015 when I started to work for Indiana Health Centers, Inc.

**3. What was your relationship to the encampment and how were you affected by it? Did you speak directly with people living in the encampment? If you did not have direct contact with persons in the encampment, what did you hear about it and what were the sources of information?**

IHC Medical Clinic provides medical for many of those who were part of the encampment. Yes, we spoke to many of those who were part of the encampment when they came into the clinic for medical appointments.

**4. Who were all the stakeholders in this situation? Do you think the media included the voices of all stakeholders in this issue?**

I don't have enough information to answer this question.

5. **Was your path of action always clear? If not, at what point was there the most debate regarding how to handle the situation?**

I am unable to answer this question.

6. **Was there any response that was completely unexpected? Did this regard action or inaction? In retrospect do you feel that it was warranted?**

I don't have enough information to answer this question.

7. **Who do you think has the power to address homelessness in this community? Did those people use that power effectively in this situation? How would you want them to use it if an encampment happened in downtown South Bend again? What could be done differently? What still needs to happen?**

I believe we all have the power to make a positive impact on homelessness in the area. We all need to come together and have a realistic conversation and listen to each other on how our community can help and what is the best way to do so. I would recommend to have more supportive housing opportunities for the homeless and then wrap community services around the individuals who live in these communities.

8. **Anything else you want to add to this conversation before we stop? Do you have any new thoughts on homelessness at this point?**

I wanted to personally thank you for including me in this project. I wish you nothing but much success with this project.