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INTRODUCTION

Common Threads (CT), a student organization, produces crocheted sleeping mats from recycled plastic bags ("plarn") for those experiencing homelessness with the support of medical student volunteers.

- Due to the labor-intensive nature of the initiative (50 hours per mat), CT sought to encourage engagement beyond the curriculum-required minimum hours to bolster volunteering and facilitate the opportunity to evaluate completed sleeping mats.

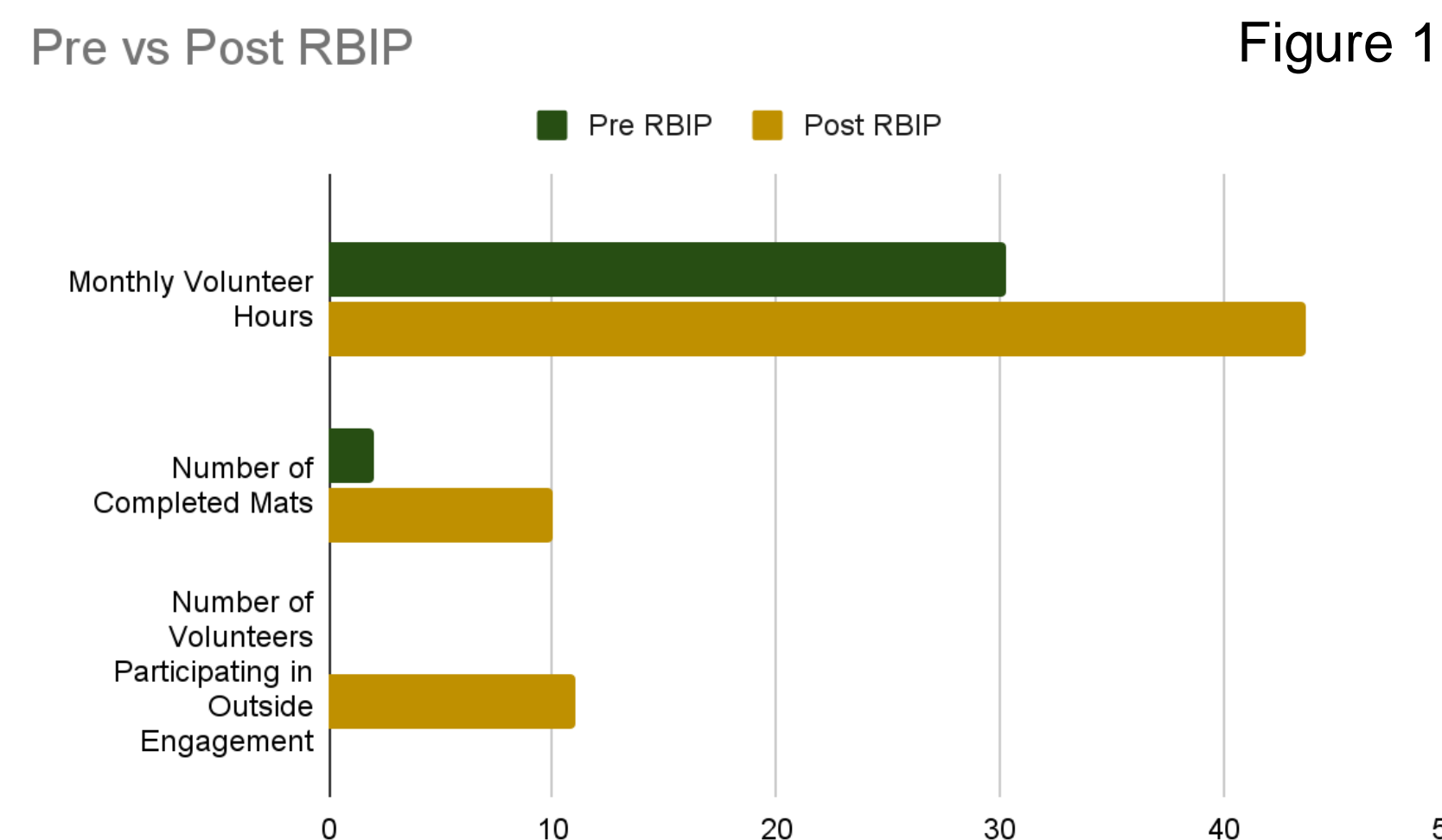
METHODS

- To encourage student participation, CT allowed students to earn a "Community Change Partner" certificate (RBIP).
- Students had the opportunity to receive curriculum-required hours as well as points toward the title by volunteering to help make crocheted sleeping mats out of "plarn" for those experiencing homelessness.
- Students needed 375 points to earn title.
- Points were awarded based on relative time commitment and necessity of task in furthering the completion of the mats.
- Results were evaluated by comparing the number of completed mats, monthly volunteer hours, and number of volunteers engaging in work outside of events before and after implementation.

FIGURES

Table 1

RBIP: Point Systems	
Completing A Mat	400 points
Crocheting at an Event	50 points
Making 'Plarn' at an Event	25 points
Completing % of a Mat	375 points x % complete



- Table 1. Outlines the Point System
- Figure 1. Visual comparison of engagement before and after the initiation of the RBIP



Scan QR code to view demonstration video of a finished sleeping mat



RESULTS

Prior to the RBIP, CT supported:

- 30.3 monthly volunteer person-hours
- 2 completed mats
- No engagement outside of events

After the initiation of the RBIP, CT supported:

- 43.6 monthly volunteer person-hours
- 10 completed mats
- 11 people engaged in work outside of events

LIMITATIONS

- Several in-progress mats are not included in current data.
- Limited supply of plastic bags, hooks, and "plarn."
- Threshold to receive certificate may have been set too high. Would consider lowering the threshold to be more achievable.

CONCLUSIONS

- In general, the results reveal that the RBIP improved participation in the sleeping mat initiative.
- After implementation, there was an increase in the number of all the following:
 - monthly volunteer hours
 - completed mats
 - people engaging in work outside of events
- These factors were extrapolated to be an indication of improved engagement and participation.
- Future research will aim to evaluate the community impact of the sleeping mats.