

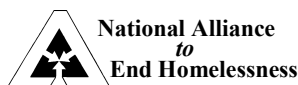


END HOMELESSNESS!

A fact sheet for kids in grades 3 – 5

Vol. 2, No. 1

PREPARED BY THE
NATIONAL ALLIANCE
TO END
HOMELESSNESS



The National Alliance to End Homelessness educates young people — ages 5 to 25 — about issues surrounding homelessness in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The Alliance also distributes information and materials for educating young people about homelessness through its website at www.endhomelessness.org.

Want to

know more?

- ✓ Visit The Alliance's website at www.endhomelessness.org
- ✓ **Read** and talk about one of these:
 - ▶ *A Chance to Grow* by E. Sandy Powell
 - ▶ *A Rose for Abby* by Donna Guthrie
 - ▶ *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting
 - ▶ *Home* edited by Michael Rosen
 - ▶ *The Lady in the Box* by Ann McGovern
 - ▶ "No Place to Call Home", *Scholastic News*, Vol. 67, No. 12

KNOW what homelessness is

Someone who does not have a home is sometimes called "homeless." Lots of people are without a home for a short period of time — maybe one or two days. Some people are without a home for a longer time: many months or years. In our country, the United States of America, there are lots and lots of homeless people — or people without homes.

By learning more about homelessness, you can be

part of the fight to end homelessness. To play a part in ending the problem, you need to:

KNOW HOW BIG THE PROBLEM IS

Have you ever been asked a question and you did not know the answer? It is frustrating, isn't it? Well, if you keep reading this fact sheet, you will have a lot of answers to questions people ask about homelessness.



KNOW WHY

Nobody wants to be homeless. There are lots of reasons why people are without a home. Once you understand the reasons why people are homeless, it is easier to figure out how to solve the problem.



KNOW HOW TO HELP

Everybody deserves to have a home. We can solve the problem of homelessness. And you can be a part of the solution. Read on to find out more!

KNOW how big the problem is

Anybody can be homeless. It doesn't matter what color a person's skin is, what religion they practice or how old they are. People without homes live in cities, in suburbs and in the country.



Every night in the United States, about 750,000 people don't have homes.

That's more than the entire population of the nation's capital, Washington, DC!

In a year, about **3 million** people don't have homes for some period of time, whether it's one day, two weeks, three months or the whole year.



Last year, about 50%, or 5 out of 10 people without homes, were families.

That means that a lot of women and children find themselves with no place to call home.



The majority of people without homes NEVER sleep on the street.

Many people who do not have homes temporarily stay in shelters, motels, cars and in campgrounds. Other people live overcrowded with family or friends.

Most people do not stay homeless for long. The majority of people who lose their homes find new places to live pretty quickly.

The most important thing all homeless people need is a safe, permanent place to live.

source: *A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years*, National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2000.



KNOW why people are homeless

There are lots of different reasons why people are without homes. Here are just a few:

1. It costs a **lot** of money to pay for a **place to live**. In some places, even small apartments cost more than people earn! There are not enough inexpensive places to live for everyone who needs them.
2. Many people who don't have homes work and still do **not have enough money** to pay for everything they need. That's because the money they make is not enough to live on. There are lots of people who work every day and bring home less than \$1,000 a month. If a two bedroom apartment costs almost \$900 a month in a city like

Washington, DC, that doesn't leave much money for bills, food, clothes & transportation, especially for families with children.*

3. Sometimes people **can't get help** when they need it. For instance, going to the doctor or paying for medicine is too expensive for some people. If people can't get medical help, they may become too sick, either mentally or physically, to work. This means they can not earn money to pay for rent and other things.

Just like the game of **dominoes**, people often find themselves without a home because one bad thing happens and then other bad things follow. It can be really hard to pick up the pieces when

lots of bad things pile up . . . just like when the dominos fall.



1. Make available more homes that aren't so expensive.
2. Pay people enough money so they can pay their rent, buy food and pay their bills.
3. Give people the information and help they need to meet their daily needs.

*source: *Out of Reach: The Growing Gap Between Housing Costs and Income of Poor People in the United States*, National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2000.

KNOW how to help

HELPING PEOPLE MEET

THEIR DAILY NEEDS . . .

What are daily needs? Think about it. What do you need on a day when you don't feel well? What do you need on a day when it's really cold outside? What do you need when you are hungry? Your answers to these questions are the same as the answers a person without a home might give.

Here are some ways you can help people who do not have homes meet their daily needs:

- ➔ Cook a meal and deliver it to an organization that serves food to people who do not have homes.
- ➔ Find out what a homeless program in your community needs the most. Collect money from your friends, neighbors and your family. Buy and then deliver the item to the program.
- ➔ Collect blankets, hats and gloves for people who are living on the street and deliver these warm items to them.
- ➔ **Treat people who are without homes like you would like to be treated!**

ENDING

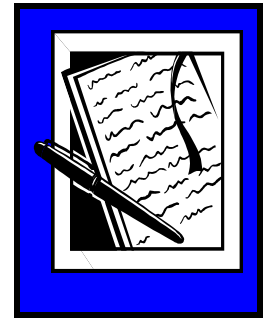
HOMELESSNESS . . .

It's really important to help people get the food, clothing, and shelter they need to get through each day. It's also very important to solve the problem of homelessness. And, YES, kids can be a part of the solution to homelessness. Now that you know more about homelessness, you can start now — today — and help solve this terrible problem.

Here are some ways you can help solve homelessness:

- ➔ Raise awareness by sharing what you have learned with family members and friends!
- ➔ Organize a clothing drive for grown ups who are trying to find a job. Collect suits, ties, dresses, blouses, skirts and shoes. Take what you have collected to an organization that helps people find jobs.
- ➔ Write to your national, state and local government representatives who make the laws that affect people without homes. Find their contact information in the government blue pages.

SAMPLE
LETTER TO
YOUR
GOVERNMENT
OFFICIAL(S):



Dear _____:

My name is _____. I am _____ years old and I live in _____. I am writing to you to find out what you are doing to help people who do not have homes. Did you know that _____?

(put a fact here)

I am very concerned about _____

(put another fact here)

I would like to know how you feel about these facts. I would also like to know what you plan to do to change the situation.

Thank you,

(your signature)



END HOMELESSNESS!



FIND IT!

Find and circle these vocabulary words:

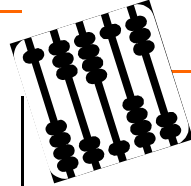
HOME JOB SHELTER HELP

RENT SOLUTIONS FURNISHINGS

HOUSIN2000 GOVERNMENT HOPES

DOMINOS FAMILY VOLUNTEER

W E H G Y E L T R K D O M I N H D S
 H A S O L U T I O N S C O W N O O V
 J E G V O M N O C H S H O Y E M M L
 E L N E U O H H E C L H G R L E I S
 S H I R R D V O L U N T E E R X N F
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CALCULATE IT!

\$ It costs a family about \$900 a month for a typical two bedroom apartment in Washington, DC. How much will it cost to rent the apartment for one year?

\$ How much will it cost to rent the apartment each week?



IMAGINE IT!

You have just read some very important facts about homelessness. Now you can understand how special it is to have a place to call home. In this next exercise, **imagine** your ideal home.

- What would it look like? What rooms would it have?
- How do you feel when you're in this home?
- Who would live there with you?

Write a **poem** that expresses what your ideal home would be like.

MORE EXPLORATION!



KNOW IT!

To be a part of the solution to any problem, you need to know the facts.

So, find a **new fact** about homelessness:

- 📰 look through the newspaper,
- 🌐 search the Internet or
- 📖 go to the library.

Write your new fact below:



CREATE IT!

You have learned that people without homes live in many different types of communities: in rural areas, towns and cities.

Your task:

Create a **collage** of a community that meets every member's needs.

You have already explored some of these needs in this fact sheet!

- * Try to use a variety of pictures in your collage.
- * Make sure there are affordable places to live, places to buy food, schools, jobs and other necessary community services.
- * Look in magazines and newspapers for other pictures to add to your collage.

DO IT!

Now that you've explored homelessness, make a plan to **do** something that helps a person or family who is without a home.



I will help a person or family meet **daily needs** by doing the following:

I will help **end** homelessness by doing the following:

I will ask _____ to help me.
(parent, teacher, another adult)

Reference List for Grades 3-5

National Alliance to
End Homelessness
1518 K St, NW Suite 206
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 638-1526
(202) 638-4664 fax

Age appropriate books, articles, videos, websites and teaching guides about homelessness



Books

- ◆ Bunting, Eve. *December*. Harcourt Brace, 1997.
- ◆ Chalofsky, Margie et.al. *Changing Places: A Kid's View of Shelter Living*. Gryphon House, Inc., 1992.
- ◆ Chinn, Karen. *Sam and the Lucky Money*. Lee & Low Books, 1995.
- ◆ Da Costa Nunez, Ralph. *Our Wish*. Homes for the Homeless, 1997.
- ◆ Fox, Paula. *Monkey Island*. Orchard Books, 1991.
- ◆ Frost, Jonathan. *Gowanus Dog*. Frances Foster Books, 1999.
- ◆ Groth, B.L. *Home is Where We Live: Life at a Shelter Through a Young Girl's Eyes*. Cornerstone Press, 1995.
- ◆ Guthrie, Donna. *A Rose for Abby*. Abingdon, 1988
- ◆ Hamilton, Virginia. *The Planet of Junior Brown*. Mac-Millan, 1986.
- ◆ Hubbard, Jim. *Lives Turned Upside Down: Homeless Children in Their Own Words and Photographs*. Simon & Schuster, 1996.
- ◆ McCauslin, Mark. *Homelessness*. Crestwood House, 1994.
- ◆ McGovern, Ann. *The Lady in the Box*. Turtle Books, 1997
- ◆ Powell, E. Sandy. *A Chance to Grow*. Carolhoda Books, 1992.
- ◆ Spangler, Ruth. *Mandy's House: The Story of a Homeless Family Who Finds a New Place to Live*. Publisher Press, 1990.
- ◆ Spinelli, Jerry. *Maniac Magee*. Little, Brown and Company, 1990.

Articles

- ◆ "No Place to Call Home," *Scholastic News*, Vol. 67, No. 12

Videos



- ◆ "Fly Away Home" from Reading Rainbow - Ordering information: <http://gpn.unl.edu/rainbow.htm>
- ◆ "Shelter Boy" from "The Reporters," Fox Television.

WebSites



- ◆ www.endhomelessness.org
National Alliance to End Homelessness
- ◆ www.hud.gov/kids/hthsplsh.html
HUD homelessness awareness page
- ◆ www.earthsystems.org/ways/
54 Ways You Can Help the Homeless
- ◆ <http://nch.ari.net>
National Coalition for the Homeless

Teaching Guides



- ◆ *Kidstart: Kids Can Care!* Largo, FL: Pinellas County Cooperative Extension Service, 1989.
- ◆ *Learning About Homeless Children, Youth and Families*. Seattle, WA: Center for Creative Education, 1995.
- ◆ *Unsheltered Lives*. Montpelier, VT: Department of Education, 1991.