



Understanding the Issue: HOMELESSNESS

Did you know?

The United States is the industrialized nation with the highest number of homeless women and children.¹

Many factors can cause homelessness, including poverty, lack of affordable housing and limited job opportunities. As the gap between housing costs and wages grows, so does the number of individuals and families who are at risk for being homeless or living without permanent housing, whether it's on the street or in a shelter. At-risk individuals struggle to pay for housing, food, childcare, healthcare and education and may suffer homelessness as a result of an emergency or an illness.

“ For kids, homelessness means sleeping in crowded shelters, on couches, in cars or sometimes on the streets. It means frequent moves, being separated from family and exposure to "adult" issues, like alcoholism, drugs and violence. It means struggling to keep up in school, and the increased likelihood that they themselves will experience deep poverty and homelessness as an adult. Indeed, even if their homeless experience is short lived, it is an experience they will never forget.”

— Shannon Moriarty, Change.org²

Let's Talk

- Think of all of the things that you do at home like sleep, cook and bathe. Why is your home important to you?
- What causes a person to become homeless?
- Why would it be hard to be homeless or live in a shelter?
- How can you help people who are experiencing homelessness?

By the Numbers In 2013-2014:^{3,4}

138,575 Chicagoans were homeless, a 19.4% increase from the prior year

70,028 Families in Chicago were homeless

22,144 Homeless students were enrolled in Chicago Public Schools last year

Learn More

Ages
5-8

- **The Tooth** by Avi Slovdovnick
- **Fly Away Home** by Eve Bunting

Ages
9-12

- **Hold Fast** by Blue Balliett
- **Esperanza Rising** by Pam Munoz Ryan

Young
Adult

- **Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America** by Jonathan Kozol
- **Three Little Words: A Memoir** by Ashley Rhodes Courter

¹ "OECD.org". Retrieved on 02-06-2015

² Shannon Moriarty Blog. Change.org. Retrieved on 02-06-2015

³ "National Coalition for the Homeless Fact Sheets". National Coalition for the Homeless. Retrieved on 02-06-2015

⁴ "Chicago Coalition for the Homeless: Studies". Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Retrieved on 02-06-2015

TAKE ACTION

Prepare a Meal

Work together as a family to prepare a favorite family recipe. Deliver your home-cooked meal to a local shelter or pack individual meals in lunch bags for people living in shelters or on the streets.

Pack Survival Kits

Inspire your friends and family to collect unused shampoo, soap and sample-size toiletries when they travel. Pack the supplies into individual survival kits with personal notes.

Donate Toys & Clothing

Work with your family to clean your closets and select new or gently used items to donate to a local shelter. Clothing, towels, blankets, and warm weather items are always in need. Some shelters need help sorting donations too.

Host a Pajama Party

Kids who are experiencing homelessness have left the comforts of home behind. New pajamas and a good book can provide a lot of joy. Host a pajama party and ask your friends to bring a new pajamas and a good book to donate to a local shelter.

Engage Your Elected Officials

Much of the funding for homeless programs comes from federal grants that are administered by the states. By sharing your concerns with your local leaders, you can help influence where this money goes.

PARTNERS

Apna Ghar

apnaghar.org • (773) 883-4663
(Survival Kits, Donations)

Casa Central

casacentral.org • (773) 645-2300
(Survival Kits, Donations, Pajamas/Books)

Chicago Hopes

chicagohopes.org • (224) 595-4482
(Pajamas/Books)

Christopher House

christopherhouse.org • (773) 472-1083
(Donations)

Connections for Abused Woman and their Children

cawc.org • (773) 489-9081
(Survival Kits, Donations, Pajamas/Books)

Deborah's Place

deborahsplace.org • (773) 722-5080
(Prepare a Meal, Survival Kits, Donations)

Inspiration Cafe

inspirationcorp.org • (773) 878-0981
(Prepare a Meal, Survival Kits, Donations)

Share Our Spare

shareourspare.org
(Survival Kits, Donations)

Teen Living Program

teenliving.org • (773) 548-4443
(Prepare a Meal, Survival Kits, Donations, Pajamas/Books)



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The Honeycomb Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a focus on family volunteering. Our mission is to engage, mobilize and inspire kids and their families to build Chicago's communities through public service.