



LET'S END HOMELESSNESS!

A fact sheet for kids in grades K-2 Vol. 2, No. 1

WHAT is homelessness?

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

Being homeless is hard. It is a time when a person or a family does not have a place to live: a place to call home. People are homeless if they have to share a place to live with one or more families. People are homeless if they have to live on the street, in their cars, in homeless shelters, in sheds or under a bridge.

Have you ever been camping? If so, did you sleep in a tent? Sleeping in a tent can be lots of fun — well, unless you have to do it every day of the week. Some families who do not have homes live in tents. It is pretty hard for the children to get ready for school in the morning. If you are without a home and have to live in a tent, it is not fun.

Being homeless does not mean a person or a family will never have a home. If you keep reading this fact sheet, you will find out more important information about homelessness and the ways in which we (that includes you!) can end this terrible problem.

WHO is homeless?

Anybody can be homeless. Moms, dads, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters can all be homeless. It doesn't matter what color your skin is, what religion you are, whether you are a boy or a girl, or if you live in a city, suburb or in the country.

People who are homeless have names, families, things they like to do, foods they like to eat and games they like to play — just like you! So, how is someone without a home the same as someone with a home?



**EVERYBODY
DESERVES TO HAVE
HOME!**



**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 metro area. The Alliance also distributes information and materials for educating young people about homelessness through its website at www.endhomelessness.org.

FOR MORE

INFORMATION . . .

- Visit The Alliance's website at www.endhomelessness.org
- Read and talk about one of these picture books:
 - *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams
 - *A Rose for Abby* by Donna Guthrie
 - *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting
 - *The Lady in the Box* by Ann McGovern
 - *Our Wish* by Ralph da Costa Nunez
 - *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen* by DyAnna DiSalvo-Ryan
- Watch the Reading Rainbow video, *Fly Away Home*



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WHY are people homeless?



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

1. It costs a lot of money to pay for a place to live — even a small apartment. There are people who work every day during the week and they still do not make enough money to pay for a place to live.
2. They do not make enough money to pay for a place to live and to pay their bills and to pay for the doctor if they get sick. Some people are too sick to work at all. People who do not have very much money have to make hard choices. Sometimes, after they pay for their food and their bills, they do not have enough money left to pay for a place to live.
3. Sometimes people can't find help when they need it. Like if someone's home burns down or gets destroyed by a tornado or hurricane and they don't have enough money to get a new place live. Other people are very sick but can not pay to go to the doctor.

THREE SOLUTIONS!

1. Provide homes that don't cost a lot of money.
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 keep a home.

Most of the time a person or family becomes homeless because one bad thing happens and then lots of bad things follow. Sometimes so many bad things happen that it gets harder and harder to find and keep a home.

HOW can I help?

Good question! Kids can do a lot to help people who are without homes.

Some of these things help people meet their daily needs. If you aren't sure what a person's daily needs are, think about what *you need every day* —from the time you wake up to the time you go to sleep. Think about how your daily needs change depending on what season it is. Think about what your needs are on a day when you feel sick. These are the same things people need who are without homes.



There are also things kids can do to help end homelessness. While it is very important to help people meet their daily needs, it is also important to **end the problem**. Wouldn't it be great if everybody had a home?

THINGS I CAN DO TO HELP PEOPLE WITHOUT HOMES MEET THEIR DAILY NEEDS

- ◆ **Treat people who are without a home like you would like to be treated!**
- ◆ 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 items to the program.
- ◆ Collect blankets, hats and gloves for people who are living on the street and deliver these warm items to them.

THINGS I CAN DO TO HELP END HOMELESSNESS

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ **Talk with your friends, neighbors and family about what you have learned about homelessness.** Ask them to do something to help stop this terrible problem.

BRAIN WORK



SENSE IT!

Close your eyes.

Think about a place you call home.

Now answer these questions:

1. In a home, what is your favorite smell?

2. In a home, what is your favorite room and what does it feel like?

3. In a home, what sounds do you hear?



DRAW IT!

Imagine the best room in a home. The room you would want to spend a lot of time in. Draw a picture of what your favorite room would look like.



PRESENT IT!

Now tell a friend, family member or neighbor what home means to you!



MORE BRAIN WORK!



CHOOSE IT!

Making choices is hard. Think about two things you like to do. If you had to choose only one of the things, which one would it be? Draw a picture of both things and circle the one you would choose.



OBSERVE IT!

Take a walk through your neighborhood with a grownup. What are the different types of homes people live in?



DO IT!

Now that you've exercised your brain, make a plan to do something that helps a person or family who is without a home.

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

I will help a person or family that does not have a home meet **daily needs** by doing the following:

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

Reference List for Grades K-2

National Alliance to
End Homelessness
1518 K St, NW Suite 206
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 638-1526
(202) 638-1661 Fax

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



Books

- ♦ Asch, Frank. *Good-bye House*. Simon & Schuster, 1986.
- ♦ Bunting, Eve. *December*. Harcourt Brace, 1997.
- ♦ Bunting, Eve. *Fly Away Home*. Clarion Books, 1991.
- ♦ 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.
- ♦ DiSalvo-Ryan, Dyanne. *Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen*. Morrow Junior 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.
- ♦ 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.

Videos

- ♦ "Fly Away Home" from Reading Rainbow - Ordering information: <http://qpn.unl.edu/rainbow.htm>



WebSites



- ♦ www.endhomelessness.org - National Alliance to End Homelessness
- ♦ www.hud.gov/kids/hthsplsh.html - HUD homelessness awareness page for kids
- ♦ www.earthsystems.org/ways/ - 54 Ways You Can Help 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.