

Homeless Teens

"Approximately one-third of the United States homeless population are youth."

Published on January 9, 2011 by [Raychelle Cassada Lohmann, M.S., L.P.C.](#) in [Teen Angst](#)



Finally the bell rang and school was over. Students gathered their materials and excitedly scampered into the hallways; sounds of laughing, loud talking, and lockers clanking echoed in the background. All of the students were eager to exit the building anticipating the long weekend; that is all but one, Jeremy. Jeremy relished the comfort of the school building. It was the only place in his life that provided safety, security and stability. You see, like thousands of today's teens, Jeremy was homeless. His weekend would consist of trying to find a place to stay that provided shelter, warmth and food.

What the Data Says:



In the United States alone, there are estimates that approximately 3.5 million people are homeless and 1.35 million of them are children. Yes, that's over one-third of the homeless population! Homelessness effects teens in many different ways. Fifty percent of homeless teens age 16 and older, drop out of school. Many resort to using drugs which can lead to addiction as a means of coping. They lack food and clothing, need supplies, medical and dental treatment and the list goes on and on. These teens lack the major thing most human's desire - stability.

Related Articles

With the state of America's economy and the jobless rate holding at about nine plus percent, teens are finding it increasingly more difficult to find a job. The jobs that teens once held are now being sought out by older and more qualified applicants who are without employment. And with the increasingly high foreclosure rates, so many kids have lost their homes and their families are forced

to the streets. Many families are scrambling to find a place to live, moving in with family members or sending their kids to other places to live as they search for a job.

Many teens living on the streets are homeless because they ran away from home. According to the National Runaway Switchboard, "Every day between 1.3 and 2.8 million runaway and homeless youth live on the streets of America. One out of every seven children will run away from home before the age of 18." Approximately forty seven percent of these kids report conflict at home as the primary reason for leaving. Other reported reasons for running away include: School Problems, Substance Abuse, Abuse (physical, sexual, and verbal), Pregnancy, and Mental Health Problems.

Regardless of the reason, we have entirely too many youth living on the streets of America. I watched the interviews this past week on the Homeless Man with a Golden Voice and the outpour of compassion from the American people was/is truly amazing. I thought, "What if we take that same compassion and give it to our homeless kids and their families?" There are many things that we can do to help out the homeless youth in our nation and each action does make a difference.



What We Can Do:

- Volunteer your time with a youth in need. Become a mentor with the school system or a community agency.
- Donate clothes to your local school for students in need or organize a clothing drive. Many schools have a clothes closet. So before you throw out that pair of pants you no longer wear think twice there may be someone that'd love to have them.
- Volunteer at a Soup Kitchen or Homeless Shelter. Form a committee in the community or schools arrange for a club to sponsor an event to get people actively involved in volunteering with these organizations.
- Churches and Community Agencies - Start an afterschool program for teens to have a place to go. Have a committee that works on finding placement for some of these families for a week or so.
- What we all can do - Show a little compassion and reach out to help a homeless teen.

References:

The National Coalition for the Homeless - <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>

The National Runaway Switchboard - <http://www.1800runaway.org/>

When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide - Informative site for parents written (with assistance from law enforcement and youth service professionals) by parents who have experienced the trauma of a missing child. <http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/childmissing/contents.html>

USA Today

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2009-07-09-homeless_N.htm

http://www.usatoday.com/money/economy/housing/2010-01-13-foreclosures-rise-in-december_N.htm