

Homelessness In Your World

Irene and Gwen
With help from Project 150



Our Project

We're in Girl Scout troops 14 and 723. We're working on our Silver Award, the second highest award in Girl Scouting. For our project, we're raising awareness about homeless teens in Nevada. Not many of you know just how bad homelessness is. Nevada has one of the highest rates of homelessness in all of America and it's something that needs to be fixed.

What is Homelessness?

Many people think of homelessness as being out on the streets, but for homeless teens, couch surfing, living at a friend or family member's house AND living on the streets mean homelessness. In fact, anyone living in a non-adequate space is considered homeless.

Homeless Teens

Our project is focusing on homeless teenagers. Students and teens our age and older.

There are many reasons for teenage homelessness. Many have run away from foster homes, or have aged out of the program. Most are running away from emotional, physical or sexual abuse and have nowhere to go. This is one of the main problems faced by homeless teens. A number are homeless because of their substance abuse. Due to problems at home or school, they turn to drugs or alcohol. Sometimes their parents are the ones abusing the substances, causing the teens to run away. A huge, often overlooked problem, is that a child's sexuality can cause parents to kick their children out.

Causes of Homelessness

There isn't one specific cause or step that leads to homelessness, but a mix of different things

According to estimates from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, a family with a full-time worker making minimum wage could not afford fair-market rent for a two bedroom apartment *anywhere* in the U.S.

The lack of affordable housing is one of the biggest factors behind homelessness .

Natural and other disasters can throw people into temporary homelessness. Unexpected job loss can cause families to lose their home.

Nationally, 50% of homeless women and children are fleeing domestic violence.

Veterans are a specific demographic when it comes to homelessness.

Veterans often experience homelessness because of disabilities caused by their experience on the battlefield. Physical injuries, post-traumatic stress and mental suffering are just a few of the wartime after-effects that drive the population of homeless veterans.

68% of U.S. cities report that addiction is a their single largest cause of homelessness.



About Homelessness

EXTRA FACTS



- As of 2007, 68 out of every 10,000 residents were homeless in Nevada. That's a higher proportion than any other state.
- A majority of homeless people are staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing, but 38% are unsheltered, living on the streets, or in cars, abandoned buildings, or other places not intended for human habitation.
- Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Washington State, and Washington, D.C. have the highest rates of homelessness.
- According to Children in Transition, there are about 1.35 million homeless students.
- Right now, there are almost 3,000 homeless students in Washoe County School District.

Project 150

Project 150 is a non-profit charitable organization founded in December 2011 by two Nevada Natives who heard of 150 homeless students at Rancho High School in Las Vegas. Since then, Project 150 has provided food, clothing, school supplies, sports equipment, shoes and other special requests to over 1,100 homeless, displaced and disadvantaged high school students. They are currently serving 34 high schools in Las Vegas, two high schools in Reno and will add additional schools as they grow and as schools allocate resource rooms. We're working with Project 150 by providing them with most of our donations. Hopefully we will soon be helping them set up rooms in high schools around the area!

Children in Transition

We took a trip to visit Children in Transition (CIT) to learn about what they do and how they help homeless students. Their goals are to provide academic support for students, find out how many homeless students there are and provide them with what they need. CIT normally starts the school year with about 600-800 homeless students in Washoe County School District, and by the end of the year might end up with as many as 3,000. They serve kids ages zero through graduation. This includes all forms of homelessness: couch surfing, doubled up families, people living in motels and more. CIT works closely with school counselors to figure out which children are homeless, how many of them there are and how CIT can help. Teen parents, runaways, unaccompanied children/teens or kids living with anybody who is not a legal guardian is automatically considered CIT.

How You Can Help

Just knowing about homelessness can help. Many Americans are misinformed or under informed about homelessness. There are many programs out there dedicated to informing the public about what homelessness is really like. You can also donate clothing, food and other items to a local shelter, take a tour of a local shelter or volunteer. We can also present this Power Point to a local organization.