

## Homelessness

I have been blessed enough in my life to have never had to experience homelessness, but just seeing people on the streets trying everything they can just to survive, must be a terrible feeling that no one should ever go through. Fortunately the number of homeless people has been going down in the U.S, from 763,010 people in 2005 to 633,782 people in 2012. I'm going to talk about what causes homelessness, homelessness in kids, shelters and how to volunteer to help with homelessness and of course how to end homelessness.

The Center on Budget says that the U.S is reaching a national unemployment rate of 9% or higher. This could cause the number of poor Americans to rise by 7.5% and the number of deeply poor people with incomes below half of the poverty line, could rise by an estimated 4.5%. That would result in 1.1 million families with children falling into poverty. Being in that financial state puts people at risk of housing instability and homelessness. Sometimes people who can no longer make house payments become homeless that way. The troubled economy is just one of the many causes of homelessness. People find themselves without a permanent home for a number of reasons such as poverty, domestic violence, mental illness, addiction to drugs and alcohol abuse and many more.

Next is homelessness in kids. Many people think that all homeless people are adults. But in truth, the homeless population in the United States is a lot of children and families. Kids whose families can no longer afford permanent housing may find themselves living in shelters or hotels, with relatives, or in extreme cases, on the

streets. According to the National Law Center on homelessness and poverty, more than 25% of the homeless in the U.S. are under the age of 18. One in fifty children in the United States experiences homelessness each year. Children can experience homelessness through poverty, lack of affordable housing, domestic violence or running away from their families.

Thirdly I'm going to talk about shelters and how to volunteer to help with homelessness. The volunteers at shelters are there because they care. They do not get paid and volunteer as often as they can to keep the shelter going. Shelter workers know of the options available to help, whether that is finding an apartment, entering a job training program, or staying in school. The volunteers who work at shelters are usually good people to turn to for assistance and are understanding. Look for local shelters and volunteer your time to help. You never know whose life you could change.

Lastly I'm going to talk about ending homelessness. One of the key ways to fight homelessness is through public policy and legislation. By changing laws and enacting economic policies that benefit the poor, the U.S. homelessness rate could drop significantly. Another way is to ensure affordable housing. Government leaders can assist the homeless and those on the verge of homelessness by paying for health care, childcare, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment until they get back on their feet. When these services are available and affordable, people can get the help that they need to stay healthy and off the streets.

We have looked at what causes homelessness, homelessness in kids, shelters and how to volunteer to help with homelessness and to end homelessness.

Hopefully you know how to help and handle the situation of homelessness better and be willing to volunteer your time because not everyone is as fortunate as we are.

**Sources:**

<http://www.teenhealthandwellness.com/app>

<http://www.usatoday.com>



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