

Homelessness in America

By Ian Bowling

Personal interest project

Omega

January 21 2010

Homelessness in America, is it a major problem? Yes, it is, and there are several aspects of homelessness that aren't looked at. All 50 states in America have homelessness, but it is more of an issue in some states than others. Yes, there is always the reason of choosing not to get a job, but the majority of homeless people were either abused, are war veterans, or have mental illnesses. Today in America it is hard enough to get a job with our bad economy, but it's even harder when you don't have a phone, car, or a house. Treatment towards homeless people is generally very poor, which affects their lives so much. Homeless children have a very low success rate because it is very hard for them to get out of what they are raised in. Overall, people don't choose to be homeless; there are very many causes behind it.

There are homeless people everywhere, of course, but there are generally more homeless in bigger cities than smaller for more reasons than just population. In New York (where 7 percent of the population is homeless (www.nyc.gov)) one would think that some homeless there would go to a smaller town with more work. The downside to that is there is less concern about homeless in smaller towns. Which means a lot less homeless shelters, and

anything done for homeless. There is, of course. A lot of work in New York, but being homeless and trying to get a job there is a bad combination. The recession really affected cities to a point where the homeless have no chance. If one were to ask a homeless person how they lost their house and everything, they would almost always say, "I got laid off, couldn't afford the mortgage/rent that month and was on the streets in a matter of weeks."

Homelessness happens very randomly for a lot of people because of war trauma, mental illness, or abuse. Abuse is a very painful way for many to become homeless because an abused person is left with some troubles afterward. Their only choice is the streets and homelessness. When one is abused they tend to not trust anyone again, which makes it very hard for them to get off the streets. War trauma puts people on the streets because, after seeing so many people die and/or killing a lot of people it puts them into a kind of turmoil. They can't sustain a job, house, or family which is why there are so many campsites and other shelters just for war veterans. Mentally ill people with no family or friends to help them almost always end up on the street. People with autism or any other mental illness that haven't been helped can't work for anyone because they don't know

how to or don't have any attention span at all. This all shows that they didn't make this decision, other things in life made the decision for them which gives a whole different view on the concept of homelessness in America.

How can anyone get a job in America when they don't have a phone, car, or house? Well, having a phone certainly adds a lot to life because it obviously allows contact with everyone. If someone actually got a job without a phone, what would they do if they couldn't show up? What would they do if their boss needed them on short notice? Nothing, and someone would be very swiftly fired. Without a car or even public transportation, it makes the range of work areas very small because of distance. It would be a very far walk back in forth, and they would have to leave an hour or so early, depending on where they are at. Having a night shift would add even more complications, because one is probably going to walk through some pretty bad places with gangs and other bad people. Without a house where are they supposed to wash their clothes? Where are they supposed to take a shower everyday so they can look nice for work? Where do they sleep when shelters are always full? None of these things can happen easily without a house which is another reason why they can't get jobs. So

this shows without any of these crucial things, jobs are nearly impossible.

Why are Americans so rough towards homeless? A lot of them have some delusional thought that if one doesn't have a job, they are nothing but drunks. Being constantly put down can make anyone think they can't do anything with their lives, which isn't true because they can get out of the hole-they just need some help. A lot of people do help homeless by volunteering at soup kitchens and shelters and places like the Salvation Army. That's not always what homeless want though. One homeless woman stated, "I get food or money sometimes, but I really want someone to talk to about what I'm going through and help me with it mentally." This shows that if helped out physically and mentally homeless people think they can do something with their lives. So maybe it's time for more fortunate people to start helping out homeless people in there community in anyway they can (helphomeless.org).

Homeless children in America have a very hard time getting out of what they were raised in. In Los Angeles alone, there are 100,000 children in gangs and a lot are on drugs. Most of them, by the age 14, are murderers.

Obviously, they have very little money so they cannot really afford college or a good education. Plus, how could they earn a scholarship to any school when they are constantly around bad influencing people, and have nowhere to do their homework every night? Homeless children often fall into the influences. Their lives are just so hard for them they tend to do drugs to temporarily ease the pain. Additionally, they join gangs to make money for their families when they are just making their lives worse. They have no friend or family support, so it is pretty hard for them to get out, that's why about 1 in 10 homeless children accomplish anything in their lives (cudenver.edu).

So, maybe it's time everyone around the United States helps out these homeless adults and children all around the world by donating their time and money to causes that help homeless children and adults with their lives. If things continue the way they are there will be 1.5 million more homeless people in the next two years. So, whether someone was born into homelessness or they made the choices to be homeless or something else in life made the decision for them, they all still need help and all this shows they are in pretty deep. Some people's lives are tougher, so everyone should think what it would be like to be in that

position. Then maybe that would open some eyes. People don't always choose to be homeless; there are many other things that cause it.

Works Cited

- ① <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/526/homeless-facts.html>
- ② <http://www.solutionsforamerica.org/thrivingneigh/homelessness.html>
- ③ <http://www.cudenver.edu>
- ④ "Homeless need help" by Steve McCalin

