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Focus on Family Homelessness: The Impact on Families with Children and Strategies to Consider

Family homelessness impacts every community across the country. As practitioners working directly with families, you have likely seen the impact of homelessness and housing crises. Whether it's a father living in his car, a mother and her children seeking shelter after fleeing domestic violence, a family sharing housing with



others due to economic hardship - the experience of homelessness bears significant economic, health, and other consequences for individual families and our communities.

Research shows that homelessness and housing instability are associated with factors like chronic stress, increased involvement with the child welfare system, higher rates of family separation, poor health, exposure to violence, and frequent school moves and absences. While research tells us about the impacts of homelessness and housing crises, including risks associated with child safety and well-being, different sources of homelessness and housing needs data help us better understand the scale and scope of homelessness and housing needs.

For example, families with children represented 33% of the approximately 553,000 people identified as experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness on a single night in January 2018 for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Point-in-Time (PIT) count - equivalent to approximately

180,400 people or 56,300 families with children.¹ Alongside PIT data, we also consider McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program data gathered by schools for the U.S. Department of Education. Of the approximately 1.36 million students enrolled in public school districts and reported by state educational agencies as experiencing homelessness at some point during the 2016-2017 school year, approximately 76% were sharing the housing of other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.²

These data sets don't include all families experiencing homelessness and don't reflect that living situations among people experiencing homelessness can change from one day to the next, but they do emphasize the need for a range of housing options that are affordable at all income levels, including for households exiting homelessness, and elevate the importance of [aligning local efforts to address the affordable housing crisis](#) and actions to prevent and end

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Visit the PAC on the FRIENDS website at www.friendsnrc.org

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Focus on Family Homelessness

homelessness. Understanding different data sources helps communities respond to distinctions among households, making it possible to more effectively tailor responses, use existing resources most efficiently, and engage a broad range of systems and services to best address current and projected housing and related needs.

To end homelessness, every community needs to be able to implement a systemic response that ensures homelessness is prevented whenever possible or, if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and one-time experience. And that systemic response must endure for the long term.

Released by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness in 2018, Home, Together, the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, provides a blueprint for communities to identify and implement their own strategic activities and align efforts with key stakeholders to build that systemic response. This includes opportunities for child welfare agencies and CBCAP and community-based programs to [partner with housing and homelessness services providers](#).

Access to safe and stable housing with supports to ensure long-term stability is a proven solution to homelessness among families with children and can positively impact a broad range of outcomes from health and behavioral health, to educational achievement and attainment, to employment and long-term financial stability – all factors that contribute to child welfare's goals of safety, permanency, and well-being.

Supporting communities to build a sustainable and coordinated

response to prevent and end family homelessness will help us secure a brighter future for all Americans, ensuring that every child grows up healthy and thriving, with access to opportunities to achieve their fullest potential regardless of circumstance.

Submitted by Jasmine Hayes
Deputy Director of the
[U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness \(USICH\)](#) FRIENDS
National Advisory Council member

¹<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2018-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

²<https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-14.15-to-16.17-Final-Published-2.12.19.pdf>

Resources

[Home, Together: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#)

[Homelessness in America: Families with children](#)



Common Signs of Homelessness

Note: While these are considered common signs, please recognize that they only offer general guidance. There is significant variability within the school-age homeless population. Individual students may differ significantly from the following general characteristics:

<p>Lack of Educational Continuity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at many different schools • Missing records needed to enroll • Inability to pay fees • Gaps in skill development • Mistaken assessment of abilities • Poor organizational skills • Poor ability to conceptualize <p>Poor Health/Nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing immunizations & medical records • Unmet medical & dental needs • Respiratory problems • Skin rashes • Chronic hunger or food hoarding • Fatigue (may fall asleep in class) <p>Transportation & Attendance Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erratic attendance and tardiness • Numerous absences • Lack of participation in afterschool activities • Lack of participation in field trips • Inability to contact parents <p>Poor Hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking shower facilities/washers, etc. • Wearing clothes several days • Inconsistent grooming <p>Lack of Personal Space After School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent lack of preparation for school • Incomplete or missing homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to complete special projects • Lacking basic school supplies • Loss of books and supplies on regular basis • Elevated concern for safety of belongings <p>Social and Behavioral Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A marked change in behavior • Poor/short attention span • Poor self-esteem • Extreme shyness • Unwilling to form relationships with peers & teachers • Difficulty socializing at recess or lunch periods • Difficulty trusting people • Aggression • "Old" beyond years • Overly protective of parents • Clinging behavior • Developmental delays • Fear of abandonment • School phobia (afraid to leave parent) • Anxiety, especially late in the school day <p>Reactions or Statements by Parents, Guardians, or Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibiting anger or embarrassment when asked about current address • Avoidance of questions related to current address • Statements about staying with grandparents, other relatives, friends, or in motels & campgrounds • Statements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I don't remember the name of the last school." ○ "We've been moving around a lot." ○ "Our address is new; I can't remember it." ○ "We're staying with relatives until we get settled." ○ "We're going through a bad time right now."
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Adapted from flyers developed by the Illinois & Pennsylvania Departments of Education. For more information on homeless education, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at: nche.edu.gov

12-B-1 | NCHIE Local Liaison Toolkit: Appendix 12.B Common Signs



Feeding Community: A Response to Food Insecurity

From a broken-down car to a little one waking up sick, there seems to be no shortage of stressors in life. No family is immune to these disruptions, but for low-income families and families living paycheck-to-paycheck, even the smallest disruption can quickly derail not only their progress, but their well-being.

Through our work at Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina, we see the careful balance that families live in each day. The families that seek food assistance from our network of over 460 local grocery assistance programs tell us that they are making hard choices on limited incomes. Senior citizens are choosing between buying their medicine and buying food. Parents are choosing between paying for transportation to work and buying food. Families are choosing between paying rent and buying food.

These are choices we don't think anyone should have to make.

Over 16% of North Carolina residents are food insecure, including nearly 22% of all North Carolinian children. These statistics are not an anomaly but instead are reflective of national trends. Lacking reliable access to sufficient nutritious food is not only the reality of families facing extreme hardship such as homelessness, but is also the reality of working families that a generation ago may have been able to make ends meet. Wages simply have not kept up with the cost of living and here in our region of North Carolina, employment in our local industries is no longer a ticket to economic stability.

At Second Harvest, we believe that everyone deserves to eat.



Families have enough worry on their plate, and we think that hunger should never be one of them. Ensuring that children and adults have consistent access to healthy, nutritious food is paramount to keeping families healthy, strong, and hopeful.

Second Harvest and our sister, Feeding the Carolinas Food Banks, respond by supporting a wide variety of programs designed to meet people where they are, from Back Pack programs and school pantries filled with meals suitable for the youngest of children, to hospital-based pantries recognizing that food is medicine, to local community-based pantries offering healthy and fresh food at no-cost to anyone in need. We also strongly advocate for federal programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),

that create a life-line for families navigating a difficult economic terrain.

To learn more about Second Harvest Food Bank and our work, or to locate assistance in your community, visit hungernwnc.org or feedingthecarolinas.org.

To learn more about other communities across the nation and locate services, visit feedingamerica.org

Submitted by Gwen Frisbie-Fulton
Second Harvest Food Bank



Early Care and Education: Keys to Better Futures for Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness

Last year, public schools identified 1.3 million homeless children and youth – the largest number on record.ⁱ An additional 1.2 million children under the age of six are estimated to experience homelessness each year.ⁱⁱ

Schools and early childhood programs may be the only places of stability in lives of children experiencing homelessness. They also serve as hubs for a wide array of services for the entire family, and set children on a path to healthy development and obtaining the education that is their best long-term path out of poverty and homelessness.

Federal law contains strong protections for the early care and education of homeless children and youth. Families experiencing homelessness are often afraid to seek shelter, or may find that

there are no shelter beds available. As a result, they may stay with other people temporarily, or in motels; they often move frequently between locations. Early care programs and public schools use a definition of homelessness that matches this reality. This definition specifically includes children who are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; living in motels or hotels due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations; living in emergency shelters or transitional housing; and living in cars, campgrounds, or bus stations.

Under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, children who are experiencing homelessness can remain in one school (including a preschool), even if their temporary living situation is located in another school district or attendance area, if that is in their best interest. Schools must provide transportation to keep children's education stable. In addition, children who are experiencing homelessness can enroll in school and begin attending immediately, even if they cannot produce normally required documents, such as birth certificates, proof of guardianship, immunization records, or proof of residency, or even if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines. Finally, children who are experiencing homelessness must be able to participate fully in school activities and access all

programs and services for which they are eligible, including extracurricular activities, credit recovery, special education services, school nutrition programs, language assistance for English learners, career and technical education, gifted and talented programs, magnet schools, charter schools, summer learning, online learning, and before- and after-school care.

Head Start, Early Head Start, and the Child Care and Development Fund also have specific requirements to serve children experiencing homelessness, including identification, enrollment, and outreach provisions designed to remove barriers caused by homelessness.

At the local level, the school district's homeless liaison is a key contact. Homeless liaisons have critical responsibilities, including ensuring access to early childhood education and other programs, and collaboration with community agencies. Practitioners should be able to find the local liaison's contact information on the school district website or the state educational agency website.

Additional resources, including best practices and tools for implementation, may be found at www.schoolhouseconnection.org or nche.ed.gov.

*Submitted by Barbara Duffield
Executive Director
Schoolhouse Connection*

ⁱ National Center for Homeless Education. Federal Data Summary. February 2019: <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-14.15-to-16.17-Final-Published-2.12.19.pdf>

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Education. December 2018. Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles 2018. <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/homeless/early-childhood-homelessness-state-profiles.pdf>

INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL-AGE YOUTH

IF YOU LIVE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

- ◆ In a shelter
- ◆ In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation
- ◆ In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station
- ◆ Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

You may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

Eligible students have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is their preference.

* If the school district believes that the school selected is not in his/her best interest, then the district must provide the student with a written explanation of its position and inform the student of his/her right to appeal its decision.

- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested.
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to the students' needs.

If you believe you may be eligible, contact the local liaison to find out what services and supports may be available.

 Local Liaison Catherine Knowles 619-239-8729	 State Coordinator Justin Singleton 619-233-3101
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If you need further assistance with your educational needs, contact the National Center for Homeless Education: 1-800-308-2145 • homeless@serve.org • <http://nche.ed.gov>



Horizons Mitigates the Trauma of Early Childhood Homelessness

In Massachusetts alone, more than 18,000 children under the age of 6 experience homelessness each year. During the critical early years of brain development, the stress associated with these changes and lack of consistency can have long lasting impacts on young children, including later success in school and life.

Horizons for Homeless Children is a non-profit that was established thirty years ago to help address this issue by providing services to young children and their families who are experiencing homelessness. Today, Horizons reaches 1,500 children each week who benefit from access to our early education centers and playrooms built in shelters across the state. Horizons also recognizes that the best way to help children is to support their families too, so family partnership is a critical programming element.

Horizons builds, manages, and staffs more than 90 playrooms in homeless shelters across the state through its Playspace Program. These Playspaces are staffed by volunteers who provide healing play to young children living in shelters, for two-hour shifts, several times each week. While children are enjoying playtime, their parents are typically attending classes, meetings, or other programming that parents need and would be unable to attend otherwise. During their time in the Playspace, children can interact and experience a space designed for them, full of dramatic play, arts and crafts, manipulatives, toys and books.

Recognizing Horizons' leadership in this area, the social impact team at Sesame Street in Communities called on Horizons to inform the content behind a series of

new professional development videos, articles, and strategies for providers who play a crucial role in supporting children experiencing homelessness. The resilient and relatable Lily, a seven-year-old Muppet, whose family is staying with friends on Sesame Street after losing their home is also featured amongst the new resources. By featuring Lily and her friends on Sesame Street, the resources show the experience from a child's perspective, with Lily and her friends encouraging optimism, promoting understanding, and modeling simple coping strategies for children.

Since launching in December, these resources, including features on Horizons' Playspace Program, have already been viewed hundreds of thousands of times. "Homeless children are an invisible part of our society and Sesame Street in Communities' focus on the issue is shining a light

on our most vulnerable," said Kate Barrand, CEO of Horizons for Homeless Children. "Early life experiences actually get into the body, with lifelong effects—not just on cognitive and emotional development, but on long-term physical health as well. Those effects can be mitigated with the right supports and we're proud to share what we've learned along the way with other organizations seeking to do the same."

Horizons for Homeless Children has continued to use and share these new resources with shelter providers across Massachusetts as well as the general public to help them understand accessible and tangible ways they can support children experiencing homelessness. For more information or to share these important resources visit www.horizonschildren.org and continue this important conversation.

Submitted by Deanna Dwyer



Lily, a seven-year-old Muppet, whose family is staying with friends on Sesame Street after losing their home.

The Power of Purpose

For families experiencing homelessness in more than twenty-five communities across the country, the help they need can be just a text away, thanks to the dedicated team of social entrepreneurs at Purposity. The online community of Purposity was originated in Atlanta and connects the dots between those who need help and those who can provide it through the ease of technology. Purposity's social networking platform works like this: school systems and non-profits in local communities let Purposity know of their needs. Purposity spreads the word via an app to individuals near them who are willing to help. Community members click a link, see the need, and make a difference for someone near them by purchasing and donating items online. It may be the family next door who lost their home in a fire or the child down the street you didn't know needed school supplies. As the concept of Purposity scales nationally, companies, non-profits, churches, schools and individuals are banding together, breaking down barriers, and uniting to help neighbors.

The coordinator of the H.E.R.O. Program for Families in Transition, part of the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, has the ability to post items from Amazon that the families desperately need. Members of the local community are notified of the needs through a weekly text message and can purchase those items with a few quick clicks.

The Nashville Public Schools launched the Purposity program in Nashville, Tennessee in January, 2018. Community members were encouraged to download the app that alerts them to needs in their area, or follow their favorite organization. Participants can opt to purchase

an item that fulfills a need and Purposity provides the shopping, shipping and notifications. In Nashville, nearly 900 community members have answered the call to help a neighbor in need. The response from the community has been overwhelming. In just nine months, the supporters have fulfilled more than 640 needs and we have been able to support families struggling with homelessness in ways that have previously not occurred. Before Purposity, it would have taken more than two weeks to find a donor for the size 11, wide men's basketball shoe in royal blue that a student needed to play with his high school team. A single mom and her kids who were starting over after fleeing domestic violence might sleep on the floor for ten days before air mattresses could be procured for them. Purposity has changed all of that, impacting lives in both rural and urban areas. In communities everywhere, there are people who want to help but don't know how to reach people in need. Purposity connects those dots with a simple text message and the power of social media. The process is easy and efficient, and most students and families receive the specific item they need within a matter of days.

As a social worker with more than twenty years of service to students and families experiencing homelessness, Purposity has been a game changer. I am now able to meet the very real and concrete needs my

families have for basic items to ensure a good night's rest and healthy meals or the specific items students need to pursue their hopes and dreams outside of the classroom. It is also an immediate way for friends and community members to make a difference in the lives of those around them by offering tangible support to a family who is struggling.

To learn more about Purposity, please visit their website at www.purposity.com. Purposity communities are quickly popping up all over the United States. To see where they are currently, download the app, head to the "nearby" feed, and click your location. Live on Purpose.

*Submitted by Catherine Knowles
Homeless Liaison
Metro Nashville Public Schools*

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



IF YOUR FAMILY LIVES IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

- In a shelter
- In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation
- In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station
- Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

Your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the Federal McKinney-Vento Act.

Your eligible children have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is your preference.
- * If the school district believes that the school you select is not in the best interest of your children, then the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if you request this.
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your children's needs.

If you believe your children may be eligible, contact the local liaison to find out what services and supports may be available. There also may be supports available for your preschool-age children.



Local Liaison

Catherine Knowles
615-259-8729

State Coordinator

Justin Singatan
615-253-3101

If you need further assistance with your children's educational needs, contact the National Center for Homeless Education:
1-800-308-2145 • homeless@serve.org • <http://nche.ed.gov>



The Growing Epidemic of Youth Homelessness

Anthony Queen, FRIENDS' PAC Member, Interviews Kendra Avila at 3:11 Youth Housing

I had the opportunity to interview Kendra Avila, the Programs and Administration Coordinator at 3:11 Youth Housing here in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We covered a range of topics that address the increase in homelessness among youth in Kent county and what is being done to combat it.

Youth Homelessness in Kent County and 3:11 Basics

- Over 2,000 young people experience homelessness in Kent County each year.
- About 80 young people experience homelessness on any given night in Kent County.
- 3:11 Youth Housing exists to bridge the gap between homelessness and interdependence. Building a firm foundation only occurs when providers and young people work in tandem to create opportunities for growth and change. The youth who enter our house are incredibly talented, resilient, and motivated people who desire stability and a supportive network. The young people who engage with 3:11 have great potential; they need invested people and relationships for true transformation.
- The name, 3:11, comes from the Bible verse 1 Corinthians 3:11. While Christ has provided the foundation for this work, we do not proselytize to our young people. If a young person wants to talk about faith, we engage in a conversation, affirming and accepting their perspectives and choices. We do not have any faith requirements as compliance for services, and we do not require any religious activities.

- We walk alongside each young person who moves into a 3:11 home, setting goals together that make sense for their life circumstances. Our goal is safe and affordable housing for youth.
- Since 2012, 3:11 has been providing housing to young people, ages 18 to 24, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. 3:11 exists to provide a supportive network to our young people, and through support, community partnerships, and the work of our youth, we hope to be able to house even more of the 2,000 young people experiencing homelessness throughout Kent County each year.

Information on Youth Homelessness over a 12 Month Period (Some information from Voices of Youth Count at Chapin Hall, University of Chicago)

- 72% of youth who have spent time on the street also couch surf
- 42% experienced two or more episodes of homelessness
- 73% experienced an episode of homelessness lasting more than a month.
- 52% felt unsafe
- Since 2012, 3:11 has housed over 40 youth. 3:11 can currently house 21 youth at a time.
- 90% of youth find safe and stable housing of their own or reunite with family upon move-out.
- Collectively, our youth have saved over \$10,000 for future housing through their rental savings accounts.
- 100% of youth are engaged

in community meals, learning valuable life skills and conflict resolution. 100% of current youth are engaged in goal setting, tracking their progress as they move towards healthy interdependence.

- 90% of youth have obtained full-time employment, entered and completed trade school, and/or pursued higher education.

In January of 2012, Jonathan and Lauren VanKeulen, along with two members of their youth group, came together to launch 3:11 Youth Housing. One of these youth, Jeremy, told Jon and Lauren that God was telling him to start a housing program for youth in the city. After everything he'd been through and everything he saw his friends going through, he couldn't ignore this huge problem.

Together, Jeremy, Jon, Lauren & Ja-Quari, began researching the need in the community. At that time, there were only two apartments dedicated to housing youth ages 18-24 who were experiencing homelessness in Grand Rapids. This group brought together a team of 8 young people who were homeless at the time and asked them what they needed. Additionally, they began researching best practices around the country. Through research and ongoing planning, the 3:11 model was formed.

Youth voice is essential to 3:11. Youth have owned this work from the inception; from the boardroom to committees to mentors and to policies, youth have been involved in forming every aspect of 3:11. When young people say, "This rent structure isn't working for me," or "I need something different," and we are able to mod-

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The Growing Epidemic of Youth Homelessness

ify based on their feedback, we see true and long-term change. The number of youth experiencing homelessness in Grand Rapids is on the rise, currently 80 youth per night. Additionally, housing resources continue to be scarce. Current research suggests that 40% of homeless adults were also homeless as a young person. 3:11 Youth Housing exists to break the cycle of homelessness.

How have you seen youth homelessness change over the years?

Despite several collaborative efforts to improve access to affordable housing in the Grand Rapids area, an increasing number of young people are finding themselves without housing in the local community. According to data from the Kent County Intermediate School District, 1,468 students in Kent County were homeless in 2018. Additionally, recent counts state that around 80 young people are homeless on any given night in Kent County and over 2,000 youth experience homelessness each year.

When a youth is homeless, what are some of the less obvious things they encounter that the

public is not aware of?

It is important to acknowledge that youth homelessness doesn't often look like what the public may perceive homelessness to be. Youth homelessness doesn't have just one face and it isn't easy to nail down a specific story that shares why or how a young person finds themselves experiencing housing instability. The reasons why a young person may experience homelessness include:

- Family Problems
- Physical or Sexual Abuse
- Residential instability
- Addiction
- Limited employment opportunities
- Identifying as LGBTQ
- Aging out of the Foster Care System

Nationally, where does the Midwest fare?

I can't tell you where the whole Midwest fares with this issue, but I can tell you where the state of Michigan fares, based on homelessness data from the schools. There are over 36,000 homeless students in the state of Michigan, which is the 6th largest number

of homeless students in the U.S. The highest number of these students are in grade 12, often ages 17 - 19.

What would be the number one thing you would change today when it comes to youth homelessness?

All of it! Can we eradicate it? Since we know that's not a near-future possibility, we believe that it's crucial to break the cycle of homelessness. Young people experiencing homelessness often were homeless as a child. We know that 40% of homeless adults also experienced homelessness as a youth. By intervening at this critical life stage, we hope to break the cycle of homelessness for the youth we interact with.

I believe LGBTQ, pregnant and parenting youth, youth with special needs or disabilities, and youth of color, particularly African-American and Native American youth, are more likely to become homeless, do you agree?

We agree and research supports this. Specifically, LGBT youth have a 120% higher risk of reporting homelessness, African Ameri-

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The Growing Epidemic of Youth Homelessness

can youth have an 83% higher risk of reporting homelessness. Of the 3.5 million people in the United States who experience homelessness each year, 42% of them are black and 20% are Hispanic (even though each group represents just over 12% of the U.S. population). Additionally, approximately 12 to 36 percent of youth, ages 18 to 21, exiting the foster care system become homeless. When a young person has compounded marginalized identities, the risks of experiencing homelessness is even higher.

Reunifying youth with family or a

support system, when safe and appropriate, should be at the core of any approach?

Ninety percent of 3:11 youth move into housing of their own or are reunified with family. Whenever possible, reunification is the goal. But because all youth living in a 3:11 home are between the ages of 18 and 24, our mission is to walk with youth as they transition to adulthood. Additionally, we follow our young people through alumni programming, walking alongside them as they transition into adulthood, which often includes reunification, even if not

in housing specifically.

Youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness have not historically been served within a single, coordinated system. Collaboration across federal, state and local partners is crucial to providing a coordinated community response and the full range of solutions youth require. How does that statement fit with western Michigan?

Wow - what a great question. Yes - a coordinated community response is most effective in serving the full range of youth who are experiencing homelessness. West Michigan still has a way to go in this area, but we are beginning to make some progress. Our county has a dedicated youth committee focused on the issue of youth homelessness and we are tackling these broader systems-level issues. We also have a Youth Advisory Board that meets regularly and gives feedback in our decision-making process. We are working more in depth around youth-centered, coordinated entry, engagement with child welfare and juvenile justice systems, prevention efforts, and long-term supportive housing options when needed. We still have a way to go in this area but are hopeful that progress will continue to be made.

A Vision for the Future

3:11 Youth Housing has a vision for the future. A vision to see more lives transformed and more youth connected. 3:11 focuses on deep impact and true growth. Our organization envisions a city where youth know they have a place, where their graduation day can be celebrated, and where they can move from dependency to interdependence through their time at 3:11 Youth Housing.



FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council members (from l to r, front row): Raven Sigure, Fatima Gonzalez-Galindo, Marcela Henao, Valerie Lebanion (from l to r, back row) Jessica Diel, Anthony Queen, Beth Stodghill, Joanne Hodgeman, Bruce Bynum.

About the PAC

FRIENDS has established a Parent Advisory Council to provide useful overall program direction and guidance to the activities of the National Center. Committee members share their experience and expertise in child abuse prevention and family strengthening through their active participation in FRIENDS workgroups and the annual Grantee's meeting, development/review of FRIENDS written materials, and by providing resource center staff with consultation and advice.

Contact Information: **Beth Stodghill and Jessica Diel, Editors**
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