

Learning About Homelessness



Everyone deserves a home.

WHO are the homeless?

- Many people in NYC have lost their homes and so either stay in **homeless shelters** or sleep on the **streets**.
- The people you see sleeping on subway benches or other public places are often called “street homeless,” and are mostly adult men and women – many of whom have mental or physical health problems.



WHO are the homeless?



- But most homeless people in NYC sleep in shelters, and so you don't see them or know that they're homeless.
- By far, most of those in homeless shelters are **families** – moms, dads and kids.
- Tonight, roughly **22,000 children** will sleep in homeless shelters in NYC.

HOW MANY people are homeless?



- The total number of people in NYC shelters tonight is about 62,700.
- If all of those homeless people went to Yankee Stadium, they would fill every single seat – and 15,000 more would have to stand.
- That doesn't even include the **thousands more** homeless men and women who **sleep on the streets** and other public places.

HOW LONG are people homeless?

- People can be homeless anywhere from **one night** to **many years**.
- Families who've lost their homes stay in homeless shelters for **just over a year** on average.
- Some people, especially those who live on the streets, can be homeless for many years before they get the help they need.

WHY are people homeless?

People become homeless for many different reasons:

- Sometimes **their rent gets too high** and they can't afford to stay in their homes.
- Sometimes, people **lose their jobs** or get paid less money and so **can't afford to pay rent** anymore.
- Some people have difficult **mental or physical health problems**, or have just had a lot of **bad luck**.



WHAT is a homeless shelter?

- NYC is required to **provide a bed in a shelter** for anyone who doesn't have a place to stay.
- There are **many kinds of shelter** – some look like apartment buildings, some look like hospitals or dormitories.



WHAT is a homeless shelter?



- Shelters provide a bed, a place to shower and food – but they can be loud, dirty and crowded.
- There isn't much privacy, and people often have to share bathrooms with dozens of strangers.

WHAT is a homeless shelter?



- Families have to cram all of their things into one small room, and they often must leave toys, furniture and other belongings behind.
- Most shelters don't allow any pets, which also means they have to say goodbye to their cats and dogs.

WHEN did it get to be so bad?



It wasn't always this way: There are more homeless people in New York City now than at any time since the Great Depression in the 1930s.

HOW can we help?

Always respect other people

- Remember that NO ONE wants to be homeless, and homeless people need our help and compassion.
- Go to the Coalition's "What should I do if...?" webpage for a list of how to help those you see on the streets.

HOW can we end homelessness?

- The Coalition calls for housing-based solutions to homelessness.
- Others need housing with some extra help, or “supportive housing,” to make sure they can get and stay healthy.



HOW can we help?

Support the Coalition's Youth Programs



- Camp Homeward Bound:

Sleepaway camp in
Harriman State Park,
serving 360 boys and girls
each summer

- Bound for Success:

After-school program and
summer day camp based
in a shelter in NYC

HOW can we help?

Host a food drive

- Many New Yorkers rely on donations to be able to eat.
- You can collect canned food or other items that won't go bad and give them to the Coalition or another organization.
- You can also make care packages with toiletry items for people in need.



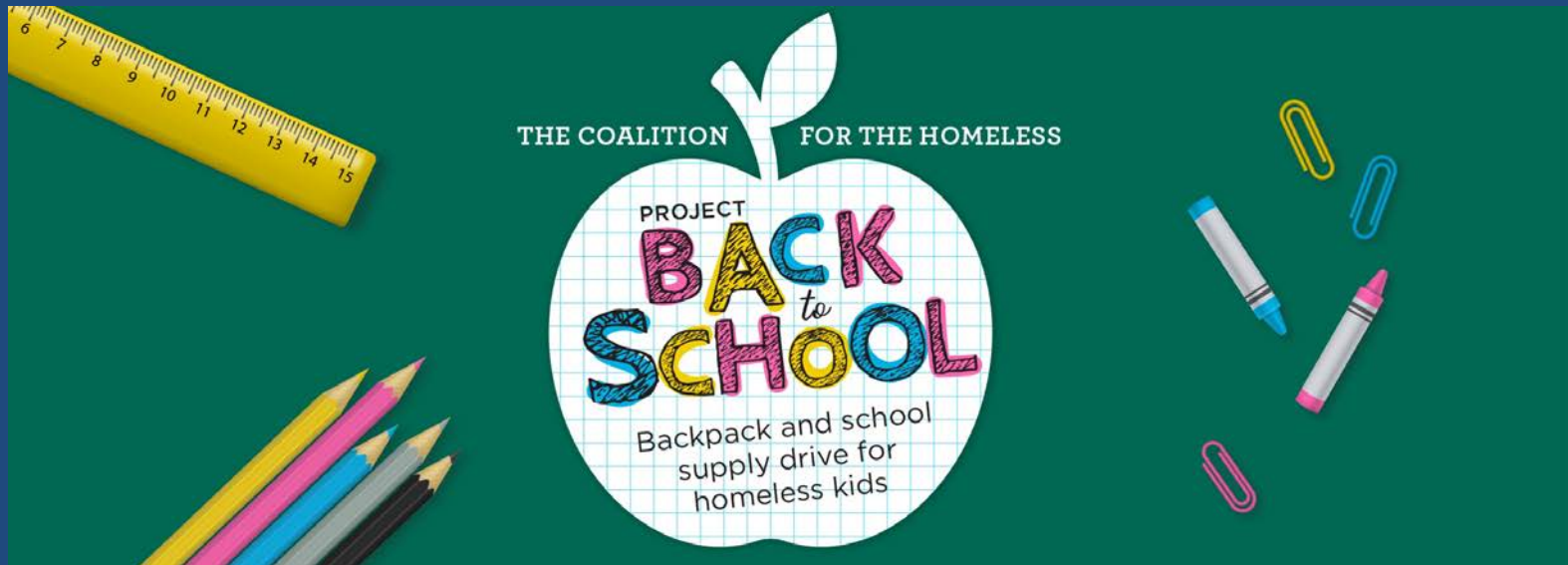
HOW can we help?

Spread holiday cheer

- Homeless moms and dads often don't have enough money to buy their kids presents, so the Coalition's Holiday Toy Drive collects and gives out gifts to boys and girls.
- Ask your teacher about how to get involved!



HOW can we help?



Participate in Project: Back to School

- Every year, the Coalition gives thousands of homeless kids backpacks stuffed with all the things they need in school – like notebooks, pencils, pens and more!
- We need your help to collect the supplies and make sure no one has to go to school unprepared.

HOW can we help?

Talk to your friends and family

- Even adults don't always understand homelessness.
- Your parents can get more information at coalitionforthehomeless.org



Discussion Questions

- Think about your daily activities. How would they be different if you were homeless?
- Have you ever seen someone teasing a homeless or poor person? What did you do?
- Did any of these facts about homelessness surprise you?
- How else do you think you can help homeless people?