

Family Homelessness FAMILY HOMELESSNESS Family Home

Giving Homeless Families A Voice



Family Homelessness Family Homelessness Family Homelessness

A Community Awareness Tool

Family Homelessness Family Homelessness Family Homelessness Family Homelessness Family Homelessness

Created By:
Participants in the
NW Coalition for Homeless
Families Community
Building Project

Family Homelessness Family Homelessness Family Homelessness Family Homelessness Family Homelessness

Homelessness has a new face



Families are the fastest

**growing group among the
homeless**



**We, the participants
in the Coalition for
Homeless Families
Community
Building Project, hope
by sharing our
experience that our
community will
better understand the
problem of family
homelessness.**

WILLIAMS SMITH

AND SEVEN OTHERS ON THE PRACTICE OF
PERFORMANCE OF THE CENTER
OF THE CENTER

the PURSUIT of HAPPINESS

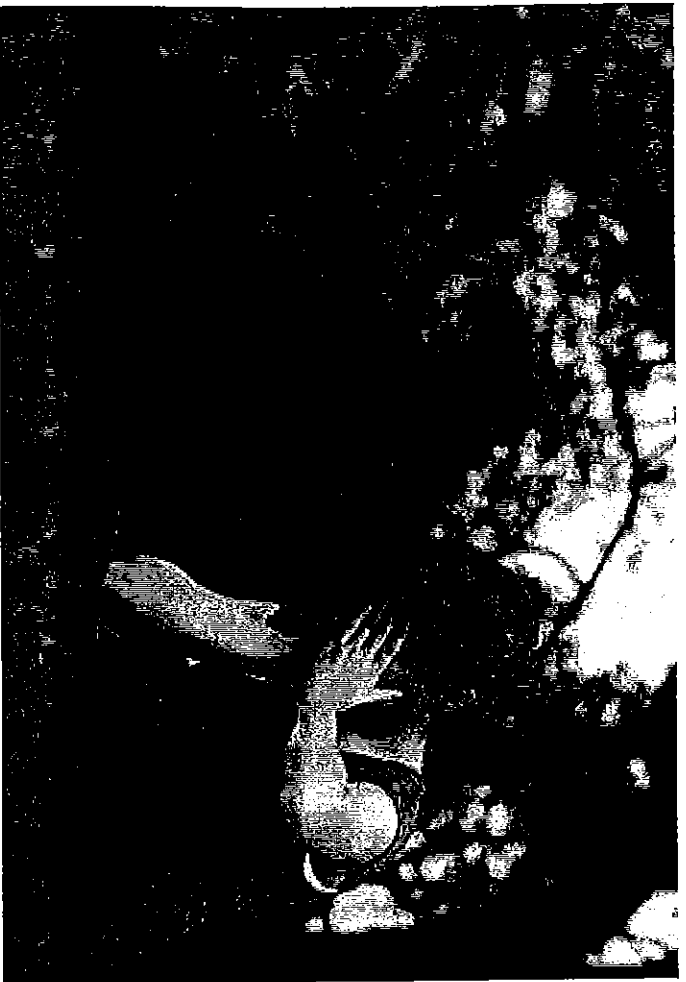
Inspired by a New Party

Here are five statements that most people

can agree on:

1. Hardworking people should be able to afford housing and still have enough money for groceries and other basic necessities.
2. Children deserve an opportunity to succeed in school and life, which is tied to having a stable home.
3. Housing gives people an opportunity to build better lives.
4. To succeed you need a place to call home.
5. It's only fair that everyone has a safe, decent place to live.

These statements are about homeless families



**Imagine not knowing where
you and your kids were
going to sleep tonight...**



**The biggest struggle I face on a
daily basis is...**

“Are we going to be
safe when we are
sleeping tonight”

~Patricia

“Not having a job to
make ends meet”

~Tabitha

“Trying to be strong for my
son and a good role-model”

~Jamie

“Stress”

~Joy

“Transportation”

~Cheyenne

“Daycare and trying to keep
a roof over my son’s head”

~Richard

“Fear of being homeless again and discriminated
against because of my past”

~James

“Where we are going to
sleep and how I am
going to get my kids to
school”

~Autumn

“Trying to find stable
housing for my child
and I”

~Tina



**We are mom's and dad's
who love our children!**



Who I am...

"A good dad who cares about people"
~Richard

"A role model to my son"
~Jamie

"The keeper of the future"
~Stephaine

"A hopeful survivor"
~Dani

"A survivor and a mom beating the odds one day at a time"
~Suzanne

"A strong woman"
~Cheyenne

"A wonderful mom who loves her four children"
~Autumn

"A clean and sober mom"
~Tabitha

"A beautiful woman"
~Tina

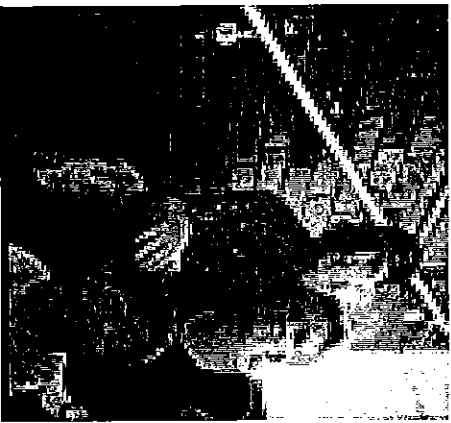
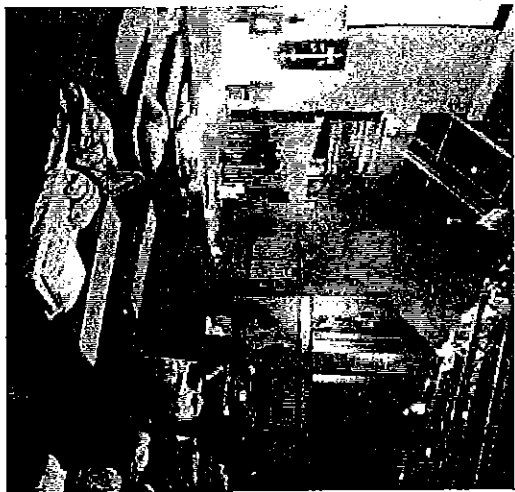
"A struggling ex addict trying to make change for my life and my children"
~Joy



The Problem:

Homelessness is one of our nation's most serious social problems. While it is often the result of interwoven systemic and personal problems, the primary cause of homelessness among families is the growing gap between housing costs and income. Even a short period of homelessness can lead to depression, mental illness and child neglect, yet increasing numbers of families are homeless for months and sometimes years. Emergency shelters are unable to provide the intensive long-term assistance which homeless families require in order to stabilize their lives.

Our families are invisible to the community!



This is what we want our community to know about family homelessness...

“Children should never worry about where they will lay their heads at night”

~Stephaine

“That shelters are no place to raise kids”

~Richard

“It’s bigger than you think”

~Tina

“That it’s cold, scary, and there is not enough help”

~Susan

“These kids need a chance”

~Jamie

“It happens to

hard working families too”

~Joy

“That we are humans like everyone else, an unfavorable circumstance does not make you detestable”

~Dani

“That it’s real and drop the stereotype of it’s just bums and drunks”

~James

HOMELESS IN AMERICA



Families that become homeless have remarkable resilience and resourcefulness. Despite all of the challenges they face, they find solutions to their housing problems and exit the homeless system, most never to return. It is increasingly clear that allowing families to stay homeless is more expensive than moving them quickly back into housing. There is hope that outcome driven approaches, coupled with family determination and provider innovation, will lead to many more solutions to end family homelessness.



If I could change one thing about the way homeless families are served it would be...

“More respect”

~Tina

“A more personalized approach to families needing help and a lot more compassion”

~Dani

“Don’t

Discriminate”

~Patricia

“Help with transitioning into permanency”

~Suzanne

“More housing for low-income people and better daycare”

~Susan

“I just needed a little help and it would have stopped me from being homeless”

~Jamie

“Help getting us in a home, not sending us to a shelter”

~James

“More funding to help people pay their rent?”

~Tabitha

“More help preventing homelessness before it happens”

~Richard

Children suffer from being homeless



All children need a home!



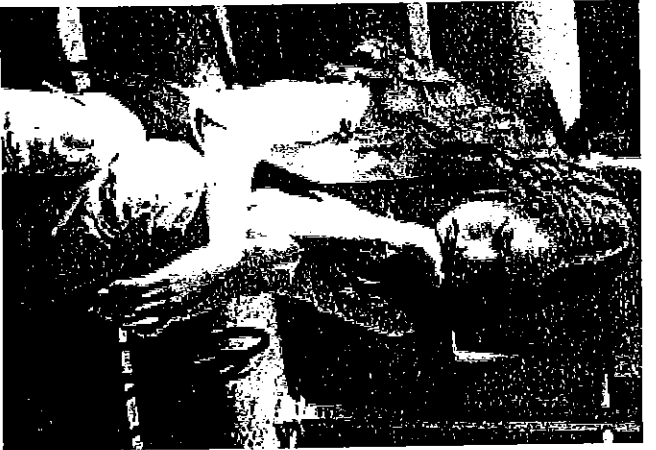
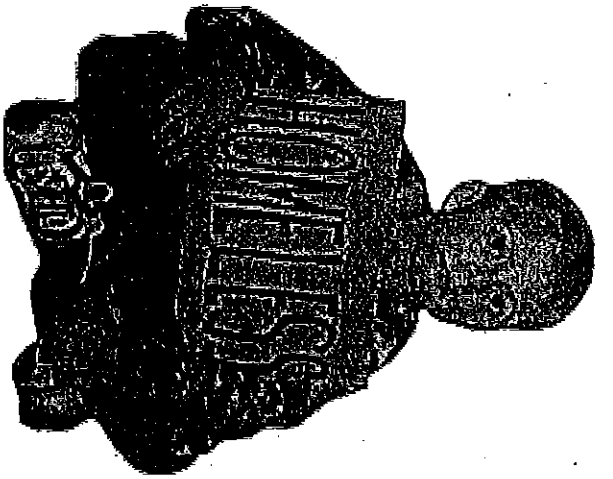
Homeless children are sick at twice the rate of other children. They suffer twice as many ear infections, have four times the rate of asthma, and have five times more diarrhea and stomach problems.

Homeless children go hungry twice as often as non-homeless children.

Homeless children are twice as likely to repeat a grade compared to non-homeless children.

Homeless children have twice the rate of learning disabilities and three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems of non-homeless children.

50 percent of school-age homeless children experience anxiety, depression, or withdrawal compared to 18 percent of non-homeless children.



**“It takes a village
to raise us!”**



My children need...

“A safe and secure environment”

~Jamie

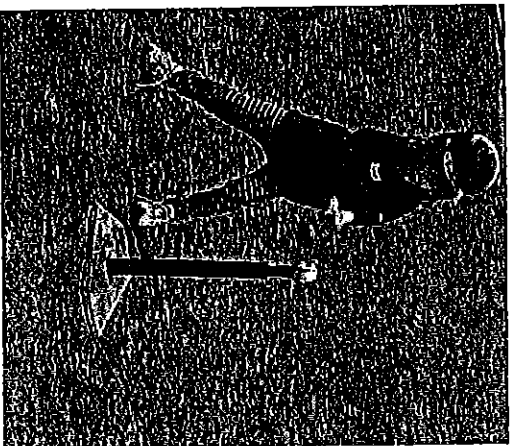


“To feel like they have a permanent home”

~Richard

**“To have a chance just like
any other kid who is not
homeless”**

~Susan



**“To have a
chance in life”**

~Joy

**“A stable home and a mom
who doesn't worry all day
long”**

~Autumn

**Time with me to learn
and to love”**

~James

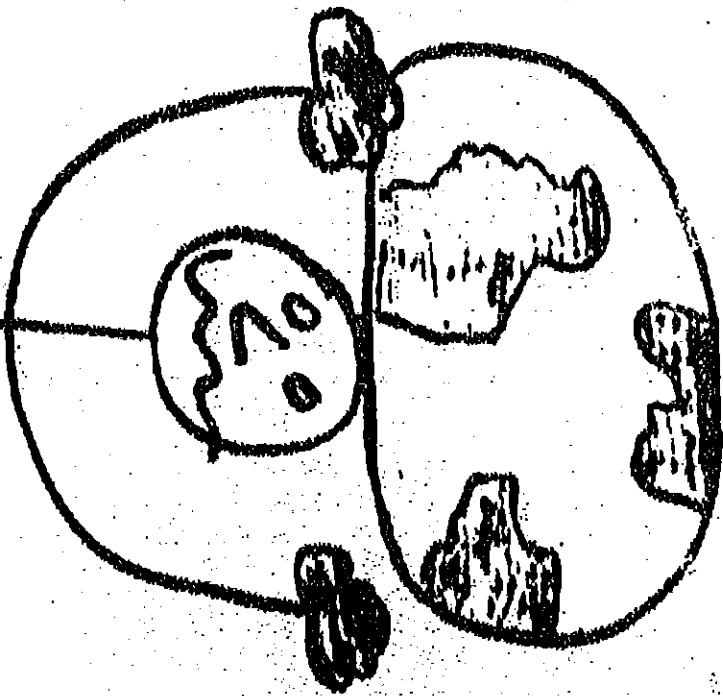
**A place to sleep that they
know is their own”**

~Tabitha



HOMELESSNESS THROUGH

A CHILD'S EYE'S



Sometimes,

its

really hard

BRANDON, AGE 9

What the kids say...

Life in a Shelter

Crowded
bedrooms,
Lot's of strangers,
Too many rules,
Loud, crying
babies,
People everywhere,
But,
It was better than
our car.
~Justin, Age 14

Cardboard Boxes

Homeless people live in
cardboard
boxes, don't they?"
That's what some kid
said to me today.
Then he laughed.
I wanted to hit him
But I didn't. I laughed too.
Then
I went back to the shelter
and ~~did~~ cried.
~Jamie, Age 13

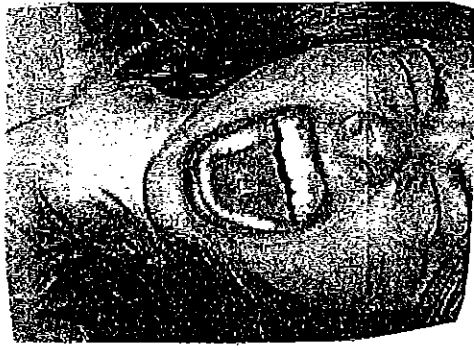
Why Mummy?

"Mummy why did them
people say we were smelly?"
They laughed cause my
clothes have holes.
Why does nobody else
have holes mummy?
Look at the food mummy.
When will we get some?
My tummy hurts mummy
make it feel better.
Why won't they give me
a bed mummy?
Mummy the floor is
cold and hard.
Mummy are we on the floor
because I did something bad?
The kids at school
are mean to me.
They tell me I'm a beggar.
Mummy what's a beggar?
It doesn't sound nice mummy.
Mummy why wasn't
I invited to anyone's party?
They won't come near
me at playtime.
Mummy did I do
something wrong?"
~Kendal, Age 9

LIVING IN A SHELTER

HOLLY, AGE 10

THROUGH A CHILD'S EYE'S



Living in a shelter
is good because
it's better than
sleeping outside.
Some people get

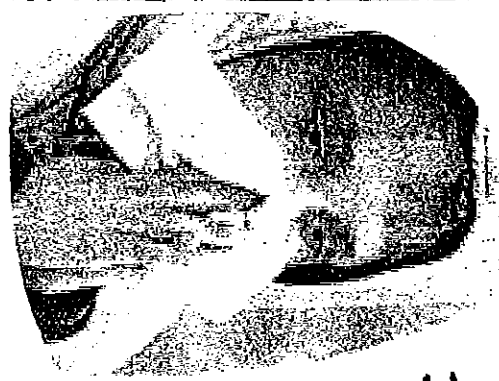
mad and yell at me in the
shelter. I cry sometimes be

cause I don't
have friends

cause we

always have

to move away.



I wish my shelter
was warmer
because it's
always cold

in the shelter that I live in.

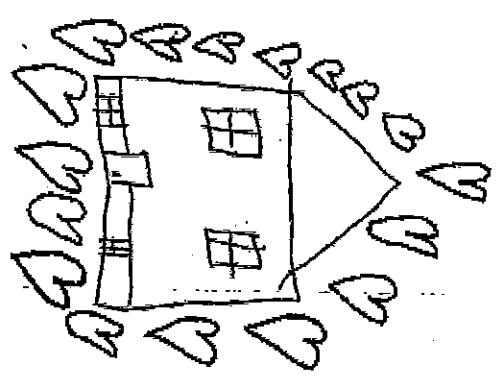
I wish so bad that me and
my mom could live

in our own house.

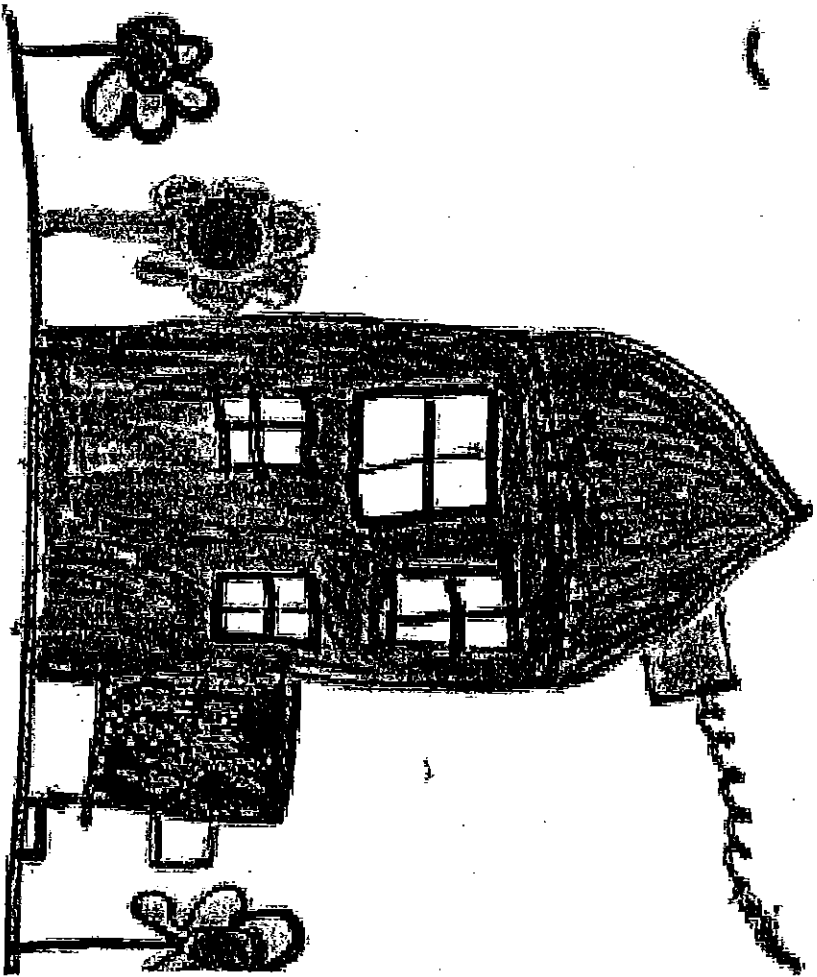
That

is my

wish.



HOPE THROUGH A CHILD'S EYE'S



"I JUST TRY TO DREAM ABOUT THIS PICTURE BECAUSE MY MOM IS WORKING HARD, AND SHE WANTS ME TO HAVE MY OWN ROOM."

MILLIE, AGE 8

My hopes for my children's future are..

"Success in all they do"

~Stephaine

"That my children truly believe in their hearts that

they can accomplish anything they desire"

~Jamie

"Graduate college, be successful, and never be homeless"

~Patricia

"That they can be kind, compassionate human beings "

~James

"For them to have the courage and strength to follow their dreams and never lose hope no matter how hard things get"

~Dani

"That they don't repeat the cycle in our family"

~Cheyenne

"That my children are even blessed to have a future"

~Suzanne

RISING from POVERTY

We need more than just housing!



Not all families need the same level of services

The first priority is making sure families have a safe place to live. Without a roof over their heads, they cannot hope to address the underlying problems that led to their homelessness. But housing by itself is not enough! Homeless families usually need additional help, there is no one-size-fits all solution to ending family homelessness.

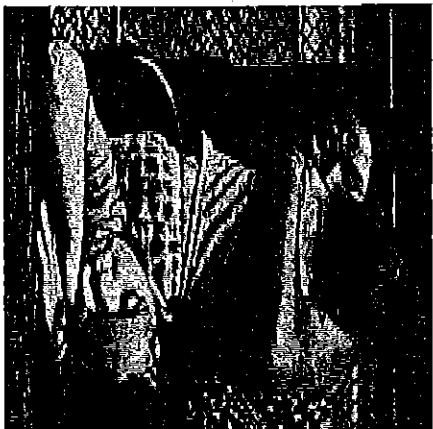
Housing...



COMMUNITY



A Chance...



An Education...



Determination...



Child Care...



Through the Coalition for Homeless Families we were able to survey 181 homeless or formerly homeless families and ask the question:

“What does/did your family need the most to end your homelessness and remain housed?”

The survey reported their biggest needs were:

- 24% Support Services (1)
- 22% Subsidized Housing
- 15% Relaxed Landlord Requirements
- 14% Job Training/Education
- 7% Social Support (2)
- 6% Clean and Sober Housing
- 3% Help with Childcare
- 3% Staying Clean and Sober
- 3% Determination
- 3% Other (3)

(1) Types of support services identified were supportive housing with case management, transitional housing, rent assistance, and preventative services

(2) Types of social support identified were support from family and friends, 12 step groups, and church

(3) Other identified supports were TANF, SSI, and getting away from domestic violence



The #1 thing that will help my family overcome our homelessness is...

“Landlords willing to give me a chance to show them I have changed”

~James

“Support to help teach me better way’s that I can meet my family needs”

~Joy

“Subsidized housing”

~Patricia

“A steady, good paying job with affordable medical and dental coverage for families”

~Dani

“Help paying my rent until I get a job”

~Tabitha

“Respect and the ability to have an agency help me with rent, job training, and other things so I can get out of the system for good”

~Susan

“Stable job”

~Stephaine

“Someone willing to rent to me”

~Autumn

A little help will go along way!



MAKE HOMELESS FAMILIES COUNT!

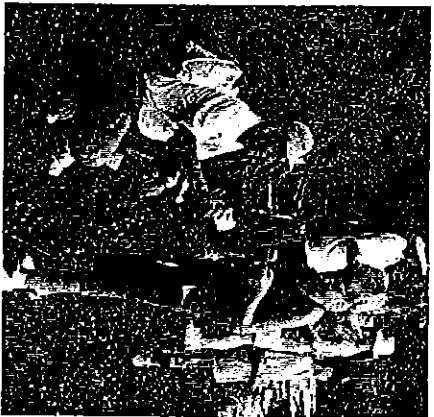


Be part of the solution!



While the causes and solutions to family homelessness are complex, there is much that an individual or community group can do to help. No matter what your skills, age, or resources, there are ways you can make a difference. Volunteer, advocate, give financial or material contributions, and continue to learn about family homelessness.

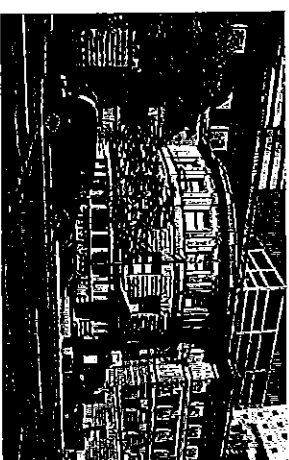
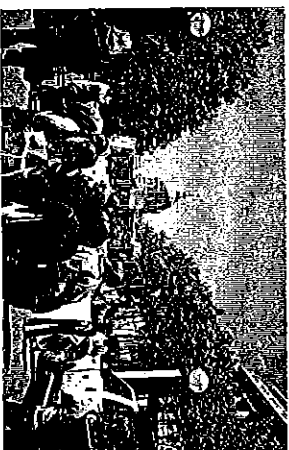
Volunteer



Volunteering your time to help people experiencing homelessness is one of the best ways to learn about homelessness and help at the same time. There is a lot of “behind the scenes” work (filing, sorting clothes, cutting vegetables, etc.) to be done at shelters and other direct service agencies. Think about what kind of setting in which you work most effectively—with individuals or groups, with men, women, or children, and so on. Then, call a few places, ask what help they need, and arrange for a visit.

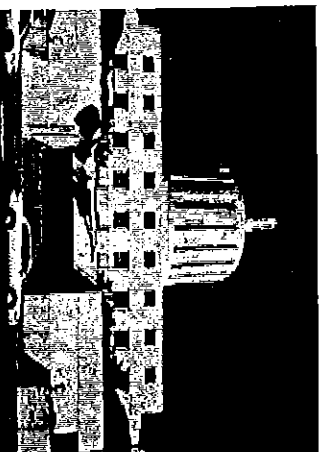


Advocate

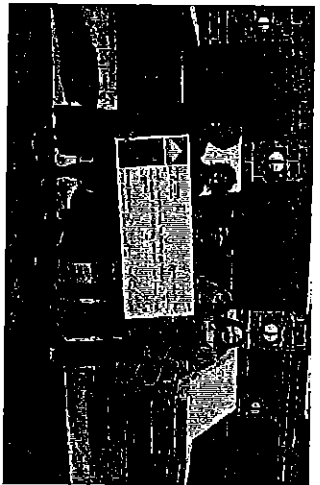


Advocacy is critical to creating the systemic changes needed to end homelessness. Advocacy means working to bring about positive changes in policies and programs on the local, state, and federal levels. It means working with various sectors of the community (e.g. city/county officials, members of congress, direct service providers, and the business community) to develop workable strategies for responding to homelessness.

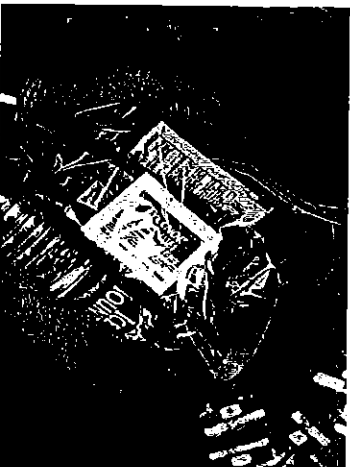
- You can:**
- Talk to your family and friends about this issue
 - Share this “Zine” with others
 - E-mail or write your state and federal legislators
 - Attend a city or county budget hearing and speak up for families



Contribute



While the concern and support demonstrated by volunteer work and advocacy are essential, material assistance is also a necessity. The people experiencing homelessness and the programs that serve them need help every day. Suggestions might be to: donate clothing; give money to a homeless organization; donate household items; books; find job opportunities for the homeless; help raise funds for a homeless organization; or call a local homeless family service organization and ask what kinds of things they need!



All I want is a
home of my own.



Continue to educate yourself, your family and your community about family homelessness. If you would like more information, want to get involved or want more "Zines" call of the Coalition for Homeless Families at Portland Impact (503) 988-3771 ext.22654



**Special thanks to all the participants
that made this project possible**

The participants wish to thank



**NW Coalition for
Homeless Families
Participating Agencies:**

- Cascade AIDS Project (503) 223-5907
- Central City Concern (503)294-1681
- Community Transitional School (503)249-8582
 - Friendly House (503)228-4391
- Goose Hollow Family Shelter (503)228-3195x215
 - Human Solutions (503)988-5200
 - Multnomah County Department's of-
 - Health(503) 988-3676 and
 - School and Community Partnerships (503) 988-6295
 - My Father's House (503) 492-3046
 - NARA (503) 238-9875
 - Neighborhood House (503) 244-5204
- Oregon Community Warehouse (503)224-0711
 - Portland Impact (503) 988-6000
 - SEI Community Service (503) 249-1721
 - West Women's Shelter (503)224-7718
- YWCA of Greater Portland (503)294-7400

**United
Way**
Community Partner

**Thanks to the United Way of the
Columbia-Willamette for funding
this important project**