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**Solutions to Homelessness**

In your life how many times have you seen a homeless person out in the streets? Probably to many to count, right? Now, how many times have you thought about ways to help them? Perhaps as individuals we find it hard to be able to help such an enormous amount of homeless people we encounter in our day-to-day lifes. However, if our community as a whole works together to fight homelessness we can help reduce the amount of people who are homeless. Many homeless people greatly want to improve their lifestyle, but they desperately need help from all of us in order to achieve this massive goal. There are many ways homelessness can be decreased: affordable housing, jobs created specifically created for the homeless, and more educational help in schools.

Affordable housing can decrease homelessness due to the fact that a key factor as to why people are homeless is because they could not keep up with their house payments. In the book “The Homeless: Opposing Viewpoints,” author Louise I. Gerdes talks about all the different aspects that relate to homelessness. “…individuals seeking housing assistance are placed on long waiting lists…Today the average wait for section 8 Vouchers is 35 months.” (Gerdes, 71) Thirty-five months is to long of a time period to

have to wait and see if you are able to receive housing help. Life can become very terrifying and stressful by not knowing where you are going to sleep at night because you have no home. Many people who seek help with housing often have to wait long time periods before receiving any kind of housing assistance. During this time they are forced to live in shelters, with family members, and even on the streets. If the average wait for a person is thirty-five months that means that they are homeless for over a year. Being homeless for many months or years can decrease their motivation for succeeding and can prolong their homelessness. “Research shows that… multidisciplinary, clinically-based engagement with housing and appropriate supportive services, help to sustain tenancies. These models of housing… can be effective in moving chronically homeless persons off the streets… and towards recovery and self-sufficiency.” (Gerdes, 153) Offering extra assistance to those who have lost their home or who are close to losing their home could prevent them from becoming homeless. Each city should have organizations where those in serious need of housing support could go in order to receive help for housing.If there were greater housing opportunities offered to the homeless more people would be able to afford a house and less people would be in shelters or the streets.

One of the main reasons as to why many people could not keep up with their housing payments is because they had no job to provide an income. The cause of having no job is that they are not able to maintain a stable living environment. Annie Gentile wrote “Survey: Hunger, Homelessness Still High,” where she talks about factors, such as loss jobs, which contribute to people becoming homeless. “Like many other cities in the U.S.C.M. survey, Callendar says Denver is seeing more families and first-time homelessness occur because of job losses…” (Gentile, 12) Often, people do not think about how homelessness is not just affecting individuals but families as well. By seeing that many families have no choice but to live in shelters or on the streets we as a community should find ways to help them. One way we could help is by created jobs for them. Many people who have currently become homeless are because they have no job. It is sad to know that many people who are experiencing homelessness for a first time are families. Due to the fact that there are so many jobless and homeless people, it only makes sense that an increase of jobs specifically created for the homeless can help reduce homelessness. In the fall of 2011 a group of A.C.E. (Academy for College Excellence) students at Los Medanos College, taught by professor Tue Rust, surveyed 128 homeless people in order to figure out what causes homelessness, why is it still going on, and what can be done to improve it. “Majority of people who answered ‘yes’ to being motivated to seek help would be highly motivated of there were jobs specifically created for homeless people.” (A.C.E) Perhaps a reason why many homeless people would find it useful if there were specific jobs for the homeless is because they would feel more comfortable with the people around them. For example some jobs that could be offered should be as retailers, working in a shelter, etc. They could slowly start building up their job experience and eventually work at a higher paid job. Due to them now being employed they could manage to live somewhere and be off of the streets. Having jobs, specifically for the homeless, where they do not have to worry about how people will judge them could greatly increase their motivation towards improving their living status. By creating greater opportunities, such as jobs for the homeless, they can improve their chances of staying off the streets and succeeding in life.

A good way to become successful is by having a good education. Unfortunately, many homeless people are not able to have a good education due to the lack of resources they are offered. Whether you are five years old or forty, the education you have is crucial to how successful you can become. Many assume that homeless people have dropped out of high school or college. While this can be true there are many homeless students who are barely children. In the article "Students Without Homes" writer Vicky Dill writes about students who are homeless. “Most educators are only gradually awakening to the fact that many of their students may not have homes. In fact, approximately 40 percent of the 3.5 million homeless Americans — between 1.4 and 1.5 million — are children.”(Dill) Due to the stress students are facing with their personal life students struggle focusing while being at school. There should be more known programs provided for homeless students which offer help in their academic work. In an article titled “Keeping Homeless Kids In School,” written by Kathleen Kingsbury and Justin Horwath they talk about the struggles homeless students face and ways which can help improve their school performance. “…the number of homeless students continues to climb as more parents face foreclosure or the unemployment line.” (Kingsbury, Horwath) Because there are several parents losing jobs and homes, providing students with academic needs can improve their chances of being successful in school. Programs such as offering homeless students free tutors, free schools supplies, and transportation can help students by releasing them of the stress they can have of not being able to have these needs. By having more homeless student programs many could receive a good education and be well prepared for life. Attending to the needs of homeless students can help decrease the number of homeless people in the streets because they would be able to get support from their school in order to succeed and have a good job.

There are many ways in which we can decrease homelessness. Think about all the luxuries you have such as a home, money, education, many people do not have even these simplest of needs. If we as a community help those who are homeless we can provide many others with the same goods that we are fortunate to have. Having housing support to those who have no home can help keep people off of living on the streets. Jobs can help people have a good home and live a comfortable life style. Homelessness can also be decreased if schools offer extra helpful programs to those homeless students. Offering support in housing, jobs, and education we could help decrease the amount of people who are homeless in our community.