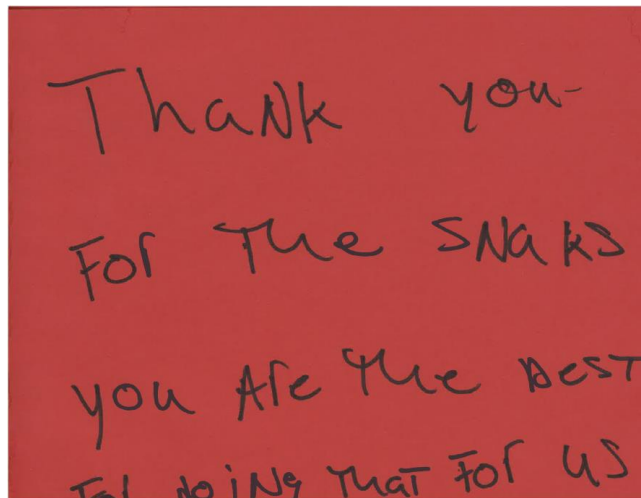




ACTIVITIES

The purpose of these activities is to gain an understanding of what homelessness means and for students to understand that no matter their age, they can make a difference. As you work through these, remember that many of us – or our classmates – may be homeless or have experienced it before. Choose the activities that are the best fit for your classroom. First, go through the “what”, “why”, and “who” bullets with your class.



- **What:** A person is considered homeless if he or she lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This means that this person may be staying in a shelter, a vehicle, outdoors, with friends or family, with strangers, or any public or private place not intended as a permanent nighttime residence.
- **Why:** People become homeless for a lot of reasons: loss of employment, income, lack of affordable housing, the cost of living, medical issues, family conflict, natural disasters, mental health, addiction, the economy, domestic violence and many more.
- **Who:** Homelessness effects a lot of people: children, adults, the elderly, veterans, all genders, families, individuals, etc. Nearly 1,000 students in your school district alone experience homelessness each year.

ACTIVITY: SHORT STORY

With your class, read the short story (below). The story is about a family of four who found themselves homeless. Individually or in a group, write down 3 things that you learned from the story and share with the class or with a partner. Have a discussion and ask questions like: What would you do in Brian's situation? What would you be feeling?

The Millers are a family of four made up of one father, Brian, and three children: Sandra, Crystal and Robin. Sandra and Crystal are in high school and Robin is in middle school.

Brian loved construction and built his life around construction jobs. He loved to build, to be outside, and to push himself to create the best work he could. After working in construction for over 20 years, the physical labor started to wear on Brian. He developed back pain that got worse and worse...and worse. He did not go to the doctor because he could not afford to take a day off of work and he wasn't sure how he would pay for the visit. Eventually, Brian's back pain got so bad that he lost his job.

With experience only in construction, Brian had difficulty finding a job that didn't require a lot of physical activity.

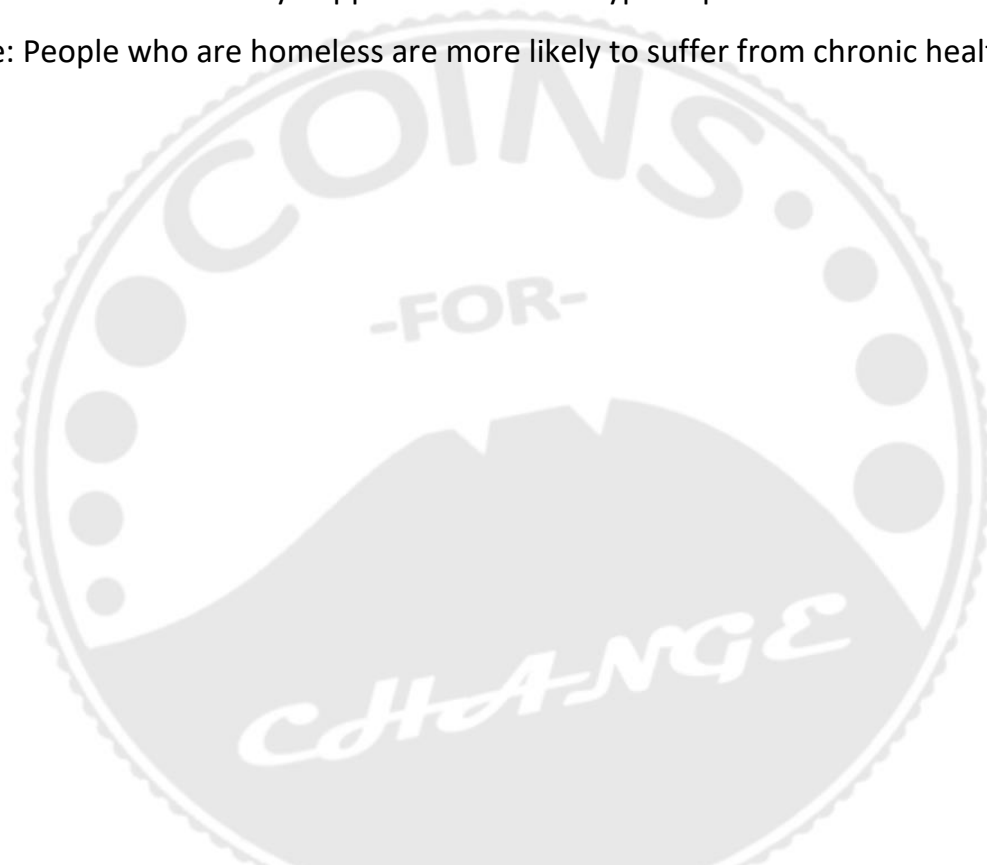
The Millers found themselves unable to pay their rent for their apartment. So – when the Millers had to leave their apartment – they slept in their minivan most days. They woke up around 6am every morning to move their car in hopes that they wouldn't be seen or questioned about their living situation. Each day, Brian walked Robin to middle school and Crystal and Sandra walked alone to their high school.

The oldest daughter, Sandra, decided to get a job so that the family could have a little extra money. She got a job making \$9.50 an hour and started working about 10 hours each week. Now that the Millers had a little more money each week, they stayed at a motel instead of in the minivan. It was stressful sharing one vehicle with different schools, jobs, schedules and four people.

ACTIVITY: TRUE OR FALSE

Individually or in a group, answer these true or false questions. Then, discuss the actual answers.

1. True or False: A person is homeless because he or she wants to be.
2. True or False: Every child has a home.
3. True or False: People who are homeless usually have jobs.
4. True or False: Homelessness only happens to a certain type of person.
5. True or False: People who are homeless are more likely to suffer from chronic health issues.



Answers:

1. False: Many people are forced into homelessness because of their circumstances. Only 15% of the homeless population is “chronically homeless”, which means they have been homeless for a year or longer or have been homeless four+ times in the last three years *and* they have a disability.
2. False: There are over 1.6 million children in America who are homeless.
3. True: Some studies show that over 50% of the homeless population works.
4. False: homelessness affects people of all ages and genders.
5. True

ACTIVITY: PICK FIVE

Many individuals who are homeless are forced to carry everything that they own with them. Often times, they are forced to give up an item simply because they cannot keep it with them and do not have the storage. Individually or in a group, circle five items that you would keep over rest. Then, discuss why you chose those five items and what it might feel like to lose the others.



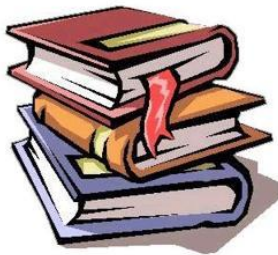
Pets



Food



Clothes



School work



Hygiene supplies



Tent



Toys



Bedding



Bike



Pet food



Important papers (Photo ID, birth certificate, etc.)



Cell phone

ACTIVITY: HOMES

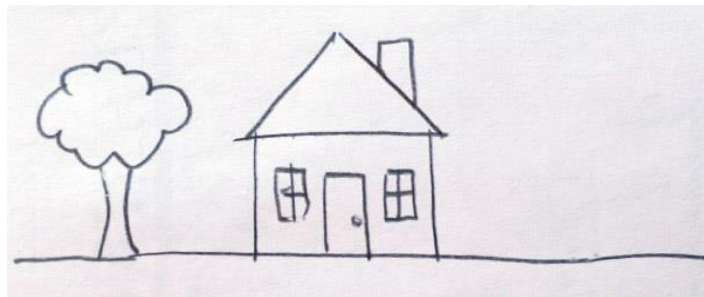
Answer these questions with a partner. Then, share with the class. Another option (for the teacher): Collect all of the answers, compile the information, and share later on what the class came up with.

What does home mean to me?

What does it mean to *not* have a home?

How many types of homes are there?

What types of homes are there (for example: apartment):



ACTIVITY: WORD FIND

J O S P K L H I R I X H G J E
P R U M P U M A A X C S H N T
T I E E N F A J E O G N T I N
R G H G S H G E F J G R H V E
F J E S E H R A E V E U A F I
S R B M R U M C O P H K W Z L
G H I C S E S U R V I V A L I
D T E A D A D E F Y T E F A S
Q G E L E C N A T S I S S A E
B R F P T E S Y E O I K Z T R
T Z K U U E X D E L D W D A I
H V B R F A R Q N B J L C L O
J E I V X X Y X Y U M O C E G
Y A F I H V T F H F F P X N R
L R N M P Q W Y S U D H K T W

Words and their Definitions

- **Resilient:** able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions
- **Assistance:** provision of money, resources, or information to help someone
- **Fear:** to be scared of someone/something
- **Funds:** a sum of money intended for a particular purpose
- **Entrepreneurial:** to organize, manage and assume the risks of a business or enterprise
- **Leadership:** the action of leading a group of people or an organization.
- **Time:** to give your time means to give a number of minutes or hours in your day
- **Treasure:** to give treasure means to give a valued, tangible item (such as money)
- **Talent:** a natural ability or skill
- **Hunger:** feeling of discomfort or weakness caused by lack of food
- **Safety:** The condition of being protected
- **Shelter:** A place providing temporary protection
- **Survival:** The state of continuing to live despite difficult circumstances

ACTIVITY: WHAT I CARE ABOUT

Individually or in a group, identify two issues you care about (homelessness, hunger, children, adults, elderly, surviving outside, etc.) Below each issue, list two ways you will help.

Issues I Care About

1) _____

To help with this issue, I pledge to:

2) _____

To help with this issue, I pledge to:

3. Who will hold me accountable? Myself? A friend? Someone else?

ACTIVITY: TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE

Complete the sentences below. Share individually or in groups. Students can help one another brainstorm ideas, too.

If I had an hour to myself, I would

If I had an hour to do something for the community, I would

I am really good at

One way that I can use my talent (what I'm really good at) to help others is by

If I wanted to raise \$20, I would

If I wanted to raise \$40 (double \$20) I would

