

HOMELESSNESS “101”



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P.S. In all of this, I found **Wendy's Story** (the cover girl) on page 31, poignant, heartwarming and hopeful. **Please do read it in its entirety.** Her strength, courage and character, under the handicaps of Autism and homelessness, is a remarkable and humbling story. Her coping skills are extraordinary and beneficial for our homeless. **Like each of you, she has become one of my heroes.**

SECTION ONE

For Volunteers and Service Providers

A Primer on Homeless Behavior

By Andrea Ball, with Alan Graham and David Gomez, both homeless, responding:

When it comes to the homelessness, we all have lots of questions.

The big ones always grab the limelight. Why are people homeless? Are they all drunks and drug addicts who deserve what they get? Should panhandling be banned? Homeless advocates are always quick to weigh in on these issues, and the ensuing debate in the community can get pretty heated.

It's the little questions, however, that often go unanswered. Over the years, I've heard plenty of friends and colleagues wonder aloud about things they've observed about the appearance or behavior of homeless people. I asked several local advocates for homeless people to answer some of the questions I've heard.

Granted, these are not probing questions whose answers will shed light on the homeless epidemic. But they might give us a better idea of what's going on with people who live on the streets and why they do some of the things they do.

Why do homeless people smoke when cigarettes are so expensive?

The sight of a panhandler smoking is infuriating to many people. Instead of wasting \$5 on a pack of cigarettes, homeless people need to spend that money on food or housing, critics say.

So why do homeless people smoke? The simplest answer is that they're addicted, said David Gomez, who works with homeless people for Austin Travis County Integral Care, which provides mental health services to low-income people. But there's more to it than that.

"Smoking cuts your appetite, so you don't feel as hungry," he said. "Smoking has a calming effect, and I know I would like to feel less stressed about where my next meal will come from, where I can rest without being arrested, how my kids are, whether my mom has died yet or not, etc., etc., etc."

Nicotine has also been cited as having a soothing effect on people with mental illness, Gomez said, and many homeless people have schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Why do homeless people have dogs?

Gomez says that homeless people often take in dogs that have been abandoned by their previous owners. They befriend the animals and share their food with them. The dogs provide protection and companionship.

"These are people who have lost all familial ties," said Richard Troxell, founder of House the Homeless. "Dogs are man's best friend. Everyone needs a friend ... especially when you are down and out."

Why don't they go to a shelter instead of living outside?

This question comes with lots of answers. Some homeless people complain that they get sick at the shelters because the dormitory-style setting exposes them to a lot of germs, Gomez said. Some say they don't feel safe. Others don't like the more restrictive environment of a shelter.

"Some folks prefer living outdoors than sleeping in a room with a bunch of other people," said Helen Varty, executive director of Front Steps, the nonprofit group that runs the city homeless shelter. "Some folks want to drink, and you can't do that in a shelter. Some folks are mentally ill."

Why do homeless people wear heavy coats outside in the summer heat?

Experts say there are both physical and psychological reasons for this. Some homeless people wear heavy clothing because they are alcoholics, said Alan Graham, founder of Mobile Loaves & Fishes, which feeds homeless people in parks and camps.

"Chronic inebriates have very thin blood, and they run cold, even in hot weather," he said. "That is why during really, really cold weather like we had last year, this particular population is very vulnerable."

The homeless bundle up so they don't have to worry about carrying or storing their clothing, Gomez said. They also do it to look bigger.

"Wearing all that makes you look larger than you are, and that is a good deterrent to getting assaulted," he said.

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Homelessness

by The Corporation for Supportive Housing

How many people are homeless in our country?

According to [HUD's 2010 Annual Homeless Assessment Report](#), there are **643,067 people** experiencing homelessness on any given night in the United States. Of that number 238,110 are people in families, and 404,957 are individuals.

Why do people lose their homes?

Although there may be specific complicating factors that contribute to particular individual or family experiences of homelessness, like a history of trauma or a severe disability, fundamentally, a household becomes homeless because they are unable to find or maintain housing that they can afford. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

- A family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States.
- An estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50% of their annual incomes for housing.

Is homelessness primarily an urban problem?

Although homelessness is often thought of as an urban problem, people become homeless in suburban and rural areas as well. In fact, since 2007 the annual number of people using homeless shelters in suburban and rural areas has increased 57% while in urban areas it has decreased 17%.

Which federal programs specifically address homelessness?

HUD provides funds to communities to specifically address homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. In order to receive these funds, each community must form a "Continuum of Care" (CoC) that brings together diverse stakeholders to plan for and prioritize the use of these funds.

These planning bodies can be excellent partners for Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) that want to contribute to ending homelessness. While these funds are a critical part of addressing homelessness, CoC resources are generally far less than the resources administered by PHAs, and HUD is increasingly encouraging PHAs and CoCs to collaborate in the work of ending homelessness. To find the CoC in your community,

What are the characteristics of people who are homeless?

HUD has found that African-Americans, men between the ages of 31 and 50, and people with disabilities are all at higher risk of becoming homeless compared to their representation in either the U.S. or the poverty population. Although all persons experiencing homelessness are unique, there are a number of subpopulation groups that share common characteristics and challenges. Five of these subpopulations are outlined below.

People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness

Seventeen percent of people who are homeless are experiencing chronic homelessness. An individual or family experiencing chronic homelessness has typically been homeless for more than one year or had multiple episodes of homelessness. Usually they also have one or more diagnosable disabilities such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder or a chronic physical health condition. Due to their intense needs, such persons or families often consume a disparate share of the resources in a given community. Supportive housing is an effective solution for ending chronic homelessness and can be particularly cost effective when made available to people who otherwise spend multiple nights in expensive public institutions such as hospitals and jails.

Families

Although families can experience chronic homelessness, most can return to housing fairly quickly if provided with appropriate support. Families often become homeless due to an unexpected crisis such as the loss of a job or a medical emergency that precipitates the experience of homelessness. To regain housing, families may need rental assistance, help finding another job and/or assistance locating an affordable housing unit. Some families may also benefit from supportive services to build skills like budgeting or parenting, or to address mental health challenges.

Veterans

On any given night, 67,000 veterans experience homelessness. Some veterans have difficulty reintegrating into society after trauma experience during their service. They may have post-traumatic stress disorder or physical challenges that make it difficult for them to work. Many also struggle with mental health and/or substance use issues. Although many homeless veterans can regain housing stability through access to short or medium-term rental assistance and supportive services, some chronically homeless veterans need supportive housing. The HUD-VASH program provides supportive housing to homeless veterans by pairing a Housing Choice Voucher with supportive services from a VA Medical Center (VAMC.)

Seniors

The sheltered homeless population age 51 to 61 has grown from 18.9% of total sheltered persons in 2007 to 22.3% in 2010. Older adults who are experiencing homelessness have three to four times the mortality rate of the general population due to unmet physical health, mental health, and substance use treatment needs. The combination of issues typically associated with homelessness such as mental health and substance abuse with those related to aging such as reduced mobility and a need for assistance with daily activities requires providers of housing and services to this population to develop creative solutions. In addition to benefiting from supportive housing with flexible services, homeless

older adults may also benefit from living in housing that has been thoughtfully designed with safety in mind and that is accessible or adaptable according to ADA guidelines.

Individuals exiting the Correctional System

Some individuals exiting the correctional system are at high risk of homelessness due to their limited income and the difficulty they may experience in accessing employment and housing, especially if they have a disability or chemical dependency. Numerous studies have documented that providing individuals who are re-entering society with access to affordable housing and tailored supportive services can significantly reduce recidivism rates. PHAs can play a significant role in this process by considering the unique circumstances for each individual. For more information on public housing and reentry contact your State, County and Local Public Housing Agencies.

Supportive Housing

Supportive housing combines permanent, affordable housing with services that help people live more stable, productive lives. Supportive housing is developed by packaging together housing that is affordable to persons with very low or extremely low incomes with flexible supportive services that are designed to meet the special needs of an individual or family. When targeted effectively, supportive housing can be cost-effective for communities. Creating supportive housing involves partnerships and collaboration. Please refer to CSH's publication [Not a Solo Act](#) for more information about putting together a supportive housing project. (*NOTE: CSH publications cost money*)

Who does supportive housing serve?

Supportive housing is typically targeted to individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness and who would have difficulty maintaining permanent housing without ongoing supports. Supportive housing is designed primarily for people with long histories of homelessness due to persistent obstacles like serious mental illness, substance use disorders, or chronic medical problems. Compared with other very low-income people, these men and women disproportionately use shelters, emergency health care and public mental health services—often cycling rapidly through various public institutions at great cost to taxpayers. Supportive housing can break this cycle by providing affordable housing and the services that these individuals or families need to remain stably housed.

Supportive Housing is distinguished from affordable housing with resident services in that households who need supportive housing are often described as persons who:

- without supportive services cannot access and maintain stable housing in the community, and
- without affordable housing cannot access and make effective use of treatment and supportive services in the community.

From CSH's perspective, supportive housing is effective for a wide range of people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. CSH has focused on working with partners to create supportive housing opportunities for people—men, women, youth and families with children—who meet the following criteria:

1. They are poor, with most earning 20% of area median income or less.
2. They have chronic health conditions that are at least episodically disabling, such as mental illness, HIV/AIDS and substance use issues or other substantial barriers to housing stability (domestic violence, trauma, a history of out-of-home placements).

3. They are not able to obtain or maintain housing and do not live in appropriate and stable housing in the community.
4. They would not be able to retain stable housing without tightly linked services.

This group includes people who may be homeless (for any length of time) or are at risk of becoming homeless and those who may be leaving other systems of care without a place to live, such as young people aging out of foster care, people with mental illness or other disabilities, leaving jail or prison, and some elderly people.

Within this target group, CSH has stepped up efforts to ensure that supportive housing is delivered to a priority population consisting of a subset of those defined: people who have been homeless for long periods and have experienced repeated (three or more times) or extended (a year or more) stays in the streets, emergency shelters or other temporary settings, sometimes cycling between homelessness and hospitals, jails or prisons.

What are the benefits of supportive housing?

Research shows that supportive housing has positive effects on housing stability, employment, mental and physical health, and school attendance.

Supportive housing is also a far more cost-effective response to homelessness than many of the institutions where many people without housing spend large amounts of time. Cost studies in six different states and cities found that supportive housing results in tenants' decreased use of expensive homeless shelters, hospitals, emergency rooms, jails and prisons. People who are housed in supportive housing significantly reduce their use of these more expensive interventions. Some examples follow:

- Emergency room visits decline by 57%
- Use of emergency detoxification services decline by 87%
- The rate of incarceration declines by 52%
- More than 83% stay housed for at least one year

These reductions result in direct public system savings. For example, in New York, reductions in service use resulted in an annualized savings of \$16,282 per unit, which amounts to 95% of the cost of providing supportive housing. In Portland, the annual savings per person amounted to \$24,876, whereas the annual cost of housing and services was only \$9,870. Further evidence shows that supportive housing benefits communities by improving the safety of neighborhoods, beautifying city blocks with new or rehabilitated properties and increasing or stabilizing property values over time.[\[v\]](#)

What are the Characteristics of Quality Supportive Housing?

CSH's Dimensions of Quality for Supportive Housing set the standard for development and operation of supportive housing throughout the country. Our assessment tools and trainings are designed to help you leverage the Dimensions of Quality in your programs and projects. The Dimensions of Quality clearly articulate what makes quality supportive housing. They strengthen and sustain the supportive housing industry by driving better outcomes for tenants, especially those with multiple barriers to housing stability. They help ensure that existing resources for supportive housing are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Aligning Supportive Housing with Needs

Supportive housing is a critical and effective tool for ending homelessness, but targeting this intervention is very important. Supportive housing is designed to serve those who would not be able to stay housed without a wide range of supportive services. People living in supportive housing usually have a long history of homelessness and often face persistent obstacles to maintaining housing.

Supportive housing is generally not intended for people who are experiencing homelessness due to a short-term economic crisis or who appear likely to get back on their feet simply with a housing subsidy.

As you begin or expand your work to end homelessness, it is important to discuss with homeless service providers (and possibly outside experts) how you will ensure the right people receive the right resources, and whether or not your community wants to target scarce resources to any particular sub-populations. For example, if addressing homelessness due to foreclosures is the focus of your local initiative you'll likely want to consider a less intensive program that focuses on getting people re-housed and increasing their incomes. On the other hand, if your community is determined to address street homelessness and those with persistent mental illness, or perhaps a problem with homeless families with a disabled head of household, supportive housing is likely a more cost effective option.

Over the past ten-plus years, federal policymakers have directed more resources towards permanent housing and addressing persistent, long-term homelessness. There are many reasons to address long-term homelessness through supportive housing, including: the high cost to taxpayers when people cycle for long periods of time between emergency systems; wanting to address street homelessness particularly in business districts; reducing the number of long stays in shelters to create space for those with short-term needs; and perhaps most importantly, the moral reason of wanting to help people who have suffered on the streets the longest. That said, homelessness is a broad problem with varied solutions based both on individual levels of need, as well as local housing conditions and other factors. The bottom line is to be sure that the intervention your community is working on truly matches the needs of the population you are seeking to help.

What are the most common models of supportive housing?

Supportive housing is found in diverse locations and neighborhoods across the country and the design of the housing itself reflects that diversity. Models of supportive housing include:

Single Site Housing

This is generally an apartment building, townhouse or single family home that exclusively provides housing to formerly homeless families or individuals. Project-based vouchers are the primary PHA tool used in single site housing, which is generally owned by nonprofit landlords.

Integrated Housing

This model generally refers to market-rate apartment complexes that have a dedicated percentage of subsidized units that provide housing to formerly homeless families or individuals. Project-based vouchers are the primary PHA tool used in integrated housing.

Scattered Site Units

This model enables households to lease apartments from private landlords using a rental subsidy. This rental subsidy might be designated to the tenant (tenant-based) or to the organization assisting them (sponsor-based.) A sponsor-based model allows providers to master lease apartments from landlords and sublet them to people who cannot otherwise pass landlord screening. Scattered site models can be particularly effective in quickly creating units of supportive housing in markets with vacancy in the existing rental housing stock. Tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers are the primary PHA tool used in scattered site supportive housing.

Long-Term Set-Asides

Set-asides are dedicated units that provide housing to formerly homeless families or individuals within a building that may or may not be subsidized. The subsidized supportive housing units in integrated housing are often referred to as set-asides. Set-asides can also be established in buildings financed with public funding, Low Income Housing Tax Credit buildings and public housing.

What are the features of the housing?

While the physical configuration may vary, supportive housing generally shares the following common features:

Apartments are dedicated.

Units are intended and designated for individuals or families who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness and who have multiple barriers to independent living.

Tenants hold leases and pay rent.

Tenants ideally pay no more than 30% of household income toward rent and utilities. The tenant has a lease with no limits on length of tenancy related to the provision or participation in supportive services.

Housing and services are coordinated.

Agreements exist between the housing owner, the property manager and the supportive services providers. Service and property management strategies are coordinated to address issues that may threaten housing stability.

Supportive services are flexible and engaging.

All members of the tenant household have easy, facilitated access to a flexible and comprehensive array of supportive services designed to assist the tenants to achieve and sustain housing stability. Service providers proactively seek to engage tenants in on-site and community-based supportive services, but participation in such supportive services is not a condition of tenancy.

Supportive Services

The supportive services provided in supportive housing are what distinguish supportive housing from other types of affordable housing. To the extent possible, the supportive services available in a supportive housing project should be customized with the needs of the tenants in mind. Supportive housing support services are intended to help ensure housing stability and to maximize each tenant's ability to live independently. Depending upon the supportive housing model in use, supportive services may be provided on-site within the supportive housing development, off-site at a central community location, or provided through a mobile team of multidisciplinary service providers that visit tenants in their homes. Additionally, services should be designed and delivered to promote integration of residents into their communities to the greatest extent possible and appropriate.

What are the primary types of services offered in supportive housing?

The examples of services below are not intended to be a comprehensive list.

Case Management

This is the most widely used form of services in supportive housing. The case manager does not provide every service a tenant needs but helps broker relationships between the tenant and the service providers. Case management can include new tenant orientation, assistance with accessing child care, community building activities and transportation to help the tenant access services in the community.

Mental Health Services

This category of services focuses on assisting a tenant in improving their mental health status. Services under this category may include psychosocial assessment, individual or group counseling, support groups and peer mentoring.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services

This category of services is designed to assist tenants in addressing their abuse of substances. Services may include relapse prevention and recovery planning, individual or group counseling, harm reduction services and inpatient rehabilitation.

Independent Living Skills

Tenants in supportive housing may need assistance in acquiring or regaining skills that allow them to maximize their independence. This may include assistance with rent payment and budgeting, conflict resolution, training in cooking/meal preparation, training in personal hygiene and self-care, and training in housekeeping and apartment safety.

Vocational Services

These services are designed to assist a tenant in accessing employment or improving their employment situation. Services may include vocational counseling, job placement and supported employment.

Health/Medical Services

This category of services helps to ensure that a tenant is addressing their physical health needs. This is particularly important as persons experiencing homelessness often have serious unaddressed health needs. Services may include routine medical care, medication management and nutrition counseling.

Peer Support Services

For adults, peer support services are those that are provided by someone who is on their own recovery journey and has received training in how to be helpful to others who participate in mental health services. For children, peer services are called "family-to-family" services. Peer Support Specialists can help people find interesting or fun things to do, advocate for themselves, make friends, get a job, find better housing and learn skills to live well in the community

Social Activities

Social activities can be a great way to build community within supportive housing. Some activities can be provided by housing and service providers and others can be tenant-led. In addition to helping to create a positive milieu within a building, these types of activities help to engage people who might otherwise isolate in their apartments.

What are the primary approaches to providing supportive housing?

In structuring the services within a supportive housing project, there are several approaches that can be utilized in order to improve outcomes for tenants and promote housing stability.

Housing First

Housing first is a philosophy that homelessness can be most efficiently ended by providing someone with access to safe, decent and affordable housing. Although an individual experiencing homelessness may benefit from supportive services such as mental health or substance abuse counseling, participation in these services is not a prerequisite to access housing or a condition of maintaining it. In fact, the stability provided by a housing unit facilitates the ability of a tenant to participate in these services. Research has shown that even when participation in services is not required as a condition of tenancy in supportive housing, tenants still participate at high rates. The housing first philosophy focuses on simplifying the process of accessing housing through streamlining the application process and removing unnecessary documentation or site visits. It also ensures that supportive housing tenants are not subject to conditions of tenancy that exceed the normal conditions under which any leaseholder would be subject, including participation in treatment or other services. Research has demonstrated that

this approach is effective in promoting housing stability, particularly among people who have been homeless for long periods of time and have serious psychiatric disabilities, substance use disorders and/or other disabilities.

Harm Reduction

Similar to Housing First, the Harm Reduction philosophy prioritizes housing stability among persons who have experienced homelessness and who may be facing disabilities. Although recovery from mental health and substance abuse disorders is always the goal, harm reduction acknowledges that persons may be at different places along the continuum of behavior change. Harm reduction focuses on meeting tenants where they are at and assisting them to set and achieve goals for themselves. In this process a trusting relationship is established with the provider. This relationship has been proven to be a key to many individual change processes. Services focus on helping tenants stay housed by assisting with the management of problems that interfere with their ability to meet the obligations of tenancy, such as paying rent. Tenants are also encouraged to explore obstacles toward their goals in an open and non-judgmental atmosphere where they can contemplate costs and benefits of receiving services addressing their special needs, so that staff does not alienate tenants or cause them to begin a dishonest game of hiding their drug use, psychiatric symptoms, etc. Like any other tenant, tenants receiving services using this philosophy must still pay rent and comply with the terms of their lease.

Consumer-Driven Program Design

In designing supportive housing in general and particularly the services to be provided, it is important that potential tenants (often called consumers) have an ongoing opportunity to provide input. Consumer participation is a tool for empowerment through which persons who have experience with homelessness can both “develop management skills...and the ability to make decisions that affect their own lives.” Organizations can also benefit through the involvement of persons experiencing homelessness. Involving the persons served by a particular policy or program in its development and evaluation can lead toward programs which are more “user-friendly,” responsive and effective. When tenants are empowered to govern their living community, they are also more likely to respect property and treat neighbors with respect.

Supportive Housing Key Terms

Following are many of the terms used in supportive housing programs and the definitions that CSH finds to be most generally accepted.

Activities of Daily Living Skills (ADLS)

Basic skills required to take care of one’s personal needs, such as grooming, housekeeping, budgeting and using transportation.

Affordable Housing

A general term applied to public- and private-sector efforts to help low- and moderate-income people purchase or lease housing. As defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, any housing accommodation for which a tenant household pays 30% or less of its income.

AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome)

The advanced stage of HIV disease is characterized by a severely compromised immune system that increases vulnerability to life-threatening opportunistic infections.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Federal legislation that defines the rights of access to and use of public accommodations, commercial facilities and the workplace for people with disabilities. Also provides mechanisms for enforcement of rights of disabled persons against private persons, other entities (such as employers), and state and local governments.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams

Multidisciplinary teams that provide case management, crisis intervention, medication monitoring, social support, assistance with everyday living needs, access to medical care and employment assistance for people with mental illness. The programs are based on an assertive outreach approach with hands-on assistance provided to individuals in their homes and neighborhoods.

At Risk of Homelessness

An individual or family that is low-income and does not have the support or resources necessary to prevent them from becoming homeless. They are also exiting an institution, living in an unstable housing situation or at imminent risk of eviction. Refer to HUD definitions.

Case Management

The overall coordination of an individual's use of services, which may include medical and mental health services, substance-abuse services, and vocational training and employment. Although the definition of case management varies with local requirements and staff roles, a case manager often assumes responsibilities for outreach, advocacy and referral on behalf of individual clients.

Clinical

Pertaining to standardized evaluation (through direct observation and assessment) and conducted with the intent to offer intervention/treatment.

Community Building

Efforts intended to accomplish any of the following: develop and sustain strong relationships among individuals, develop and sustain involvement in neighborhood and community-based organizations and institutions, and develop group capacity to collaboratively identify and accomplish common goals.

Community Organizing

The process of bringing people together to identify common interests and work collaboratively to accomplish common goals.

Consumers

Recipients of health, mental health and/or social services.

Debriefing

A process that allows people to discuss thoughts, feelings and opinions regarding a recent experience.

Decompensation

Movement away from functioning at baseline level toward a reduced level of functioning and stability; psychological imbalance.

Delusion

A serious disturbance in thought content; belief systems that are not based in reality.

Detoxification

The process of ridding the body of addictive substances via a gradual or complete decrease of substances, intended to result in the cessation of use.

DSM IV-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)

A publication of the American Psychiatric Association that describes mental disorders and the criteria for diagnosis.

Dually Diagnosed

Term used to describe individuals who are diagnosed with two different disorders, such as mental illness and chemical addiction.

Entitlements

Publicly funded financial and medical benefits available to individuals who meet criteria usually based upon income or disability measures.

Fair Housing

Refers to federal laws designed to protect access to housing regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, familial status, religion or disability.

Harm Reduction

A model of substance-use intervention that focuses on helping people who use substances to better manage their use and reduce the harmful consequences to themselves and others

Housing First

The goal of "housing first" is to immediately house people who are homeless. Housing comes first no matter what is going on in one's life, and the housing is flexible and independent so that people get housed easily and stay housed. Housing first can be contrasted with a continuum of housing "readiness," which typically subordinates access to permanent housing to other requirements.

Intake

The process for determining or assessing eligibility of applicants for services.

Intervention

The action taken to address a situation or problem.

Job Development

Creating or connecting to job opportunities.

Life Skills

See *activities of daily living skills (ADLS)*.

Low-demand Environment

A low threshold program that emphasizes ease of entry and ongoing access to services with minimal requirements.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)

A congressionally created tax credit (Internal Revenue Code Section 42) available to investors in low-income housing designed to encourage investment that helps finance construction and rehabilitation of housing for low-income renters.

Master Leasing

A legal contract in which a third party (other than the actual tenant) enters into a lease agreement with the property owner and is responsible for tenant selection and collection of rental payments from sublessees (see sublease).

Medicaid

The Medicaid Program provides medical benefits to low-income and disabled people who have no medical insurance. The Medicaid program is funded through state and federal funds. States are required

to provide eligibility to certain types of individuals and may include other groups. The mandatory eligible groups include: very low-income families and children who are eligible for the state's welfare (TANF) benefits; Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients or in states using more restrictive criteria, individuals who are aged (65+), blind or disabled.

Medicare

A federal program that provides health insurance to people age 65 and over and certain people with disabilities.

Operating Reserve

Funds set aside to be used to offset possible losses due to unexpectedly low rent collections or unanticipated operating and maintenance costs. A reserve may be required by a lender in the form of an escrow to pay upcoming taxes and insurance costs.

Permanent Housing

In the world of supportive housing, the term "permanent" typically refers to affordable rental housing in which the tenants have the legal right to remain in the unit as long as they wish, as defined by the terms of a renewable lease agreement. Tenants enjoy all of the rights and responsibilities of typical rental housing, so long as they abide by the (reasonable) conditions of their lease.

Reasonable Accommodations

A key provision of the ADA, which requires that housing be made accessible to persons with disabilities. It also applies to requirements on employers to make alterations in the work environments to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities.

Rehabilitation

A treatment approach that involves assessing a person's skills and needs, and teaching skills to reduce a person's disability and maximize a person's functioning in the community.

Relapse

A return to addictive behavior after a period of abstinence. It may take the form of an isolated incident of use or repeated use.

Relapse Prevention

A variety of supports and tools, including group and individual work intended to assist individuals who have made a commitment to abstinence.

Release of Information Forms

Documents signed by residents that allow staff to share confidential information (e.g., mental health and substance use treatment, HIV information) with other service providers as necessary.

Representative Payee

A person who receives another person's SSI, SSDI or public assistance check on their behalf in order to help them manage their funds.

Scattered-site Housing

Dwelling units in apartments or homes spread throughout a neighborhood or community that are designated for specific populations, usually accompanied by supportive services.

Single-site Housing

A housing program in which all living units are located in a single building or complex.

SSDI (Social Security Disability Income)

An insurance program that provides cash benefits for people with disabilities who have made payroll contributions to the federal social security program while they were employed.

SSI (Supplemental Security Income)

Federal cash benefits for people aged 65 and over, the blind or disabled. Benefits are based upon income and living arrangement.

Stages of Change

A model of addiction and recovery that identifies phases of readiness to alter addictive behavior. Related interventions are based upon the individual's state of awareness and desire to change behavior at a given point in time.

Stakeholders

Individuals who have a vested interest in the outcomes or the process of a particular endeavor.

Supported Employment

Employment in an integrated setting with ongoing support provided by an agency with expertise in providing vocational services to people with disabilities.

Supportive Housing

Combines and links permanent, affordable housing with flexible, voluntary support services designed to help the tenants stay housed and build the necessary skills to live as independently as possible.

Tenant

Whenever possible, CSH uses the term "tenant" (rather than consumer, resident, client or participant) to refer to the people who live in supportive housing projects. This emphasizes the importance of permanent housing in ending homelessness and recognizes that in many programs, tenants may or may not also be voluntary customers of support services provided. This is not meant to minimize the great amount of time and energy some programs spend with people before they are actually tenants. It is, however, intended to underscore that tenants of supportive housing should have the same rights and responsibilities of tenants of other lease-based, permanent housing.

Transitional Housing

Housing meant to help people who are homeless access permanent housing, usually within two years.

Voluntary Services

The term "supportive" in supportive housing refers to voluntary, flexible services designed primarily to help tenants maintain housing. Voluntary services are those that are available to but not demanded of tenants, such as service coordination/case management, physical and mental health, substance use management and recovery support, job training, literacy and education, youth and children's programs, and money management.

Tent City - A Primer

While homeless encampments are not a new phenomenon and exist in cities across the US[^] this primer focuses on the infrastructure of tent cities in Seattle, Washington.

Currently there are two encampments in Seattle (Tent City 3 and Nickelsville) and one on the east side in King County (Tent City 4). Two of the tent cities (3 and 4) plus 15 indoor shelters are run by SHARE/WHEEL[^], a nonprofit partnership of two "self-organized, democratic, grassroots organizations of homeless and formally homeless" individuals. This is the largest the largest shelter-providing

organization in the Pacific Northwest. Nickelsville is not under the SHARE umbrella and is the only encampment in Seattle that hosts families with children.

The National Center on Family Homelessness[^] fact sheet indicates that families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population, now accounting for almost 40% of the nation's homeless. Every year, hundreds of thousands of American families become homeless, including more than 1.5 million children.

Tent City 3 and 4 are both portable, self-managed communities of up to 100 homeless men and women (singles and couples). They exist to fill the gap between the lack of affordable low-income housing and the insufficient number of shelters for those who need it. Tent cities work as temporary shelter until residents can get back on their feet and find permanent housing. As for public housing the Seattle Housing Authority's waiting list of 4/27/11 showed wait times from 2 - 15 years[^] dependent on a variety of factors. Many forms of public housing, such as Section 8, rely on lotteries to move people off waiting lists.

The transitional encampments are primarily hosted by religious organizations on church property. Secular groups and private landowners have hosted tent cities in the past though these options tend to be fewer. Under a 2002 Seattle City Ordinance temporary-use permits were required for an encampment to be hosted by *any* organization for a maximum allowable stay of up to 90 days. Under a new City Ordinance passed on October 3, 2011[^], religious organizations may now host tent cities as "accessory uses to religious facilities in all zones" without requiring permits, limits on the length of stay or the number of encampments within the city. However, secular entities and private landowners must still obtain temporary-use permits in accordance with the original ordinance which can cost up to \$3,488[^] and take several months to approve.

The estimated cost to run an encampment is approximately \$4,500-\$5,500 per month (about \$45-55 per resident) covering operations and site needs such as portable restrooms, a dumpster and waste removal, two daily bus tickets per person for transportation to work and appointments, just to name a few. Volunteers bring hot meals most evenings and there's an ongoing short list of needs[^] ranging from batteries to canned goods, to clothing and blankets, to hygiene products. SHARE receives about 80% of its funding from the City of Seattle for management of their indoor shelter facilities, no portion of these funds are eligible for use on the encampments. Dollars for tent city operations come in part from FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program, from private donations, grants and other SHARE fundraising efforts. Community outreach and support from religious organizations bring in daily donations to cover needs such as food, clothing and supplies.

Added support for Tent City 3 comes from Greater Seattle Cares (GSC)[^] by connecting local communities with the camp for the provision of residents' daily needs.

Typically an encampment is made up of various style tents raised up on pallets and plywood — individual tents, tents for couples, and a dorm-style tent for single men and another for women used in part as a transition space for newcomers. There are larger tents for food storage, food preparation, donations and supplies, an office area, a community tent with a TV and videos, plus a covered area with a few used computers shared among residents.

On "moving day" every resident is required to pitch in, breaking down the encampment at one end and setting up at the other. Volunteers do come to assist but more are always needed. The site being vacated must be completely moved in a single day. A vacated site is then thoroughly cleaned leaving no trace of up to 100 people who had lived there. The cost of a move comes in at around \$2,500 (GSC Annual Report 2010[^]) and covers truck rentals, supplies, relocation of portable toilets, trash service and repairs (torn tents, bases, tarps, rigging).

There is a continuing need for more sites on which to host the encampments. On many occasions the struggle to secure the next location can run dangerously close to the move-out date.

Tent City — Code of Conduct

- * No alcohol or drugs are permitted; sobriety is a must
 - * No weapons are allowed
 - * No men in women's tents/no women in men's tents
 - * No loitering in the surrounding neighborhood
 - * Quiet time imposed from 9pm to 8am
 - * No open flames are permitted
 - * No violence or crime is tolerated
 - * Cooperation and participation in camp maintenance is expected
- * **It's worthy to note that Seattle's Tent City 3 has been studied by other cities in the US and Canada as a "model for a homeless encampment that works".**

Websites of interest:

http://www.usich.gov/funding_programs/programs/

http://www.usich.gov/funding_programs/programs/homelessness_prevention_and_rapid_re_housing_program/

http://www.usich.gov/usich_resources/toolkits_for_local_action/using_medicaid_to_fund_supportive_services/primer_on_how_to_use_medicaid_to_assist_persons_who_are_homeless/

Great **webinar** on homeless children and McKinney-Vento Federal legislation.

<http://dese.mo.gov/webinar/Webinar09-19-12-QS.htm>

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/>

<http://hpcdelaware.org/>

SECTION 2

For our Homeless



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TAP FAITH MINISTRIES

It's Your Church. Worship God Anytime, Anywhere

WEBSITE: <https://tapfaith.com>

E-MAIL: tapfaith@mail.com

From: <http://www.venturearticles.com/what-to-do-when-youre-homeless.html>

What to Do When You're Homeless - The Ultimate Guide

With the global recession, more and more people are losing their homes or being evicted from their apartments. It's even more common for teens to runaway from home or suddenly be forced out of their homes once they hit the age of 18. While the challenging economy out there right now is tough, being homeless definitely makes things even more difficult. There's many ways to survive when you're homeless without dying of starvation or sleeping on the streets, you just have to be a little creative or know where to go. You can even make an adventure out of it, like the real-life Into the Wild character Chris Mccandless did (just make sure that you survive this adventure and live to tell about it). I've spoken to many people who are nomads and vagabonds for advice and even did a short stint on the streets myself, so I've gathered all the information you'll need to make it out there. Though most of this guide is based on being homeless in the United States, I'm sure you'll still benefit from some of this info even if you're in other similar countries such as the UK, Canada, or Australia.

Possessions

The last thing you want to worry about while being out on the open road is your belongings. The first thing you should do, if you have any, is try to find a suitable place where you can store them. If a relative or friend won't let you store them at their place, then you should look into renting out a storage locker if you have the money. They typically cost between \$30 and \$100 a month, depending on where you live and what size or space you rent. You should only go with a trusted storage place and try to read reviews on it online to see if it's a good place. Be careful of fake reviews, as many owners of these storage facilities will lie and pretend to be happy customers leaving their reviews. If the review sounds way too positive and has exclamation marks after every sentence, it's probably fake. Try to choose a place that looks well secured with fencing and cameras, and a building that's located in a generally safe area. If you can't afford a storage rental, you should try to sell your items on Craigslist or Ebay. Craigslist is free and it's mostly local shoppers that you'll be dealing with, so it's probably ideal for this particular situation.

How to Make Money

Knowing different ways to make money when you're homeless is easily the most important thing you'll need to know, so we'll cover this first. There are many different ways to earn money, you just have to be motivated and in some situations, a little creative. Some of the ways are a little old-fashioned, while other methods have just become available with the creation of the internet and easy to access computers and wi-fi connections. But majority of these methods will be easier for you to do if you have some type of address you can use to receive mail or open accounts. So the first thing you should do is open a Post Office box in whatever area you think you will be living or traveling to. P.O. boxes are fairly inexpensive, at somewhere around \$6 a month (possibly less or more, depending on size). You will usually have to make an upfront payment that covers 6 months in advance however. For me, it cost me about \$36 for 6 months, and the box was somewhat small but could probably fit around 100 letters or a few letter size packages. Once you have a P.O. Box, it will be easier for you to conduct business in numerous ways. Here are just some of the best ways you can do this.

Sell Aluminum Cans

One of the most common ways that homeless people make money is by collecting aluminum cans (and scrap metal) and then selling them to recycling centers or scrap companies. This is probably not one of

the best ways to make money when you're out there in the world, but if you are desperate, creative, and persistent, it might just pay for your food or lodging each day. The prices you can sell cans for are based on pounds in the United States. The price for a pound of aluminum cans varies by the day, but the usual range is between .70 cents and \$1.40 per pound. The recession has greatly affected the aluminum scrap industry, so you're more likely to get less than \$1.00 per pound these days. However, that could change at any time so if you think you can gather lots of cans, you should call around to recycling centers and ask what the going rate is. It takes about 34 cans to make a pound, so at the current rate, you would probably only be making about .02 cents per can. So just to make \$2.00 a day, you would have to collect 100 cans every day. While you can find cans along the road and even from the families of friends who may not recycle, the best place to find them is in dumpsters behind restaurants and other companies that throw out lots of cans every day. Some busy restaurants will go through 50 to 100 cans a day or more, since many of their ingredients involve things that are canned, such as coconut milk (Chinese and Thai restaurants will often use ingredients like these in their dishes). So if you are in an urban area and can locate some of these places, maybe even work out a deal with the manager to come by and collect them, there's a possibility that it can be profitable for you. As far as transporting them, you should think about investing in a portable can crusher and a box of large garbage bags if you think you can make up for the costs. There was one story out of Sweden that I recently read where a man was believed to be homeless because he collected cans and wore dirty clothes, but it turned out that he was a millionaire. After he died, his family discovered that he invested most of the small amounts he made each day into the [stock market](#) and bonds, and this eventually grew into a fortune of over \$1 million. He even had over 100 gold bars in his possession, as well as a house that was fully paid off.

Internet

With the emergence of the internet, new ways to make money have opened up for those who are homeless but who have access to the net. To use the internet when you're homeless, you should get a library card at a public library that has lots of computers. Library cards are free and are usually approved the same day or within a few weeks of when you apply. If you have a little money, you can also invest in a netbook or cheap laptop. You can find used ones on craigslist and ebay, but if you feel more comfortable getting a new one, there's a few decent netbooks out there for as low as \$250 (Target, Fry's, Walmart and many other stores sell them). Once you have a netbook, you can use the free wi-fi access at public places. Sometimes, you don't even need to be inside a store or building to receive the wifi signal. I've used Wendy's wifi from outside, while sitting in my car before.

Now when it comes to making money online, there's lots of ways to do it, you just have to be able to recognize and stay away from the scams. You should never buy into any "work from home" guides or cd's. In fact, you should never pay for any advice on how to make a living from being on the computer. By googling and doing enough research, you will figure out how many people do it. Just don't expect it to be easy. Often times, it takes many months of hard work before you start seeing any income from it. I like to think of it as like an online farm, in which you plant things and tend to them, then harvest them months later. But when you're out on the streets, you usually won't have the time or patience for something like that. So here are a few ways to make money the same day, or at least get paid within a few weeks like a normal job would.

Write Articles

Writing articles is one of the best ways to earn money, because there's so many companies and private website owners out there who need people to write or rewrite articles for them. If you know how to use a computer and how to talk about things, you can easily make extra money doing this. You can

completely survive off doing this, just don't expect to get rich from it. Most people want articles to be between 400 and 600 words. That may seem like a lot, but it's not. In fact, I've just written close to 100 words already in this paragraph so far. There's many different websites that buy paid articles including AssociatedContent, Ehow, Hubpages, and Helium. These sites typically pay between \$3 and \$10 an article, though some can pay much more. It will typically take your average person a half hour to an hour to write a full article. So if you spend 5 or 6 hours a day doing this, you'll have more than enough moola to get by. When you write for these places, some of them will allow you to write about anything you want and then they will either accept or decline them, while others will give you specific topics to write about (these ones usually pay more). They will usually pay you either through Paypal, Check, or bank account wire transfer. There are also many websites like GetaFreelancer and Elance where website developers, like myself, actually pay people to write articles for us. On these types of sites, a person posts a job that they need someone to do for them, and then workers who are willing to do the job will bid on it. There are literally hundreds and thousands of these jobs out there, so even though there is fierce competition, you should be able to find some decent work. The people who post the jobs will usually specify how they intend to pay, or what their deadline for the job is or what they expect. Some may not even want original work, but may ask you to rewrite articles for them in your own words. This is probably easier than writing your own originals, though it typically pays much less (somewhere around \$1 to \$3 per reworded article is average pay).

Flip Domain Names

Another great way to make money online while you're on the streets is by selling [domain names](#). The domain name industry is a multi-million dollar market, in which people invest in domain names by buying, trading, and selling them. Now some of these names can be very expensive, and you should really learn what you're doing before you jump in the water. But there's a few places like Ebay where the cheaper, less valuable ones are sold. It's here that you can make a few dollars each day to get by. You shouldn't set your sights to high, because that would involve investing more. You should focus on the names that you see for sale that have lots of bids already (check the person's feedback and inspect their profile to make sure they didn't just setup a dummy account to bid on their own items). Once you find some names that have lots of bids in the \$10 to \$50 range, you should try to win them if you think you can sell them again for a few dollars more. Even if you only make \$5 a day, it's better than nothing and you can buy lunch and dinner with that. I sometimes look for values, such as 4 letter .com domain names. These are very popular but prices fluctate a lot between \$10 and \$60. So every day, I try to find one or two for somewhere in that price, and then sell them a week later for \$8 to \$20 more. Ebay fees are usually only between .25 cents to \$1.50 when you're selling items in this price range. Paypal fees are pretty similar to these, so if you sell an item for \$25, you should expect to give around \$2 to \$3 to Ebay and Paypal.

Sell Plasma and Sperm

These are two ways to make money while helping others who are less fortunate. The only downside to these methods of getting paid for your time is that you must be healthy and disease free in both situations. To locate plasma or sperm donation centers, you can use google and you should have no problem finding them. There are thousands of websites out there with maps and directions on where to find them. But of course, if you live around bigger cities, you're much more likely to have these types of companies in your area. Plasma locations seem to be especially populated on the east coast, as I've looked at several maps and noticed a stark difference between the number of companies on both coasts.

Plasma is basically a substance that is found in your blood, that other people may need when they get into accidents or have diseases and their bodies are unable to produce more. There's medical clinics and

labs all across the country that accept plasma donations and pay cash out upon each visit. But how much you can make depends on the company and how much plasma you can give them. The average rate of pay for each visit is around \$30-\$40, but I've read reviews on the internet in which some people state they've been paid as low as \$10. I've also read that some places don't pay at all, so you should call around if you can and ask each place if they pay or not. It will usually take around an hour or two for them to collect your plasma. During the collection process, you are put in a room and they hook IV's up to your arms. As one IV is pulling your blood out and separating the plasma from it, the other IV is pumping that blood back into your body so you don't lose any blood. Apparently, plasma will regenerate in your body within hours or a few days. Most donation clinics won't let you donate more than 2 times a week, because they want to give your body time to regenerate more so you can remain healthy and still have some to donate the next time you go. People who decide to do this should eat before they go, as it can drain your energy levels and make you feel tired afterwards. The only main danger that a person may encounter in doing this, is when you go too many times and the people administering the IV's or needles don't know what they are doing. Too many needle pokes in your arm in the same place can cause your vein to become damaged. But I think if you only do it once or twice a month, you should be clear of any risks of this happening.

Now when it comes to donating sperm, I've never personally done this and there isn't as many donation centers for this as there is for plasma and blood. Also, only a very low percentage of people who apply to become donors are actually approved, because they require that your sperm is very high quality. If you don't mind the idea of knowing there might be a kid out there with your genes in them, you can make some extra bucks by doing this. The typical pay is anywhere between \$5 to \$60, depending on the quality and quantity of your sperm. Some companies advertise that they pay thousands a year for people who donate regularly (like a few times a week or more), but it all depends on where you go. You should always check a company out to make sure it's a qualified place before going. If you're worried about what people might think of you, there are many places that allow you to donate anonymously. You'll just have to call around and ask them if that's an option, and what methods are available for you to do it that way.

Become a Human Guinea Pig

If you don't mind going through experimental trials and surveys to help further science and medicine, there's a few companies out there that will actually pay you to do just that. The most well-known one would be Benchmark Research. They are only located in certain cities though (Austin, Fort Worth, New Orleans, Sacramento, San Angelo, and San Francisco). Basically, they will pay you to try out new types of medications, or just to track your daily routine and how things affect you. They have all different types of trials and things to participate in, but you must apply first and they will call you when something becomes available that you can do. If you have a certain disease or medical problem, such as chronic headaches, bladder problems, HIV, insomnia, then you are probably more likely to receive a call from them than if you are a healthy person. But they do have trials and surveys for healthy people as well, so if you're game, it probably wouldn't hurt to apply. I've never personally gone through them or known anybody who has, so most of my research on them is from things I've read on the internet and in the news. I've read from a number of different places that they do not run first-test trials on people. In other words, they aren't testing medicine out for the first time on the people who apply to be participants. Apparently, everything has been tested on people and animals already and determined to be safe, but if they want you to engage in a medication trial, it may not be FDA approved. I can't say if any of this is true because my sources are primarily from the internet, so you should definitely do some investigative work on this company first before you decide to participate in any of their trials. The pay seems to be very good however, at anywhere from \$50 to a couple thousand dollars for each study. I

heard that people who participated in a swine-flu vaccine trial earned around \$1,300 just for that one study. So it does sound promising, but I would proceed with caution.

How to Eat

Eating cheap will be crucial to your survival as a nomad. If you're making money, then it shouldn't be too difficult to find cheap sources of food. You should definitely locate all the McDonalds restaurants in your immediate area and take advantage of their dollar menu. Try to not eat more than you need each time you go. If you're a vegetarian, or a pescetarian like me, it may be tougher for you to find cheap food. You can also buy Ramen noodles in a cup from most convenience stores like 7-11 and Circle K, but it may be cheaper if you get them in a grocery store. You can then use the hotwater from the coffee machine in those stores to fill your cup up so the noodles can soften. But keep mind that this is very unhealthy and should only be something you do once in awhile. There are virtually no good absorbable nutrients in a cup of Ramen noodles, so you should make sure you eat normal foods in between eating those.

If you don't have any money, there are many soup kitchens and homeless shelters across the nation that can supply you with food. The only problem is, many of these places have a limited supply, so they are on a first-come,first-serve type system. So if you think you won't be able to afford food on a specific day, you should get to these places early to ensure you get a meal. Some of these types of places may require you to help in cooking or cleaning up if you eat there. Some churches may not shelter people, but give out bags of food to those who are needy. The best way to find places like these is to google "food for homeless" and put your city name next to that phrase, or to visit your local Department of Social Services. If you're low income or have no place to stay, you should also realize that you may be eligible for food stamps. You can also ask about these or apply for them at the same department, or go online and visit the Government's website.

Where to Sleep

As far as sleeping, you need to setup a plan and lay all your options out. If you don't have friends or family who will let you crash there, you'll have to think of something else. There are a few websites online where strangers will let you stay in their home, such as couchsurfing.org, but you must join the website and become a member. Also, these aren't places where you can stay for more than one night, so you shouldn't expect to get too comfy. It should only be used as an absolute last resort, and you will probably have to pretend that you are traveling because clubs like that are based around traveler and backpack communities.

Sleep in Your Car

If you have a car, it may be best to just sleep in your car, or trade it in for a small van if you can afford one, just try to stay in a small area so you don't waste too much gas. For instance, you could leave your car parked in a large grocery store or Walmart parking lot, and move it at night (unless it's a 24-hour Walmart and you think the manager wouldn't have a problem or notice your car out there every night). While it's not really safe to sleep in your car in certain areas, you should do some research to locate some areas that are more upscale that have free 24 hour parking. For example, San Jose, CA is a pretty safe city and there's places where people can leave their vehicles in the parking lots near the light rail train stations. These are called "park and ride" lots and they were designed for people who are meeting others or who are leaving their cars at the lots. I believe the maximum time you can park there is 24 hours, but it may be more.

Camp Out

If you don't have a car or vehicle, you can invest as little as \$30 and buy a tent. The beauty of a tent is

that they can be packed up and smaller ones are pretty light, so you can carry it everywhere you go. The only downside is that you are more exposed to the elements outside and it may be hard to find places to camp, as well as dangerous in some situations. National Parks are probably the best bet, but can be very expensive and isolated from places with food. You should check the camping rates online for the National Parks in your area. In California the lower priced spots cost around \$15, with only a few in the \$5 range (which are probably miles away from any type of civilization and food). If you search enough on the internet, you'll find websites that list free places to camp, but they are usually far and few between. If you have a reliable mode of transportation, such as a car or a motorbike, there are even more isolated areas in the United States where people can camp for free, which are known as BLM land (Bureau of Land Management) or public government land. BLM land is owned by the government and you don't need a permit or permission to camp there, but you should first check some credible maps to ensure that where you are camping is indeed BLM land. It may even be a good idea to check with the Bureau of Land Management themselves, though it's not necessary if you feel that you have a credible map that outlines which areas are private property and which areas are BLM. If you decide to camp for free on BLM land, then you should contact the Bureau of Land Management to see what rules there are for the general area in which you plan to camp. They will usually require you to leave the area after a certain amount of days, such as 15 days, and stay out of the area before you can return again. But if you keep a low profile and nobody notices you, I doubt you would have any problems staying for longer lengths of time. One of the most famous BLM areas where many people camp is called Slab City in Southern California. It's located in a desert region that is far from any major cities, where the heat can be unbearable during summer. However, many travelers in both tents and RV's camp in this area year-round and especially when during the winter season when the temperature is a bit cooler. There is a small town nearby called Niland, so if you ever decided to camp in this area, you could ride a bicycle to Niland whenever you need supplies. If you've ever watched the movie Into the Wild, there's a few scenes where the main character visits Slab City and stays there for a little bit. Just keep in mind that when you're in the desert, the hot weather isn't the only problem you may encounter. There are many poisonous black widow spiders, rattlesnakes, and a wide range of other dangerous critters that you should know how to recognize so that you can avoid them.

Hostels

Another option is youth hostels, though they aren't as common in the United States as in other countries and not as cheap either. But hostel rates are pretty similar to camping rates, between \$5 and \$15. You may get a private room, but for those prices in the U.S., that would be rare. Most people paying those types of prices would get a bed in a dorm where other people are. Most of the people would probably be young, like in their 20's and 30's. But I've heard of a few places where it's mostly older people who are homeless that take advantage of the cheap costs. To find hostels, you can use Google if you have internet access. They would be listed as hotels or motels in a phone book, so it'd be more difficult to tell the difference if you go that route. To book a bed or a room, you would usually have to make a reservation over the internet, by phone, or simply walking in there a few days ahead of time, though some of them may have a bed or room available immediately.

Shelters

If you don't have money for a tent, camping spot, or a room in a hostel, you can visit homeless shelters and see if you can get a place to stay. Many of them will allow you to sleep there for free as long as you get there early. Some may even require you to do work around the building to pay your way, which is not uncommon. To locate shelters in your area, just google "homeless shelters" and the name of your city next to that phrase, or visit your city's Department of Social Services and ask them for a list. It may even be best if you travel to the largest city you can, as there may be more variety in shelters to choose

from, in case you can't get a bed at one of them. Just keep in mind that if you do this, you'll be sleeping in a dorm room with many other homeless people, probably in bunk beds. So if you have any belongings or anything valuable in your pockets, you may want to sleep with one eye open or put them somewhere where they can't be taken from you while you're sleeping.

Where to Live

When it comes to areas to live in, you should choose a place that has a good average temperature that you can live in, in case you ever need to be outside for long periods of time. The northeast states like New York and Pennsylvania probably aren't some of the best places you would want to be living when it snows. Places that are too hot like Florida and Arizona may not be suitable either. Try to find a place that has a nice balance, with mild winters and summers. But even more importantly, you should try to relocate to a city or area that has lots of businesses and other things nearby. If you need to find a homeless shelter or something cheap to eat, you don't want to be living out in the boonies where there's not many options.

If you have a little money saved up and feel adventuresome, you may even want to leave the country and relocate to somewhere that's cheaper. Just make sure that you have enough money to get back or move on to somewhere else if you have to leave for any reason. For example, Thailand is much cheaper than the United States as far as living, and with the passport and plane ticket, it would cost you somewhere between \$800 and \$1000 total to get there. You could rent an apartment there in a rural area for as little as \$90 a month. A beach house could be as cheap as \$200 a month. The food there would only cost you maybe \$3 a day if you were being conservative. But there aren't many facilities for the homeless there, and getting a visa to stay longer than 30 days can be a problem for some people. In this case, you would either have to have enough money to get back to the USA if you had to leave, or to travel on to Malaysia which allows Americans to stay for 6 months without a visa and which is also very cheap. But there are many places around the world like that, even as close as South America, though probably not as cheap. Visas are the main problem you would run into. So if you're considering doing anything like this, you should research the visa policies online before heading out.

Where to Go to the Bathroom

Obviously, when you're homeless, you won't have the same access to a private bathroom that a person with a home would have. So when the going gets tough, the tough improvise. If you're in a public area, you can just use public restrooms like in stores and other businesses. In smaller buildings you'll be more noticeable if you're not buying anything there, so you may want to locate the big stores such as Walmart, Target, and Shopping Malls. Maybe draw up a map of where they all are in your immediate area. If you're sleeping in a car and you're a male and have no place to go to the bathroom, you should train yourself to only sleep at night by getting up real early in the morning. This way, you will most likely be sleeping when everything is closed, and you won't have to use the restroom as much around that time. In case of emergency, you should keep a plastic bottle in your vehicle and dispose of it the next day by bringing it into a public restroom and dumping its contents into a toilet while throwing the bottle in the garbage (make sure the cap is on good so nobody has to smell it). You should also find out where 24 hour stores such as Super Walmart are in your area in case you do need to use the bathroom late at night. Some convenience stores like 7-11 have public restrooms as well.

Where to Shower

Showering will probably be your biggest obstacle when you're homeless. If you're staying in a group home or shelter, then they will probably have showers there that you can use. Even if you aren't staying there, many will let you use their shower, so you can just stop by one like twice a week or so. If you're making money, you can sign up for a membership at a local gym for as low as \$30 or at a YMCA, and

use their showers. If you don't want people to know you're showering because you're homeless, you can just show up and work out for a little bit or exercise and then use the shower like everybody else does. If you're camping in or near a national park, they usually have showers available at most campsites or in the general admission area. People who live near beaches can take advantage of the showers they have as well. Majority of public beaches have showers for people to use for when they get out of the water and want to wash the saltwater off. It's probably a good idea to invest in a pair of swimming trunks or a bathing suit, as it's illegal to shower nude in these places (as well as embarrassing). If you think it'll be a long time before you can find a shower, you should consider buying wet wipes from your local pharmacy or Walmart. Wet wipes, also known as moist towelettes and wet naps, are prepackaged clothes that are either soaked in water or isopropyl alcohol. They were created for parents who wanted to clean the undersides of their babies while changing their diapers, but that doesn't mean you can't use them to clean yourself with. Obviously, it would be difficult to clean your entire body with a few of them, so if you do ever decide to this, you should just try to clean the most smelly areas and hold off on the other areas until you can find a shower.

Packing

When deciding what to pack when you're homeless, you should only carry the bare essentials you will need and put the rest in storage, as mentioned earlier. This should include at least 3 pairs of clothing (2 pairs of pants, 1 pair of shorts, and 3 shirts), 4 to 5 pairs of socks (socks are small so you can pack more than other types of clothing. If you've ever seen Forrest Gump, then you know how important socks can be to people who are constantly traveling or in living in rough conditions), moist towelettes, a roll of toilet paper (for emergencies), a small portable umbrella (if possible, not necessary), a sweater or jacket (only if you think you'll be in cold weather), and if there's still room, a blanket or sleeping bag. You should put everything into a bag or backpack, but make sure you cover everything in a large garbage bag or other type of plastic bag first, just in case it rains.

Where to Clean Your Clothes

Since you're probably packing light, you won't have as many clothes as people who live in apartments or homes. So you'll probably need to clean your clothes twice as often. This can be expensive, so if possible, you should wear an undergarment or shirt beneath your nice clothes, so you don't get sweat and body odors on them. This will help eliminate the amount of times you'll need to do your laundry. Laundromats (known as Laundrettes or Launderettes in the UK and Europe) are one of the only options available to you for cleaning your clothes if you don't have friends or family who will let you use their machines. These places can vary in prices depending on where you go, so you should check the prices on the machines in a few different areas. If you happen to be camping near a clean source of freshwater, such as a lake, then this may serve as a temporary solution, in that you can just move your dirty clothes around in the water to get some of the surface dirt and smells out. But makes sure it's a safe area with no gators in the water or any potential dangers like that.

Where to Get Medical Care

If you become hurt or seriously ill, you can visit an emergency room anywhere in the United States. By law, they are not allowed to deny anybody and must run the necessary tests and checks to make sure you're not seriously sick or injured. They can't hold you there for not paying either. So if you can't pay on the day you visit one, they will bill you at whatever address you give them. If you don't pay, then they can sue you (if they can find you that is, and if you own any assets which they can sue for, which I'm sure you wouldn't if you're homeless) or it will go into collections and a debt collection agency will try to contact you and get you to pay up. For non-emergency problems, many cities and counties have

programs available for low income individuals to get health care. For example, I live in San Jose, California, and I was sick but was only making about \$500 a month. I looked up "low income health care" and "free health care clinics" on Google for my area, and after about 20 minutes of searching, I found a program that the city offers. I went down there and they gave me a ct scan on my abdomen and did blood work and checked my urine. They then established that I had an ulcer with gastritis and gave me a prescription for antibiotics. The whole thing only ended up costing me about \$15 out of pocket. The city or the state covered the rest (Well I should say taxpayers, but I paid taxes in California for many years so I didn't feel so bad about it.).

How to Get Back on Your Feet

Your ultimate goal while you're living without a home should be to get back on your feet and become successful eventually. While being homeless is seen as an unfortunate situation by most people, you should use it to your advantage and view it as an opportunity to save your money up. While there are many churches and city services that have programs that work with employers to find you a job, that isn't your only option when it comes to getting back on your feet. There are also various labor agencies that do temp-to-perm work, and if you're creative, you can probably find ways to make money by contracting your services out to individuals who may need them. But in my experience, working on creating your own business is probably your best bet. As I mentioned before, the internet is one of the best ways to make money while you're living on the streets, but it's also a great way to plan for your future. While you're writing articles, or selling domains, or doing whatever you have to do to get by each day, you should also set aside a few hours in the library after that to work on your own business online. Start up your own website, and sell virtual things or try to figure out ways to sell physical things and send them to people. You can even start a blog and talk about a specific topic you know a lot about, and once you have lots and lots of original content posted and visitors coming in, you can sell something next to your content, or you can place ads on there and make money when people click on your ads. Google AdSense is just one of many programs online that can provide ads for your website or blog. The key is to have original content, so visitors can find you. Don't copy any sentences from other websites, because then Google will penalize your website and nobody will be able to find your website in search results. But this is just one of many ways to start up your own business. It doesn't have to be an internet business, it could also be the old-fashioned way with a physical one. Regardless of what you decide to do in the end, you should always have a plan for getting back on your feet. If you've never seen the Will Smith movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*, it's basically the true story of Chris Gardner, a salesman who became homeless and went on to become a very successful stockbroker after getting on his feet. Who knows, maybe one day you'll be able to write a book about your experiences and tell your rags to riches story to the world too.

From : <http://thehomelessguy.blogspot.com/2009/12/what-do-homeless-people-need.html>

What Do Homeless People Need?

This is a **list of material possessions homeless people need to survive**. Sure, there are many things that **homeless people** need that have nothing to do with **material possessions**, but I'll write about that another time.

I will mention this, though. Sure, giving away your hand-me-downs is easy. These things you were not using or were going to throw away anyways can be used by homeless people. But know that looking

like a homeless person wearing someones discarded items has a negative psychological effect on homeless people that can worsen and extend their homeless experience. Critical to a homeless person's recovery from homelessness is a **feeling of worth**, and **dignity**. Being able to wear decent clothing, being able to not look like a homeless person, provides many benefits for homeless people.

- **Coats** - with hoods is a bonus. Hoods help keep the wind and rain off, and the warmth in.
- **Socks** - Homeless people go through socks fast. Homelessness is tough on feet, and keeping feet healthy is difficult in the homeless environment.
- **Blankets** - especially for the homeless who won't or can't get into a shelter. Still, some shelters have little in the way of blankets and so the homeless are allowed to use their own as well.
- **Backpacks** - they wear out fast with daily use. Now, I'm not much for making endorsements of products, but time after time I've learned that JanSport backpacks are by far the best of the lesser expensive backpacks. They hold up very well.
- **Toiletries** - toothpaste and toothbrush, deodorant, comb or brush, fingernail clippers, soap, shampoo, razors, shaving cream, tissues, aspirin, lotion, chapstick, etc
- **Knit Caps** - in natural colors please. Sure, a florescent pink cap with fuzzy knobs may look cute on a coed, but not on your average homeless guy.
- **Tents** - more and more homeless people are sleeping outside, and good inexpensive tents can be found, if you don't already have one you don't use. Walmart usually has a good selection at a good price.
- **Rain Ponchos** - They work better than umbrellas because they can cover a backpack and other carried things. It may be tempting to buy and pass out cheap ponchos, but know that the will be worn often in rainy snowy climates and the cheaper stuff will wear out and tear after only a few uses.
- **Bus Passes** - or bus tokens are easy to get from your local transit authority.

<http://www.thenation.com/article/ten-things-you-need-know-live-streets>

This monthly feature was conceived by writer and Nation editorial board member Walter Mosley as a kind of do-it-yourself opinion and action device. Most often "Ten Things" will offer a brief list of recommendations for accomplishing a desired political or social end, sometimes bringing to light something generally unknown. The purpose of the feature is to go to the heart of issues in a stripped-down, active and informed way. After getting our visiting expert--or everyday citizen--to construct the list, we will interview that person and post a brief online version of "Ten Things," with links to relevant websites, books or other information. Readers who wish to propose ideas for "Ten Things" should e-mail us at NationTenThings@gmail.com or use the e-form at the bottom of this page.

For millions of Americans, the housing crisis began well before last year's front-page collapse. Bigotry and criminalization by an unjust system of policing and incarceration, combined with economic privation, have kept even the meager privilege of a subprime mortgage or slumlord lease out of reach for many. As the crisis unfolds, the number of homeless will grow. [Picture the Homeless](#), a social justice organization founded and led by homeless people in New York City, has joined *The Nation* to come up with a list of things you need to know to live on the street--and ways we can all build movements to challenge the stigma of homelessness and put forward an alternative vision of community.

1

Be prepared to be blamed for your circumstances, no matter how much they may be beyond your control. Think of ways to disabuse the public of common misconceptions. Don't internalize cruelty or condescension. Let go of your pride--but hold on to your dignity.

2

There is no private space to which you may retreat. You are on display 24/7. Learn to travel light. Store valuables in a safe place, only carrying around what you really need: ID and documents for accessing services, a pen, etc. You can check e-mail and read at the library. You can get a [post office box](#) for a fee or use general delivery (free).

3

Learn the best bathroom options, where you won't be rushed, turned away or harassed. Find restrooms where it's clean enough to put your stuff down, the stalls are big enough to change in and there's hot water so you can wash up. If you're in New York City go to [Restrooms in New York](#).

4

It's difficult to have much control over when, where and what you eat, so learn soup kitchen schedules and menus. Carry with you nuts, peanut butter or other foods high in protein. Find a list of soup kitchens by state.

5

Food and clothing are easier to find than a safe place to sleep--the first truth of homelessness is sleep deprivation. Always have a blanket. Whenever possible, sleep in groups with staggered schedules, so you can look out for one another, prioritizing children's needs over those of adults.

6

Know your rights! Knowing constitutional amendments, legal precedents and human rights provisions can help you, even if they're routinely violated. In New York, for example, a [2003 court-ordered settlement](#) strictly forbids selective enforcement of the law against the homeless. The [Malcolm X Grassroots Movement](#) offers another resource, and the [ACLU](#) has cards, brochures, fact sheets and films.

7

Learn police patterns and practices. Be polite and calm to cops, even when they don't give the same respect. Support initiatives demanding independent police accountability. Link with groups from overlapping populations of non-homeless and homeless people (i.e., black, Latino, LGBT groups) that

are fighting police brutality and building non-police safety projects, like the Audre Lorde Project's [Safe OUTside the System](#) in Brooklyn. Organize your own CopWatch--and photograph, videotape and publicize instances of police abuse. Consider and support models like the [Los Angeles Community Action Network](#) or the [People's Self Defense Campaign](#) of the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement in Brooklyn. The publisher of this information does not promote all the individual ideas presented herein.

8

The First Amendment protects your right to solicit aid (panhandling), especially if your pitch or sign is a statement rather than a request. To succeed, be creative, funny, engaging ("I didn't get a bailout!"). Find good, high-traffic spots where the police won't bother you.

9

Housing is a human right! Squat. Forge coalitions with nonhomeless but potentially displaced people in this era of mass foreclosures. Support [United Workers](#) in Baltimore, the [Coalition on Homelessness](#) in San Francisco, the Nashville [Homeless Power Project](#). Learn about campaigns against homelessness in other nations, including the [Landless Workers' Movement](#) in Brazil and the [Anti-Eviction Campaign](#) in South Africa.

10

Don't go it alone! Always be part of an informal network of trust and mutual aid. Start your own organization, with homeless people themselves shaping the fight for a better life and world.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

<http://www.squidoo.com/Homeless-Experiences>

<http://voices.yahoo.com/advice-homeless-old-pro-get-689982.html?cat=6>

<http://www.squidoo.com/WhatDoHomelessWant>

WENDY'S STORY

Who Am I? Why Can't I Answer This Question?

I am a 35 year old Autistic female. I live in the far North on a beach, on the frigid cold Atlantic Ocean. I have seen snow storm storms every month of the year, even June, July, and August. When we are not fighting off blizzards and ice storms we are fighting off hurricanes and torrential sea storms. It's always foggy, it's always cold, 75F is a major heat wave for us, from December to March we are lucky if the temperatures rise to 0 as they usually stay around -20F for weeks on end, and can get much, much colder.

I became homeless as a result of a flood on May 9, 2006. When I first became homeless, I had 2 dogs,

9 cats, and 3 birds. Today 5 years later, I am still homeless, and I have 12 cats. The first 3 years were the worst. I've learned a lot in that time, making the last 2 years much easier for me. I have been homeless through 3 blizzards, 2 ice storms, countless small snow storms of only a foot or so, weekly thunder/lightening storms, 4 or 5 hurricanes each year, coyote attacks, wolverine attacks, black bear attacks, mountain lion attacks, been shot at, beaten up, had my hip broken, my pets killed, poisoned, and drowned, my car stolen, my car cut in half, and this all in 5 years time.

I chose not to go to shelters, tent cities, or shanty towns and instead what is known as a "boondocker", living off-the-grid, off the land, no electricity, no toilets, no running water, in the wilds of Maine, in the woods, in a swamp, on the beach, pretty much a full-time year-round camper, which explains why I have had problems with bear and mountain lions, things most homeless people never have trouble with.

Being homeless is much different for me, than it is for homeless people in the inner cities, my answers are thus going to reflect that, and you will have to keep in mind that most homeless people are not in the woods cutting down trees and building lean-tos out of pine boughs, some thing I have done 3 times now in the last 5 years. (I'm half Native American - Kickapoo - I sort of embraced my culture big time after becoming homeless, funny thing that, the half of me which is not Native American, is Scottish Traveller aka Gypsy... I have actually been told by people that my ability to survive where and how others could not, is because of my Native American & Gypsy blood and that I'm predisposed to surviving homelessness because it's in my genetic make up to do so. No idea how to respond to that! LOL!)

Before becoming homeless, I never gave homelessness and homeless people a second thought. I didn't avoid them or hate them, I simply just did not even think about them. When you don't need help; you just assume that there is help out there for people that need it. But than you become one of those people that need help, and it's a real eye opener, about just how little help there really is out there for them. It really amazed me, just how little help their really is for homeless people.

I can see now that I was very ignorant of how hard it is for homeless people, and it took becoming homeless myself to see that. I hate to say it but I think this is true for most people, if they aren't homeless they don't think about homeless people and if they do, they assume there is help out there for them, and until something happens to make them homeless, they'll never realize how wrong they are.

In any case, I will try to write my list in such a fashion that it will be useful to all types of homeless people in general.

My list would read:

#1: A place of my own, where I am warm, dry, and safe from vandalism. It doesn't have to be a house, it could be a tent, a car, a pop-up trailer, a small junky motorhome...

I was homeless less than 24 hours before I went out to buy a tent, (there was a hurricane raging off the coast, the coast being 100 feet from where my house had stood prior to the flood a day earlier,) found I could not afford a tent so bought a \$5. 8x6 tarp and a sleeping bag instead. I eventually saved up for a \$900 car and am now saving up for a \$1,000 motorhome which I should have in little

over a month from now if all goes well. My income is \$2,000 a year so it takes a while for me to save up for things I need.

I want a place of my own, just me, not a shelter crowd bumper to bumper with people. A place I can live that belongs to me. A sanctuary. Privacy. Solitude. Shelter. Safety. A home to call my own.

#2: A JOB. We want to work, just give us a chance!

I have Autism. No one will hire me because I have Autism. I can do the work if someone would give me a chance to prove I can do it. But 5 years homeless and 400 job applications and job interviews later, I'm still jobless. :(At the moment I'm living off of sales of my art (paintings and photography) but it's not enough. \$50 to \$150 per month barely pays for food, let alone gas. PLEASE SOMEBODY GIVE ME A JOB!

I can get temporary work, a day here, a week there, but mostly only during the summer time and the Christmas season. It keeps me going, gives me \$100 once every few months, but PLEASE, I need something permanent, a job for every day, an income I can rely on.

I am also not eligible for ANY government or privately run help. No WIC, no TANIF, no welfare, no foodstamps, no HUD, zip, nadda, nothing. Every where I go: I'm too young, too old, my income is too high, my income is too low, I'm too white, I'm too female, too Autistic, too disabled, not disabled enough, I'm too moral (no drugs, no drinking, no unwed kids = not eligible for EVERY SINGLE shelter in the area, which ONLY take in drug addicts, alcoholics, and unwed teen mothers), etc, etc, etc.

But if someone would just hire me I wouldn't need to apply for assistance to begin with! PLEASE tell business owners to stop discriminating against people with Autism...let us have jobs! We deserve the right to be self sufficient too you know!

Important!

The Most Important Thing...

Food.

Maybe food should be #1?

While food is the MOST IMPORTANT thing, most homeless do not think so until after they have been homeless for over a month.

To the newly homeless food often comes #3 after finding shelter and seeking employment.

You can live without shelter. You can survive with out a job. If you don't have food, you will die. Food is the most important thing to homeless and non-homeless alike, they just are often not aware of it until they are faced with starvation.

A Homeless Person's ONE & ONLY Meal For the Day, Maybe Even All Week - Nazi Death Camp

Prisoners Had More To Eat!

#3: Food. Plain and simple. Without food we will die.

For the first 3 years of homelessness I rarely had a day where I got to eat a full meal and often went several days in a row with no food, the longest I went without food was 12 days in a row. Believe me: you don't know what hunger pains are like until you go 12 days without food!

There was one time, in the winter of 2006, after a blizzard, when the temps were -18F, and I had gone 12 days without a thing to eat and I couldn't find any food anywhere and was terrified I'd starve to death, that I did ask for help. It was the one and only time I have ever begged in my entire life. I went to my church, [The Saco Ward of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints](#) (a.k.a The Saco ward Mormon Church) on 14 & 15 Smith Lane in Saco, Maine, to my bishop, to ask for food. He said he had to set up a counsel meeting with his advisors to discuss the matter and would get back to me in a few days. They got back to me a week later, and they said that after checking my records I had not paid enough tithing over the course of my having paid a 30% tithe to them for 27 years and therefore they could not waste valuable funds to help someone like me who did not give back enough to the church.

Guess why I can't get food from the local food pantries and soup kitchens: they require proof of address! You have to have a home address, not a P.O.Box, and they only allow 3 things as accepted proof of address: your electric bill, your water bill, or your cable tv bill. Nothing else. You have to PROVE you live in the town, yet if you are homeless and have no house, and therefore no utilities, you can't eat at the soup kitchens which are out there on the newspaper bragging that they are helping the homeless!

If you don't dare to ask your local homeless what they need or you do ask and they don't respond, **the best thing you can give a homeless person is gift cards to take out food places** (never cash! - while many need and would well spend cash, there are many too who would waste it on drugs, beer, and cigarettes!). The best gift cards you can give are: SubWay, McDonalds, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Dunking Donuts, StarBucks, WalMart, local restaurants, etc.

SubWay and Pizza Hut are especially good gift cards to give: a single foot long sub or a large pizza will feed a homeless mother and child for a week, and single homeless person can make that huge foot long sandwich last over a week if they have to, and by eating only one half of a slice of pizza a day they can make a pizza last for over 2 weeks. And a smaller, thinner homeless person, can make a single pizza last the whole month by eating only a quarter of a slice a day. A Pizza Hut pizza cost \$16 and it's very possible to cut it into 30 slices - think about it- a \$20 gift card to Pizza Hut will give a homeless person a meal for 30 days, not a full meal of course, but enough to keep them from starving to death until they can get a full meal. Is it too much to ask to at least be afforded the right to have a 1 inch slice of pizza each day?

Regardless of whatever else they need - homeless people ALWAYS NEED FOOD to eat! There is never enough! That bowl soup in the photo above? That was my one and only meal for that day. I

hadn't eaten the day before and would not the day following either. A fellow homeless man, a former POW, saw this meal and commented: "They gave us more than that each day in the Nazi death camps. We were starving to death in German work prisons 60 years ago and we had more food to eat than the homeless of America have in the 21st century."

Think about this man's comment next time you see a homeless person on the street: Holocaust Prisoners in Nazi Germany had more food to eat than that homeless person does. Don't ask what they want. You know what they need. They need a good meal if they are going to stay alive.

The last 2 years have been better for me food wise. I became well learned in the art of trash picking and dumpster diving and making tiny scraps of food last for days. I know where to look for food. I know which restaurants offer very low priced meals and am now "eating out" at least one meal a week. I found that SubWay sells \$5 footlong veggie sandwiches and that you can ask (for no extra charge) that they put double layers of everything on it, and than have it cut into 4 instead of 2, and thus you have 4 days worth of food for only \$5. SubWay is this homeless person's new best friend.

Food is a precious commodity and a very rare find. It is far easier to get \$5 than it is to get a meal for \$5, so while I do have reservations about asking for money, and will very likely refuse to take money offered to me, I will never refuse a gift of food.

#4: Companionship. A friend. Just someone to sit down and talk with me.

I'm alone all day and all night, and people who used to be my friends turned their backs on my after the flood, they pretend like they never knew me. It hurts being alone. I'm still the same social creature I was before the flood, I still have the desire and need for human companionship. More than anything else I wish I had a friend, someone who I can talk to at the end of the day, someone I can spend time with. I hate being alone.

Since becoming homeless I have seen the darkest nature of humans: I've been beaten, shot at, had my arm twisted, my hip broken (which because I could not afford to go to the hospital, did not heal properly and I now have arthritis as a result of this injury), rocks thrown at me, someone poisoned 5 of my cats, 2 cats had their heads bashed in, 1 cat was poisoned & drowned, 1 cat was beaten to death, 2 of my cats were cut in pieces - 1 they left the head, the other they left the legs and tail (see a **picture of her in the photo above**, her name was Kit-Kit, I had had her 14 years, all we found was her legs and tail - this is how hate filled the Saco Ward Mormons are)-...my car, the only place I had to sleep at night, was cut in half. Since 2006 I have not seen one shred of human kindness, not hear one kind word, it's hard some days to find a reason to WANT to live any more. It's been 8 years since any one told me they loved me, 3 years longer than I've been homeless.

What do I want to feel good? Companionship. A friend. A hug. Just someone to sit down and talk with me. People to leave my cats alone. For the Saco Ward Mormons to stop murdering my pets. To feel safe again. I would love that. I'm alone all day and all night, and people who used to be my friends turned their backs on my after the flood, they pretend like they never knew me. It hurts being alone. I'm still the same social creature I was before the flood, I still have the desire and need for human

companionship. More than anything else I wish I had a friend, someone who I can talk to at the end of the day, someone I can spend time with. I hate being alone.

I can live without money. I've done it, so I know it's possible, but it is hell hard to live without a friend. It's hard to live with the constant threat of having your pets murdered during the night. To be safe, for my cats to be safe, and to have a friend again, that is the thing, I want most of all. PLEASE somebody make the [Saco Ward Mormons](#) leave me and my cats alone!

Note To Self:

- * If you are dirty and smell bad, people will beat you up.*
- * If you are clean and smell nice, no one knows you are homeless.*
- * If you wear a long mink coat you will survive being homeless in the winter.*

#5: Clean water and toiletries (soap, deodorant, hand cleaners, toothpaste, shampoo, feminine pads, toilet paper, flea powder, sunscreen, bug spray, etc). To bath. To wash our clothes. To keep from smelling bad. To keep from feeling dirty. To keep our dignity.

I myself have an advantage most homeless folks do not have: I live on a beach. I swim daily in the ocean, fully clothed and am always meticulously clean and fresh. The beach sand scrubs dirt and grim out of my skin and clothes. When I have money I buy soap, body lotion, and deodorant FIRST and food after (food is easier to find in the trash, than cleaning goods).

You may have noticed I wear flowers in my hair. Are they real? Yes they are. Fresh picked every day. Clusters of roses, huge giant lilies...they look nice, yes, but they are not there for looks. Perfume, cologne, deodorant, body lotion, scented things which women wear to remove or mask body odor are a very rare thing for a homeless person to have. If you open the trunk of my Volvo you will find in it a 20lb cat-food bag, filled to the top with near-empty bottles and jars of soaps, and face creams and hand creams and body lotion, even makeup - these are things I have found in the trash and saved, and use. Perfume however is not so easily found in trash cans, as women often keep the fancy bottles long after the scented liquid is gone. Thus why I wear the flowers, for perfume itself is made from the oils of flower blossoms: specifically the oil of roses and lilies.

Because of my obsessively cleanliness habits I have freedoms other homeless do not get: I don't get kicked out of libraries or malls. I've even had homeless people come up to me begging for money, unaware that I was just as penniless and homeless as they were. I do not look homeless.

#6: Clean clothes. Good quality, clean clothes. Not your old rags. Not cast offs. AND clothes appropriate for the local weather.

I was not poor before becoming homeless, and I was able to salvage some of my clothes from the flood, not necessarily practical in a fashion sense, but warm: a result of which I wear silk gowns, velvet dresses, and a full length mink coat pretty much all the time. I do get crass a lot about my clothes, but I don't have anything else to wear. I kind of look like I'm heading out to a Broadway

show, all day long. Some people get angry over it: "How can you be homeless and wear a \$10,000 mink coat?" Simple, the coat is over 200 years old, it belonged to husband's grandmother. It survived the flood. Besides the blue/white fleece which I made, it's the only coat I have. And say what you want, but when Maine's -40F winter comes raging in, and I am stuck outside in a blizzard, I'm glad I have it.

I live on a beach, yes, but it's a cold North Atlantic beach and rare is the day we see a heat wave of 75F. Most of the year our highs are 50F. It's cold here. Silk and velvet insulate the body and keep out the cold, while fur hold in body heat. If I didn't have a full length mink coat to wear during the 3 blizzards and 2 ice storms I've been homeless through, I probably would have frozen to death by now. You can laugh or get angry all you want, about a homeless woman owning a full length mink coat, but this this coat keeps me alive, and that's why when I had to choose between it or one of my other coats, this was the coat I choose to keep. It's all about survival. You have to dress for the weather.

But here's the thing: People who do not know I am homeless, don't care that I dress "wealthier" than they do, and they treat me, like a movie star, a lot of people think I am, I often have people ask for my autograph, and I say: "Who do you think I am?" They say, "I can't remember your name but I saw that movie you did, you know the one..." Funny that. I get it all the time. I get it because I bath daily (in the cold ocean), keep my clothes clean, and wear very high class fashion.

There was a while when I stopped bathing, stopped wearing the silk and fur, and wore rags for a time. I was treated like shit, had things thrown at me, was beaten up and had my hip broken. Why? What had changed? Nothing. All I did was change my clothes and not bathe for a few days, everything else remained exactly the same.

This is the thing I learned most being homeless: appearances are everything. Because I do not look homeless, because I keep myself and my clothes clean, I am not treated as poorly as other homeless people are. I have seen people better off than I am, treated very poorly because they smelled bad and had dirty clothes, and they were not even homeless!

If homeless people had a place to bathe daily and good clean fashionable clothes they'd be treated a lot better. I know I was. I know I have an advantage there, because of where I live and the clothes I owned before becoming homeless. But this is something every homeless person deserves:

The dignity to be treated kindly by their fellow man, and it seems kindness from others required you to be clean, smelling fresh, and well dressed. To look clean, to smell clean, to be well dressed, these are options most homeless do not have access to, and yet it's the ONLY thing they need to make a huge improvement in how other people treat them.

#7: Things to meet the needs of those with the homeless (children, pets, etc)

Some homeless have babies.
Some homeless have children.
Some homeless have teenagers.
Some homeless have cats.
Some homeless have dogs.

Some homeless have parrots.

Look at who or what is with the homeless person and remember they have needs too. Babies need diapers. Dogs need flea collars. They all need food, be it jars of baby food or cans of cat-food, they got to eat.

Note To Self:

** You don't think about the things you have, until you do not have them.*

** Things you have, wear out faster when you are homeless, because they are constantly exposed to the weather.*

** You don't know how truly dark it is until your flashlight goes dead in the forest.*

#8: Things that need replacing.

Look at what they have already. Is it worn out, damaged, and need replacing? Are their dishes broken, cups cracked, tents torn, shoes repaired with duct tape? If so, buy them a new one. Better yet, get them something better than the one they already have.

In 5 years I have replaced the tarp-top of my tent-thing 3 times, gone through 5 toothbrushes and 4 sleeping bags, broken 3 flashlights, gone through 100s of batteries, lost 2 hair brushes (stolen?), and worn out 4 pairs of sneakers. Little things like this mean a lot.

I also paid \$375 in damages to a local library after the books I had out were destroyed during a thunder storm which flooded out my tent.

Did you ever notice how in most pictures of me, I am barefoot? There is a reason for that: A good pair of hiking sneakers can cost \$200 or more, and expense that takes me 8 months to save up for. When my shoes wear out and fall apart, I've no choice but to go barefoot for months on end until I can afford a new pair of shoes. From 2006 - 2010 I had no boots during the deep snows and sub-zero winters. In 2006 - 2008 all I had was a pair of sandals and no socks. Try wading through 6 feet of snow at -20F wearing open toe sandals with no socks, if you want to try walking in this homeless person's shoes.

Things wear out and need replacing, but it can be months, even years, before a homeless person can save up for something they need.

Note To Self:

** You think "It's cold outside." when sitting comfortably in your house coat and slippers, sipping coca in front of a fireplace.*

** You know it's cold outside when you are digging bare handed through wet snow to find wet wood which won't burn.*

#9 Things to keep out the cold.

Okay, so this is a regional one, but even the warmest climates have cold wet nights.

Look around you. Look up at the sky. Look at the clouds. Look at the calendar. Is it getting ready to rain? Snow? Lightening?

Homeless people need but often don't have: umbrellas, raincoats, hats, gloves, thick fleece blankets, and the basic odds and ends needed to protect themselves from the harsh elements.

When I say I live in a place, rather unusual for homeless folks, most people assume I mean it is just colder because it's Maine. No. There is a reason I am one of less than 10 homeless people in this area. There is a reason, our town shuts down 7 months out of the year and sits as dead empty ghost town, with not one business and barely a 1,000 people daring to stay here year round. People will tell you it is crazy to live here at all, and utterly insane to try to live here while being homeless, as it's hard enough to live here in a house.

To help you understand why I got so much media attention while being homeless, why people seek me out to ask their questions to me for advice on surviving homelessness, why so many psychologists world wide have targeted me as their study subject when studying the homeless, I will tell you about my town, and it will explain much:

In the summer between from June to August we get 2million tourists, they come and they sun on our beach, surf in our waves, they ride the ferris wheel and the merri-go-round, eat french fries in vinegar, cotton candy, fried dough and lobster rolls, they call it paradise and they marvel at the sign which reads: "Old Orchard Beach, the world's finest beach" , the sign being a Guinness World's Record Plaque. They think it is the world's finest as in "the best beach" nothing could be farther from the truth: it is the world's finest, because it has the the finest grains of sand, as in the smallest grains of sand, found anywhere in the world.

Tourists talk to the locals and than are shocked to be told, that when the tourists leave, so do the residents, every thing is shut down, the town abandoned and boarded up. *"Why would you ever leave this place? It's the world's finest beach! I'd die to be able to live here all year long!"* Die is right. That sign which reads "The World's Finest Beach", it should say "Beware of the world's deadliest beach"...there is a reason our sand it so fine grained - it is well churned.

Our short summers are beautiful and packed with tourists, our short tiny streets are filled each summer, bumper to bumper with no elbow room to walk on sidewalks or streets. Tourists often hold the delusion that our town is like this all year. Many are the tourists who opt to buy houses and live here, they proclaim: "For the rest of our lives, in this glorious heaven!." They call it Paradise and say the Garden of Eden must have been here. They laugh at the warnings from locals, who say to not buy the house, to visit during winter first, to see what this town is REALLY like. But like Adam & Eve they move into Paradise, to quickly be driven out only a few short months after moving in. Driven out by the driving forces of the beach itself and the infuriated winter ocean that dances on it's peaceful summer shores.

I live in a rather unique section of Maine, right in the heart of the Maine Gulf, in a section known as Saco Bay, where the Saco River Delta dumps into the Atlantic Ocean. The landscape of this area is a giant horseshoe 13 miles across and as many miles deep, with only a narrow opening, and a deadly rip tide during tidal changes. The seven mile center of the horseshoe is the pristine 7 miles of gleaming

white sand known as "Old Orchard Beach".

There are 5 to 10 drownings here ever year as people commonly get too close to the cliffs' edge and fall in under the crumbling ledge, or as is also common, "daring" (foolish) swimmers like to take the challenge of attempting to swim this unswimmable pass and are crushed to death on the shallow jagged rocks which lay only inches before the water's surface, long before they have time to drown. The river itself is over 300 miles long stretching across several New England states and heading far into the Northern reaches of Canada...if you drown anywhere up North of here, no matter where, your body will end up here in the Bay, in 300 years more than 5,000 bodies have washed up on these shores, which have to be closed a couple of times a month by the Coast Guard, with the finding of each new body, this in turn results in the 500 year old Legend of The Saco River Curse, and local fishermen who refuse to set their boats in the water until after there have been 3 drownings for the year.

Dubbed as the world's most haunted river, The Saco River Delta is constantly visited and investigated by ghost hunters, paranormal investigators, cryptozoologists, and ufologists. This area is rife with superstition, and nature is quite happy to give these people a run for their money. For the shape of the Bay and the fact that we are far out many miles off the mainland and actually a sort of peninsula 3 miles off the coasts and the fact that we are many feet below sea level, results in rare weather patterns. We are almost an island barely connected to the mainland, and at the constant mercy of the wild and unforgiving ocean.

While the rest of Maine gets 120F in the summer Saco Bay does not and 75F is a major heat wave for us. Maine's growing Zone is 5, yet our growing Zone is 3. Winters in the rest of Maine rarely see temps below 0, here we rarely see winter temps above -20F. We have fog day and night, and eery howling winds that never stop. While the rest of Maine averages 3 feet of snow per season, we get that much in a single storm and can often have 21 feet by the end of the season. Most of Maine gets snow from December to February - we get snow from October to late April and sometimes into June. While most towns in Maine are open to the public year round, our town, Old Orchard Beach is only open to the public from May to October, the rest of the year business are closed and boarded up and we are ghost town with barely more than a 1,000 daring to rough out the long harsh winter, most of them lobstermen hell bent get getting every lobster and shooting every other lobsterman they see, the rest of our 8,000 residents head for higher and warmer grounds, many leaving in August at the start of hurricane season, long before blizzard season starts.

The most unique and dangerous part of this town however, is it's vast horseshoe shape, this is where the danger lies - for when storms come rolling up the coast, they get trapped here in this loop. We are the turning point where hurricanes die and become tropical storms, where Nor'easters crash and fizzle. They get caught in the ring, coming up into the horseshoe toss everything they got at us, than move on back out to sea following the line of the down scooping top of the horseshoe, ending up back where they started at the front of the horseshoe and coming back in to lash out on us again. A single hurricane can hit us 4 or 5 time in succession this way, a single blizzard, giving every one else 3 feet of snow, enters and leave the ring 3 times leaving 9 feet of snow instead. This is what makes this small space of land only 13 miles wide, so very dangerous. Storms don't pass over us, they get stuck right on top of us and do a zig--zagging dance back and forth until they can shake free of the wind currents caused by the shape of our coastline. The result: a lot of rain, a lot of snow, a lot of flooding, a damage, temperatures far colder than the rest of the state, and a steady undying wind all day and all night long

Our weather is unpredictable. On Valentine's Day of 2007, while the Valentine Bandit was covering Portland with red paper hearts for the 20th year in a row, Old Orchard Beach and most of the neighboring towns, was in black out conditions because an Ice Storm took out power lines and buried the towns in a sheet of ice, leaving 20,000 people without electricity for 3 months. In 2009, we never got any snow at all and was bombarded with massive rain and hail instead. In March of 2010 I awoke to find, not only had every drop of snow melted over night, but it was 110F outside! In March 2011 we had rare Thunder Snow - a type of weather unique to New England, caused when a tornado and a blizzard collide and create a swirling, lightening filled snow storm that levels everything in it's path. I'd heard of them, but it was the first time I had ever seen one. In August of 2010 4 funnels touched down and danced their way across Saco Bay. And yes, we do get tornados in Maine, this surprises people, who think they happen only on flat prairies. Nope dense forests can have tornados, you just have to be ready to dodge the 100 foot long spears it makes out of pine trees. Yesterday I was sitting outside reading a book, a clear blue day, not a cloud for miles, and suddenly the sky went black and it down-poured for 7 hours.

This is where I live. I was born in this town. Both my parents were born in this town. Two of my grandparents were born in this town, and it was my dad's great-great grandfather who settled and founded this town nearly 200 years ago. One of this town's few year round residents I have never left, not even during it's frequent hurricane and blizzard evacuations, and when I became homeless, this did not change. There are not many homeless people in this town, in fact there are fewer than 10 homeless people in this town, for the simple fact to be homeless here is to daily fight some of the harshest weather on the Atlantic Coast. Most people who become homeless in Southern Maine, head for Portland, Biddeford, Lewiston, Auburn, or Ouginoquit, where the climate is more stable, businesses abound, people are plentiful, and being homeless is much, much easier.

Superstitions are high around here and there are many who still believe in witches and curses and that cats are witch's familiars. There are also many who say that only a non-mortal, a witch of great power, could survive living off the land in a climate of such extremes. I am known by the locals as "Maine's Crazy Cat Woman" and "The Sea Witch of Old Orchard Beach". Now you know why.

I will tell you how I survived, hurricanes and blizzards and as you will see, it took the help of lots of strange little odds and ends. If you are in an area with extreme weather conditions, than your local homeless will also need some of these same types of things in order to survive. As will also see, I had settled down into one spot and was off the beaten path enough to be able to keep supplies I needed stored in my tent, most homeless folks do not have this luxury of a place to store things. During my second year of homelessness I built a second tarp tent along side the one I slept in, this second one acted as my storage shed for season cloths, shovels, and eventually over the years a portable cook stove, and a 3 month food supply which is why I am eating better these last 2 years, than the first 3 years. But as I said, this sort of storage space luxury is VERY RARE for homeless people.

My scariest nights in the tent-thing were the lightening storms which crash through here on a weekly basis all year long. The torrential rains flooded the inside soaking my mattress (yes I have one under my sleeping bag - it took only 2 nights sleeping on the hard ground for me to head out to find it - got it out of the trash). High winds tore through and ran off with the tarp taking it at times a quarter a mile away, thus why I set out to find cement cinder blocks to tie down to every tie down hole on the tarp's edge - and during a hurricane, even that did no good as I now had a tarp flying over head and waving 8 40lb blocks at me. (I ended up adding tie ropes from the block to the near by trees, once I did that the

only way to tarp would move if the tree uprooted...ah yes, tall skinny pine trees in Maine, you never know when you'll find them roots to the sky. Silly me thinking a 150 foot tree would hold the tarp down during a hurricane. Live and learn I suppose.) It was the lightening which bothered me most - me sleeping under the 4 tallest pine trees in town, one of them got hit by lightening - twice! Than there's the fog before the storm and after, and during...can't see an inch in front of your face. And let's not forget the thunder booming and vibrating the ground and sending the 9 terrified cats, 20 claws per cat, up my back and on my head. Thunder storms: the reason I opted to move out of the tent and into a car.

Than there was the day, I woke up to find myself in a nature made igloo, buried under 9 feet of snow (thank goodness I had a snow shovel in the tent with me, it would have been hell digging out with my hands.) and unzipped my sleeping bag to find, in addition to the 1 dog and 9 cats that were SUPPOSED to be there, a stray mother cat, her kittens, and a skunk, all nestled down asleep inside the bottom of my sleeping bag. The skunk left 3 days later after the blizzard passed. I now have 12 cats instead of 9. (I did not yet have my car at the time the cats moved in, I was still living under the tarp at that point. I guess I had the warmest safest place they could find during the blizzard.)

A question I was asked a while back said:

"I was wondering about how to keep warm while on the road? It's winter soon. I have a car and a tent. Which is warmer? What do homeless people in New England do to stay warm in the winter? Do you have some kind of heating? Is the car heater enough? Or is it needed at all?"

I can't answer for others, but for myself, I live in Maine, in an area where we have 5 to 7 months of snow and 2 of those months at sub-zero (-20F and lower, -48F BEFORE wind chill factor, not unusual) temps.

Of course with our winters it's warmer under a tarp than it is inside a car. When the temps are that low a heater does no good, chances are it's too cold to get the car battery to turn over the engine, and if you can't get the car started than you can't get the heater to come on. Homeless people freeze to death inside cars in this kind of weather. Being up off the ground, cold wind goes right underneath and chills the inside to even colder temps than the outside. And a car is metal - it holds in the cold VERY well.

The tent is going to be much warmer. Smaller, so not as much area to heat

I wear 3 dresses one on top of the other, 2 kimono over that, a fleece hunters jacket over that, a full length winter coat over that, and a 200 year old full length mink coat over that, a knit hat on my head and a fur hat over that, a pair of gloves worn inside a pair of mittens. Than me and my 12 cats wrap up in a fleece blanket, get inside of a -30F sub-zero sleeping bag, and zip that up inside a -40F sub zero sleeping bag. I built a large nest, like a bird's nest, out of 3 bales of hay, and the sleeping bags were places inside of this, than spare hay pulled over the top once me and the cats were inside the bags.

Keep a shovel in the tent, if it gets buried in snow you'll suffocate - you got to dig out an air hole so you can breath. Dig is near the bottom in the front and a second near the top at the back (to keep the air circulating), NEVER a single one straight over head! (which could cause a cave in and death from being smothered by snow.) Brace a large log standing upright, in the center of your tent to keep the snow sliding off and stoop your tent from collapsing.

If you have access to it, line the inside of your tent with hay or cardboard, to hold in heat. Stack bales of hay around the outside and bury those in snow, those keep out the cold.

THIS is how I survived under a tarp during Maine's harsh coastal winters.

So next time you see a homeless person and you want to help. Take a look around you. Think about the weather in your region. Every region is unique. What type of weather are these people facing? What would you need to fight off the weather where you live? Do they have what they need to fight off the climate they are in? If not, than that is a need high on their priority list. You can live ANYWHERE in the world, in the harshest, wildest climates, provided you have the right tools to survive in that sort of climate. You want to help homeless people? Watch your local weather station and give homeless people supplies needed to protect themselves from nature.

Note to Self:

** A Library Card will keep you warm.*

**A Library Card will help you gain an income.*

** A Library Card will change your life.*

#10: A Library Card

Every homeless person who does not have one should get one. If they can not afford one (and they will have to pay for one if they do not have utility bills to prove they live in the town): than this is a thing you need to help them get.

I am going to repeat, but greatly add to one of the answers I already gave you, to explain WHY a library card is so important, but it requires with it: good hygiene and clean clothing, for without them, the library card is useless. I have many Library Cards. Each week I am at each of the following town libraries: Old Orchard Beach, Saco, Biddeford, Portland, and Burbank, and I am a frequent visitor at other libraries including the ones in Wells, and Ocean Park. My being a frequent, daily, 4 to 8 hours a day, library patron, has resulted in many changes in my life, all of them good. I shall explain...

I do not ask for money, but I can tell you that people do not think I need money, either, so it's doubtful that if I did ask, that anyone would give me any anyways. I used to be what you would term "the visibly wealthy" and a lot of people think I still am, most people would not believe I was homeless, to look at me, people have said as much, and it took taking them to see the tarp-tent I live in for them to believe I really was homeless. They always say to me: *"I never would have guessed...you don't look homeless."*

The visibly wealthy are people who LOOK wealthy, people whom other people THINK are wealthy, people who SEEM as though they live a millionaire life style, when in fact, they are very, very far from wealthy at all. I am one of these people. I look wealthy, and by all outer appearances, I seem to be living a very maximist millionaire lifestyle...I know this because people tell me so all the time. Very few locals are actually aware that I am homeless, most of the people who discover this fact, are in fact tourists who run across my tent accidently while exploring the wild pine forests which surround the area. Unlike other homeless I, my tent, and the spot of land I call "home" is out of sight of the public. I

am in a swamp in the forest, on the beach, not in the downtown city as other homeless are. It has both advantages and disadvantages. It makes it harder for me to get food, requiring more living off the land than other homeless folks do, but it allows me a place to store things and results in my being able to acquire a food supply for several weeks at a time, something few homeless can do. In the city getting food daily is much easier, but also a requirement as you have no place to store food for the months ahead.

But I've always lived here, in the forest, on the outskirts, since 1975, so every one "knows" me. Very few people know that I have been homeless since 2006, however. I don't tell people and they don't think to ask, because simple fact of the matter is, I do not "look" homeless, nor do I "act" homeless. In fact I do not look or act any different than I ever did. The locals actually know very little about me and have long whispered rumors of witchcraft and gypsy curses. They all know I'm a writer and they add comments of: *"She's a famous author and you know how THEY are. I forget what she wrote, but it was really crazy shit. Horror or something. She's one of those CRAZY writers, you know the type, lives in the woods and hates people."* Rumors of my being an eccentric millionaire have circulated for over 20 years now. Rumors of my being a witch go as far back as 1979. Few have ever come to see me at my home. Few knew how I REALLY lived before becoming homeless, and even fewer were ever aware of the fact that I became homeless at some point.

Every town has a "local witch" that the kids run away from and parents warn to stay away from, and in Old Orchard Beach: I'm it! "The Sea Witch of Old Orchard Beach" That's what people call me. They don't know what else to call me, they're too scared of me to ask my name.

If you are ever in Old Orchard, and you see a strange event: crowds of people suddenly rushing off the sidewalks and running to hide indoors, look around, you'll probably see me walking by. In a town with bumper to bumper tourists and no room to move, I'm the only person you'll ever see with a 10 foot buffer all around me - devoid of people, save the few who point and scream: *"There she goes, look away, it's the witch! Don't let her put the evil eye on you."* Like I said, fishermen and their families, and their friends, and their neighbors are a superstitious lot, this town is rife with people scared of spooks.

But it's always been this way, for near on 40 years. I've only been homeless for the past 5 years, but here in town, no one knows, no one cares, they don't ask, and I don't tell them. No one around here knows I'm homeless, save the Saco Ward Mormons, they being the vandals who made me homeless. Who would I tell? They'll all too busy running away scared I'll zap them with a gypsy curse to even think to talk to me or be my friend. I still go to the same places and do the same things I always did. I still dress as I always did. I'm still clean. I'm not in rags. Granted I've no money to spend any more and I am no longer giving money to the panhandlers and street musicians as I used to do (a habit of mine which lead to the rumor I was a millionaire), because I no longer have money to give them, and I sleep under a 8x6 tarp now instead of in a house, and I have to adjust things to adapt to my homelessness, but by all outer appearances, no one would know my living conditions have changed.

What does this have to do with a library card? I'm getting to that. People think to be homeless you must be dirty, and smelly, and wear rags. In addition to having Autism I also have OCD. I've got a thing about germs and dirt and body order and fleas and lice and...have you ever seen the TV show "Monk"? Yeah. I'm very clean, very disinfected. Obsessively so. It's very important to me to not be dirty and to not smell bad. Staying clean and smelling nice is a bigger priority for me than finding food.

Because of the local rumors and gossips and ideas people have about who and what I am, I have no friends. What friends I had before I was homeless, turned their backs on me afterwards, as it seems, they were only my friends while they thought I was rich, in hopes of getting something out of me and now that they know I have no money, they don't have the time of day for me. Fact is, most of the rumors started because I have Autism and I am very different from other people as a result. I have great difficulty talking. My speech is slurred and stuttered, and often too fast for others to make out what the words are, combined with my Scottish Native Mainer Down East accent it makes it very difficult to near impossible for people to understand me when I talk.

Speech being a difficult thing for me, I turn to other modes of communication: **writing**.

Writing leads to books.

Books leads to reading.

Reading leads to libraries.

Libraries lead to library cards.

Ahhh, there it is. And now for the connection:

Because I am so very alone all day and all night, with people too frightened to get near me, too scared to be my friend, I turned to books for companionship. Books and cats. Cats and books.

Before being homeless, I did not live alone. I lived in a large family. No one had an income, because every one's income was pooled together, one big income divided out as needed to family members. Strict laws governed the family, laws that forbid a woman from getting a job or driving a car or being seen in public without the company of a male relative. School was not an option. Education was seen as a bad thing. Government was considered evil, and we as Scottish Travellers aka Gypsies, were a government unto ourselves. The flood which left me homeless, shattered the family, leaving some in the hospital, some dead, and the rest scattered to the wind. I alone remained in Old Orchard...alone, 29 years old, with no schooling, no education, no job skills, no job history, no social skills, no driver's license, no car, and no idea how to even begin to learn how to do any of those things. I did not know what a GED was, I'd never even heard of one before.

Note To Self:

**Without my Library Card I would not now have an income.*

**Without my Library Card I would not now have a GED.*

**Without my Library Card I would not now have a driver's license.*

**I did not have these things 5 years ago when I became homeless.*

My Library Cards (I have many) and 3 local libraries was my key to freedom from the mindset of homelessness, the key to my survival, and the key to my income.

These 3 libraries saved my life and kept me going, during 3 of the worst years of my life:

[Libby Memorial Library](#)

27 Staples Street

Old Orchard Beach, ME 04064

McArthur Public Library

270 Main St
Biddeford, Maine

[Portland Public Library](#)
5 Monument Square
Portland Maine 04101

FIND THE NEAREST LIBRARY'S NEAR YOU

During the first 3 years of homelessness, I spent nearly every day-time hour in one or the other of these 3 buildings 6 days a week. And what did I do there? Well, I joined Squidoo for one thing. I also joined Zazzle, CafePress, Associated Content, Etsy, FaceBook, MySpace, and Twitter.

I became one of Squidoo's top 100 writers (in popularity out of 2 million members), and am on their list of the top ten highest paid Squidoo members, with my Squidoo PayDays varying from \$90 to \$200 each month for writing articles such as this article you are reading right now.

On Zazzle I went on to become one of their ProSellers (meaning their highest paid artists), not an easy thing to do at the time I did it in 2007. They've changed the requirements today and now there are many ProSellers. I make between \$30 to \$600 per month, selling my art online through them.

Probably the biggest impact of my libraries time was NaNoWriMo and ScriptFrenzy, the 2 international writing contests which combined I have a total of 7 winnings out of 12 contest entries, and am now today their local Municipal Liaison for The Southern Maine Charter. Through these contests, I met thousands of fellow writers worldwide, and organized a local writer's group which I now head. I could not have done it without the help of the internet access computer programs of 3 libraries listed above.

Without a library card, I would not have an income, for due to my Autism, I am still unable to get a "regular" job, but thanks to my library card I am making enough money on line to not really need a regular job anyways.

An even bigger change would come in December 2010 when, I took the GED test and passed at 100% perfect score on everything except math, and was then contacted by colleges, because my scores broke a record at being among the highest test scores ever seen in the nation. When asked by college professors, how a person with Autism, and no formal school education could get the scores I was getting (on the several tests they had me take to prove I was not cheating on the GED), I explained to them that in the past 5 years I have read ALL 12,000 books in the collection of the Old Orchard Beach Libby Library, over 8,000 books from the Biddeford Library's collection, and I'm currently working on reading the entire 2 million book collection of the Portland Library, I'm about 10,000 books into their collection at the moment. I've learned A LOT these past 5 years. My head is now packed full of information on every topic under the sun, which also explains my ability to write articles on such a huge wide range of topics as I do.

Without my library card I would have a GED now, nor would I have colleges such as Harvard asking me to take their courses. I do not currently qualify for financial aid (my income is TOO LOW!) however, I am currently taking steps to correct that, and plan to take Harvard up on their offer, to study to become an English and Literature Professor. I do so love words and books and I seem to have a nick for teaching such things to other. Becoming an English Professor is very likely to be a career on my horizon.

All this, thanks to my getting a library card.

But as I said, you need more than JUST a library card to do this! You MUST keep yourself clean and presentable and you MUST wear clothing that are not rags, and that is why I mentioned the seemingly off topic part about my outer appearances above.

Did you ever look at homeless people and notice how they always wear dark clothes: black, brown, navy...this is because you can wear dark colors longer between washings, as the dirt doesn't show. Yes, I know what most homeless people look like and how they normally live, I am a frequent patron of the Portland Public Library, on Congress St, in the heart of the biggest homeless capital of Maine: Downtown Portland, where over 300 homeless men, women, and children gather each day at One City Center to huddle on the sidewalks in hopes of getting a handout, or the possibility of getting to spend the day inside Portland's giant 3 story 2million book library. Notice how in my photos I am often wearing WHITE and LIGHT pastel colors? Part of the reason I do not look homeless is because of the lights, whites, and bright colors I wear... you just plan NEVER see homeless people dressed like this. To keep these clean requires a lot of Shout and Blueing and frequent washing.

And I will give this advice to other homeless people: **Put staying clean your #1 priority, and you'll be treated better by the non-homeless public and find it easier to find the other things you need, such as food and a place to sleep. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY: it'll give you daily access to your local libraries.**

While most libraries draw in a few homeless from time to time, the Portland Library is different: they welcome the homeless into their doors. They give the homeless FREE library cards (the only library I know of which has this policy). They have volunteers and programs to teach the homeless how to use computers and how to find jobs online and how to set up online businesses. They have a huge basement level over 2,000 square feet, where homeless were (back in 2006; I believe this policy was removed in 2009 and no longer is allowed) allowed to come in and sleep on the floor for a few hours while the library is open. Bill Gates on learning of the Portland Library's unique program to help the homeless, paid for it's \$10million renovation and expansion, which now includes a dining area where the homeless can sit down at one of 40 tables (90 min limit per day per person) to eat (food they brought with them) and a massive computer room with 100 computers available for use by the homeless. It is no wonder homeless flock from all corners of Maine to wait in the long lines to get into this very busy and always packed library.

But even here, cleanliness can become an issue, and if you are too dirty, too smelly, enough to disturb the many non-homeless patrons, the librarians will ask you to leave, and if you don't leave, the Portland Police Department has a mini office right inside the library, just for the purpose of physically carrying out the many homeless, drug dealers, and gangsters who often frequent this library. The police guards stand on duty at the doors and you have to go through 2 levels of security, including a gun-check, to get admittance into the main part of the building where the books are kept.

My being so very openly and meticulously clean, in 17 years as a patron here, I've never once been asked for a gun-check. In the early days of those 17 years, I had visited this library only occasionally, I saw the many homeless throngs gathered inside and out, but never thought about them. It was only in

the past 5 years, after becoming homeless myself, that I learned the importance this building had on the lives of so many people who had no place else to go. I became a weekly visitor here, and my spending time with the homeless people and using the homeless programs, lead librarians to ask me: *"Doing research on homelessness I see! Good for you, those people need all the help they can get."* She had no idea, I was one of the homeless people. To her I looked like one of the many college students who come to this library to interview the homeless.

I myself have an advantage most homeless folks do not have: I live on a beach. I swim daily in the ocean, fully clothed and am always meticulously clean and fresh as a result. The beach sand scrubs dirt and grim out of my skin and clothes. When I have money I buy soap, body lotion, and deodorant FIRST and food after (food is easier to find in the trash, than cleaning goods).

Because of my obsessively cleanliness habits I have freedoms other homeless do not get: I don't get kicked out of libraries or malls and thus have a warm dry place to stay for mot hours of the day. I'm on the computer all the time chatting online because I'm in the library all the time: I have 5 library cards, each cost \$12 - \$25 a year, and provide me with 6 to 12 hours a day INSIDE in a warm dry building, and with no lack of things to do: one of these libraries is 3 stories tall and has 2 million books, I'm getting a lot of reading done...and get this...as a result of homelessness and my new found library habit, in spite of have never gone to school, I was able to get my GED and pass it with a 100% perfect score on every thing but math! I would not have been able to do this if I was not keeping clean, because the libraries are constantly throwing homeless people out based on: "I'm sorry, but you'll have to leave, people are complaining about the smell." Stay clean and get a library card and you'll have a place to stay almost all day long, every day but Sunday.

Note to Self:

**The Library is the single most important organization in your community.*

**The Library is a homeless persons best friend.*

**The Library will do more to help you end your homelessness than any shelter, charity or soup kitchen ever will.*

While my current income is \$2,000 a year, about \$5 a day, I was not poor before becoming homeless, my wardrobe was extensive, I was a CosPlayer, a huge fan of Liberace, and had a wardrobe to rival Liberace's - glitter, sequins, fur and all. Today my wardrobe is much limited, but no less furry or sequined as I was able to salvage some of my clothes from the flood, not necessarily practical in a fashion sense, but warm: a result of which I wear silk gowns, velvet dresses, and a full length mink coat pretty much all the time. I do get crassed a lot about my clothes, but I don't have anything else to wear. I have exactly 3 changes of cloths, stored in the trunk of my car: one for spring/fall, one for winter, one for summer. Granted I kind of look like I'm heading out to a Broadway show, or should be on a Las Vegas stage, all day long, but these are the only cloths I have and I can not afford to go out a buy something "normal" looking, like T-shirt and jeans, and considering I've dressed like this since I was 12 years old, I'm not likely to stop either.

Some people get angry over it: [I]"How can you be homeless and wear a \$10,000 mink coat?"[I] Simple, the coat is over 200 years old, it belonged to husband's grandmother. It survived the flood. It's the only coat I have. And say what you want, but when Maine's -40F winter comes raging in, and I am stuck outside in a blizzard, I'm glad I have it.

I live on a beach, yes, but it's a cold North Atlantic beach and rare is the day we see a heat wave of 75F. Most of the year our highs are 50F. It's cold here. Silk and velvet insulate the body and keep out the cold, while fur holds in body heat. If I didn't have a full length mink coat to wear during the 3 blizzards and 2 ice storms I've been homeless through, I probably would have frozen to death by now. You can laugh or get angry all you want, about a homeless woman owning a full length mink coat, but this coat keeps me alive, and that's why when I had to choose between it or one of my other coats, this was the coat I choose to keep. It's all about survival. You have to dress for the weather.

People who know I'm homeless, they get mad about the way I dress. They yell at me and accuses me of wasting money. Honey, I sewed these dresses myself, almost 20 years ago, and each on cost my under \$30 to make, and this coat didn't cost me a penny, it's been passed down in my family for decades. I had these clothes LONG before I was homeless. But here's the thing: People who do not know I am homeless, don't care that I dress "wealthier" than they do, and they treat me, like a movie star, a lot of people think I am, I often have people ask for my autograph, (not mine however...which is even funnier, as I'm a writer not an actor! LOL!) and I say: "Who do you think I am?". They say, "I can't remember your name but I saw that movie you did, you know the one..." Funny that. I get it all the time. I get it because I bath daily (in the cold ocean), keep my clothes clean, and wear very high class fashion.

There was a while when I stopped bathing, stopped wearing the silk and fur, and wore rags for a time. I was treated like shit, had things thrown at me, was beaten up and had my hip broken. Why? What had changed? Nothing. All I did was change my clothes and not bathe for a few days, everything else remained exactly the same.

This is the thing I learned most being homeless: appearances are everything. Because I do not look homeless, because I keep myself and my clothes clean, I am not treated as poorly as other homeless people are. I have seen people better off than I am, treated very poorly because they smelled bad and had dirty clothes, and they were not even homeless! I've had homeless people come up to me begging for money, unaware that I was just as penniless and homeless as they were. I do not look homeless.

If homeless people had a place to bathe daily and good clean fashionable clothes they'd be treated a lot better. I know I was. I know I have an advantage there, because of where I live and the clothes I owned before becoming homeless. But this is something every homeless person deserves: **The dignity to be treated kindly by their fellow man, and it seems kindness from others required you to be clean, smelling fresh, and well dressed. To look clean, to smell clean, to be well dressed, these are options most homeless do not have access to, and yet it's the ONLY thing they need to make a huge improvement in how other people treat them.**

So when you ask, do people believe I need the money? No, people do not believe I need the money, because most people think I'm a millionaire, they say as much. I have had homeless people tell me I give other homeless people a bad name. Why? Just because I'm homeless and barely getting by on \$5 a day, why is that any reason for me to give up on life and wear rags and refuse to clean myself? I'm still a human being after all, and I'm still the same person I was before I was homeless, and that person hated being dirty, so why shouldn't I continue to keep up my good hygiene? I'm not ready to lay down and say to the world: "I give up!"

And so, while this stuff may seem off topic for the importance of getting a library card while being homeless, I assure you, they are important, and if you want to be successful, have an income, and live a "higher quality" life while you are homeless, than you MUST stay clean, dress well, and spend a lot of time taking advantage of all the free services that come with your library card!

In Conclusion...

Well, so there you have it. My list of the top 10 things that homeless people need to survive. As for things they actually "WANT" which is how your question was worded... they have the same wants and desires as any one else. They used to have hobbies and collections, they used to play sports and go to movie theaters. They used to laugh. They used to smile. They used to have fun. They want to be able to do these things once again.

When homeless, what would you need, want most of all?

Food, Clean water, Warm blankets, Money.

Appropriate clothing for the weather, clean and in good condition, not cast off rags.

A family, friends, someone to talk to.

A safe place to sleep.

Toiletries (soap, deodorant, etc)

A job.

Something soft to sleep on. (mattress, pillow, hay, etc), A tent.

A car or truck.

An RV or motor home.

An apartment or home.

Thanks for Reading My Story. *Wendy*

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

<http://listverse.com/2008/01/22/top-10-things-you-need-to-survive-the-streets/>

<http://oldtimer.wordpress.com/2007/06/03/what-the-homeless-need-most/>

<http://hpn.asu.edu/archives/Oct99/0255.html>

<http://homelesslaw.wordpress.com/category/mail/>

http://www.nationalhomeless.org/need_help/index.html

<http://www.holytaco.com/25-awesome-homeless-guy-signs/>

<http://guide2homelessness.blogspot.com/2004/10/introduction-to-project.html>

A Sobering Blog Comment:

I Want to be Homeless

I don't like working, and I'm in TX right now I'm thinking of going to California and get a tent and just live out in the woods, or campgrounds. I guess campgrounds would have showers, or sleep on the beach. I don't care about money, and if I needed money for alcohol or food, I could always try and get a job at some fast food restaurant for a couple weeks and that should last me for a while. I wouldn't want to ask anybody for money, I don't like being around people, so I won't miss anybody, I'm a person that keeps to myself.

Also about being homeless and for food, can't I hunt or fish? Maybe I'll get some cheap paddle boat and just sleep on that, seems safer than sleeping out on the street. Also campgrounds have electricity so I can connect my cd player and listen to music.

When I was living with my parents, I couldn't stay there unless I had a job, so usually I would just lie and drive to a lake and just stay in my car until night time, get drunk, listen to music, and then go home and sleep. I think I did this for about a year, so if I'm homeless I can do the same in a tent, and avoid getting a DWI since I don't have to drive home.

Then I tried to make myself work and left my parent's house, I figured if I have to pay rent then I could keep a job, but that isn't working out as I planned. I mean, I guess it's alright, but I just don't like the idea of having to work 8-5 for the rest of my life, makes me feel like, I'm "trapped" and actually I'm not even working 8-5, I'm only working from about 10-2pm, but it just pisses me off, so I'm thinking of just forgetting about everything, I'm 25 and like I said I keep to myself.

SECTION THREE

Reference and Referral Information

Homeless Resources

HOUSING

www.shelterlistings.org/county/de-sussex-county.html

- **Sussex Community Crisis Housing Services** 204 East North Street Georgetown, DE 19947 (302) 856-2246
- [Casa San Francisco Emergency Shelter](#), 127 Broad Street Milton DE 19968 684-8694
Eligibility: Homeless persons without a history of violence against others.
- [Connections, PATH Homeless Outreach](#), Intake: call 302 232-5490
Eligibility: Homeless Adults.
- [Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing](#), 684 Forest St, Dover, 19904 302 736-3600
Eligibility: Homeless Men (21+) not under influence of drugs or alcohol or on psychotropic medication
- [Friendship House, Andrew's Place](#) Intake: Call Center for information: 652-8278
Eligibility: Men who are 55 or older
- [Gateway House](#) Statewide, Intake: call Admissions Coordinator 302 571-8885
Eligibility: Potential tenant must have stable income
- [Oxford House of Delaware, Sussex](#), Intake: Call (302) 377-0485 or call the individual house.
Eligibility: Any individual male or female recovering from alcohol or drug addiction who makes a commitment to not use any alcohol or drug, and is able to pay their equal expense of the household bills usually in the amount of between 100.00 and 120.00 dollars a week.
Oxford House Old Orchard: 3 Bradford Lane, Lewes, DE 19958-9511, Male 7 bed, (302) 703-2884
Oxford House Georgetown: 105 Race Street, Georgetown, DE 19947-1909, Male 8 bed, (302) 544-0054

Oxford House Millsboro: 28043 Gravel Hill Road, Millsboro, DE 19966, Male 6 bed, (302) 730-6096
Oxford House Coolspring: 19211 Beaver Dam Road, Lewes, DE 19958-5556, Male 6 bed, (302) 549-1135
Oxford House Quiet Acres: 23400 Windy Acres Lane, Millsboro, DE 19966-1531, Male 8 bed, (302) 993-8355
Oxford House Lewes: 8 Tulane Drive, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971-9418, Male 8 bed, (302) 703-2889
Oxford House Rehoboth Beach: 14 Jefferson Street, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971, **Women 6 bed**, (302) 260-9318
- [Rotary Club of Nanticoke, Rotary House](#) Seaford, Intake: Call Shipley State Service Center at 628-2000 for intake Eligibility: Homeless families with an employed full time income.
- [Salvation Army, Adult Rehabilitation Center](#) Statewide 302 654-8808
Intake Process: Call for information. 81 bed facility
Eligibility: Adults ages 21 years or older who are jobless or homeless.
- [Shepherd Place](#), (302) 678-1909 Intake: Performed at time of entry and additional intake done by case manager. A 30 bed emergency shelter serving homeless women with children (no men) & single women

- aged 18 and over.
- [Sojourners' Place](#) Statewide, Up to 42 men and 8 women can be housed at one time and stay as long as they need to stay to complete program (302) 764-4713
Eligibility: Chronically homeless persons capable of rehabilitation
- [YWCA, Marian Hinson Home-Life Management Center](#) Statewide, Intake Process: Complete application on site Transitional program for homeless families. Provide supportive services to victims and survivors of domestic abuse. (302) 658-7110
Eligibility: Adults with custody of at least one child

MEDICAL SERVICES

LaRed Health Center 505 West Market Street Georgetown, DE 19947 855-1233

FOOD

Blessed Givings Emergency Food Program

Address is 40 Ingramtown

Georgetown, Delaware 19947 Phone number is (302) 856-3447

When people have no other options, and need food for themselves and their families, then this food program may be able to help. Perishable items, meals, and other forms of nutritional support are provided to the needy and low income.

Catholic Charities Basic Needs Program - Sussex County

406 South Bedford Street, Suite 9

Georgetown DE 19947 Telephone - (302) 856-9578

This is one of the charities that offers several programs and resources. Families can stop by for the food pantry, soup kitchen, or clothing closet. In an extreme emergency, as funds allow, they may have money for emergency expenses too, such as medications, utilities, or rent.

Bridgeville State Service Center

Food closet address - 400 Mill Street

Bridgeville DE 19933 Call 302-337-8261

Services and food is distributed **seven days a week** to the needy.

Casa San Francisco Emergency Food Pantry

Location is 127 Broad Street

Milton, Delaware 19968 Call (302) 684-8694

Similar to the Catholic Charities location listed above, this charity offers many programs and social services to people across Sussex County.

Christian Storehouse

Mitchell Street At Old Landing Road

Millsboro DE 19966 Call (302) 934-8151

Offers aid for people regardless of religion or background.

Delmarva Clergy United

Church address is 13724 South Old State Road

Ellendale, Delaware 19941 Telephone number is (302) 422-5306

First State Community Action (Food Closet)

308 North Railroad Avenue Main phone number is (302) 856-7761

Sussex County Delaware is supported by this food pantry. Call for free groceries, meals, fruits, vegetables, baby formula, and other aid.

State Service Centers

Milford DE 19963 Call 302-424-7230

Seaford 302-628-2000

Bridgeville 302-337-8261

Georgetown 302-856-5574

Laurel 302-875-6943

Case managers from these centers can direct people to government and public assistance programs and solutions. Apply for programs such as food stamps, LIHEAP, or other federal or state aid.

Salvation Army Sussex

601 North Dual Highway

Seaford DE 19973 Dial (302) 628-2020 for hours

Also offers a number of programs. For food, can provide Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas meals.

Programs run include Angel Tree and free winter coats, as well as holiday gifts for children.

Food Bank of Delaware Sussex, Milford Business Park

Main address is 1040 Mattlind Way

Milford DE 19963 Call the food bank at (302) 424-3301

Items for the needy include free food, groceries, and meals. They also partner with local churches and distribution centers, so they have information on locations to call for help. A great place for referrals and guidance.

Blessed Givings Emergency Food Program (302) 856-3447

DelMarva Clergy United, Food Closet (302) 422-5306

Jusst Sooup Ministry / Mobile soup kitchen 302 644-8113

Goodwill Industries, Food Closet, Bridgeville, 302 741-0456

Dagsboro Church of God, Josephs Storehouse 302 732-6550

Cape Henlopen Food Basket 302 644-7727

Bethel Tabernacle, Helping Hands Food, Frankford, 302 539-6768

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ACE Resource Center 302-628-3016 Seaford

Community Resource Center LRAC 302-227-1340

Love Inc. 302-629-7050

Tap Faith 302-544-0054 or 302-519-6675

Recovery Response Center 302-424-5660 (Substance Abuse/Mental Health)

Mobile CRISIS Unit: 800-969-4357

HALO in Maryland 410-742-9356

St Vincent DePaul Society 302-448-1986

Paul Alexander - 302-628-0630 after 6

Homeless Hotline - Catholic Charities 302-856-9578 ext 4

Crisis House - 302-856-2246

Christian Shelter - 410-749-5673

Serenity Homes - 302-228-1047

Superna Marra Homes - 302-228-2008

Delmarva Teen Challenge - 302-629-2559

La Red Homelessness Unit 302-236-1875

HELP PAYING BILLS

[Http://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/sussex_county_assistance_progr.html](http://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/sussex_county_assistance_progr.html)

SPACE FOR RESOURCE INFORMATION - NOT YET INCLUDED

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SECTION FOUR

Facility Overview

We have a plan for a 10 person facility. It is scalable. It could hold 50 or more homeless people depending on the size of the structure.

The particular layout below shows a plan view measuring 40 feet by 50 feet or 2000 square feet.

While a plan helps to visualize a project, it does little to define the many complex parts necessary to make a project a reality. **THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS – THIS MIGHT BE TOO MUCH WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS PARTICULAR GROUP.**

There is no shame in acknowledging one's limitations. In fact, it could be said that there is wisdom in such an acknowledgment. Having said that, it doesn't hurt or cost anything to know the big picture. We never know when an opportunity might arise which will enable us to move forward on such an excellent project. Opportunity favors the prepared.

THE STRUCTURE

We all understand that this effort is a volunteer effort without funding. Therefore it is incumbent on us to reach out and find resources. Most of us are aware that the Federal, State and some Local governments have un-utilized buildings and facilities that could be retrofitted to meet the needs of the homeless in Sussex and Kent Counties. There are also benefactors out there who have not yet been approached or have not yet stepped up to contribute the valuable resources necessary to bring this worthy goal to fruition.

What do these people require to become involved? In a word – **LEADERSHIP**. The last thing on earth a benefactor needs is to contribute their resources and then be expected to

do the work of retro-fitting, stocking and managing a facility such as what we are considering. The success of such a project will require at least four things, Faith, Leadership, Teamwork and most of all ACTION. In Matthew 17:20 our Lord teaches us that with the faith of a mustard seed, we can move mountains, that all things are possible.



This is the size of a mustard seed. I can not believe that between the 25 or so Christian men and women, involved in this homelessness project, we can not find enough faith to bring this project into being. Having said that, in James 2:17 we are taught that faith without works is useless. Leadership and Teamwork takes faith, couples it with action and brings forth the magnificent. This is not rocket science, it is men and women doing God's will. If we take God's will and our will to work together, we can make this a reality. To be sure this will not happen over night. It could take a year or more. This is where persistence and tenacity come into play. All part of the challenge.

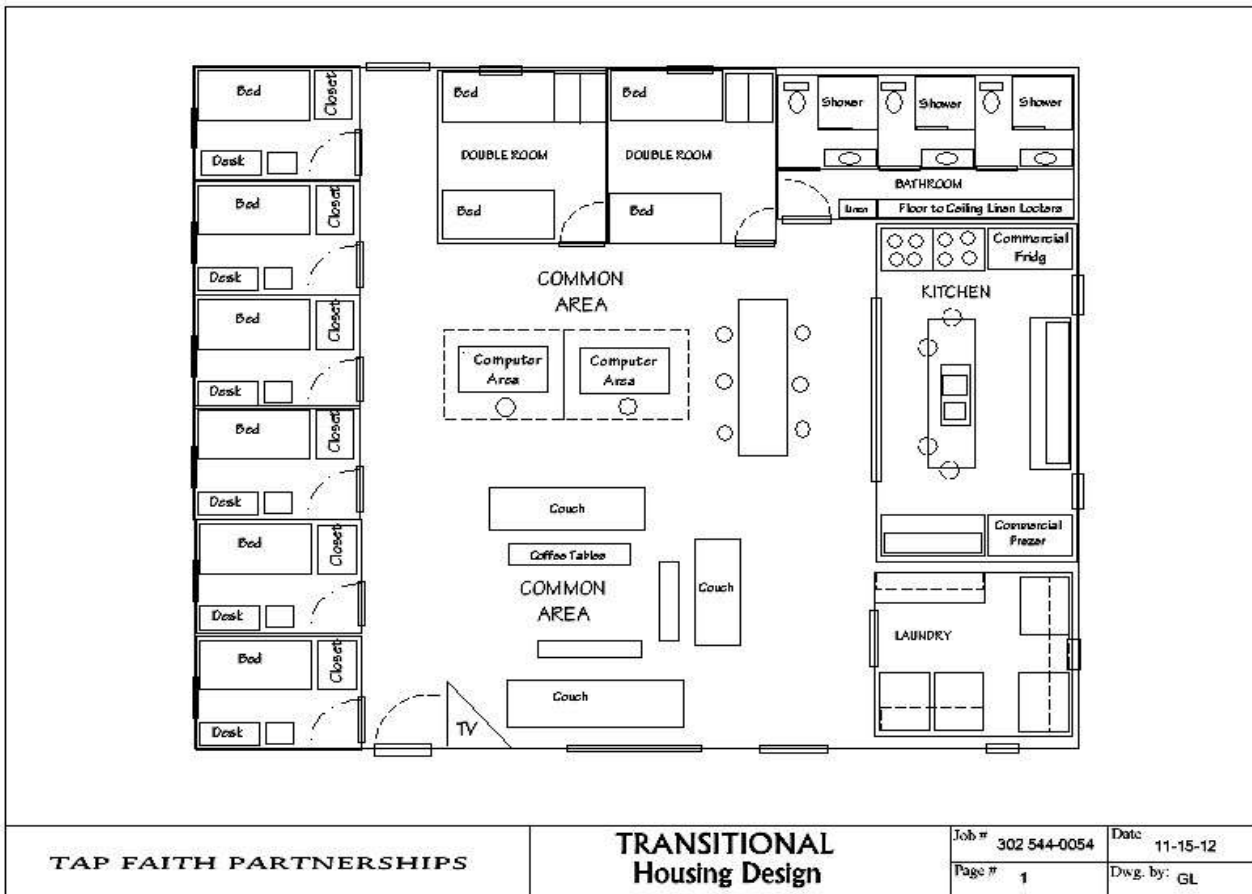
THE RETRO-FIT

I was involved in the EXTREAM HOME MAKEOVER of Reverand Dunn's Jusst Sooup Ministry facility on rt. 9. It took us 10 days from an open field to a completely finished and functional facility. I've also observed the Chinese build a fifteen story building in seven weeks. I am a skilled project manager with over 40 years of experience. I know we can do this if we set our minds to the task. The question is, do we have the will and commitment to follow through to completion?

The retro-fitting of a building to house, feed and teach the willing homeless to achieve self-sufficiency will require the donations of materials and equipment from vendors throughout the County. We have observed that there are any number of vendors that are ready and willing to contribute. However like any potential benefactor, vendors will require the same four things in order to feel comfortable in giving, Faith, Leadership, Teamwork and most of all an ACTION plan. If we can provide a realistic plan, they will contribute.

MANAGEMENT

In management we have the greatest challenge. You see the bricks and sticks are easy compared to management. In management, among other things, an operational manual must be created and implemented. If you've read the stories and information in previous sections you realize that many homeless dislike rules and authority. So a discerning intake will be required. That means that some of our homeless will have to be turned away. This will be heartbreaking but necessary if we are to assist those willing to help themselves. Management activities will require human resources to achieve smooth operation, assuming such a thing is possible. More financial resources will be necessary. Grant writing and fund raising will be necessary. It is a long and winding road filled with struggles and troubles, that will lead to the success of a project such as this. However as Tap Faith likes to paraphrase, *“The greater the struggle, the more glorious the triumph.”*



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