

In High School and Homeless...



People don't like to think of students being homeless; teaching a child equation or reminding them of historical events while the student sits in class wondering where they will be sleeping that night. Unfortunately, that is a reality for many students.

These students hide in the shadows or slip through the cracks to avoid bringing attention to themselves or situations. Almost 89,000 students were counted as homeless during the 2013-2014 school year (nn4youth.org). However, that number is actually higher. There is a strict definition of who can be considered a homeless student. Homeless students are defined as children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This number is also affected by the students' abilities to hide the fact that they are homeless. When students are younger, sometimes the signs are easier to spot such as a spotty attendance record and poor health and nutrition.

Students who find themselves homeless often keep their status a secret for several reasons. Kids don't want to be taken away or separated from their families. Students end up homeless for many reasons. These can stem from the family's financial struggles to being estranged from family due to a sexual orientation. There is also a pride and an embarrassment element that comes into play. Students don't want to be known as the homeless kid. These reasons among others have stopped the revelation of so many people.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act paired with the education system to play a role in helping homeless students. The Act is where the definition of a homeless student comes from. However, there is so much more to do than being able to identify which students are or are not homeless. Some schools provide a homeless education liaison who helps students navigate and stay in school. These liaisons are meant to be a source of help for students. This includes making sure that homeless students receive equal opportunity to succeed.

This article aims to show people how deep the problem is. If you would like to help spread the message, contact us at Ts4Hope@yahoo.com.