



# Homelessness in Little Places

## By Mikayla Moss

In most cases one learns by watching others. Homelessness is an issue that plagues every society but it could be possible that some countries could be succeeding at helping the outcasts better than others. This Christmas I was in Eleuthera, an island located in the Bahamas no more than an hour flight away from the coast of Florida, with relatives. While I was there I got the opportunity to reconnect with my culture and learn about what kind of people I derive from.

Is there homelessness in Eleuthera? Yes, on many occasions we road past people with mental issues who were aimlessly roaming the streets, but I observed how almost every time my Uncle or Aunt greeted them before taking off. In Eleuthera there is a sense of family. It is a small island so everyone is aware that they could be related in some kind of way to one another, it is because of this closeness in blood natives on the island simply just want to take care of one another. There were a couple of times that I saw a mentally disturbed woman sitting in the ice cream shop watching television with her old blanket, we would turn back around and find her in the convenient store. Every time I saw her I thought this would have never happened in the States. If she was, for example, to walk into a Menchies I could easily envision a manager throwing her out because she brings down the prestige of the store. But in Eleuthera people are more concerned about expanding their property and helping others than accumulating wealth and keeping up an image. My last day there, my siblings and I were riding around with my Aunt when a man walking on the side of the road hailed her in the car. He was apparently one of our distant cousins who traveled from town to town claiming that he was a prophet. From the outside, as a citizen of the United States, my thoughts were that 'he's crazy,' which may have been true, but he still found shelter every night from somebody on the island. My aunt, personally, had given him many rides in her car, something that I wouldn't have even considered doing.

But that's the culture of my home island.

There are organizations that throw parties on the beach to raise money to take care of the less fortunate and the elderly. I should know this because while I was there my grandmother who had just recently come out of surgery was presented with a two-hundred dollar cheque.

All the fundraisers, and the simple, “how ya doins” while passing doesn’t change the homeless predicament on the island, they are still homeless. But I have a feeling that it gives them hope and joy. They never feel alone, and from my studies I believe that the worst part of homelessness is loneliness.

Should we do this in the United States?

Not entirely, the island of Eleuthera is very relaxed; since everyone knows everyone it is ok for an individual to keep their guard down. In Florida, inviting a stranger into your home can be considered extremely dangerous. But what I’ve taken from my trip is that we should all treat one another like human beings. So easily the homeless are tossed around in our society and ignored to the point that we forget that they are people. I wouldn’t be surprised if that’s the reason why kids take advantage of them and abuse them because in their minds they have considered them inhuman.

But they are human.

And when we encounter them we must treat them with even more love and compassion, because at the end of the day we might not be blood family related but we all belong to the family that is the human race.