

Homeless and in College

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College, the temple for a higher level of education. When people think college they think bunking in a dorm, crazy roommates, late night parties, and ten page papers. People think of college as the best time of a youth's life. Freedom, no parents looking over shoulders and finally getting the opportunity to make big life decisions. This is what college was meant to be, but it isn't this picture perfect tale for everyone. Imagine having to do those ten page papers while thinking about where you're going to sleep at night? Imagine sitting through a three hour lecture with your stomach growling for food? Imagine having to abandon activities in order to get a little pocket change just for the basic needs? This is the reality for some. The Atlantic and other sources state that up to 14% of college students are homeless in the United States.

Every number has a name and every name has a story. How these students came to be without shelter varies. Some have bad relationships with their parents. Before they know it that bad relationship leads to homelessness and taking on the world on their own. Like most young adults they enroll in school in hopes of turning their negative situation into a positive. Although, before they could cross over into the Promise Land of knowledge and enlightenment they have to go through this little thing called financial aid. Without certain documents and information that predominantly comes from the parents they cannot receive the money. They instead probably will try to make it independently and they will find out later that it is more difficult than they ever imagined.

Some students' parents lose their job and can't afford to cut a check. If there is a glitch with financial aid or any other loans the payments quickly build up and before they know it they're swimming in debt. These are just a couple of the stories.

This fact is saddening because deep in the hearts of most millennials there is the desire to go to college, to learn more, and to be the best human being possible. This was not as evident before because in the past if you could not afford a higher education you did not go. But the world is changing, the college system just isn't changing with it. That is why there are students crawling out on their bellies senior year with a mountain full of

debt and no real leg to stand on. Even worse there are students who have the desire to learn and are not able to complete school because of homelessness.

Everyone could agree that every willing student should be granted the opportunity to further their degree status. It is because of this that there are some schools, such as UCF, who pass out can goods and food for its students. There are other schools that provide care services. If a student is lacking the basic needs the care service opens up avenues for them to make money and provide for themselves. The most important piece to this puzzle is the student must be willing to accept the fact that they're going through a difficult time and accept the fact that they need help. There is never a need to be ashamed of the struggle; it is something that will happen to us all.