



Effect of Art on the Homeless Population

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Art is a form of self-expression that works to heal people mentally, physically, and spiritually. Art also takes on many forms, allowing people to appreciate and admire whatever strikes their interest. Additionally, the positive effects art has on people are endless. In fact, one of the most prominent communities that art affects is the homeless population. Often at doubts both with themselves and the world, homeless people are able to work out their emotions through art; a process that is so strikingly effective and beautiful that it leaves most awe-stricken.

An article titled *Art Messaging as a Medium to Engage Homeless Young Adults* Art Messaging as a Medium to Engage Homeless Youth lays out the positive effects of art on the homeless population. It explains how, "Art has been shown to be an empowering and engaging entity with numerous benefits to vulnerable populations, including the homeless persons and young adults." Although the main purpose of the article is to analyze the risks and possible implications art has on influencing drug and alcohol abuse within the homeless community, it does not disregard the positive effects of art as a form of self-expression. However, the results of the experiment laid out by this article find that, "homeless young adults respond to messages that remind them of

goals and dreams they once had for their future, and to content that is personal, real and truthful.” This not only supports the point that art has positive effects, when properly portrayed, on the homeless community, but also gives hope of opportunity to those who may feel hopeless in their current situations. Art has the effect of allowing the homeless to take their current situations and perceive them not as lost but areas where people can improve and respond.

Another organization by the name of Hospitality House aims to support the homeless community by providing artistic outlets. They believe that, “creative offerings essential to their existence”. They understand the importance of art in homeless communities as a way for people to not only grasp the reality of their current situations, but also devote time to a meaningful activity that can contribute to the culture of society. Art as a creative outlet also gives homeless an opportunity to define themselves. It allows them to be known as something other than homeless - something with creative ideals and potential. This is not saying that when someone becomes homeless, they are automatically defined as homeless, but it does not take away from the fact that art allows them to define a possibly hidden identity and express themselves in ways they felt were difficult to before.

One last positive effect of art on the homeless community is prominently outlined by Essence E. Jaime of California State University Long Beach who drafted a proposal titled “Expressive arts therapy program for homeless adults: A grant proposal”. The proposal highlights the importance of expressive arts therapy to improve the mental health of homeless adults. She explains how, “The inspiration for this grant proposal arose through [her] own journey as an artist. It is [her] hope that those suffering in isolation may find solace in the arts” (5). Through personal experience, Jaime’s proposal is effective in outlining the true importance of art on the health of the homeless community.

Resources:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3792012/>
<https://www.kqed.org/arts/11745874/why-art-making-is-essential-to-the-tenderloins-homeless-population>
<https://search.proquest.com/openview/60a13d59d3182544d384273a07418c55/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>

Image:

Hospitality House, <https://www.hospitalityhouse.org>, 290 Turk Street, San Francisco CA 94102, (415) 749-2100, FAX: (415)749-2136