



# The Voice Indianapolis



February 2015

SPONSORED BY: THE CREATIVE CHANGE PROJECT

IN THIS ISSUE

## Welcome!

By: Us

Welcome to the Voice, a newsletter by the homeless voices of our community.

Welcome back to another issue of "The Voice." Like always, if you have missed any of our previous issues click the following link to our website and find them there ([www.creativechangeproject.com](http://www.creativechangeproject.com)). On the Home page of our website you will see a designated box for the newsletters, click, and you are there.

The purpose of this newsletter is to raise awareness and educate the general public on real homeless issues and the truth about living homeless.

Our hope is that we can persuade readers to facilitate or attend a Cultural Competency Presentation which will profoundly change the way you view homelessness.

We hope you enjoy our work!

- ❖ **Welcome!**
- ❖ **In the News**
  - Mayor calls for more homeless encampments.
- ❖ **Special Thanks**
  - HVAF (Homeless Veterans and Families)
- ❖ **Did you know?**
  - That the homeless are not the same as the poor?
- ❖ **Charting the Way**
  - Where do you think poverty comes from?
- ❖ **Question:**
  - How do you explain homelessness to children?
- ❖ **Homeless Graphic Art**
- ❖ **Next Cultural Competency**
  - Upcoming Event: Walk a Mile in My Shoes! (New)
  - Food For Thought



### Who's Who?

Did you know that the homeless are not the "working poor?" (Page 4)



Explaining homelessness to kids. (Page 6)



### Mayor calls for more camps!

Not the solution but acknowledging that there is a problem... (Page 2)

# IN THE NEWS!

## Seattle Mayor wants to allow and regulate new tent cities....

The Seattle Times

By: Daniel Beekman, Wednesday,  
January 14, 2015

When passengers step off the ferries from Bremerton and Bainbridge Island and head into downtown Seattle, homelessness is just about the first thing they see.

People sleep every night on the Marion Street pedestrian bridge, a narrow span that connects the Seattle ferry terminal at Colman Dock with First Avenue. Many camp right under the Alaskan Way Viaduct, which runs above the middle section of the bridge.

With traffic roaring overhead, the spot isn't peaceful. But the number of campers has grown since last summer, according to ferry commuters who hustle past twice a day.

Pedestrians almost had to tiptoe through on a recent chilly morning, picking their way past at least six people dozing under tarps and sleeping bags.

"It bothers me because it's very sad and unfortunate," said Margo Dannemiller, 48, a Bainbridge Island-Seattle commuter. "They're lighting fires in there. They're urinating and defecating. It's unpleasant, but mostly I just wish they had another option."



Just that — another option for people sleeping outside — is what Seattle Mayor Ed Murray had in mind Wednesday as he proposed new legislation on tent cities.

With homelessness and illegal camping a growing concern in Seattle and across the region, Murray is asking the City Council to authorize and regulate up to three additional tent cities, potentially on city property.

"Permitted encampments are not, in my view, a long-term strategy to end homelessness," the mayor said at a news conference, noting that the city will fund an additional 50 shelter beds at the King County Administration Building for the remainder of the winter.

"But organized encampments have less impact on our neighborhoods and provide a safer environment than what we see on our streets today," he said.

Murray promised last month to present the council with a bill in

January that would "make a limited number of unused, vacant lots on private and public land in nonresidential areas available for encampments, not including city parks."

He had more details Wednesday. The three new sites would need to be within a half-mile of a transit stop and at least one mile from each other.

Seattle wouldn't run the tent cities. It would issue 12-month permits to social-service organizations, which would manage the tent cities.

Murray said he decided to take action after hearing from his Emergency Task Force on Unsheltered Homelessness, a volunteer panel convened in October and dominated by representatives from social-service organizations.

Increasing the number of authorized encampments in Seattle was among several recommendations the panel

brought back to the mayor in December.

Seattle will spend more than \$37 million on homeless services this year, Murray said, calling the outlay the nation's third-largest after New York City and Los Angeles.

Nonetheless, last January's One Night Count of people sleeping on the streets and in vehicles was more than 2,300 in Seattle, the mayor noted. Throughout King County, the tally was more than 3,100. The 2013 numbers were much lower: 1,989 and 2,736, respectively.

Performed by volunteers over just a few hours once a year, the count isn't scientific. But the 2015 edition is next week, and

Murray is expecting more people will be counted, he said.

"We are a very generous city that currently funds over 1,700 shelter beds," he said. "But each night people are turned away from a warm bed due to lack of capacity."

The task force recommended that the city consider authorizing new tent cities on sites in all land-use zones, but the mayor's bill would limit the sites to nonresidential zones.

The panel suggested the city authorize an additional seven encampments serving about 100 people each, rather than three.

Murray said he arrived at the number three based on "our

sense of how many organizations might be willing to take this on and our sense of the available property."

The panel advised barring people under 18 from authorized tent cities, a provision Murray agrees with.

There are currently a handful of authorized encampments in Seattle. They tend to be located on sites connected with religious institutions, which are allowed to host tent cities with few restrictions. Encampments elsewhere must obtain temporary-use permits, which aren't tailored for tent cities and which expire after just a few months.

#### IN THE NEWS

## Special Thanks!

HVAF of Indiana is more than a housing organization – they provide veterans and their families with programs and services that work. They are a dedicated team of more than 60 professionals working to eliminate homelessness among veterans and families.

Their Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program helps prevent at-risk veterans from becoming homeless and the Residential Employment Substance Abuse Treatment (REST) program offers intensive residential substance abuse treatment to homeless veterans.

They are the largest nonprofit provider of comprehensive services for veterans in Indiana and help veterans become self-sufficient.

For more information follow the link below:  
<http://www.hvafofindiana.org/>



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## Did you know

By: The Creative Change Project

### Did you know that there is a difference between the poor and the homeless?

In the world of “religion(s)” we “the homeless” and “the poor” are all considered “poor” - and this is true. Both groups certainly lack sufficient resources to live at a standard considered “comfortable” or “normal” in a society. However, when you separate Church and State you also separate “the homeless” from “the poor.” Creating a new group called “the working poor.”

As confusing as this may sound, allow us to reveal what becomes obvious for those of us living homeless. Under the church umbrella food and clothing are the primary resources distributed among us all. Certainly the churches do far more than just providing food and clothing but these particular offerings seem to be at the heart of their calling.

Under the state umbrella (state being any governmental entity) the primary resource targeted to the poverty-stricken is - housing. The ideology seems to be that “shelter” is one of the necessities of life, much like food and water. Thus subsidies are created for affordability, generating “low-income” housing or “affordable” housing.

The fortunate recipients of this housing are now extracted out, creating two distinct populations of people – “the working poor” and “the homeless.” It should be noted that “working” does not necessarily mean having a job but rather constantly “working” to maintain the housing that has been bestowed upon them. Their challenges come via income limits, updated poverty guidelines and arbitrary policy changes that stem from the ongoing shifts of attitudes regarding how best to assist the poor. A common statement often made by the working poor is,



#### HOMELESS FACTS

# 80%

Eighty percent (80%) of our homeless population suffer from mental health issues.

# 60%

Sixty percent (60%) of the homeless population have jobs.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION



“Sometimes it just seems like their thought process is - how can we make them earn what we have given them.”

Nevertheless, both groups are still fundamentally lacking but now in different ways. For example, the basic needs of the “working poor” shifts significantly. The “new needs” consist of but are not limited to - utility assistance, day care subsidies, furniture, transportation, rental assistance, car repair, food subsidies and health care.

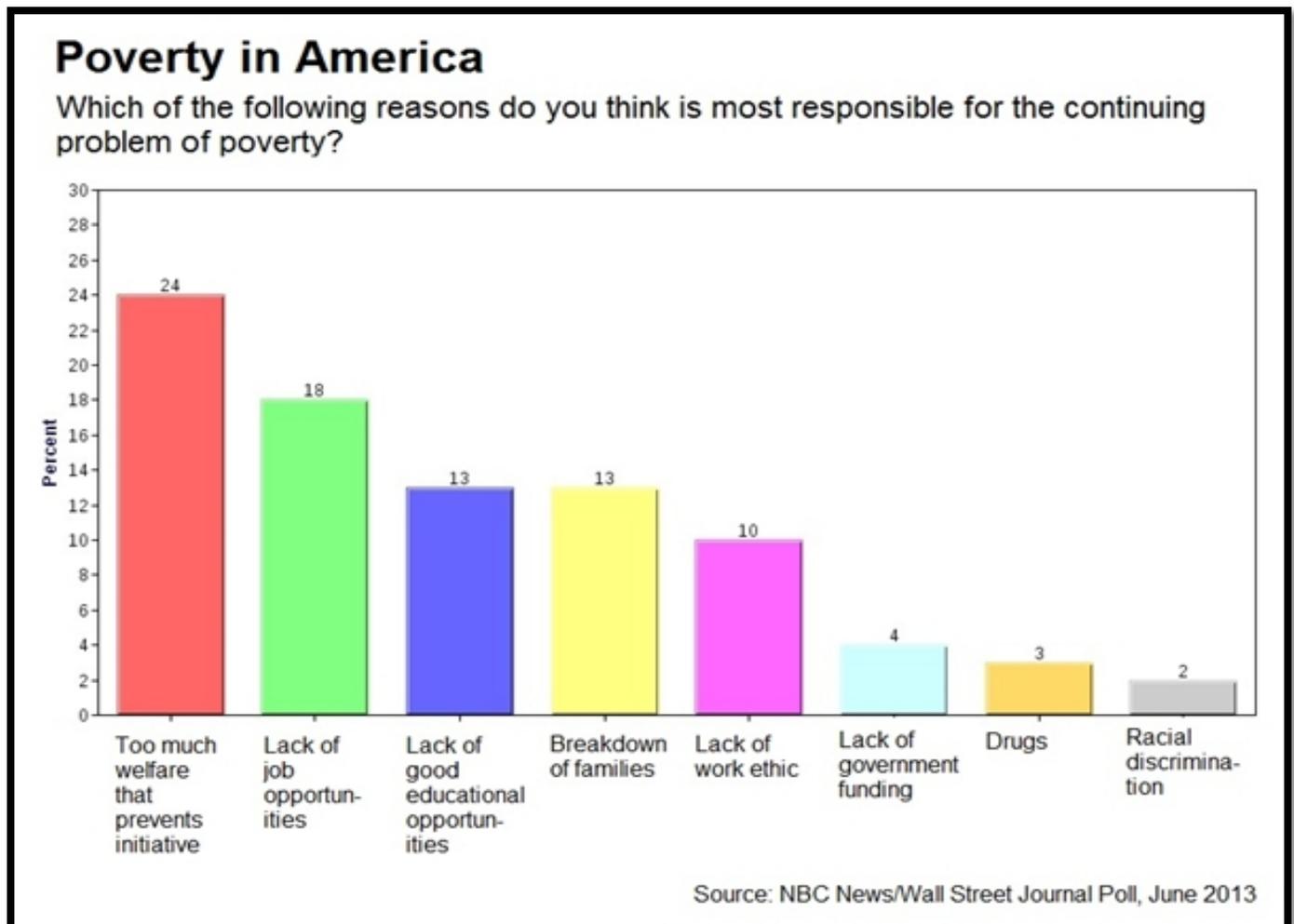
On the other hand, being homeless, we cannot utilize those things mentioned above while living on the streets (except for health care, of course). Therefore, our basic needs remain the same - food, water, temporary shelter (in inclement weather) and a place to be for the bulk of everyday.

Understanding these things, there seems to be an irony for those that are homeless and seeking government housing. Or better yet, government housing being “the

solution” for homelessness under the state umbrella. Moving from homeless to working poor doesn’t sound ideal if at the end of the day we “still lack sufficient resources to live at a standard considered – comfortable.” Perhaps the conversation should focus more on a “quality of life” that will lead to self-sufficiency -maybe? Join us for our next Cultural Competency Presentation to see what this proposal really looks like.

## CHARTING THE WAY:

Source: Listed below



# "Talking to kids about Homelessness"

By: Betsy Brown Braun

## What is the best way to explain homelessness to your kids?

It is important to understand that homelessness is not a "loaded" issue for the child... yet. His questions about a homeless person usually stem from genuine curiosity. That person doesn't fall into any of the categories of people with whom he is familiar. He is not passing judgment; he is wondering. The young child's initial impression is heavily influenced by the parent's affect, actions, and responses to his questions. And it is by observation of the parent that the child first gets his cues about how to react and feel. So, as you answer your child's questions, be aware of the attitude you may be projecting.

Homelessness, when someone doesn't have a home -- a place to sleep, for meals and in which to keep his belongings -- can be unsettling and even frightening to a child. Younger children will wonder where the person's family is, why there is no one to help him. Many will go to a place of worry about themselves and if they will ever not have a home. Worries grow after hearing that the person doesn't have enough money to have a home. The child wonders if his own family has enough money.

If the homeless person behaves strangely or erratically, indicating that s/he may be mentally unstable, the child's

curiosity (and sometimes fear) intensify. When there is an unpleasant odor or an obvious lack of physical hygiene, there are more questions. *Why does she look like that? Why is he acting like that? Is he dangerous? Are we safe?* Explaining mental illness is both tricky and important.

While a parent needs to answer the child's questions honestly, I believe it is also important that our answers show compassion. Homelessness is not a crime, but it is a problem. In your answers and attitude you will be modeling the empathy on which our society depends.

Here are some answers to use as starting points in explaining and discussing homelessness with your child who has raised the question. Your responses should be honest, short, and speak to the child's question. No more and no less.

1. A person who is homeless has no place to sleep, to eat, to shower and keep himself clean, or to keep his belongings. He has no home.
2. Usually, the homeless person doesn't have family or friends who can help him. (This concept is particularly difficult for the young child to grasp, as he can't even imagine not living with a mommy or daddy.)
3. For grown-ups, having a home costs money. A homeless person

is an adult who doesn't have the money he needs to own a house or rent an apartment or to buy food.

4. There are many reasons that a person doesn't have money. Usually it is because he doesn't have a job. (With older children, this may lead into a discussion about the ways that people get jobs.)

5. Mental illness is when a person's brain is not working the way it is supposed to. Just like people have problems with their bodies, sometimes a person has a problem with his brain. (It is important, for the sake of the child, to add that it is not common to have those kinds of problems. Most people do not have mental illness.)

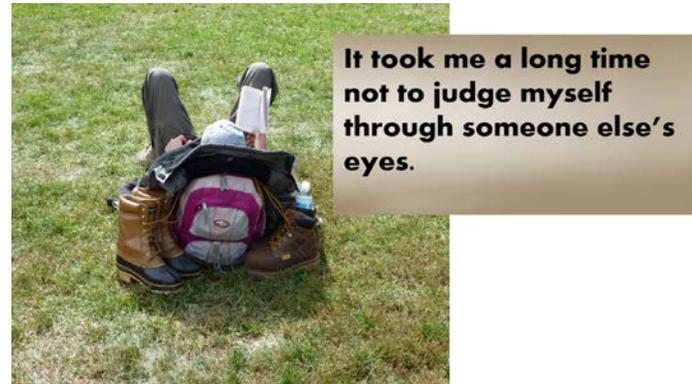
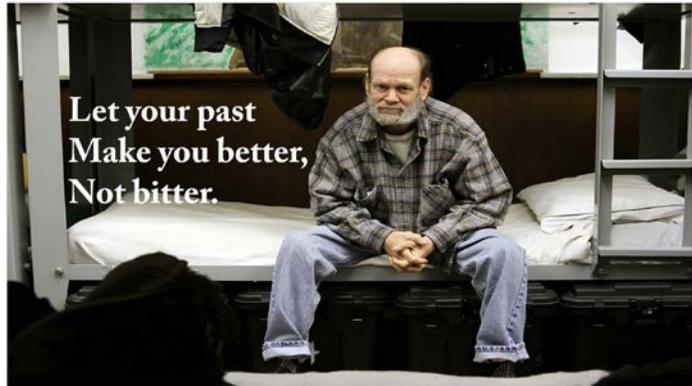
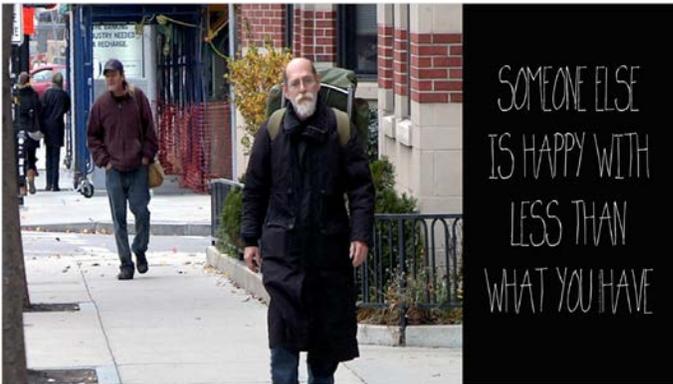
And here is a caveat: Sometimes parents attempt to use homeless people as an example of what could happen to the child if ...

...if he doesn't stay in school,  
...if he doesn't go to college,  
...if he doesn't get a good job,  
...if he uses drugs, etc...  
(Seriously, I have heard this!)

This is a bad idea, and it is not necessarily true. If a parent is going to use homelessness to cultivate feelings and action, empathy and ways to help should be at the top of the list, not fear-mongering.



## Homeless Graphic Art



Check out our Facebook page to see more: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Creative-Change-Project/303593586466151>



how to help the HOMELESS



What do you really know about Homelessness?



PRESENTATION 

2015						February
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28



**SATURDAY**



February 21, 2015

**Greenwood Public Library**  
 310 South Meridian Street  
 Greenwood, IN 46143

**COMING UP NEXT**



**SATURDAY**



March 21, 2015

**Brownsburg Public Library**  
 450 S Jefferson Street  
 Brownsburg, IN 46112



# The **HOMELESS** EXPERIENCE



**DATE:** Friday, March 27, 2015 - Sunday, March 29, 2015

**TIME:** Friday, 4pm Begin - Sunday, 2pm End

**LOCATION:** Downtown Indianapolis



Have you ever wondered what it's really like to be homeless and live out on the streets? Come see firsthand the situations that homeless individuals face daily by "Walking a Mile in my Shoes." This new program will allow you to:

1. Engage with the homeless of our community
2. Meet those who serve the homeless community
3. Acquire knowledge regarding the growing crisis of homelessness and
4. Become aware of the public's attitudes towards people who are homeless

Space is limited, so visit our website to sign up for this rare experience. A general itinerary is listed on our website for preview.  
<http://indy26aug.wix.com/indyhbr#!form/c6rr>



**Moving homeless individuals from one site to the next through the use of law enforcement and physical barriers alone is costly, doesn't solve the problem and tends to generate hostility and further desperation among those being moved.**

The  
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[CreativeChangeProject.com](http://CreativeChangeProject.com)