



The Lord's Place Advocacy & Education Guide for Teens

The Lord's Place is dedicated to breaking the cycle of homelessness. Our goal is to ensure that every family and individual experiencing homelessness in Palm Beach County has a place to call home.



Included in this guide are:

-  Facts about homelessness
-  Common misconceptions
-  Discussion topics
-  Educational activities
-  Ways you can help

This guide will give you the knowledge and tools needed to understand the state of homelessness in our community, as well as the capability to make positive change.

Page 1: Learning the Facts

Read statistics about homelessness and challenge common misconceptions

Page 2: Putting Yourself in Their Shoes

Engage in activities and discussion topics to explore and better understand homelessness

Page 3: Making A Difference

Discover ways to volunteer, fundraise, and advocate for the most vulnerable in your community



45% Of Floridians struggle to meet their basic needs.
Of that 45%, **13%** of Floridians are living in poverty.

14%
of Americans Have been
homeless at one point in their life

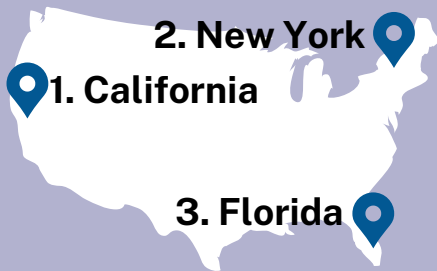


Homelessness has been on the rise since 2017, growing 6% between then and 2022 nationwide. In Palm Beach County, homelessness has **risen 32%** in the past year.

The #1 cause of homelessness is simply not having a home. Some factors that may contribute to this are:



- Lack of stable housing/ rising rents
- Natural Disaster
- Lack of family support system
- Unemployment/ low wages
- Mental health issues
- Medical debt



Florida has the 3rd highest amount of people experiencing homelessness in America, behind New York as #2 and California as #1.

Nationwide: 580,000

Florida: 30,809

Palm Beach County: 1,855

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

"People choose to be homeless."

People can become homeless due to many reasons, such as eviction, loss of a job, escaping domestic violence, or mental illness.

Homelessness is not a choice, and is not a moral failing or sign of laziness.

"Homeless people should just get a job."

There are many barriers to employment while homeless, such as a lack of street address, no access to showers or clean clothes, difficulty affording transportation, and more. Many people experiencing homelessness are employed, yet don't make enough to cover living expenses and rent.

"They're homeless because they do drugs."

Only a percentage of homeless people have drug use issues, just like housed people. Addiction is not the leading cause of homelessness, and even people with drug issues are deserving of compassion, respect, and housing.

Putting Yourself In Their Shoes: Discussion Topics and Educational Activities to Increase Understanding of Homelessness

Getting the Conversation Started

How would you feel having to go to school with little sleep, no shower, and dirty clothes? Would you get good grades and be able to keep up with schoolwork? How do you think your classmates will treat you?

How would you feel never being able to invite your friends over to your house, because you didn't have one? Would you make up excuses as to why, or would you tell them the truth? Would you feel judged or embarrassed if you did?

Where would you do your homework if you didn't have a bedroom where you could close the door? How would you complete your homework without internet/wifi or even electricity or lighting?

How would you feel if you had to share a sleeping space with your parents and siblings?

How do you treat those who are different than you? Do you find yourself making assumptions and judgements without knowing a person or their circumstances?

What assumptions do you hold about people who are homeless, and how does that compare to the facts you have just learned?

Activities

Make a list of all of the items you use regularly at home, such as what you use to get ready in the morning, electronics, game devices, personal belongings. Being homeless does not allow people access to many of these amenities. Now, make a list of what you could feasibly carry with you every day, and write out how your life would be different with so few possessions. Focus on how it would physically be different as well as how you would feel emotionally.

Being homeless makes doing well in school infinitely harder. Many teens experiencing homelessness end up dropping out. Look up what jobs are available in your area without a high school diploma. Map out a ten year plan of how you would make money, find housing, and go to college without a diploma.



Making a Difference: What YOU Can Do to Create Positive Change

Below are a few examples of ways you can help:






DONATE

Making donations is a quick and easy way to help those experiencing homelessness! Commonly donated items are:

-  New or Gently Used Clothing
-  Canned Food
-  Toiletries
-  Money



Ways to raise money:

-  Yard Sale
-  Car Wash
-  Consigning Unused Clothing
-  Saving Change
-  Saving Allowances



ORGANIZE

Host a donation drive with friends, classmates, family, or after school group to collect items to donate. You could even make a party out of getting together as a group to package and distribute the items!



SPREAD THE WORD

The next time you're out with friends or family and hear someone make a negative remark about a person experiencing homelessness, take a moment to educate them about the facts and realities of homelessness, and how it can happen to anyone.

