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Homeless Teenagers: The Growing Segment of Homelessness in the US

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Author's contribution

This whole work was carried out by the author OAB.

Review Article

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the problem of the homeless teenagers and the homelessness affects on the teenagers. The homeless teenagers lack education, proper living and sufficient programs to help reduce the problem. The decision-makers responsibility to provide the appropriate laws and methods to implement the right programs play an important role to reduce or decrease the number of homeless teenagers. This paper discussing the homeless teenager problem, explains the public administration theory related to the homeless teenagers, and provides alternatives for the problem and recommendations.

Keywords: Homeless teenagers; public administration; education; homelessness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is one of the increasing trends in each city, county, country and around the world. Homeless people can be found roaming the street, sleeping in public places, in parks, and asking for money to survive. In some cities, homeless people have charity organizations to improve their condition and to help them in their harsh lives. Homeless youth can be described as "Homeless youth are not a homogenous group. They may include runaway from setting where there is physical or sexual abuse, throwaways who are not wanted by their families, youth involved in substance abuse, or youth in families that are homeless"

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(P.71), [1]. Moreover, the different aspect of homeless can be found as “They are young, old, health, ill, male, female, employed, and unemployed. Poverty, joblessness, chronic illness, and other serious life circumstances or combinations may be directly related to homelessness” (p.8), [2]. In addition, “more than half of the homeless persons seen by agencies are women and children and more than one-quarter are children and youth” (p.9), [2].

There are several charitable organizations which address the needs of the homeless people. One of the increasing segments among the homeless people is the homeless children or homeless teenagers. Homeless children and their parents considered being 38% of America’s homeless “They are also the fastest growing segment of homeless population. The demand for emergency shelter by families with children has increased 50% since 1995 and 15% in the last year” (p.51), [3].

Furthermore, the deployment of the services and programs provided for the homelessness youth increases concerns as “Although there existed supportive services for homeless adults in many urban centers across the country, social workers, health care professionals, and other child welfare advocates grew concerned that young people were not utilizing the services, and therefore not likely to be receiving the assistance they need to meet even basic needs” (p.105), [4].

According to the 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress found that “On a single night in January 2013, there were 610,042 people experiencing homelessness in the United States, including 394,698 people who were homeless in sheltered locations and 215,344 people who were living in unsheltered locations” (p.1), [5]. In addition, the report indicated the following:

- More than two-thirds of all homeless people (67 percent or 410,352 people) were 25 years or older.
- 10 percent of homeless people were 18 to 24 years old (or 61,541). This percentage remains the same regardless of sheltered status.
- Nearly one-quarter of all homeless people (23 percent or 138,149) were homeless children under the age of 18, and 30 percent of sheltered homeless people were children.
- 80 percent of unsheltered homeless people were over the age of 25. Less than 10 percent of the unsheltered population was under 18. (p.6), [5]. (see Fig. 1)

Currently, in the United States, the problem of homeless adolescents really exists, and this small group lives on the streets without a family, a home, or schooling. This is a generation of ‘lost teenagers’ because they are obviously prime candidates to become deviants and criminals as adults harming society due to their misery experienced as young people. The transition and allocation for homelessness adolescents in United States depicted as “Since the mid-1970s Hollywood has been a Mecca for runaway and homeless adolescents and young adults. These young people travel to Hollywood from as far away as New York, Tennessee and Canada or as close as Pasadena and Beverly Hills” (p.101), [4]. Some of the reasons for increasing numbers of homeless families are unaffordable housing, unemployment, abusive treatment, economic crisis, nature disaster and educational barriers. The dimension of the homeless teenagers’ population is that these individuals are deprived of what all children need which is to be socialized into the larger society in a healthy, moral manner – to have adult role models.

Some of the causes of homelessness youth were “Many professionals and academics locate the cause of homelessness among youth in the collapse of the family structure, a perceived lack of parental and marital responsibility, and alcoholism and/or drug abuse” (pp. 26-27), [4]. Another reason of the increase number of the homelessness youth was “Most respondent were told to leave the house when they were in their early teenage years because their parents/guardians were no longer able and/or willing to care for them” (p. 131), [4]. Furthermore, the homelessness problem rose from different aspects such as the social perspective of this issue. “The “social” space within which social work has historically operated has been both a crucial and contested strategy of social government” (p.15), [4]. The reason behind this conclusion is because that the social work focuses only on certain aspects of the homeless adolescents such as crime and delinquency among young homeless disregarding the importance of educating families and youth [4]. Without parents and teachers, homeless teenage Americans are in a cruel mess where they have no adult role models to mentor them and guide them to right decisions. Instead, these homeless teenagers have to fend for themselves in the streets of America and find any means to survive, get by, and live another day of total struggle and despair. The purpose of this paper is to identify the homeless teenager, explain the public administrator’s contribution to the homeless children in the context of ethical theory, explain some theories, discuss how homelessness affects the homeless teenager and finally to discuss the various possible alternatives available to the decision makers and provide some recommendations to lessen the problem of homeless children.

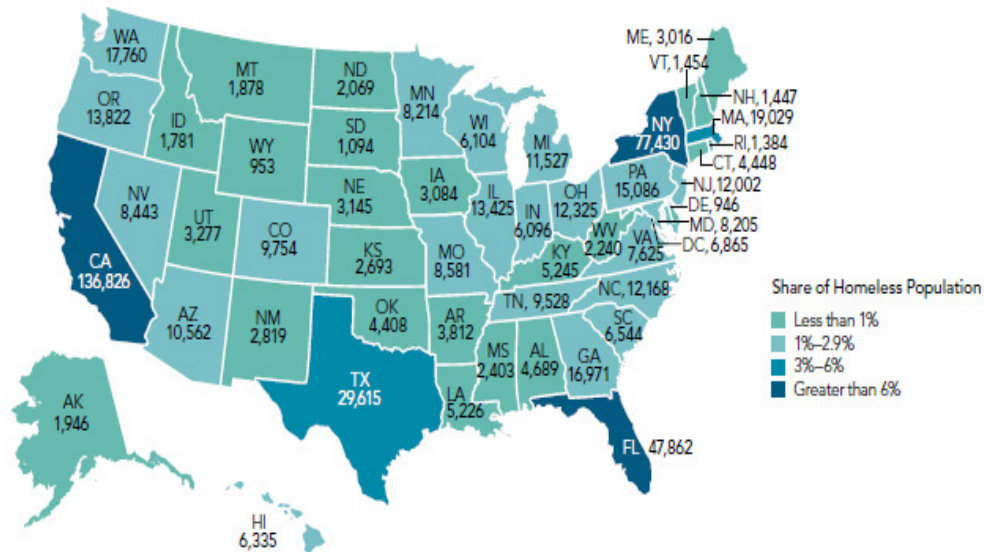


Fig. 1. Homeless people by State 2013

Source: *The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) by Henry et al., (2013, p.8) [5]*

2. WHO ARE THESE HOMELESS TEENAGERS?

In some instances, these homeless girls and boys run away from their families due to childhood abuse or domestic violence. In other cases, these homeless teenagers run away from their conservative family households because of strict rules and regulations placed on their behaviors. In most instances, homeless teenagers end up on their own in the streets

when their families become homeless. This is a hidden tragedy unfolding across America during this current economic recession. More and more American families are falling on hard times financially, joblessness has become widespread, and as a result, more homeless teenagers end up on the streets, without the safety and comfort of a family home. Of course, due to shame, embarrassment, and logistics, most of these homeless teenagers drop out of school. Due to the stress and burdens of homelessness for American families, the older teenage members, especially the males, may end up alone by leaving the situation in hopes of finding a better life. The condition of homelessness among American teenagers is a tragic one because of the vulnerable age of these teens when they especially need positive adult role models. By having to live on the streets, without parents, without family, and without school, homeless teenagers can easily turn to lives of drug addiction and crime. The only opportunities for survival in the minds of many homeless teenagers are to figure out ways to survive on the streets. Drug dealing can be an easy alternative to choose as well as committing other crimes.

Some of the problem behaviors that homeless adolescent practices were “Drug (ab) use, unprotected sexual activity, physical, sexual, and emotional violence, prolonged homelessness” (p.4), [4]. Transience played another role of the homeless adolescent behavior as “Youth with moderate and high levels of transience were marginally less likely to exhibit drug abuse and dependence than were youth with low levels of transience” (p.1635), [6]. Furthermore, the government administration and its goals in trying to eliminate the use of drugs elaborated as follow:

Although former President Nixon was the first to declare a “war” on drugs in the United States, the movement did not escalate to an all-out crusade until the mid-1980s. Illicit drugs, carefully and strategically differentiated from legal ones, were touted as the root of most social evils, ranging from welfare and unemployment to the destruction of families, child abuse, and educational failure. On the domestic front, the “war on drugs” was fought on multiple terrains. Among the poor, drug use is constructed as both a cause and symptom of many perceived “problems” -welfare “dependency,” crime, failure in education, unemployment, AIDS, etc... Government response to the use of illegal drugs can largely be characterized as one of “zero tolerance.” Rather than rehabilitation for drug users, the Reagan-Bush administration, with widespread support from the majority of the upper- and middle classes, enacted a number of new laws and policies designed to “deter” the import and selling of illegal drugs. Mandatory criminal sentencing, mandatory drug testing in the workplace, gang prevention units, and increases in surveillance in inner-city areas are among the many strategies that have been enacted in the name of drug prevention. The result has been a dramatic increase in the number of number of people arrested for drugs, the majority of whom are ethnic minorities living in inner cities (pp.153-154), [4].

In the low class, poor neighborhoods, the street gangs become the family structure for some homeless teenagers who are willing to do any crime, including robbery and murder, to remain within the gang.

3. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION INVOLVEMENT TO THE HOMELESS TEENAGERS

The problem of homeless teenagers in the United States is one in which public administrators have failed to adequately address the core causes of it or propose adequate

solutions to resolve it. There are a variety of stakeholders involved in the problem including the homeless people themselves, both families and individuals, the local citizenry of every place where a homeless problem exists who are adversely and negatively impacted by the problem, the private charities whom provide services specifically for the homeless segment, and the various government agencies - local, state, and federal - who have programs and policies that address this social problem. The stakeholders in government on all levels have a common complaint about shortages in their budgets which hamper their abilities to adequately address the homeless teenager problem or implement effective solutions that would lessen the increase of the problem. The private charities who provide shelter and food to homeless people with children in all the major cities share the common complaint that they are overburdened with too many homeless families and individuals to address all of their needs. Local citizens in the places where significant homeless teenage problems exist, including almost every metropolitan area in the United States, are concerned collectively about what should be done about this segment of people, especially homeless children.

In democratic societies such as the United States, public administrators are bound by the overriding ethical duty to put public interest over self-interest. Some of the other ethical responsibilities to be demonstrated by public administrative decision makers include: (1) present a service orientation and a commitment to serve; (2) Have a promise to procedural fairness; (3) use fiduciary responsibility; (4) Be bound by and uphold the law; (5) Support the democratic process; and, (6) Be responsible to the policy goals of people superiors while fairly examining all policy options and exercising leadership appropriate to position [7]. At all levels of government, the decision makers are supposed to acknowledge these basic ethical responsibilities in their positions within their particular administrative offices. In this context, those government officials in agency positions on local, state, and federal levels that address the increase of homeless children should be taking effective action to reduce and lessen the problem. However, the nature of homelessness across the country clarifies that something has been lacking or is absent from local, state, and federal officials' decision-making in regards to the homeless children problem because of the increasing numbers of both individuals and families living without shelter in every major city in the country. The private charities operating in the cities to help the homeless families are sharing the common problem of being overwhelmed by the greater numbers of homeless people.

The government fails to provide the right programs for the right reasons to address and resolve the homeless children problem. We need to educate the homeless children. What influence their academic achievement? Can education help lessen the growing number of homeless children? How safe are the homeless children? The lack of funding is directly originated from the lack of interest on part of government officials in local, state, and national governments. These officials have placed other priorities ahead of the problem of homeless teenagers because of an overall lack of commitment to their basic ethical duty to serve the public interests rather than their own.

Although the "dysfunction" within, and "breakdown" of familial relationships are often the focus of most discourses regarding the causes of homelessness, these narratives also highlight an additional source of trouble within the social landscape that I attribute primarily to new strategies of "advanced liberal" government. In particular, shifts in the government of the social body that have rendered individuals increasingly responsible for their own well-being have created a void in the traditional "safety nets" of the child welfare system (p.104), [4].

Furthermore, in his book titled, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*, explained the problem with the United States system as

“Capitalism” is now clearly re-emerging as the name of *the* problem. The first lesson to be learned is not to blame individuals and their attitudes. The problem is not individual corruption or greed, but the system that encourages you to be corrupt (p.77), [8].

Going back to the basic principle of a democratic society, every public administrative official involved with any public agency that deals with some part of the homeless children problem at local, state, and federal levels should have an individual basic ethical responsibility to put the public interest ahead of their self interests on this social problem. Instead of ignoring it, denying it exists at a problematic level, and rejecting any requests for increased financing by public agencies responsible for addressing the needs of the homeless, public officials have to stop, take a step back, and look at the big picture of this social problem.

4. THE ETHICAL THEORY

One of the ethical theory frameworks that public administration officials could consider in relation to addressing the homeless teenagers problem is utilitarianism. At its simplest understanding, utilitarianism holds that people should follow the principle of utility to guide their actions at all times so that they bring about the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people. The historical development of this theory by English philosophers, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, in the late 18th century and early 19th century, as partially driven by the embracing of the new ideas of democracy and individual liberty at that same time period. It was an ethical theory that denounced elitism and promoted democracy. Also, it was an ethical framework that proposed potential empirical resolutions to all moral problems [9]. An overt shortcoming of the ethical theory of utilitarianism is the exact nature of trying to abide by such a principle and how it becomes applicable in life's complicated situations. Is there any chance of everyone in the world following the principle of utility while at the same time bringing about a world of total, absolute happiness? Of course not. However, the importance of this ethical framework was to declare that human beings, including powerful, political leaders, business leaders, and even religious leaders, would have to consider their self interests as secondary to the larger, greater interests of everyone else. The point is that utilitarianism used by public officials would cause them to base decision making on the rationale that they are committed to bringing about the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people. In regards to the homeless teenager problem, throughout the nation, the top public officials driven by an ethical framework of utilitarianism would make this problem a priority, investigate the root causes, and provide adequate funding for a nationwide, comprehensive solution because it would generate and bring about the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people. The public officials would be inspired to do something big and urgent to resolve the social problem of the homeless teenager. The old stand-by reasons of neglect and ignorance of the problem as serious would be shed once and for all and these public officials would be upfront, honest, and morally concerned about the right, real solutions for the social problem. By having the principle of utility guiding their actions, these public officials would act urgently, make sure the funding is granted from the right government agencies, and ensure that sufficient numbers of staff are on the ground and at the front lines to implement the comprehensive solution to provide housing, jobs, and education for these homeless people. This type of ethical theory would involve more government manpower on the three levels - local, state, and federal. Planning, organizing, and carrying out the comprehensive solution would be a grand scale effort that would be

unprecedented in the American experiment with democracy. However, assuming these public officials are committed to utilitarianism, this huge, massive effort would be done with inspired attitudes by these public officials to bring about the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people.

5. HOW DID HOMELESSNESS AFFECT THE HOMELESS CHILDREN?

To understand the alternatives and realize whether these alternatives would contribute to lessen the homeless teenagers' problem, two important points need discussing: the first one is the rights of the homeless children. The second point is the impact of homelessness on the homeless children. By understanding the right and causes, one would be able to understand how the alternatives below would be effective and become evidence to be feasible.

5.1 Homeless Teenager's Right

One of the most important rights for the homeless children when it comes to education is the Stewart McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. This law concerned the education needs for children. In addition, the most recent action considering the homeless children's education is the amendment of the McKinney Act integrated in PL 107-110 (No Child Left behind Act of 2001). This amendment guaranteed the educational rights for homeless children along with those who are disabled [10]. The homeless teenagers were giving the right to study and be educated, but the question remains why the homeless teenager segment is growing and whether these homeless teenagers really take advantage of these acts.

5.2 The Impact of Homelessness on the Homeless Teenager

One of the most important causes of homelessness is the unaffordable housing, "the gap between the number of affordable housing units and the number of people needing them is currently the largest on record, and estimated at 4.4 million units" (p.324), [11]. Some of the barriers for the homeless children to attend school are registering requirements (name, physical address, and health insurance), lack of transferring records, and lack of transportation and school supplies [11]. In addition, behavioral disorders, psychological and physical problems such as depression and mental illnesses exist. All of these barriers have affected the homeless teenagers in their lives, educational success and their personality. Therefore, understanding these obstacles show that the main reason for these barriers occurring is the unaffordable house or the residency status. The section below is explanation for two alternatives which may provide a stable and permanent residency for the homeless teenager.

6. POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES

When dealing with child or problem facing a child, the first step is to act upon the problem and try to solve it not by passing the law only but by finding the solution and work on it. "It is not possible to do the right thing for a child by passing a law or by setting up administrative machinery. These things are necessary but are only the first miserable state" (p.178), [12]. In addition, each child must be diagnosed in regard to his/her previous history and health issue before initial any type of treatment whether to place him/her with family or in child care institutions [12]. The alternatives to this problem of homeless American teenagers, which can be taken as guideline rather than an absolute solution for the homeless teenagers, can

reduce the likelihood of these homeless young people to become abnormal, drug addicts, and criminals as adults are mechanisms or policies that could possibly be put into place that would address their three primary needs as adolescents: food, safety, and education. These mechanisms and policies could have monitoring processes built in them to ensure that they do reduce the likelihood that these homeless teenagers would turn to the live of drug addiction and crime as adults. These are complex issues to be addressed first by considering the interdisciplinary framework of decision making. This framework consists of six different dimensions which focus on some significant element in the decision making process. The dimension of philosophy, for example, underscores the importance of the use of values and ethics in decision making for the homeless teenager. The economic dimension involves the use of probability and considers the utility of the chosen alternatives. The sociology dimension places importance on the studying of group behavior to better understand the impact of homelessness on the teenagers. The law/political science/anthropology dimension, on the other hand, underscores the importance of the legal environment and humanistic environment of that decision. The mathematics dimension underscores the importance of the use of models and simulations to lesson the problem. The psychology dimension involves the focus on individual behavior and the psyche in understanding the impact of homelessness on the teenagers. All of these dimensions are important to consider when weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the various alternatives in confronting and addressing a problem such as American homeless teenagers. The categories of the placement of deprived child who lost the sense of being under one roof with his parents because of war or illness of parents which in this case would include the homeless teenagers as follow:

1. Foster parents, who wish to give the child a family life like what which the child could have been provided with by the actual parents.
2. Small homes in the care, if possible (but not necessarily), of married wardens, each home containing children in various age groups.
3. In the third category the groups are larger. The hostel perhaps contains eighteen. The wardens can keep in personal touch with all the children but they have assistants, and the management of the assistants is an important part of their job.
4. The larger hostel, in which the wardens are mainly engaged in the management of the staff and only indirectly concerned with the minute-to-minute management of the children. The fact that there is a larger staff means that there is more opportunity for discussion among the staff; there are also advantages for the children in that there can be teams competing with each other.
5. Beyond this is the still larger institution which does its best for children under impossible conditions. They have to be run by dictatorship methods...quite hopelessly difficult children can be managed in such a way that they do not get into trouble with society over long periods (pp. 179-181), [12].

These categories can be used as instruction to where to place the homeless teenagers in according to history, health and social conditions the homeless teenagers. Placing a homeless teenager in any family with considerations of his/her conditions might not solve the problem and the homeless child might find a way to go be to the street where no body can have control of his/her actions.

6.1 Alternative One: Implementing Free Housing Program for Homeless Teenagers

This could be a state or federal program that would directly address the food and security issues that are number one priority for any homeless adolescent. These young people want a place to call home where they can eat, sleep, and stay while attending school. These homeless teenagers could change their lives around most dramatically by having a permanent home and have the provisions available to permit them to remain full time students while attending public schools. This free housing program, however, is a complicated undertaking because of the need for these homeless teenagers to have adult role models, and substitute parents, who could serve them in this role in the family household. Homeless teenagers cannot be given the responsibility of living independently at their age without parents or adult role models present. Obviously, this is a problem to address in this alternative from the interdisciplinary framework to recognize, sociologically and psychologically, that the free housing program would only provide physical relief and shelter to these homeless teenagers but they would also need foster parents residing in their free homes in order to make it work. Homeless teenagers should have trained, educated foster parents living in these homes for this program to work because they would have to be expected to live under a set of rules and regulations to qualify and retain their participation in this free housing program. This program would mean that homeless teenagers are moving into the safety and security of homes and that they have trained foster parents ready to serve them as mentors and role models. In addition, these homeless teenagers would be expected to meet qualifying standards to retain free housing through their school performance. This program would thus effectively address this other priority issue of education. By having these homeless teenagers in permanent homes, they would be attending schools in their school districts like any other teenager from their same age group. However, the homeless teenagers' incentive is to do well in school, keep up with all their course work, and obtain good grades because they can qualify to remain in their permanent homes with their foster parents who are educated and trained to address their special needs and problems. The whole socialization process would then become much more positive for these formerly homeless teenagers. "Positive and nurturing attitudes provide the needed umbrella for securing the attention and motivation of parents and children" (p.196), [13]. Their food, safety, and school needs are all being met with this free housing program and their foster parents are functioning as the pivotal role models to change these poor teenagers' lives completely around from the negative to the positive. The most significant weakness of this program alternative is the economics and logistics (mathematics) of implementing this program, having sufficient numbers of foster parents in these free housing facilities, and having these foster parents properly trained and compensated to handle this very responsible, task-oriented role for these special needs homeless youngsters. These homeless teenagers are going to need extensive psychological counseling and therapy to adjust to a normal life as a school going teenager with his or her same age peer group. Also, these homeless teenagers are going to have problems with what happened on the streets, in some cases crimes were committed, in other cases; prostitution was done to make money to survive. The foster parents in this program are the key role players that would need to be essentially recruited, educated, and trained to specifically handle this kind of role and responsibility in this government program.

6.2 Alternative Two: Program to Have Families Sponsor Homeless Teenagers

This program would be best run at the local level with financial help from state and federal governments to have ordinary American families with teenage children sponsor a homeless teenager to live in their family home, and be raised in their family home, and attend school with the children of this American family as a full member of the family. "Homeless families need opportunities to develop enjoyable and meaningful relationships" (p.195), [13]. The participating families in this program would be compensated for their efforts to take in these needy homeless teenagers. Since some of these homeless teenagers may have special needs, especially those who suffered abuse of any kind, they would need to be treated and counseled extensively before being qualified to enter these ordinary American families to become members of American society again and have the opportunity to go to school full time, get food, have shelter, and receive the loving members of an American family willing to open their doors and provide this chance. Parents should be combined with others to learn how to use their atmosphere effectively. In this method, parents may help each other find child care, provide each other moral support, and share ideas on financial plan and other concerns of substance [13]. The participating American families can be recruited from their local communities to consider their incentives and benefits for signing up to take in a homeless teenager for at least a year or longer if the family and teenager are compatible. The compensation must be sufficient to make the effort worth it to the participating families and this rate must be increased each year the family participates in the program.

This alternative has some strength. It provides food, safety, and education for the homeless teenagers while also giving the opportunity for these individual youngsters to incorporate into comfortable, family environments with healthy, ambitious American families. The foster parents in this program will obviously be positive role models for these program participants. The economic feasibility of this program is very attractive because of the fact that American families will take the homeless teenagers right into their homes. These families will be paid for their service which is more cost effective than trying to set up free housing across America staffed with foster parents. The free housing program would create what the homeless teenagers would consider 'artificial family environments' but the sponsorship program of homeless teenagers will introduce these individuals into safe, loving family environments. There would be nothing 'artificial' about the foster families sponsoring these homeless teenagers and having the assurance that professional therapists and counselors are in harmony with the family in restoring these homeless teenagers back to psychological, social, and personal health. The monitoring of the foster family sponsorship program is important to ensure that the homeless teenagers are happy and content with their situations as well as if the foster family has accepted and adapted to having the new member of the family. The monitoring of the program might be necessary to make sure to transfer homeless teenage participants to families that are willing to take them and want them, and not taking them solely for the compensation.

The different dimensions of the interdisciplinary framework of decision making are more effectively addressed with this alternative because of its greater feasibility and the fact that the logistics are less complicated and costly. In this proposal, homeless teenagers are recruited, treated, and healed to some extent through professional medical and psychological services, and then they are placed carefully in American family homes who have enlisted to participate in this sponsorship program to get these youngsters off the streets and back in school. The occurrence of a family environment is the most significant advantage in this proposal compared to the free housing proposal because the homeless teenagers can benefit from this much more than they would a trained mentor who would

fulfill only a limited parenting role. This proposal has the advantage of being more socially and psychologically healthy, comfortable, and normal for the homeless teenage participants. The qualifying process to remain in these American family homes would be just as severe as the free housing program's process but would be more oriented towards how the individual fit in with the new family and how the new family got along with the individual.

7. CONCLUSION

Children are the most important element for the family, community and the society as whole. The future of children starts from the first day he/she is born. When a child becomes homeless, his/her chance to be educated, successful and healthy becomes less. This does not mean that there is no homeless child who is educated or successful as we saw in the true story of the movie: the pursuit of happiness. However, the questions that will remain unanswered are how to prevent more children from becoming homeless and when will it be feasible to implement effective programs to decrease the homeless teenager segment.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

By using the interdisciplinary framework of decision making, the proposal to provide a sponsorship program for homeless teenagers to undergo treatment and then be placed in ordinary American family homes is more cost effective and highly valued as a means to reduce the American homeless teenager population and address the primary needs of these young victims than the free housing program proposal. When considering the many dimensions, the proposal to provide free housing with trained staff presence to function as surrogate parents or mentors for the homeless teenagers is not feasible nor logistically possible with the current conditions of government budgets on local, state, and federal levels. Although it would provide for the security, safety, and education needs for the homeless teenagers, the teenagers could begin viewing this home environment as artificial and fake. However, the proposal to provide American families who want to participate in the program to sponsor homeless teenagers might be feasible and cost effective because these families are being compensated and given opportunity to provide these homeless teenage participants a safe home, food, mentoring and guidance to go to school, do well in school, and become law abiding citizens. The problem of teenage homelessness would be thus more effectively addressed by this proposal to provide sponsorship from American families and allow them to provide most of the parenting and guidance in exchange for adequate compensation.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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