

## Fact Sheets for Kids - Homelessness

Fact Sheets for Kids help children understand related community issues. For more fact sheets, go to [www.HandsOnNetwork.org/FamilyVolunteering/ServiceLearning](http://www.HandsOnNetwork.org/FamilyVolunteering/ServiceLearning).



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## Meet Laura

Laura's dad had a drug problem and was mean to her mother. To keep the family safe, her mother left their apartment with Laura and her two brothers. They took only what they could carry and had to stay in an emergency shelter. For several weeks, they slept in a big hall with hundreds of other people. Laura's mom found a small room in a welfare hotel for \$15 a night. It had two double beds but no kitchen. Laura's mom walked a mile and a half each day to her job at a nursing home. Laura and her brother took turns going to school so one of them could stay and watch their little brother, Derek. The social worker found out and arranged for daycare for Derek. Laura missed her friends and only had two outfits for school and one pair of shoes. They had no refrigerator in the room or a way to cook food. It was embarrassing to have to eat the "free" meals at school because her mother was too poor to pay. But it was worse to constantly feel hungry and try to concentrate. Laura felt so sad and hopeless.

## Why Are People Homeless?

**Poverty** — Poor people are often not able to pay for housing, food, childcare, health care, and education.

**Housing** — A lack of affordable housing and housing assistance programs.

**Other Factors** — Lack of affordable health care, domestic violence, mental illness, addiction disorders and job loss.

## Fact

**So many of the comforts that many children take for granted are luxuries to homeless people.**

## Homeless Families

- Almost half of the homeless are families. (Homelessness Counts 2007)
- Single moms in their twenties head up most homeless families. (Rog & Buckner 2007)
- Homeless children are: ashamed, depressed, sometimes struggle in school and often feel hopeless. socially, emotionally and academically.

## How can you help?

- Be kind to kids that are homeless
- Make *Good-Eat Bags* and plan an activity to do at a family shelter
- Hold a **NEW** clothing, book, birthday or holiday gift drive