

# Hunger and Homelessness

By:Emily

## Introduction

Imagine a 10 year old child living in extreme poverty in Manhattan, NYC. She lives in an alley tucked behind a convenience store. Her mother is a cashier and doesn't make close to enough to survive. She goes to a very dangerous and run down public school a mile from her "house". There she gets bullied regularly but is too exhausted from hunger to fight back. She feels abandoned and worthless.

Would you like to be this child? No. Well there are children just like this in our backyard and it is NOT okay. We have to help them! Just last year, the national poverty rate rose to include about 13.2% of the American population. 1 in 7 people were at risk of suffering from hunger in the United States. In addition, 3.5 million people were forced to sleep in parks, under bridges, in shelters, or in cars.

## Explain The Issue

The problem is that there are MANY people locally and globally who are hungry and/or homeless, and this issue will continue to grow with a new "group" of people as today's students face a world piled high with global conflict, minimal jobs, and skyrocketing education costs. All of these factors result in increasing extreme poverty in America. Action is more crucial than ever. As we know, hunger and homelessness are increasing problems plaguing the United States - striking americans of every age, ethnicity, and religion, hitting urban and rural communities as well. Also, if this keeps going, there will be almost no way for hunger and homelessness to stop. Hunger and homelessness can result in illnesses because of lack of food, sanitation and many other factors. Having ill people around in society can be bad for the people because if an illness is contagious it could spread.

There is a severe lack of affordable housing in the United States. The growing gap between earnings and the cost of housing in the United States leaves millions of people, families, and individuals unable to make ends meet. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, people across the country would need to earn a "housing wage" of \$15.37 an hour. That is nearly three times the current minimum wage, in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment at the average fair market rent.

Many people think that there are only some hungry or homeless people in NYC and that they are mostly all in other places like Africa. However, there are many people in NYC today who sleep on cardboard, or live in little alleys or they are part of the "mole-people", who sleep under NYC by the train tracks. There are no statistics on how many people live like this but there are definitely plenty. If you are interested by the mole people you can read Jennifer Toth's book "The Mole People".

### Current Events

Also, people who have steady jobs can also be going Hungry. For example, at a Walmart ( I believe in Florida) the employees had a food drive for themselves because even though they work they don't make enough to feed themselves. Roughly 13% of the world's population is hungry. That's roughly 925 million people who go hungry on a daily basis, consuming less than the recommended 2,100 calories a day for an average adult. These numbers need to be lowered in order for us to have a sustained and strong society and economy.

People say that they really care about hunger and homelessness however take no actions to prove it. But, when the employees at Walmart made that food drive for themselves, people started to listen. The employees were also exploiting the big name 'Wal-Mart' to get people to listen. However, there is the issue that people don't really listen to warnings before it is HUMONGOUS problem. We are very close to having it be a HUMONGOUS problem, but we shouldn't have to get there for people to listen.

Homelessness in New York City had reached its highest level since The Great Depression last year, and it's now been confirmed that one in five New Yorkers—an astounding 1.4 million of the total population of 8.3 million—currently depend on food banks and pantries to sustain themselves every day. Many people don't realize how

many people live in hunger and homelessness. Some people are not as fortunate as we are. We really don't have to wonder whether we will be able to have dinner tonight. We take things like this for granted.

For example, how many people open the door to their house and say you know I'm really glad that I have a roof over my head every day. I'm not saying that we should do that necessarily but we also shouldn't take these things for granted. Because many people don't have that kind of luxury.

Last year, I was fortunate enough to have an eye opening experience working at the largest soup kitchen in New York thanks to my grandparents. It was really emotional to see so many people waiting outside in the cold for food. Also, stuffing their worn out coats with food to live off of for the next few days. I helped serve about 1,000 people. It made me feel good that I helped so many people but it also made me sad that there are so many hungry and homeless people in New York. Back then I didn't even know the half of what I know now and was still very upset. This is why I chose my topic of hunger and homelessness. I think that if people understood what an important and terrible topic this is they would understand and would want to make a change like I hope that I have and wish to do more of.

### Call For Action

There are many organizations that are currently helping this issue, both locally and globally. Two organizations that I will talk about are City Harvest and Homeless International.

City Harvest exists to end hunger in communities throughout New York City. They do this through food rescue and distribution, education, and other creative, useful, and innovative ways. City Harvest has distributed more than 465 million pounds of food to a network of more than 500 community food programs throughout New York City. The organization now delivers an average of nearly 126,000 pounds of food daily and more than 46 million pounds this year. You can learn more about city harvest by going to <http://www.cityharvest.org/>

Homeless International supports slum dwellers and improves their lives and finds lasting solutions to urban poverty. They are the only UK charity devoted to the

challenge of housing and basic services in slums. Their vision is a world in which all people can exercise their right to basic services and shelter. Shelter is more than a house: it is a space for privacy, economic activity, social care and personal fulfilment. They help communities transform slums by supporting them to work together to secure land, build homes, access safe water and sanitation, and negotiate with governments – ensuring that they have a voice that gets heard. To learn more about Homeless International you can go to <http://www.homeless-international.org/Home>

Before I had mentioned City Harvest. One of the beauties of City Harvest is that everyone, no matter how old they are can help and get involved. Even kids my age can make a change in our world! We can do this by having food drives at school. For many years my mom was very involved in the food drive for City Harvest at my school. This year the entire school did our annual food drive around Thanksgiving time. This is something that kids can do and have been doing that can make a huge impact. Or, kids can do what I am doing writing this executive report. For the template go to <http://theservicelearningproject.weebly.com/>. That template is aimed for middle school students.

Are you interested in taking action and making a change? Here are some specific organizations, mission and projects that you can participate in. If none of these happen to are interest you, you may want to consider starting your own project to help remediate this issue.

Food Bank For New York City.	Food Bank For New York City is a soup kitchen in New York City. They give over 10,000 free meals	They have many social network connections. However, this is their website is :
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	per month.	<a href="http://www.foodbanknyc.org">http://www.foodbanknyc.org</a>
Feeding America	Feeding America is the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity.	This is their email address: <a href="http://feedingamerica.org/">http://feedingamerica.org/</a> They also offer part of their website translated in Spanish.
No Kid Hungry	With no Kid Hungry you can learn a lot do many things to tell. I personally like it because one of the things it tries to do is connect to people and teach them about the importance of this issue.	If you are interested you can learn more about this organization at: <a href="http://www.nokidhungry.org">www.nokidhungry.org</a>
Stand Up For Kids	The goal of Stand Up For Kids is to reach out and help the innocent, determined kind yet homeless youth reach their dreams.	I really like the mission of this charity. If you want to learn more go to: <a href="http://www.standupforkids.org/">http://www.standupforkids.org/</a>
Coalition For The Homeless	Coalition for the Homeless is the nation's oldest advocacy and direct service organization helping homeless men, women, and children.	If you want to learn more about this organization go to : <a href="http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/">http://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/</a>

	They are dedicated to the idea that affordable housing, enough food, and the chance to work for a living wage are fundamental rights in a civilized society.	
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### Conclusion

I hope that I have inspired you to make a change. I learned a lot from writing and researching this issue.

I also want to get in touch with one of these organizations. I am leaning towards helping Stand Up For Kids. I also want to have a bake sale to raise money for this cause. I really enjoy baking so this is something that is a good idea for me but you should choose something that connects to you. For example, something that kids can do is run a stand where they have arts and crafts supplies so that you can make something for the homeless person on your block or in a place you know. This will show them that you are trying to help and that they are not alone. Also, this will show them that better times will come. Then, you should find another way to help in the long run as well.

This report promotes the importance of helping fight Hunger and Homelessness around the world. Not only does it give a general and specific sense of this issue, but also talks about people affected by it and how to make a change. I hope that I have inspired to make a big change in this issue. I believe that if we all chip in a little we can make Hunger and Homelessness history. Thank you for reading and listening to what I have to say.

### Bibliography

Link that I used( That was not mentioned above):

<http://www.studentsagainsthunger.org/page/hhp/overview-homelessness-america>

I also used my prior knowledge and facts from my friends and family.

