

make your mark On Homelessness

live on

Meet Laura

Laura's dad had a drug problem and hurt 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. She only had two outfits for school and one pair of shoes. It was embarrassing to have to eat the "free" meals at school because her mother couldn't pay. But it was worse to constantly feel hungry and try to concentrate. Laura felt so sad and hopeless.

Why are people homeless?

Poverty: People living in poverty are often not able to pay for housing.

Housing: A shortage of affordable housing and housing assistance programs contributes to homelessness.

Other Factors: Lack of affordable health care, domestic violence, mental illness, and addiction disorders can cause homelessness.

Facts

- There are 770,000 homeless children enrolled in public school. (National Coalition for the Homeless)
- Almost half of all homeless people are families. (Homelessness Counts, 2007)
- Single moms in their twenties head up most homeless families. (Rog & Buckner, 2007)
- So many of the comforts that many people take for granted are luxuries to homeless people.

Who is helping?



Cougar Care Club in Greensboro, NC provides homeless people with food and other necessities. "We are getting to know the recipients and hearing their life stories. This experience has changed the face of the 'homeless' for our students," says Kelly Ingram, club facilitator.

How can you help?

Be kind to kids who are homeless.

Plan an activity to do on a visit to a family shelter.

Hold a new clothing, book, or gift drive.



generationOn

A DIVISION OF POINTS OF LIGHT INSTITUTE

