



# Why Are People Living in Tents?

## Understanding Homelessness for Students and Children

Most of the people that you know live in a house or an apartment. They have food to eat, clean clothes to wear, and a warm bed to sleep in. But not everyone has a house to call home.

We say that these people living outdoors in our city are “experiencing homelessness” or are “houseless” or “homeless.” We are careful about what we call people because there is more to us than where we live. Just like you.

### When someone doesn't have a house they:

- may live in a tent, car, RV, or shelter;
- are often hungry and thirsty because they don't have enough money for food;
- don't have a place to take a shower, clean their clothes or bedding;
- must carry their few belongings with them in bags, a suitcase, or even a shopping cart.

## HOW DO YOU BECOME HOMELESS?

Homelessness is an experience that happens to many different types of people and there are many different causes. The top reasons people become homeless are because they:

- **don't have enough money to rent or own a home or apartment;**
- **don't have a family to live with or have been treated badly;**
- **suffer from addiction to drugs or alcohol;**
- **need help with mental illness.**

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

One of the most important ways to help is to treat people how you would want to be treated. They are human just like you with the same needs and feelings.

- **Say “hello” or smile if you feel safe.**
- **Don't yell, laugh, or stare.**
- **Give people space. Don't crowd them.**
- **Volunteer or donate needed items to groups that help.**

