What are \textit{you} thankful for?

\textbf{A Warm Bed to Sleep In?}
Did You Know?
- 1.6 to 1.7 million young people will experience homelessness this year
- 79\% of homeless youth were regularly attending school before entering a shelter

\textbf{Food on the Table?}
Did You Know?
- 60\% of homeless youth report inadequate food consumption

\textbf{A Family Who Cares?}
Did You Know?
- 63\% of homeless youth are never reported or sought after by guardians
- 22\% - 44\% come from guardians who abuse drugs or alcohol, often leading to domestic violence and conflict
- 50\% of youth interviewed during shelter stays report that their parents told them to leave or did not try to stop them
- 17\% were forced into unwanted sexual activity by a member of their household
Common Characteristics of Homeless Youth

- lack of self-sufficiency skills
- lack of financial resources
- mental health problems, often post-traumatic stress disorder
- substance abuse
- declining physical health
Meet Jamal (Fleeing/Runaway)
• 15 years old
• identifies as gay
• left home because of family conflict
• has struggled with depression and attempted suicide
Meet Jessica (Episodic/“Couch Surfer”)

- 18 years old
- comes from a low-income community
- emotionally and verbally abused by her mother growing up
- attends school

Note: LGBTQ and people of color are strongly represented in this category of youth homelessness
Meet Daniel (Street Dependant/Traveler)

- 21 years old
- struggling with drug addiction
- removed from home for neglect
- “aged out” of foster care and has been living on the streets since age 18
- engages in “survival sex”*
- attends school

*survival sex = prostitution out of necessity
Meet Tara
(Unaccompanied/Shelter Hopper)

- 19 years old
- sexually abused by her uncle as a child
- identifies as bisexual
- has been living on the street for 2 months
- plans on seeking a temporary home with her aunt
3 Main Solutions to Youth Homelessness

**Early Intervention/Prevention:**

- Make sure a homelessness episode doesn’t turn into long-term homelessness
- Improve family dynamics & mental health
Intervene with Already Homeless Youth:

• Reunite youth with their families as quickly as possible

• Strengthen family stability

• Utilize Peer Outreach – train young people to go out on the street (Homeless youth trust people ages 16-21 more easily than adults)
Intervene with Long-Term Homeless Youth:

- On-the-Street Outreach
- 1-on-1 Connections
- Address the Housing Need first
- Provide Financial Aid & Career Services
- Equip them with tools for self-sufficiency & independent housing
Homelessness in Our Community

According to a 2008 survey:

- 1,076 individuals and 1,018 persons in families are homeless within the Tri-County region
- 84% have at least 1 chronic or disabling condition
- 62% have a history of alcohol or drug dependency
- 40% have a history of violence in their family
What Can *You* Do To Help?

ServiceNet, a human service agency in Northampton, MA is always accepting volunteers (for one-time or regular commitment) to help in any of their 4 homeless shelters or work at a fundraising event. To learn more, e-mail volunteer@servicenet.org
• Jessie’s House in Amherst also accepts volunteers on an on-going basis from anything from fundraising to translating to hair styling

• Other local shelters who could use a helping hand include:
  • Community Cot Shelter, Northampton, MA
  • Hampshire Outreach, Northampton, MA
You can also donate items from their shelter wish lists:

**Franklin County Emergency Shelter:**
- First Aid:
  - Aspirin
  - Non-aspirin
  - Cold tabs
  - Decongestants
  - Band-Aids
  - Gauze
  - Medical tape
  - Antibiotic ointment
  - Vitamin E
  - Peroxide
- Personal Care Items:
  - Hand wipes
  - Alcohol
- Household Items:
  - Sheets (twin-size) and pillow cases
  - Blankets
  - Dish towels
  - Toilet paper
  - Paper towels
  - Large pots
  - Large casserole pans
  - Knives, forks, spoons
  - Coffee cups and mugs
  - Heavy-duty large garbage bags
  - Coffee cups & mugs
- Cleaning Supplies:
  - Cleansers
  - Dishwashing detergent
  - Dishwasher soap
  - Laundry detergent
  - Towels
  - Sponges
  - SOS pads
  - Disinfectants
  - Bleach
  - Window cleaner
- Miscellaneous:
  - Note pads
  - Postage stamps
  - Tape
  - Markers & Pens
  - Batteries
  - Flashlights
  - Phone calling cards

**Silver Street Inn:**
- Twin-sized sheets, flat & fitted
- Regular-sized pillowcases
- Towels
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels (preferably tri-fold)
- Napkins
- Large freezer storage bags
- Toothbrushes
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Trash bags, all sizes
- Vases
- Water glasses
- Plastic coffee mugs (with tops, if possible)
- Pillows
- Comforters--twin
- Large sauce pans
- Casserole dishes
- Baking pans
- Skillets
- Toiletries for men and women
- Art supplies
- Loveseat/couch
- Curtains/drapes (63" or longer)
- Framed artwork
- Phone cards
- CVS gift cards

**Greenfield Family Inn:**
- Cleaning products & disinfectants
- Paper products
- Linens & towels
- Phone cards
- Supermarket gift cards
- Diapers
- Baby products
- Clothing
- Food
- Small kitchen appliances (in working condition)
- School supplies
- Grove Street Inn:
  - Cleaning supplies
  - Paper products
  - Linens & towels
  - Toiletries
  - School supplies
  - Computer with Windows 95 or better
  - Lawnmower
  - Artwork for the walls
  - Long distance phone cards