

Resource # 3B

Voices Unheard—Summary

Key Points

- The homeless experience feelings of helplessness, despair, and fear, and their dreams die.
- People don't choose homelessness and don't need to be punished for being homeless. They simply want a decent place to live.
- One third of the homeless are children, 40% are men, 60% are African American. The average age of a child in a shelter is 8½.
- The homeless worry about what to eat, where to sleep, how to manage daily hygiene, and how to avoid violence.
- Being homeless often puts an individual at odds with holding a job.
- For men, lack of income and affordable housing is the main cause of homelessness.
- Domestic violence is a main cause of women becoming homeless.
- Youth who have become homeless often have family problems.
- The Drop Inn Center began in the 1970s with the efforts of activist buddy gray.
- Homeless residents are involved in running and making decisions for the Drop Inn Center.
- There are many stereotypes of the homeless and the words and names can be hurtful to individuals.
- *Streetvibes* is written by and for the homeless in Cincinnati. It began in 1996 when the city tried to make panhandling illegal. Eight thousand copies of *Streetvibes* are printed each month.
- The homeless live in cars, hallways, and abandoned buildings.
- Most shelters are geared to the needs of men rather than women.
- Going through drug or alcohol rehabilitation helps some people leave homelessness behind.
- Homeless activists talk about the issue in schools and churches and try to break down stereotypes.
- People need to care more about the homeless and address their individual needs.
- Some suggest using the skills of homeless people to rehab abandoned buildings and turn them into affordable housing.
- There is an urgent need for 30,000 units of affordable housing in the area.
- Developers are not building affordable housing and continue to tear down existing units.
- America lacks a living wage. No one who works a fulltime minimum wage job can afford to rent a typical two-bedroom apartment.
- The Milner Hotel downtown once was a refuge for the homeless but it was torn down to make way for urban renewal. The impact of its loss is still felt today, especially in winter.
- People need help from others to rise up from homelessness.

Individuals Featured

- Alicia Beck, former Executive Director of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
- Pat Clifford, Director of the Drop Inn Center
- Jimmy Heath, formerly homeless
- Riccardo Taylor, homeless
- Edna Smith, homeless
- Zakiyyah Allen, homeless

Places Featured

- Drop Inn Center
- Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
- Milner Hotel