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### Homelessness

Did you know that there are about 22 out of 10,000 people who are homeless in America? That's 11/5,000 of the Santa Cruz population. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness Organization, approximately 672,000 people experience homeless. In the Santa Cruz County people have unstable lives, an inadequate health care system, and endure health problems that are chronic, mental health, disorders, and even unresolved that are all difficult to fix these days. The poor economy, and debt, and deficit reduction in the federal level is to blame for the decline of house mortgages and increase in poverty. We need to spread the word out everyone. By spending our time to participate in the cause, we can help the homeless get out of this pit and reach the top with a little help at any time and in any way we can.

Homelessness is no doubt a significant problem that the world faces, but there are many problems that can lead up to that. People are forced to make difficult decisions when choosing necessities due to housing, absorbing high proportions of income. With the current Santa Cruz minimum wage, a person would only be able to afford \$30 per month for housing. Average housing in Santa Cruz is \$65,253, as you can see the discrepancy. There 262,382 homeless people in the Santa Cruz county and even some who are employed, but can't afford a house

because of the income rates. If your family's income was extremely low you would probably realize that it's a problem and not have as many things to buy as you do now. In the year 2000, about 11.3% of the U.S. population lived in poverty and 16.2% of them were children. Imagine if you were one of those children, you could barely afford anything or live in a nice home, it would probably makes you grateful for what you have now. There are 2,771 homeless people in Santa Cruz and the percentage has increased by 22% since 2009. {[www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci-18554141](http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci-18554141)}

Approximately 25% of the population suffers from mental illness. Many people can't access supportive housing/treatment services and children can suffer from anxiety and hunger. Some even suffer from chronic health conditions containing 46% of the population and 3% of it have HIV/AIDS. Think about if you were in that kids' shoes you would get many illnesses and disabilities without access to a proper doctor. Another problem is the decline of public assistance, as very few people receive benefits and suffer from work due to low wages. If your parents couldn't get paid as they are now and lost their jobs, it would become a problem for you. The lack of healthcare is another contributing factor to the problem because the application for people with low incomes can range from months to years. Imagine if you didn't have the proper healthcare, you probably wouldn't be as healthy, sinking quickly into poverty. Not all people are lucky. Marriage and divorce rates can be another cause, believe it or not. About 35% of mothers would fall into poverty if they got married because of becoming more dependent such as relying too much on their husband when they might not do anything at all. Now your parents may or

may not be divorced, but if your parents couldn't pull themselves together, you would be in trouble.

Domestic violence can hurt many peoples' lives, especially towards women and children who constantly experience violence or abusive relationships outside or inside their homes. There are about 25% of homeless individuals who were either physically or sexually abused as children and can continue to live their lives like that. Think for a moment. If you were one of those people, you would be hurting just like they are. Ethnicity and race are other issues at large, as they fall into the homeless pit sooner because of being a minority. This could be an issue if you were homeless and it's a shame of what's going on in our society. Leaving your community or rejecting your family and friends can lead to homelessness quicker if you don't have any support. Imagine if you cut yourself off, that would be a major problem in so many ways. Having a warrant, felony, or a conviction can also prevent you from access housing maintenance. If you had a record of a crime or something illegal, you would most likely hit rock bottom and that wouldn't be something to look forward to and that's an even bigger reason for them to continue to live a life of crime.

There are some ways to help decrease the rate of homelessness. Donating our money that we would've spent on luxury items to charities is an important factor that could help the lives of the poor around the world, including children. A household brings \$50,000 a year and donations to help the poor can come to \$30,000. Evolutionary psychologists tell us that:

Most people wouldn't sacrifice so much for strangers. If it's true that we should get in the habit of doing things we normally wouldn't do, then let's face that fact head-on. Then, if we

value the life of a child more than going to fancy restaurants, the next time we dine out, we will know that we could have done something better with our money.

Having increased access to homeless shelters could help tremendously. Since the economy's decline, many families have left welfare programs. According to the Urban Institute Report, the nation's unemployment rate has increased by 88% while reform programs increased by 14% in 2007. Online services and programs can help people get on the right track if we offer to help people build skills and work histories on these online services. Do you like seeing people on the streets while you go about your daily, luxurious lives? If not then donate something. Giving donations of your own money to homeless people on the street who ask is another courteous thing you could do. If you're walking along a street and a homeless person asks, you shouldn't have any problem in giving them some change, no matter how small it is, and be friendly to them as well. Smile at them rather than looking away. Donating old clothing or books to Goodwill or Salvation Army can also make a huge difference and give these people clothing of their own instead of wearing rags from the street. Just little things such as this can help out.

You may argue that you might not have enough time to help out, but if you do your part then you won't have to spend too much of your time at all. Even something small is always helpful, such as volunteering at a soup kitchen or emailing organizations to spread the word of the problem of homelessness. If you make a simple donation to a homeless shelter, such as money or clothes, that can be very helpful as well. If you say you don't have time then think about the hour or several hours a day you spend on facebook, or playing video games. Spend your time wisely to try and help out even if it's not that long, every second counts.

Therefore, homelessness is indeed a huge problem in the world and is never going to stop at the rate the economy is going now. Home mortgages are declining and the people without homes are suffering every day with disabilities, insufficient health programs, mental illnesses, and other problems in the world. Families are falling apart because of this and there are more children who are growing up on the streets without a shelter and proper health care. By telling people about homeless shelter services that are online and donating money to charities, shelters, or even to homeless people themselves, things will change for the better! That's why it's up to you to make a difference in the world and participate in the cause to help whenever needed. By doing anything ranging from a big to small, you can make a huge difference without even knowing it. These people who are suffering in the world need all the help they can get which is why you can help out the cause in any way possible.

### Works Sited

Camillus.org, 1960. Non-Profit Organization. 2011. <http://www.camillushouse.org/>

The Camillus house is a non-profit organization that provides humanitarian services to homeless people, young and old. It lists all of the problems that are contributing to the significant problem of homelessness. This site also shows news about homelessness and offers some suggestions on how to help the cause. Most of the information seemed pretty relevant and the site seems to update new information daily which made it a credible source for my report.

Committee to End Homelessness. King County 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. 27, Feb.2012. <http://www.cehkc.org/>

The Committee to End Homelessness is a plan in King County to stop homelessness and has been working on it for 10 years. It provides you with information on what the problems are, some event, and how to get involved. The information that appeared on the site seemed very accurate and valid which seemed to help me in my research making it a credible source.

SantaCruzHealth.org. 2000. Health reports and Statistics. 2011. [www.santacruzhealth.org/](http://www.santacruzhealth.org/)

The Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency provides information about health reports or statistics. It connects to other sites that have facts, statistics, projects, and anything related to the Santa Cruz county. Now I didn't need too much information, but what I did need I wasn't disappointed. I found just enough information that seemed updated and provided me with enough facts to continue my research.

Shepherd's Table. 2010. A Non-Profit Organization. 2010. [www.shepherdstable.org](http://www.shepherdstable.org)

The Shepherd's Stable is a non-profit organization in downtown Silver Spring that provides help to the homeless or to someone who needs basic services or assistance. The site displays volunteering, news, services, and some facts about homelessness in the world. It provides some relevant information and some statistics that were useful to me and helped me out with my assignment. Not to mention the news is only a couple of years old so it seems for the most part credible.

Williams, Mary E. *Poverty and the Homeless*. Detroit, New York: Greenhaven Press, 2004.

This book thoroughly explains about all of the causes and problem surrounding the issue of homelessness. It goes into detail about how these problems are affecting people around the world, people express how it affected them, and gives possible solutions to how it could be fixed. However this book is 8 years old from now and may be dated on some of the statistics, but there are still some facts that are still true to this day and the information has really helped me on my report.