

NATIONAL HUNGER & HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

Sponsored by
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Student Campaign against Hunger & Homelessness

November 16-24, 2013

RESOLVE TO FIGHT POVERTY

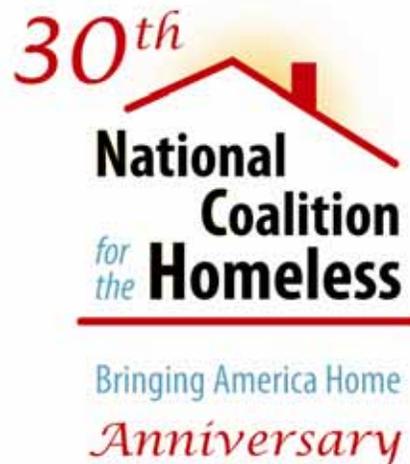


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Education	5
Suggested Activities and Ideas	6
Business/Corporate Involvement	11
Media	12
Sample News Release	14
Sample Proclamation	15
Sample Week	16
Faces of Homelessness Panel	18
“One Night Without a Home”	20
Homeless Challenge Project	22
Outreach Run	26
Oxfam America’s Dining Hall Fast	27
Oxfam America’s Hunger Banquet	28
Offering of Letters	29
Lobbying FAQ	30
Organizational Contacts	32
Appendix	35

Introduction

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, people take time to consider what they're thankful for and donate some of their time, attention and resources to those less fortunate. In the spirit of thankfulness and giving, each year the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness set aside the week prior to Thanksgiving to sponsor the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. Last year during this week, more than 750 high schools, colleges, community groups and faith-based groups from cities across the United States came together to bring awareness to pressing issues: hunger and homelessness. This year, NCH recognizes its 30th Anniversary, marking a long and difficult road toward ending homelessness, but prompting even more substantial initiatives to address the root causes of homelessness. This manual serves as a tool to inspire your community or business to get involved with National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week!

Considering Participation

If you and your group or business are considering participating in the *National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week*, first think about why this week is so important. Participating in *National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week* raises awareness, promotes ending hunger and homelessness in your community, and strengthens the national endeavor to end these social ills.

Bringing attention to the national disgrace of homelessness is something for which you can be proud. Your participation in *National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week* will help build your community and leadership skills, while fostering greater understanding and solidarity among your friends and peers, clients and co-workers. Events such as hunger banquets and "One Night without a Home" can assist individuals in recognizing the difficulties that many people face daily. We encourage you to approach a community leader or school administrator about participating in *National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week*. Together we can work to eliminate the myth that hunger and homelessness are inevitable consequences of our society and can instead recognize that ending hunger and homelessness is an achievable goal. Check out NCH's policy initiatives that promote this goal:

http://www.nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/PolicyPriorities_2013.html

Planning Ahead

Early planning is important. November 16-24, 2013 will come before you know it. Begin by enlisting interested individuals, outlining and planning events, and contacting organizations that may be willing to participate and/or offer assistance. The more time you spend brainstorming, planning, and organizing now, the better your week will go in November. *If this will be your first time participating in National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, remember that you do not need an event for each day. It might be better to choose one or two events that will be well planned, focused*

and vibrant. Hunger and homelessness cannot be eliminated in a week, but a creative, dedicated, and timely effort will contribute greatly to the national endeavor.

How?

First off, you need a team. A small, dedicated group of people can create the main planning team, but you will undoubtedly need a larger support system. It is crucial that you are constantly recruiting individuals by creating an interest in the issues of hunger and homelessness, as well as an interest in the events that you are planning. Most likely you already know people that will be interested in participating, but never be afraid to promote it to other individuals and ask for their assistance. Some people may surprise you. Consider any community that you may be involved with. Even if you have not been active in a particular community, take the initiative to assume a leadership role. Consider any groups that may already be interested in participating in hunger and homelessness issues/programs. It is imperative not only to promote interest, but also to consider all feedback. Discuss the events that you are planning and be open to changes and new ideas.

It is immensely important to know the community that you are working with: children, the elderly, college students, etc., in order to create the events accordingly. After establishing a team, it is important to decide on the logistics as soon as possible.

Here is a sample checklist of some, but not all, questions that you will need to answer:

- How many and which events should we plan for?
- When and where should the events take place?
- How many people should coordinate each event?
- Who should handle publicity?
- What is the best meeting time (preferably weekly) for everyone?
- What community organizations would help us by co-sponsoring the week?
- Who is knowledgeable about organizing events within the community?
- What are creative ways to educate the public on the events and the issue?

REGISTRATION

Before you get started please take a moment to register your Awareness Week on both the websites of the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger & Homelessness.

National Coalition for the Homeless:

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/awareness/index.html>

National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness:

<http://www.studentsagainsthunger.org/>

It is very important for you to register your week so that we have accurate records of participation across the country. We would also benefit from any feedback you can provide on events you hosted during Awareness Week.

Good luck as you begin organizing!



EDUCATION

In any endeavor, education is essential. Be able to speak confidently about why you want to, and why you think your community should, participate in *National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week*. Statistics inspire interest, but stories will also increase participation; listed below are a number of websites that you can utilize to educate yourself and your community about issues regarding hunger and homelessness. Try to be creative when you educate your community and consider using NCH's awareness programs like its [Speaker's Bureau](#) (including the [Speaker Bios](#)) and its various [YouTube videos](#).

National Coalition for the Homeless
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org>

National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness
<http://www.studentsagainsthunger.org>

Videos and books are great tools when educating yourself and the public about hunger and homelessness. For recommendations on both informative and entertaining books and videos, please contact the National Coalition for Homeless at: info@nationalhomeless.org; 202-462-4822

Below are three videos produced by the National Coalition for the Homeless.

"Faces of Homelessness I"

The highly regarded NCH video that features images of America's homeless people. This 13-minute video features images taken by award-winning photographers from around the country accompanied with powerful homeless-themed music that enables the viewer to get a sense of who is homeless in America. Available on YouTube.

"Faces of Homelessness II"

DVD was done by a trio of student filmmakers who interviewed a number of homeless people in the nation's capital. Available on YouTube.

"The National Coalition for the Homeless: Bringing America Home"

A short documentary that outlines the history and promotes the work of the National Coalition for the Homeless. Available on YouTube.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS

Below is a list of suggested events and ideas for National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week during NCH's 30th Anniversary. Please feel free to develop new activities for your unique community or business, but also use the anniversary as a distinctive way to promote NCH's policy agendas in the effort to end homelessness. If your idea proves successful, please let us know so that we can add your event to next year's manual!

30th Anniversary Theme

- This year is the National Coalition for the Homeless' 30th anniversary, which creates opportunities to call even more attention to Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week events, as well as better integrate NCH's policy aims into the week's planning and execution.
- NCH's long history can serve not as a celebration (which might indicate contentment with its accomplishments) but instead as a gauge for the long and difficult road to end homelessness, prompting greater pushes for action.
- Not only does the 30th anniversary put the enduring nature of homelessness into perspective, but it also can be used to represent some of the main barriers to ending homelessness. An example of a possible theme constructed around the anniversary might involve stressing inflation over this period of time (from 1983 to 2013) and minimum wage's inability to keep up with it, coupled with the devastating increase in the U.S.'s housing prices. This sort of layout could serve as an important backdrop for introducing and stressing the importance of policies pertaining to the need for affordable

housing, like capitalizing the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF). Follow these links for the referenced data:

Housing Price increase (adjusted):
<http://www.jparsons.net/housingbubble/>

Minimum Wage decrease (adjusted):
<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0774473.html>

Popular Awareness Week Events

- Organize a “One Night Without a Home” awareness sleep out in front of city hall or on a nearby college campus. (See the detailed description included on p. 21)
- Organize Oxfam America’s *Hunger Banquet* or *Dining Hall Fast* in your community. (See the detailed description included on p. 27-28)

Educational Events

- Host educational forums on hunger and homelessness. Invite speakers, such as individuals who have experienced homelessness, service providers, and community speakers to share their experiences. The National Coalition for the Homeless can refer you to Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Bureaus that operate in 16 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. Show videos and distribute fact sheets or other informational material (refer to the National Coalition for the Homeless’ website: www.nationalhomeless.org).
- Organize a movie night with homelessness/hunger-related feature films or documentaries. Contact NCH for our recommendations. Request that attendees bring a non-perishable food item to donate. Have a local business or group donate popcorn and other refreshments.
- Organize a book reading and discussion group. Contact NCH for our recommendations. Helpful hint: see if there are any local authors in your community who have written on hunger and homelessness who would be willing to host a book reading/signing.
- Arrange a trip to an elementary school and read a children’s book on hunger or homelessness while having the teacher facilitate an age-appropriate discussion.

- Homelessness Saturday or Sunday. Have religious institutions such as churches, synagogues, temples, or mosques focus their religious services on homelessness/hunger issues. Prayer breakfasts/meetings and candlelight vigils are also good ways to involve religious institutions.

Community Building Events

- Organize a potluck dinner in which community members bring in a dish for themselves and three other persons. Invite individuals who are currently or formerly homeless as guests in order to encourage community interaction. Remember to choose a neutral site for the dinner — a convenient place with no religious affiliation.
- Arrange a Community Service Day where people can volunteer at different local organizations and learn about their activities. Suggested contacts: food pantries, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens (See NCH Directory: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/directories/index.html>).
- Organize a Cardboard Brigade in your community. Miami-Dade County, FL successfully organized 40 cardboard brigades across the community, encouraging citizens and students to make cardboard signs and take to the streets, stressing the importance of ending homelessness and raising awareness.
- Host an Open-Mic Night in a local coffee shop. Invite all community members to share poetry, prose, and thoughts on homelessness and hunger.
- Organize a Food Stamp Challenge in which participants attempt to eat on a food stamp budget for a week or a day. Some Congressional members and elected officials have taken the challenge (<http://foodstampchallenge.typepad.com/>); invite your local government officials to take the challenge with community members.
- Construct a community quilt. This is great for classrooms/students. Each person can contribute a square that relates to an aspect of homelessness and poverty that is meaningful to them. For more information, view this example from Ms. Rhoads' 4th grade class in Yarmouth, Maine: <http://voicethread.com/#q.b1014788.i5411859>
- Organize a “We are All Homeless” event in your community, during which non-homeless individuals hold up signs asking for money in order to raise awareness about homelessness. Volunteers can also give out information directing individuals to local homelessness/hunger charities/service

providers. For more information, view this example from Dallas, Texas:
<http://www.the33tv.com/news/kdaf-we-are-all-homeless-story,0,6452650.story>

- Organize a “Living in a Car” event in which volunteers take shifts living in a car for twenty-four hours in a public area to simulate how some homeless live and to raise awareness. A great example can be seen at: <http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/oct/04/hfc-joins-national-hunger-and-homelessness-awareene/>
- Organize a collection of non-perishable items such as food, hygiene products, clothing, blankets, books, toys, etc. at a local business.

Fundraising and Drives for Hunger and Homelessness Causes

- Organize a drive to collect non-perishable items such as food, hygiene products, clothing, blankets, books, and toys. Involve community organizations in a competition to see which group can collect the most donations. Helpful hint: **Talk with local service providers to research what items are most needed in your community.**
- Designate one day for community members to skip a meal or embark on a fast. Instead of purchasing lunch that day, they can donate the money that they would have spent to hungry people in their community. Alternatively, participants can prepare a meal for homeless people.
- Sponsor a bake sale or raffle. Donate collected money to NCH or a local shelter.
- Sponsor a benefit concert with local musicians. Donate collected money to NCH or a local shelter.
- Arrange a walk or a run. Have each participant collect sponsorship money; set a minimum, such as \$20 per participant. Donate collected money to NCH or a local shelter. Encourage local businesses to donate food and drinks. Encourage local bands to provide entertainment.
- Sponsor a gallery night by selling artwork created by homeless individuals. Donate the proceeds to local homelessness/hunger organizations or directly to the homeless whose artwork is being sold.
- Organize an “Empty Bowls” fundraiser, in conjunction with an art department or local art center. Volunteers create ceramic bowls,

which are then used to serve a simple meal of soup and bread. Guests at the meal give a suggested donation of ten dollars in exchange for the meal and the bowl, which they keep as a reminder of their experiences at the meal. The money raised is used to support local, national, or international hunger relief efforts. Empty Bowls is an ideal fundraiser to be combined with an educational event. Contact Empty Bowls at www.emptybowls.net/

- Develop challenges associated with awareness events like donating whatever one brings to a sleep out event (i.e. tent, umbrella, sleeping bag, tarp).

Advocacy Events

- Think Globally, Act Locally--Washington, D.C. isn't the only place that lobbying is possible! Gather a group of students and homeless/formerly homeless individuals and visit your city hall, county commission, state legislature and/or a local office of your Congressional representative or Senator. Focus on educating your audience on issues concerning homelessness and what ideas you have to better the situation. Lobbying doesn't have to have a negative connotation; think about what you are doing as merely an educational, hopeful conversation. For more tips on lobbying effectively, see the lobbying Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section in this packet or on NCH's website: http://www.nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/lobbying_101.html.
- Have a booth where people can write to their Congressional representatives about the importance of programs for homeless persons. (See Bread for the World Offering of Letters description included in this packet).
- Attempt to integrate policy agendas into events in order to provide participants with an agenda to write representatives about, adding a way for people to push for an end to hunger and homelessness at the source (economic and health care policies for example). This could involve some sort of skill clinic that represents the importance of training and apprenticeship programs needed to help homeless people enter the skilled workforce. Similarly, having the event closely affiliated with a hospital could serve as a backdrop for insisting on implementing Medicaid's expansion.
- Register homeless and low-income people to vote.

- Have people come together and discuss the issues surrounding homelessness. Then have them write their opinions in Letters to the Editor in their local, state, and national newspapers.

All of these ideas leave plenty of room for ingenuity. Take one of these ideas and change it as you see fit, or combine components of multiple ideas, such as:

- Organize a carnival: Charge a couple of dollars for admission and/or collect canned goods as admission. Have local businesses donate food, drinks, and other goods or services. Charge very little for each, and donate all proceeds from the event to a local shelter. Have homeless or formerly homeless people attend and speak briefly. Have local bands perform. Have a booth where individuals can write letters to Congressional representatives.

Check out the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness' website for more ideas that are specifically geared toward college campuses and students, such as the Spare Change for Social Change initiative, and Swipe Twice for Hunger.

<http://www.studentsagainsthunger.org>

Business/Corporate Involvement

Involvement in Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is by no means limited to school and community events; corporate involvement can also play a central role in organizing an effort to end hunger and homelessness. A local group's partnership with a business can be mutually-beneficial; the business can provide some funding for the cause, supporting the local group, and the local group can support the business through advertisements, etc. at the event.

- Businesses often have access to resources that can create unique opportunities for fundraising. For example, a business might use its ability to buy relatively inexpensive bulk supplies to make a local group's clothing or food drive more affordable and successful. Another example might involve a business providing its services for free during a local group's event (like Laundromats washing homeless people's clothes).
- Involvement in Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week helps promote the particular business as a trusted and locally-active one, due to its involvement in the community and its support of important local initiatives. The business will benefit by establishing this positive reputation when customer support increases as a result.
- A particular business could pledge to donate a percentage of proceeds (perhaps from meals at a restaurant) to benefit a local homeless shelter or advocacy organization.

- Businesses have the option to utilize their corporate atmospheres uniquely, so as to incentivize donations or personal involvement with community events through their employees. For example, a business might allow those who donate to shelters or advocacy organizations to dress down for a week or take an extended lunch break.

A truly successful Awareness Week for any contributor will inspire people to become further involved with the issues of hunger and homelessness, and support political initiatives that would contribute to ending their root causes. At the end of this packet is a list of advocacy groups with whom people could work to continue their involvement. These organizations, along with other local ideas of how people can become more involved with the issue of homelessness on a more regular basis, should be advertised throughout your Awareness Week events.

MEDIA

An important component of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is publicity. The outcome of your event will depend largely on your ability to advertise prior to the event. A good use of the media will get people in your community to start thinking about hunger and homelessness and inspire them to take part in the events during the week. In order to get the word out and involve the community as much as possible, you need to alert your local media early on in your organizing process. *It is important to notify both campus and community media sources. Let them know about the events of Awareness Week.*

How to Utilize the Media

- Find multiple media outlets in your community such as newspapers and radio stations.
- Urge media to publish/run/air educational information as well as stories from homeless people and social service agencies.
- Have your Awareness Week events published on Community Event Boards.
- One week before National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, step up the publicity to make sure that Awareness Week is on everyone's mind. During the week, continue to work full force with the media to

gather as many participants as possible for the events. Please see the sample news release we have included as a guide (p.15).

Other Publicizing Techniques

- It is helpful to be creative in advertising your activities. Some suggestions are t-shirts, posters, bookmarks, or door hangers.
- The graphics department at a local school may be willing to help you create flyers and posters for the events, as well as fact sheets with information about hunger and homelessness. NCH Factsheets: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/index.html>
- Great places to hang flyers and posters include: local restaurants, businesses, college campuses, and service organizations. Make sure to get permission.
- In addition to the media, radio, and flyers, social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter are another good way to get the word out. Remember to keep tabs on NCH's Facebook and H and H week event page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/590250311016686/>, as well as its Twitter account: https://twitter.com/Ntl_Homeless, throughout the entire process.
- Distribute your information (fact sheets and overview of the week's events) to community organizations.
- E-mail can be a great reminder as Awareness Week draws closer. Urge each community organization to participate—interest them in joining a canned food drive, promoting Awareness Week within their organization, and sending at least a few representatives to each event.
- Another inexpensive and effective idea for publicity is to enlist students or community residents to announce Awareness Week and the events to their classes or at work. Professors and employers are usually very supportive of this idea and should not mind giving a couple of minutes of class time to promote National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.
- If you are on a college campus, using chalk on well-traveled sidewalks is another great way to publicize to a large number of people.

Make sure you let the National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Student Campaign Against Hunger & Homelessness know about Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week in your community!

Registration Form:

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/awareness/index.html>

Contact: Speakers' Bureau Coordinator

National Coalition for the Homeless

Phone: (202) 462-4822

Email: speakersbureau@nationalhomeless.org

Contact: Student Organizer

National Student Campaign Against Hunger & Homelessness

Phone: (617)-747-4381

Email: info@studentsagainsthunger.org

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

ATTENTION LOCAL MEDIA

November 1, 2013

Contact: (Your Name)

(Local Group Name)

(123) 555-HHAW

On (date), 2013, (Local Group Name) will be sponsoring a Faces of Homelessness forum as part of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. The forum will be held at (place) at (time). The forum will include the following guest speakers:

Ms. _____, homeless mother of two living in (your city or state).

Mr. _____, homeless man living in (your city or state).

Ms. _____, director of your city or statewide homeless/housing coalition.

Mr. _____, director of a local shelter in (your city or state).

_____, president of your student hunger/homelessness organization.

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (November 16-24, 2013) is a national endeavor by the National Coalition for the Homeless to promote education, action, and awareness about hunger and homelessness. (Local Group Name) is sponsoring this important effort in (your community). Other events include a "One Night Without a Home," (date), a canned food drive, and a Hunger Banquet (date).

For more information, please call (Your Name) at (your number).

Thank you for your time and attention.

****Note:** Distribute similar news releases for each of your events. Perhaps you might choose to submit a news release that presents an overview of the entire week and then submit an individual news release for each event.

Sample Proclamation

A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 16-24, 2013 AS
NATIONAL HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK IN

_____.

By Your City Council/Mayor/County/Commission: _____

Date Proclamation Issued:_____

WHEREAS, for the past several years the National Coalition for the Homeless and National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness have sponsored National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the proclamation is to educate the public about the many reasons people are hungry and homeless including the shortage of affordable housing in _____ for very low income residents; and to encourage support for homeless assistance service providers as well as community service opportunities for students and school service organizations; and

WHEREAS, there are many organizations committed to sheltering and providing supportive services as well as meals and food supplies to people experiencing homelessness including:_____, _____, _____; and

WHEREAS, the theme of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week 2013 is "Bringing America Home," and

WHEREAS, the _____ recognize that hunger and homelessness continues to be a serious problem for many individuals and families in _____; and

WHEREAS, the intent of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is consistent with the activities of _____ (local organizations).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the _____ hereby proclaims November 16-24, 2013 as National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the _____ encourages all citizens to recognize that many people do not have housing and need support from citizens, and private/public nonprofit service entities.

Sample Week

A major component of scheduling for Awareness Week is to begin with “kick-off” events that work up to the larger events, even if you have only a couple of activities planned for the week. Planning your community’s Awareness Week in this manner allows residents in your community to increase their involvement as the week progresses. By doing this, you should have greater participation for your larger events.

Below is an outline of a possible National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. This sample has been compiled from campuses and communities that have previously held an Awareness Week. *Your organization should determine how many and which events will be the most appropriate for your community.* Remember, if you are new to planning an awareness week, one or two focused events will be more effective than five or six marginally organized events. Refer back to the “Suggested Activities” section (p. 6) for more event ideas and details about the events listed below.

Weekend

Hold a “Homelessness Saturday or Sunday.” Have religious institutions such as churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques focus their religious services on homelessness/poverty issues.

Monday

Have a kick-off event to start a fundraising or canned food/blanket drive competition.

Tuesday

Faces of Homelessness Speakers’ Panel

Wednesday

“One Night without a Home” Awareness Sleep Out

Thursday

Oxfam America’s Hunger Banquet and/or Dining Hall Fast

Friday

1. Think globally, Act locally- Washington, D.C. isn’t the only place that lobbying is possible!

2. Hold an end-of-the-week benefit festival with local musicians, a donation collection, and information available on how people can continue to be involved in hunger and homelessness issues. Request that attendees bring a canned good.

Saturday

Organize a group to work at various community service sites as part of Community Service Day. Throughout the week, have sign-up sheets available.

Saturday/Sunday

Set up a Homeless Challenge Project, see pages 23-25 for details.

Remember!

During National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, as community members begin to really think about hunger and homelessness issues, it is crucial that you provide information on how they can take action after Awareness Week has concluded. Provide them with the following information and any other material that you believe is important for your own community.

- The name, address, e-mail, and phone number of a local shelter at which they can volunteer.
- The names, addresses, and phone numbers of local, state, and national homeless coalitions and advocacy groups which they can join. Contact the national organizations listed at the end of this packet to be referred to their local affiliates.
- Information about writing members of Congress.
- Information about Alternative Breaks, which allow community members to spend a week-long break doing service. Call **BreakAway at (800) 903-0646** or at <http://alternativebreaks.org> for more information.

Wrapping-Up Awareness Week

When National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week has concluded, there will still be a few loose ends that you will need to tie up. Remember to send thank you letters to all of your contacts and your support network. You or other Awareness Week organizers will probably refer to these same people in the future. Also, meet with your team to discuss what went right and what went wrong during Awareness Week. Make sure everyone evaluates his or her own project, as well as how he or she viewed Awareness Week as a whole. Gather

these individual and group evaluations to comprise a resource folder—one that you and other groups will be able to refer to in the future.

AND...

Contact the National Coalition for the Homeless and let us know how your Awareness Week was received by the community — send us newspaper clippings, posters, commentary, and other news! Follow the link to the online form: <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/awareness/index.html>

FACES OF HOMELESSNESS PANEL

What is a Faces Panel?

A Faces Panel provides an opportunity for dialogue between individuals who have experienced homelessness with those who want to learn more about homelessness. The Panel members speak about their experiences and answer questions from the audience. <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/faces/index.html>

Why host a Faces Panel?

The Faces Panel makes a very powerful impact on those who attend. People are provided with a personal connection to the homeless statistics that they have heard. Myths can be dispelled and stereotypes can be broken down as the audience gets a chance to interact with homeless people. Audience members can listen to the perspectives and stories of those who are homeless and hear their ideas for solutions to hunger and homelessness issues.

Tips for Recruiting Homeless People as Speakers

- If you know homeless people who would like to speak, ask them directly.
- Send letters to/call your local shelters asking them if someone from their shelter would like to speak. It's good to get a few "success stories" of people who are no longer homeless, as well as stories of people who are currently homeless. If you contact the shelter, you need to make follow-up calls to make sure the speakers will come. Sometimes shelters are not willing to let their clients speak. Shelters that house women fleeing domestic abuse, families, or youth, often want their clients to concentrate on their own problems and are sometimes protective. If possible, organize a diverse group of speakers (age, race, sex, homeless/formerly homeless).
- Make sure to arrange transportation for your speakers; this can include giving them bus/cab fare or simply picking them up. Sometimes the shelter will assign a staff member/volunteer to transport the client to and from the event.

- Make sure to contact the shelter and inform them that a resident will be speaking on your campus, and ensure that the speaker(s) will not lose their beds for the night if they return late.
- Be sure to compensate the speakers with an honorarium: \$40 is a suggested amount for local speakers, but feel free to give more.
- Invite the speakers to eat in your school cafeteria before the event.

Other

- Make sure to get the community and campus media to cover the event. Consider videotaping the panel.
- To get the speakers started, meet with them beforehand and ask that they address the following in their presentations: if they are formerly homeless — what their life was like before homelessness, what their life was like while they were homeless, what brought them out of homelessness, and what their life is currently like. If the speakers are currently homeless, have them share what their life was like before homelessness, what it is like to be homeless, and what their hopes and dreams are for the future. Ideally, each speaker should talk for 10-15 minutes.
- Take questions from the floor. Let the audience know that there is no question that is off-limits. You should mention that some speakers may get a little emotional if posed with certain questions. Expect tears when people are asked about their contact/relationships with family. Francine, a speaker for the National Coalition for the Homeless, invited a student to give her a hug after the student said, with tears running down her face, that she was sorry that her mother gave her the wrong perception of homeless people. Another speaker, John, wrote a song about being homeless and not one eye in a room was dry after it was performed.
- Obtain a moderator to introduce the speakers. This moderator should be someone that knows about homelessness on a local or national level. It can be a student homeless activist. It is sometimes hard for homeless people to relate to people with homes, and vice versa. Therefore, it is necessary for the moderator to act as a bridge between the two. The moderator can also interject statistics and other important information in between the stories of the speakers. Generally, the moderator is a local advocate/student who is working on homelessness issues.

For more information, contact with the National Coalition for the Homeless at (202) 462-4822 or speakersbureau@nationalhomeless.org.



“ONE NIGHT WITHOUT A HOME”

The “One Night Without a Home” Awareness Sleep Out takes place nationally during Awareness Week.

The “One Night” is an opportunity for housed persons to spend a night outside to discuss, think, and learn about homelessness. Although one night outside can, in no way, simulate homelessness, it will promote advocacy, awareness, and education.

Format

- “One Night Without a Home” usually lasts for about 12 hours, often from 7pm until morning.
- Develop your mission statement. Address the questions of who, what, where, when, and why?
- Make sure to receive permission right away from your city or county officials and community/school administrators concerning location, security, and other logistics.
- Invite homeless/formerly homeless people, community leaders, residents and community spokespersons to speak.
- Choose an appropriate site (central to community activities).

- Ask local businesses for donations (food, drinks, supplies, money).
- Ask other groups to co-sponsor the event, such as organizations (e.g. Food Not Bombs, Habitat for Humanity) that can serve food to homeless guests.
- Prepare group discussion topics that will promote interaction among all participants.
- Begin the night with a vigil or a march to draw attention, as well as participants, to the event.
- Include information that allows participants to act upon what they've learned (community service, letter writing, advocacy organizations).
- In the morning, allow time for participants to share their thoughts and concerns.

Sample Agenda

6:00 p.m.	Gather participants and provide transportation for homeless/formerly homeless guests
7:00 p.m.	Serve coffee and/or a meal
8:00 p.m.	Speakers/candlelight vigil/music
9:00 p.m.	Discussion groups
11:00 p.m.	Late night food line/music
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast /closing remarks/wrap-up

Additional suggestions

- Be mindful of what you bring. Keep in mind the situation that you are simulating; do not bring any objects or goodies that those without a home most likely lack. Do not bring cell phones, laptop computers, iPads or portable radios. Stay away from having pizza delivered. For college groups, alcoholic beverages are not allowed.
- Consider bringing supplies to donate to the homeless. Anything you bring for additional comfort would be greatly appreciated by someone who undergoes the experience every night.
- Contact local shelters or homeless advocates about bringing homeless people to your event. Ask these contacts to participate in the Night as well.
- Ask local musicians to play. Music brings people together.
- Distribute fact sheets and information about hunger and homelessness and the other events for Awareness Week.
- Make sure to recruit other people to participate in your early planning stages. Ask homeless/formerly homeless people, students, faculty, and community members.
- Invite the media.
- Post a list of rules on the night of the event. These may include: 1) no drugs or alcohol, 2) do not interrupt those who are speaking, 3) respect all

views, 4) do not leave the site. Also, post and announce the agenda, people in charge, bathroom locations, indoor sites, food and first aid stations. You may choose to put a container out for donations. Have a facilitator to mediate any disputes that may arise.

- Set aside some time for group discussion about hunger and homelessness in your community and/or in our nation. Provide paper and pencils for people to jot down their ideas. This is a good time to promote future projects, such as a day of fasting.

Wrap-Up

Appoint a committee to draft a group resolution based on the discussions that night. Establish a common ground for participants who would like to take future action. Collect names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of people for future reference and provide access to information on local service sites.

For more information, contact the National Coalition for the Homeless at (202) 462-4822; E-mail: info@nationalhomeless.org.

Homeless Challenge Project

Challenge the people and leaders of your community to take a Homeless Challenge (formerly called the urban plunge), a life-altering experience with the power to effect change. This program asks individuals from economically privileged backgrounds to give up every day things (i.e. cell phones, warm bed, and shelter), and live on the streets as a person experiencing homelessness. The experience typically lasts for 48 hours.

The Homeless Challenge

(http://www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/Homeless_Challenge_Project/index.html) serves as an educational tool providing awareness to those who participate. While a participant cannot experience homelessness entirely, when a bed and food awaits him at home, the Challenge does offer insight into the life of a person without a home – waiting in soup lines, walking great distances to access services, and feeling 'invisible' to those who are not homeless.

How to Begin

- For a detailed manual about the Homeless Challenge, as coordinated by the National Coalition for the Homeless in Washington, DC, visit the NCH's website or contact:

Speakers' Bureau Coordinator

Phone: (202) 462-4822

Email: speakersbureau@nationalhomeless.org

The Homeless Challenge works best if coordinated with guides (either currently homeless or formerly homeless peoples) who can stay throughout the night with participants for security reasons. Make sure to recruit enough guides such that

each guide stays with a maximum of five participants to avoid large crowds which might draw attention. In addition, a small ratio of guides to participants allows for participants to partake in genuine conversation with a person who is experiencing or has experienced homelessness, as well as share their day's experiences with their guide and with the other participants. Remember to offer an honorarium to your guides – i.e. \$50 per guide, per night

Contact local shelters for recommendations of potential guides and to notify staff of your plans. For contact information of local shelters or homeless coalitions, check out the Directories section on NCH's website:

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/directories/index.html>

Personal Preparation Tips

- Dress in your worst clothes; they should be old/comfortable items you won't mind getting dirty.
- Bring along one piece of ID and bury it in your sock
- Wear no jewelry or watches.
- Refrain from taking a shower for at least two days before beginning the challenge. No cologne, deodorant or use of scented soap. Rub unscented baby oil into your hair to make it look as though your hair hasn't been washed in some time. For men: don't shave for five days before starting the homeless challenge.
- Wear extra layers of clothes even if it is warm out. Homeless people wear extra clothes as they have no place to store clothes in the daytime and it keeps them warm at night.
- Wear roughed-up old shoes.
- Bring along a sheet of cardboard to use as a mattress. Or this will be one of the items you search for upon hitting the streets.
- Bring along an old blanket. Sleeping bags are okay, such as the flannel ones, but do not use state-of-the-art down sleeping bags. A sheet of plastic or a black garbage bag will also be useful in case of rain or snow.
- Women are encouraged to bring along sanitary napkins, as shelters do not always have these items available for free.
- Bring along a pack of cigarettes, plus matches, to share with homeless people. Giving someone a cigarette is a good way to start a conversation. (NCH does not encourage the habit of smoking. Studies have shown that up to 70% of homeless adults do smoke cigarettes).

Activities to Take Part in During Your Homeless Challenge Experience

- Talk with and listen to other homeless people
- Beg for money. Challenge participants are sometimes reluctant to do this. We're taught that nothing in life is free, that it's better not to ask people for anything. Panhandle rich and poor alike. You're likely to get a better response from the so-called "working poor". Split up, but keep your partner in sight. Panhandle for at least two hours. Re-group to see who was the most successful and what techniques worked best. After completing the challenge, you may give the money that you collect to other homeless people you encounter on the streets or to your local host organization who will see that it gets to the unsheltered homeless.
- Sleep outside. Don't expect to get much sleep as the police or private security guards might chase you off.
- Do not stay in shelters, as you may be taking away a bed from someone who really needs it. Sleep outside, regardless of the weather, with the unsheltered homeless. However, hang out in, or in front of, shelters, day centers, etc. to get to know your fellow homeless people.
- Go into cafeterias and fast food restaurants to look for food scraps left on the tables. Eat the food and stay in the facility until the manager runs you out.
- Go to restaurants and ask if you could sweep the sidewalk for a free sandwich.
- Go into restaurants, hotels, and office buildings and ask if you could use the restroom.
- Eat at local meal programs. In most cities, finding food is a relatively easy endeavor; don't worry about eating food meant for homeless people, as there is plenty of food to be found while on the streets. Even if you are not hungry, go to the soup kitchens anyway. This will allow you to interact with other homeless people and familiarize yourself with the various food programs in the city.
- Some religious organizations nationwide still require homeless people to attend services as a condition for getting a meal or a bed for the night. To feel how homeless people are treated by religious institutions, sit in on a mandatory religious service.
- Find a highly visible place to sleep (e.g. park bench, heat/steam grate, bus stop bench). Go to these places late at night to guarantee you are not taking away someone's favorite spot. If this somehow happens, give up your spot and move somewhere else. Have your partner stay awake at all times. Do this in two-hour shifts.

- Go dumpster diving in search of food and recyclable materials. You might be shocked by the "abundance from the streets." Watch out for needles. Use a stick instead of your hands. If you must use your hands, borrow a pair of gloves.
- Apply for work at fast food restaurants. Tell them you live in a well-known local shelter or live on the streets. Tell them that you don't have an address, but you are willing to come back daily to find out if there are any job openings.

Candidate Challenge

When planning a Homeless Challenge, extend the Challenge to political candidates, incumbents, and other public officials. Contact these local, state, and national political figures to offer them a chance to see how public policy directly affects the homeless and low-income people. In the end, this program might garner the necessary political will to end poverty and homelessness in the United States.

For the Candidate Homeless Challenge, possible alternatives include:

Homeless Challenge (Short Version): Same as the above, but anywhere from *12 to 24 hours*. Participants can eat at local meal programs and panhandle. We suggest that this challenge be taken at night.

Listening Session: Candidates/public officials, homeless/formerly homeless persons, service providers, and/or advocates have a moderated, frank discussion about public policy, homelessness, poverty issues, etc., as well as the root causes and solutions that will end homelessness/poverty.

“Walk a Mile in My Shoes”: Participants are paired with a homeless or formerly homeless person. The pair will spend a half day or full day together having lunch at a meal program, going to a day-labor office, sharing where they sleep for the night, or just trying to access social services. This is an opportunity for the participant to share quality time with someone who is homeless, someone who will share his struggles and hardships of life on the streets.



OUTREACH RUN

Get a group together and distribute food, clothing or toiletries to those in need on the streets.

1. Find out who is interested and advertise the opportunity
2. Pick a date and time (day times or early evenings work best)
3. Contact local shelters and food programs to see what groups already provide outreach to the location you've chosen in order to avoid duplication.
4. Decide what you want to distribute--clothing, food, toiletries, or a combination. Collect or purchase supplies needed. Then make bags to organize the donations so they are easy to distribute.
5. Go out on foot or via vehicle into the streets in your community and engage in conversation with those whom you encounter. Ask them if they would like what you have to offer them.

The dialogue/conversation you have with each person you meet is the most important part.

A typical outreach run will last for up to two hours, but it depends on how many things you have and how many people you encounter.

Outreach Run Fact Sheet and Information Form: Whether you are doing the Outreach Run in your own community or with NCH in Washington, DC, visit this manual's appendix to view this fact sheet and information form. This includes information on: history, purpose, guidelines, recommendations for what to distribute, length of Outreach Run, and safety tips. Also included are a supplemental form and sample cover letter.



OXFAM AMERICA'S DINING HALL FAST

This event is great for high school and college campuses that offer meal plans.

“Dining halls on most campuses are operated by a food service company that contracts with the school to prepare and serve students’ meals. On the day of your Dining Hall Fast, students agree to give up one meal, and the food service company agrees to donate a percentage of the cost of that meal to Oxfam. In most cases, the company cannot donate the full cost, since it needs to cover their normal overhead expenses, including paying dining hall staff. Some students have successfully arranged to collect the unused portions of student meal plans at the end of each semester and donated those funds to Oxfam.” (www.oxfamamerica.org)

Go to www.oxfamamerica.org for more detailed information and to download a free toolkit.

Guidelines

- *Start early.* Begin your planning four to eight weeks ahead to ensure the dining hall has plenty of time to prepare and you have plenty of time to publicize.
- *Contact your school's dining service.* Talk with the food service director and explain the details of the fast and what you need from the dining service.
- *Recruit Help.* Gather volunteers to help sign-up fasters, staff information tables, and get the word out.
- *Publicize.* Put up posters, hand out brochures, and set up information tables. Oxfam can provide the materials you need. Send a press release to campus and local media or place an ad in your school newspaper. Get the president of your school or a prominent guest to join your Dining Hall Fast.
- *Educate.* Help participants understand why their involvement is essential. Visit Oxfam's web site— www.oxfamamerica.org/actfast —for free materials you can pass out at your event.

Wrap-Up

- After the Fast, send thank you letters to the food service staff and other contributors. Tell them to include their names and contact information with their donations to Oxfam America. Make sure you receive a photocopy of the check for your records.
- Evaluate your event. Record what went well and what did not for future reference.

If you are interested in this event, please contact:

Oxfam America

Attn: ACT FAST

226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor

Boston, MA 02114-2206

Email: actfast@oxfamamerica.org, Website: www.oxfamamerica.org

Toll Free: 800-77-OXFAM (800-776-9326) Fax: (617) 728-2573

Hunger Banquet

Another fund/awareness-raising event recommend by Oxfam America is a Hunger Banquet. An Oxfam America Hunger Banquet dramatizes the unequal distribution of food in the world. The Banquet will leave many hungry, some with just enough, and very few with full stomachs. Money is raised through a standard admission charge and/or by gathering donations.

Hunger Banquet participants are randomly assigned to one of three socio-economic levels that represent proportional global standards-of-living. Out of every 100 people, 15 enjoy a full-course meal complete with royal treatment, 25 sit in a simple setting and eat a meager meal (such as rice and beans), and the remaining 60 share rice, without utensils, while sitting on the floor.

Steps

- Call **Oxfam America at 800-77-OXFAM**. The Fast Team will provide you with materials and help you organize a Hunger Banquet.
- Gather interested people in your Awareness Week team to help coordinate the event.
- Establish a time and place. For example, school cafeterias and student unions are ideal locations but will require agreements with the administration and dining service.
- Invite local celebrities to the event—local media stars will generate publicity and greater public response.
- Ask local restaurants to donate food.
- Send invitations with RSVPs. The invitations should include endorsers, special guests, and sponsors.
- Prepare the materials for the event. These materials include fact sheets (you can get information about global hunger from Oxfam America), menus, posters, a program (check with Oxfam America for a suggested script), and colored or numbered tickets (15% high-income, 25% middle-income, and 60% low-income).
- Publicize! Send out news releases and use other publicity strategies (see the media section in this packet) to gather as many participants as possible.

- On the day of the banquet, set up the room accordingly. Make sure the first group has an elaborate setting and service, while the third group has only the bare essentials.

For more information about this event, please contact:

Oxfam America

Attn: ACT FAST

226 Causeway Street, 5th Floor

Boston, MA 02114 - 2206

Email: actfast@oxfamamerica.org,

Toll Free: 800-77-OXFAM (800-776-9326) Fax: (617) 728-2573

Website: www.oxfamamerica.org

Offering of Letters

Bread for the World is an advocacy organization which lobbies for public policies that address the needs of hungry and poor people in our nation and around the world. Each year, Bread for the World sponsors an Offering of Letters campaign. In this campaign, participants write letters to members of Congress in order to impact policy decisions. Contact Bread for the World for their specific focus for 2013. Start by using their website: www.bread.org/OL

- Publicize extensively before the actual letter-writing campaign. As with other events during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, send out news releases, post flyers, and utilize other media. That way, community members will know both locations and times to either write a letter or drop one off.
- Decide when you would like to have an Offering of Letters campaign during Awareness Week. Some communities set up a booth for one day, while other communities have distributed letter writing information following the events during Awareness Week.
- Find the names and contact information of Congressional representatives for your district.
- Ask local businesses and sponsors to buy postage, envelopes, pens, and paper.
- Hand-written letters are best; draft a sample letter that community members can replicate--please contact Bread for the World for sample letters. Some community members may have never written to their Congressional representatives, so make this experience as convenient and straightforward as possible to encourage successive letter writing.

- Provide information about hunger and homelessness during the letter writing so that community members can include compelling statistics/facts in their letters on the need for supportive legislation. You can obtain this information from Bread for the World.
- Urge community members to continue their political action through voting and by writing letters to, calling, and visiting local Congressional representatives.

To receive the Offering of Letters 2013 Kit and more information about Bread for the World, please contact

Bread for the World

425 3rd St., SW; #1200

Washington, DC 20024

Phone: (202) 639-9400 and (800) 82-BREAD

Fax: (202) 639-9401

Email: bread@bread.org

Website: www.bread.org/OL

Lobbying—Frequently Asked Questions

What is lobbying?

While it may seem complicated, lobbying is simply influencing legislation (local, state, or national) and/or administrative actions. Lobbying can take the form of direct meetings, phone calls, letters, and e-mail. Discover more on NCH's Lobbying 101 webpage:

http://www.nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/lobbying_101.html.

For more information on letter-writing as lobbying, refer to the Bread for the World's Offering of Letters section (p.29). This section will focus on how to set up direct meetings and speak with elected officials.

Who/where can I lobby if I don't live in Washington, DC?

Raising awareness and ending homelessness needs to happen at all levels of government. Consider visiting state senators and representatives, mayors, and other local officials. Federal senators and representatives have local offices in their districts as well, if you are really passionate about a piece of federal legislation. Remember, you may not be able to set up a meeting directly with an elected official, but ask to speak with a staffer or aid who deals with homelessness and hunger issues.

How do I Prepare?

You should pick your topics, no more than two or three that you want to address. Then do some research so that you feel comfortable discussing the issue. If you're nervous, practice talking to others before you go. Also, consider what your goal for the meeting is, for example, a commitment to cosponsor a bill, vote in favor of a bill, or to take a leadership role on an issue. Also gather some background information on the official you will be speaking with. Find out where they have stood on past issues. Make sure to acknowledge/thank them for past support during the meeting, if applicable; this will show that you are informed and serious.

What topics should I bring to elected officials?

You don't have to talk about a specific piece of legislation. It is appropriate to discuss homelessness, hunger, or poverty in general, but do be specific on the actions that you would like to see taken. For current policy recommendations visit the NCH website at www.nationalhomeless.org/advocacy. The website breaks down issues into four different areas: civil rights, housing justice, economic justice, and health care justice.

What Should I Say or Do?

- Make sure you identify yourself as a constituent and as a participant in a Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.
- Go in a small but diverse group (no more than five people) to show that a wide range of citizens care about hunger and homelessness. Additional tip: bring someone who has experienced homelessness.
- Be concise and clear and answer questions as best as possible.
- Make sure to tell them what your opinions are and share any relevant personal experiences.
- It is best to listen closely and provide information when you can. Consider taking a notepad with you and jotting down some key points during the conversation; this will also show you're listening and interested in what they are saying. The meeting should be a dialogue not an attack or a rant.
- Feel free to make a one page fact sheet to leave with the office so they have a reminder of what was said.

What Should I NOT Say or Do?

- Don't overwhelm an elected official or their staffers. Keep your group to five or less.
- Don't be disrespectful, argumentative, or confrontational. They may not agree with you on this issue, but if you're negative, they may not listen to you in the future.
- Don't make up facts. It is okay to say, "I don't know, I'll have to get back to you on that" if you can't answer a question. Just be sure to actually follow up with information you promised.

Okay, so I Visited my Elected Official, Now What?

Send a follow-up letter thanking them for their time. Reiterate your opinion, and if they made any commitments during the meeting, repeat your understanding of their plan of action.



ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACTS

The following includes a list of national organizations that could provide you further information and support for organizing National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week in your community.

Bread for the World

(Offering of Letters)
425 3rd St., NW; #1200
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (800)-82-BREAD or
(202)-639-9400
Fax: (202)-639-9401
Email: bread@bread.org
Website: www.bread.org/OL

P.O. Box 968
Elkhart, IN 46515
Phone: (800)-297-1516 or
(574)-264-3102
Fax: (574)-262-0966
Email: info@cwsglobal.org
Website: www.cwsglobal.org

Break Away

(Alternative Breaks)
2451 Cumberland Parkway
Suite 3124
Atlanta, GA 30339
Phone: (800)-903-0646
Email:
breakaway@alternativebreaks.org
Website:
www.alternativebreaks.org

Empty Bowls

(Fundraising for Hunger Causes)
P.O. Box 1689
Burnsville, NC 28714
Phone: (828)-675-9636
Email: ImagineRen@yahoo.com
Website: www.emptybowls.net

Church World Service *(CROP Walk)*

Habitat for Humanity

International

(Building Homes for Low Income People)
121 Habitat St.
Americus, GA 31709-3498
Phone: (800)-HABITAT (800)-
422-4828

Email: publicinfo@hfhi.org
Information about affiliates in
your area can be found at:
Website: www.habitat.org
Information about volunteering:
Website:
www.habitatyouthprograms.org

**National Coalition for the
Homeless**

*(Faces of Homelessness
Speakers' Bureau, One Night
Without a Home, Outreach Run,
Homeless Challenge, and
Homelessness
101/Advocacy/Lobbying
Workshop)*
2201 P St., NW
Washington, DC 20037-1033
Phone: (202)-462-4822
Email:
handhweek@nationalhomeless.org
Website:
www.nationalhomeless.org

**National Student Campaign
Against Hunger &
Homelessness**

*(Annual Conference, Hunger
Cleanup, Organizing Student
Chapters)*
44 Winter Street; 4th floor
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617)-747-4381
Fax: (617)-292-8057
@info@studentsagainsthunger.org
Website:
www.studentsagainsthunger.org

Oxfam America

*(Oxfam Hunger Banquet, ACT
FAST)*
Attn: ACT FAST
226 Causeway St., 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02114-2206
Phone: (800)-77-OXFAM (800-
776-9326)
Fax: (617)-728-2594
Email:
actfast@oxfamamerica.org
Website: www.oxfamamerica.org

Appendix

Outreach Run Fact Sheets

History

In 1984, with horrible, dehumanizing poverty reaching new levels in New York City, a partnership was made between members of a church in the suburbs of NYC and a homeless woman from Manhattan. These unlikely teammates shared the same goal—to help those who were less able to get to resources they desperately needed on the streets: food and clothing. Members of the church began making trips to Manhattan to pass out food and clothing directly to their homeless neighbors. More and more groups began joining the group, which is now a collaboration of over 150 community organizations, called Midnight Run.

In 1987, students from Marquette University attended a National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness conference and were inspired by the group from New York City. A year later, they started their own midnight run program to meet the needs of Milwaukee's homeless population.

In addition to providing food and clothing, a vital part of outreach programs like these is fellowship. Outreach runs put a real face on the suffering homeless people experience. These are real people who have dreams, aspirations, and hope, beyond their despair, just like any one of us. The companionship you feel and the conversations you have with people you encounter on your outreach run will be the most memorable part of the trip. You will continue to build some of the relationships you form on these runs for years to come.

So, get a group together, and walk with your brothers and sisters in need. Make a difference in someone's life, no matter how small, and allow someone to make a difference in your life. You will be surprised at how great a difference that may be!

Outreach Run Guidelines

You are going on an outreach run to distribute helpful supplies and lend a caring ear to members of the homeless community. The conversations you have and relationships you develop are the most important part of the outreach run!

Here are some helpful tips from different groups who organize outreach runs to make your outreach run as effective and enjoyable as possible:

⚡ Find out who is interested in joining you, and advertise the opportunity to everyone in your community.

⚡ Be familiar with local resources for the homeless.

‡Plan ahead: Pick a date and time, set up a route, and make transportation arrangements.

»Pick a time that is good for everyone. Evenings/early nighttime or weekends usually work best.

»Remember to schedule enough time for preparation before the outreach run, including clothing sorting (for easy distribution) and preparing bag meals.

»Have a pre-planned route for your run. Pick spots where larger numbers of homeless people congregate. Also, be sure to pick busy spots in your neighborhood or city. Try not to go off to secluded spots like wooded areas. It probably wouldn't be efficient to stop for every person you see, so try to stick to your route. If your run is going to be a regular program, with a definite next-date, spread the word of where/when you will be back so more people can be ready for you. This would make your run more equitable for the entire homeless community.

»You can go out on foot, but remember you are bringing supplies with you. It might be better for your group to travel in a van or another vehicle that can fit both your volunteers and supplies.

‡Decide on what you want to distribute: clothing, food, toiletries, or all three!

»Host clothing, food, toiletries, and donation drives well ahead of your run. Use donated money to purchase the supplies you still need. Call local hotels to ask for donations of hotel shampoo/conditioner/soap.

‡Here are some more specific tips for preparation and distribution of items on your run:

»Food: Try to prepare bag meals of substance. Include a hearty sandwich, a piece of fruit, a high-protein snack (perhaps a hard-boiled egg), energy bar, a nutritional drink such as a juice box, and a dessert or two.

»Other items you may want to distribute include:

- Bottled water and coffee or hot cocoa
- Fast food coupons/grocery store gift cards
- Can opener
- Deck of cards (used or new)
- Blankets—a clean/used or a new one.
- Rain pancho/gear
- Sleeping Bag—a clean/used or a new one
- Hand warmer packets
- Long johns
- Sports/Book Bag
- Umbrella—a small, compact one that can fit in a sports/book bag

»Clothing: Try to collect all the essentials (coats, pants, shirts), but don't forget socks, underwear, knit hats (men and women), gloves and scarves. Socks are extremely popular! Wool socks in winter.

-In preparation for your run, organize clothing into a system that will allow for easy distribution.

-Organize clothes into Men's/Women's/Children's and then by size. Roll-up socks into pairs to easily grab and distribute.

»Toiletries: The most effective and easiest way to distribute toiletries is to make small kits of unused hotel toiletries or travel-sized toiletries. If you are coming from your hometown to the big city, call your local hotels seeking donations. Try to include:

- Hand Sanitizer
- Soap
- Toothbrush, Toothpaste, floss
- Bar of soap
- Shampoo
- Towelettes
- Disposable razors, shaving cream
- Small package of Kleenex
- Nail File/clippers
- Lip balm
- Lotion—body and hand
- Deodorant
- Feminine hygiene products
- Band-Aids
- Cough drops & throat lozenges

⚡Take to the streets!

»When distributing goods, here are some helpful tips to remember,

-Homeless men and women don't often get to decide their wardrobe. Offer them the opportunity to choose. Work to accommodate special requests. Ask them what size they'd prefer, and if you have several of their sizes, allow them to choose their favorite style.

-Receiving something they wanted and requested will mean a lot.

-When approaching someone, try to visibly hold an item you are distributing. Introduce yourself and explain what you are doing. Offer the item you have in your hands and any other items your group has.

-Try not to wake anyone up who is sleeping. We want to respect their privacy, but we also don't want them to miss out on anything they may need.

-Try standing at a decent distance (so as not to wake them if they are in a deep sleep) and identify yourself and begin naming some of the items you have to offer. If they still seem to be sleeping, leave a bag meal or two for when they wake up.

-TALK! Most people, even more than they want your socks or food, want someone to talk to. Again, these conversations are the most valuable part of these Outreach Runs, so take advantage of them.

-A few homeless people may be too busy or may not want to talk. If you find someone who is interested in having a serious, longer conversation, open up and listen!

-When talking to people you meet on your run, remember you are not professional counselors, student researchers, or evangelists. You are people who care. Make a connection, but try not to make anyone believe you have professional advice to give.

-Some questions not to ask: Are you homeless? Do you have family? What caused you to become homeless? It is okay if they volunteer that information.

-As a rule, try not to give money to people on your run. Your supplies, conversation, and genuine interest/care are enough.

-Always be fair and equitable in your distribution. You should not have a problem with equitable distribution, but if you do, calmly request order. If the problem persists, simply pack up and move on to your next scheduled stop.

-Never be afraid if you run out of food! No one will hold that against you. Don't cancel any additional stops, especially if they are expecting you. Go anyway, and talk to the group and distribute whatever supplies you can offer.

‡Clean up

»Remember to bring garbage bags to help keep the streets/parks and these people's homes clean.

‡Some other general suggestions:

»Try to refrain from bringing cameras or taking pictures. If you would like, take pictures of your volunteers preparing food or sorting clothes, or even on the street, but respect the privacy of homeless individuals by not revealing their identities or where they sleep.

»There is no reason to be afraid of people you encounter on an Outreach Run. These projects are safe and occur all around the country, without incident. However, in the rare occasion that there is an emergency, including a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 immediately!

Supplemental Information Form

Thank you for your interest in our Outreach Run program. This public education program is an essential part of our mission at the National Coalition for the Homeless, and we appreciate you giving us the opportunity to work with you.

The Outreach Run is about finding common ground between the housed and the homeless through dialogue with an Outreach Guide and with those you will meet. The Outreach Run is not the solution to ending homelessness, but the human exchange, rather than the exchange of goods, is the essence of the Outreach Run's mission.

We look forward to working with you and learning more about your event. Please review the attached fact sheet on getting ready for and doing an Outreach Run. Please read carefully the Outreach Run Guidelines section. Please fill out the Outreach Run Event Request Form section that spells out many of the logistics, and return it in a timely manner.

Outreach Run Guidelines

Donations

The group should collect the donations to be distributed before the time of the event.

Recommended donation items:

- Bottled water, toiletries, and socks.
- Other suggestions are t-shirts, rain gear, jackets (winter time only), non perishable food items, or gift certificates from fast food establishments.

For a more detailed suggestions listing, see the attached: Outreach Run Fact Sheets

Introductions: 10-15 minutes

One of NCH's Outreach Run guides will meet with your group at either the location where your group is staying, or at NCH's office. The Outreach Run guide will share some of his/her personal experiences with homelessness and discuss stereotypes and leading causes of homelessness with the group. The guide will then instruct the group on best practices before distributing donations in the neighborhood.

Donation Distribution: Typically about 45-60 minutes

The guide will lead the group to nearby areas where people are in need of the donations to be distributed.

Purpose of Having a Homeless/Formerly Homeless Guide

In addition to sharing his/her personal story with Outreach Run participants, the guide will interact with the participants throughout the Run and take part in a reflection session at the end of the Run. The guide also knows the local community well and is a lot more "streetwise" than run participants. While by no means a body guard, the guide is usually able to handle most adverse situations.

Number of Participants : Homeless/Formerly Homeless Guide(s)

We recommend 1 guide per 15 to 20 people.

Honoraria and Program Fee

Each guide will receive a \$40 honorarium. NCH charges a program fee of 50% of the total honorarium amount. If you only need one guide, the total amount would be \$60. The check should be mailed in advance of the event.

Donation

We invite your organization to support the work of the National Coalition for the Homeless by becoming a member. Go to our website: www.nationalhomeless.org

