



News and analysis from **The Center for Michigan** • <http://thecenterformichigan.net>
©2016 Bridge Michigan. All Rights Reserved. • Join us online at <http://bridgemi.com>

Original article URL: <http://bridgemi.com/2014/08/along-michigans-back-roads-thousands-of-homeless-children/>

Vulnerable children & families

Left Behind – rural Michigan’s dilemma: Along Michigan’s back roads, thousands of homeless children

12 August 2014

by **Pat Shellenbarger**
Bridge Magazine contributor

14

Brenda Greenhoe finds kids living in tents. She’s found them sleeping in ball field dugouts. Last summer, she found a young couple living in an abandoned garage.

That’s her job.

Greenhoe is in charge of finding and helping homeless students in Montcalm, Ionia, Isabella and Gratiot counties – four largely rural regions in central Michigan.

Last school year, she found 1,550.

“It’s a little less obvious when you drive around rural areas, because you don’t see them,” she said. “The poverty is here, but you have to drive on some pretty rough, back roads to find it. You’ll run across people who are sleeping in their vehicle on state land or in a tent.

“I see the poverty. It’s right here in my face every day.”

A flood of desperation



Brenda Greenhoe works with schools in four rural Michigan counties to find homeless children and get them on track.

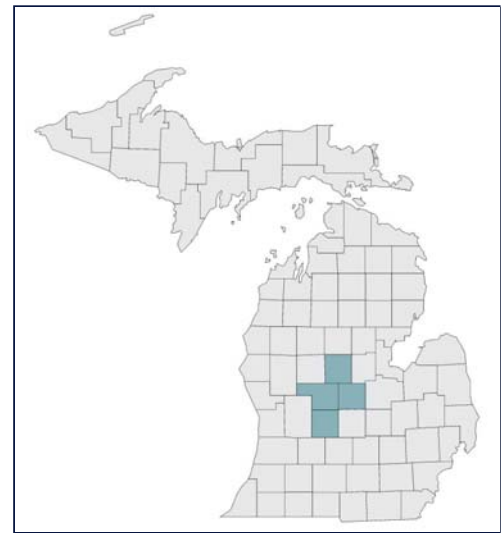
Fighting poverty is an urgent priority for Michigan residents across all demographic groups, according to the Center for Michigan's recent report, "**Michigan Speaks: The Citizen's Agenda for the 2014 Elections**," based on polling and community conversations with more than 5,500 residents across the state. It's easy to understand why: 1.6 million Michigan residents now live in poverty.

No wonder homelessness is on the rise, notably among children. Last year, Michigan was listed as having the nation's fourth highest increase (42 percent) in student homelessness over the past decade. There are more than 31,000 homeless students in Michigan, **according to most recent state estimates**.

For Greenhoe, whose territory spans 2,400 miles, finding destitute children is dispiritingly easy. The four counties where she serves as a liaison for homeless students have child poverty rates ranging from 23 to 27 percent.

One county, Isabella, has the highest poverty rate in Michigan at 32.1 percent, according to the **U.S. Census Bureau**. Those figures, however, are likely inflated by the number of Central Michigan University students living in the area.

Even without counting college students, **Isabella County's poverty rate of 18 percent** is higher than Michigan's statewide average of 16.3 percent and the national average of 14.9 percent. The rate among the county's 2,143 Native Americans is 27 percent, **the Census Bureau found**.



Montcalm, Ionia, Isabella and Gratiot counties

Isabella is one of 32 counties in Michigan that have concentrated pockets of poverty, defined as more than 30 percent of a neighborhood's residents living below the poverty line, a report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's **National Kids Count Project** found.

Only six states had more areas of concentrated poverty than Michigan, the report found, with child poverty skyrocketing 57 percent between 2000 to 2010. The 341,000 Michigan children living in these destitute areas are enough to fill every first-, second- and third-grade classroom in the state.

Low income, low expectations

Even rural counties, where low-income families are typically scattered, have pockets of poverty, including Alpena, Chippewa, Roscommon and Isabella. That matters because children growing up in low-income areas see little hope for success, said Jane Zehnder-Merrell, Kids Count project director at the Michigan League for Public Policy.

"Children from poor neighborhoods, even if their own families are not in poverty, are affected," she said. "They struggle more with behavior and emotional problems, they

are less likely to graduate, and they have reduced potential to be economically successful as adults.”

If all a child sees is poverty and hopelessness, the likelihood of escaping is remote.

“Without hope, you’re dead in the water,” said Greenhoe, whose work is supported through a federal grant. “Your priorities are based on how you were raised and where you live. It affects everybody in the community. It’s more healthy to see normal families doing normal things.”

The homeless students Greenhoe helps are often not just living in tents and abandoned garages. Under federal law, students are considered homeless if they are moving from couch to couch in one home or another, or otherwise have no stable, long-term housing. Some have run away or been kicked out of their homes.

The young couple she found in an abandoned garage last summer spent their days in a park, then returned to the garage at night. Greenhoe got them back in school and helped them find safer housing.

Beyond seeing to homeless families’ physical needs, Greenhoe said her greatest challenge is helping “children see and believe that they have a future and that they have hope and to see that they can do what they believe is impossible,” Greenhoe said.

“The first question I always ask is, ‘What is your hope for the future? What are your hopes for your kids?’” she said. “I ask them that, and I get this blank stare.

“One woman burst into tears, and she said, ‘Nobody’s ever asked me that.’”

Pat Shellenbarger is a freelance writer based in West Michigan. He previously was a reporter and editor at the Detroit News, the St. Petersburg Times and the Grand Rapids Press.

“The poverty is here, but you have to drive on some pretty rough, back roads to find it.” – Brenda Greenhoe, who searches for homeless children in central Michigan.

74 comments from Bridge readers.

Amanda Wright

August 12, 2014 at 11:33 am

How does someone get involved in something like this? I would love to help but don't know where to start.

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 12, 2014 at 12:56 pm

Pat and Brenda,

I understand this might be the result of the law that makes education mandatory till 18 years, thus the reference to college students and couples.

I assume you are being paid by the school districts to increase their cash flow.

If any of these students fall outside this definition, please advise.

I understand you seeking out the homeless, and thus are actually a Bounty Hunter, not a Truant Officer. A Truant Officer would be seeking students that had missed a few classes.

I still maintain that education should prepare students for work and to prepare them to be employees or business owners. When this is done ineffectively, we get dependence. Education should teach and result in self sufficiency, not dependance.

Dependency and Bounty Hunters patrolling back-roads are a symptoms of failure.

Cathy Mueller

August 12, 2014 at 2:06 pm

If she or any one else hired to find homeless families is doing it to increase a school district's cash flow, they would only work two days: one in February and a day in October. Any student that comes into a district between those days are not included in the count, this at the district's expense. Yes, Federal programs exist, but as they should exist, children shouldn't be living in tents or backseats of cars. Maybe your children enjoy it, but it's not healthy. Please get out of your self engineered turret and see the word as it is.

sue

August 12, 2014 at 5:23 pm

Bravo!

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 13, 2014 at 6:50 pm

Cathy Mueller August 12, 2014 at 2:06 pm

Another commenter, David Zeman, clarified the issue a little, I think. He said there is at least one federal and 50 coordinating state programs using a program called the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This Act provides federal money to the federal government, states and schools for infrastructure to implement its provisions and provides for grant money to assist the homeless including illegals.

It looks like it would apply to the 65,000 illegal immigrant children that came across the Mexican border in the last few weeks.

'The term homeless children and youths' —

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and

(B) includes ... (iv) migratory children.'

I do not agree with your assessment 'they would only work two days'. The author says, 1,550 kids/year. I understand the value to the school system would be 10 to 15 thousand each, or 15.5 – 23.25 million dollars in state funds. That does not include her salary or other program costs at the school or the grants to the kids or the other community services employed; like the police for transport, child services for homes, etc. If these were illegals, that would be a total drain on the community of 20 to 30 million dollars for no benefit to the economy of the community. Do you agree this would not be the right thing to do? As far as the federal government funds to program, they borrowed 1.4 trillion last year, so these are actually borrowed money.

'Borrowing from Peter to pay Paul' so to speak.

'Please get out of your self engineered turret and see the world as it is.' I assume you mean 'Ivory Tower?'

I am a Professional Engineer in Michigan, but in 1990 in California when a business failed in another industry, my wife and family chose to volunteer to work at a boys ranch for a year (another son worked there for 12 years). I had seen young girls and boys on the corner of Hollywood and the 405 highway that were homeless. They were not wearing red dresses, they had jackets on and had one or two suitcases, just arrived. But they all were 'coming to Hollywood' and they all had their thumbs out. In the next ten minutes of their lives things, for them, would change forever. Some of these kids ended up at the boys ranch. Their choice was Juvenile Hall or the ranch? It is likely that I have far, far more knowledge of the actualities of this world than you. One boy that

came to the ranch had broken his father's jaw the night before. He had a message shaved into the back

came to the ranch had broken his father-in-law's jaw the night before. He had a message shaved into the back of his head... 'PIMP THIS.' Another boy had seven years of Kung Fu training. He got a headlock on and threw a volunteer down on a driveway made of crushed rock in a split second. The volunteer came up pretty bloody. The parents came the next day. I was the volunteer and I had to tell them the story. The owner of the ranch showed them the injuries.

I know this world. I have lived it. Do you know what 'The Cheapest Apartment in Los Angeles' means?

I have the sincerest respect for Ms Greenhoe. I know exactly what it would take, mentally and spiritually, to do what she does. My complaint is not with her personally. It with the Progressive Movement that takes all it can beg borrow and steal to increase the size of government influence, and decrease the influence of a free people, of individuals, families, communities and the states.

If we both want to increase the well-being of these kids, then we might look at why are they there?

I consider none are mentally ill. They, like the kids from Hollywood, made the best choice they had available at the time.

If you asked each of them if they had a family somewhere, I think you would find more parents in this story, than this article informs us about. There would be a few 'broken jaws', to mend. But you alone could probably mend 100 families without too much strain.

If you asked each of them about their last school, I think you will find a story like these two. You personally, just using this information alone, could return 100 of these kids to school by yourself without too much strain in year.

A young man told me why he left school. I had told him about the importance of the student having a purpose, his own, purpose for what he is studying. He said, that was exactly the problem. He screamed at his teacher that school had no meaning for him, and he was so upset he left school directly. As he was leaving, with his back to his last teacher, the teacher happened to say, finally, you don't have any reason to stay, you have no purpose for learning History... He left the building. That night he reviewed the events of the day. He came to the point about having a purpose for learning History. So he asked himself, how could I apply this to my life? What use could I have for History? He finally realized, 'I like collecting antiques!' He now had a reason, he liked 'old things'. You could find a new one or revitalize a reason the student had at one time for learning. It might take a little practice to get it right. You might even find the students 'basic purpose'. This lights up the flame of every successful thing a person does in life. He has had it all his life. Everything he does that is not on this purpose will likely fail. Good luck.

I tutored an eighth-grade girl on math. She had been failing for several years. Her mom and I went to her classroom and saw what was happening. I had her read out-loud to me. Each time she came to a word she did not know, we defined it. Each time she hesitated or stammered or changed a word, I asked for and found a word she did not know. Soon I noticed she did not know how to and did not understand 'multiplication.' So, as before, we defined that word. She was still kind of slow and having trouble so I found an earlier word, 'unit'. When we defined that word so she understood it, the whole subject came alive. She could learn the subject fast and was flying along. I went back up to 'multiplication' and she now understood that. She was flying too fast to follow so I ended off for the day. It had taken an hour and half. She started getting A's in school. I should have taught her how to find the words, and how to define them too. But her understanding of the subject and her willing to participate were back.

Good luck.

AKos

August 17, 2014 at 11:03 am

Your school funding figures are way off. The base is near 7300 or so; most between that and 8300. A few are 11k+ because they're "20j" districts – their residents a long while back voted to pay higher school taxes. For current figures look it up at michigan.gov/mde.

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 17, 2014 at 9:34 pm

AKos August 17, 2014 at 11:03 am

Hi,

Did you add in anything from local property taxes? Things from the state general fund? For Michelle's school

Did you add in anything from local property taxes? Things from the state general fund? For Michelle's school lunch program? and the state lotteries?

Did you add in anything for Pat's salary? For her grants to people in need?

Did you add anything for local patrons and booster clubs, athletic events, and bake sales?

Did you add anything for interest received on financial investments, CDs and things?

Did you add anything for Special Education, the various Disorders or Disabled revenues?

The numbers might be a bit higher than you have been led to believe.

Terry Clingersmith

August 14, 2014 at 12:36 am

Thank You Cathy!

Carol Pyke

August 12, 2014 at 2:19 pm

Leon,

I am sorry to know that there are people in this state and country who think like you do. People do not choose to be homeless unless they are mentally or emotionally ill. (Sadly, there is no place for those folks to go either since we have a sorry mess for the mentally ill.) Anything the citizens of this state can do to help move the homeless into independence should be supported. Your comments are negative and offer no suggestions for solving this sad issue. Yes, education hopes to create citizens who can be productive members of society, but sadly, circumstances sometimes occur that destroy this possibility. Without the support of others it could happen to anyone. Families and friends often step in to help, but everyone is not blessed with such support. Let's help these people instead of criticizing them or blaming those who try to help calling them "bounty hunters." Shame on you!

Roger

August 12, 2014 at 3:21 pm

Not all people who CHOOSE to be homeless are mentally or emotionally ill. I had a couple of young men come into my business this past weekend who were basically hobos. Traveling around the country with everything they own in a back pack, and loving it. The one had been doing this for two years (he is 22 now) and had visited 46 of the continental United States. They made the choice to be homeless, and were very nice people and very happy. I know at least one of them had family and said he sees them once or twice a year and keeps in touch with them on Facebook when they are in a town with a library and internet they can use.

Sanguy

August 12, 2014 at 9:20 pm

And they are old enough to make that choice for themselves, not helpless children

Micheline Hellwege

January 3, 2015 at 9:26 am

Roger

August 12, 2014 at 3:21 pm

The "Hobos" you mention two young people backpacking across the country as an adventure. I would bet they have a home to go back to once their adventure is done and family who would be there immediately with support, should it be necessary. This is not an equal comparison.

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 13, 2014 at 9:41 pm

Carol Pyke August 12 2014 at 2:19 pm

Carolyn G. August 12, 2014 at 2:12 pm

I disagree with your view that: 'People do not choose to be homeless unless they are mentally or emotionally ill.' I see a few other commenters here do as well.

I don't agree with your implication that the homeless are insane. I don't think they are. I think they have met with some unfortunate circumstances that they haven't worked out of yet.

'Anything the citizens of this state can do to help move the homeless into independence should be supported.'

Please explain to me exactly how you feel this program leads to 'independence.' I see it as leading to exactly the opposite, 'dependence.' I see federal intervention from 'homeless' back into 'hopeless.' Now if something is effectively done in all those millions, I apologize for that. Will you apologize for wasting millions to do a few good turns? It would be a far more effective use of resources to have local charities like churches, Kingsmen, YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, businesses in the area. If these resources are continually bypassed and avoided, then they will have 'no purpose' and cease to exist.

The basic point of the article is 'poverty.' Do you see any suggestions on how to handle that? Before WW I and WW II nearly all of American boys and girls lived on farms and worked nearly the same hours as their parents. They had a concept of 'work' and they took this value with them when they arrived at work in the military or the industrial marketplace. 'Work' is the central stabilizing influence in our society. If you were to interview these 1500 homeless students, I believe you would find that they uniformly did not have a 'work ethic.' They do not know the value of a buck, and have never been taught that their value to society is what they bring to it. If they do not bring the values an employer or a marketplace require they will not be successful. Just as education is not successful to that degree.

I once, as a teacher, asked a student who was having trouble with Reading to give me three ways he could use Reading in life. This student was doing second-grade level work in math, in the tenth-grade. He had said, 'I hate Reading.' As an answer to my question he had a physical reaction, slapped his head, and had a huge realization, 'I could get a job!!!' No one in 11 years of public education had brought home to him a personal reason to learn Reading. So I am saying many of these 'homeless' are in fact failed students that are dropouts. They chose to leave school and much of their life because no one had brought home to them a personal reason to learn, or attend school. No one taught them the skill of acquiring a reason to learn. They could have been taught to ask themselves, 'How can I use this in life?'

I invite you to ask 5 or 10 History classes what personal reason each of the students have at that point for learning about History. If they have no reason for being there education will make 'no sense' to them. It will be senseless. They will want to leave. They will not want to be there.

If they have been taught that they do not need to listen to their parents and they display this 'value' with their parents, they may choose to 'be elsewhere.'

Thanks for your comment to me.

Jesse Berry

August 22, 2014 at 2:50 am

Mr Hulett, you seem to have the unbelievable ability to cure genetic problems, such as learning disabilities, and to simultaneously evoke life-changing epiphanies, in the unfortunate, all by delivering a single pithy question to those poor souls. May your god bless you, sir!

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 22, 2014 at 9:31 am

Jesse Berry August 22, 2014 at 2:50 am

Thanks, but I make no such claims as that, and I don't think that is true.

I read once, something to the effect, that any sufficiently advanced technology, may be viewed as 'magic' by those not aware of it. They may view any user of this technology as a sort of 'god.' Using a cigarette lighter in sub-Saharan Africa or landing a plane in a rain forest among primitive people might have them worshiping such a person.

That is not my intent.

An Engineering Trainee at one company stopped me in my tracks one day 30 years ago. He had been observing a string of these little 'miracles' like you said, and I said above. He said, 'Now don't get mad, Leon, we don't understand. You come in here like some kind of a 'god' or something, and notice things and do things. We have

double and sometimes triple checked these test setups. You walk in and instantly see 'the part is upside down',

'the test procedure is the wrong one', 'we've used the wrong part', etc., etc. Don't get us wrong, we are not upset that you do this, thank goodness you do. What we can't understand is 'How you do it.'

I said, 'Andy, you need a course on how to study.' He was dumbfounded. He said, 'A course on how to study, is going to give me those abilities?' I recommended him to a tutor that gave the course and he took it. He had troubles on the course, and wanted to quit. It was really tough for him, but finally I heard he made it through. I stopped by that company a year and half later, to do some consulting on a project. A senior Engineer showed me around the company to see the current state of the project, so I asked him about people I used to know as we walked along. Were they still around? When I asked about Andy, to my surprise, the Engineer described him in almost the same terms Andy had described me a year and half earlier. I had to smile to myself. He had learned 'my secret'.

Anyone can learn to do these things. Anyone can have these abilities. It is not unique to me. You could do these things. Anyone in Michigan can have and do these things.

Recently I taught an average public school fifth-grader some basic concepts; like 'ability', 'skill', and 'talent'. How to acquire an ability with 'a decision', more or less instantly. Then I had her demonstrate how she would do this in tougher and tougher situations. I had read about some math questions that were so tough, the First Year students, Freshmen at Cal Tech in the 1950's could not solve them. They are called, 'The Strong Problems.' There are 157 of them. I selected one that could be solved with Arithmetic, the kind of Arithmetic this fifth-grader already knew. If one were 'diligent'. It takes 15 and 16 year old Home-School students in the Robinson Curriculum 2 to 4 hours to solve such problems. I showed her and her family how to do this problem in about an hour. Then I changed the problem around and asked her to solve it. I had in mind to see how long, how many hours, it now took for her to do it, as fifth-grader, on her own. She replied with the correct answer more or less instantly. It was her doing it, not me.

She had acquired a high level ability in Math. But she had also acquired a high level ability in how to acquire skills to solve problems.

Good luck on what you are doing. – Leon

Tina Eaton

August 18, 2014 at 1:07 pm

Well said, Carol!

Charles Richards

August 18, 2014 at 3:57 pm

Bravo!

Charles Richards

August 18, 2014 at 4:09 pm

Bravo Carol!

memyslefandi

August 13, 2014 at 6:29 am

Maybe you should get speel check

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 15, 2014 at 9:01 am

Memy,
I like your comment.

Christine

August 13, 2014 at 7:33 pm

One thing is absolutely true. The schools must teach the children what they need to know to be productive members of society. Several decades ago, the goal was to teach them how to be good factory workers, how to work for a company. These outdated goals do not serve the people of today. The kids must be their own entrepreneurs, get vocational training or go on to higher education. Companies no longer care for their employees; it's not a lifetime connection like it was before. Lansing has a vocational school that has provided opportunities for thousands of kids. Now, Michigan needs small business to flourish to hire these workers. Central Michigan University has a high homeless rate? They graduated with nowhere to go?! The US is a large place. These kids need to get their butts on a bus. I agree the seeking out of kids is a sign of failure but I don't place the blame in the same place and I agree, it needs to be done and lucky for us this woman has taken on the task. Michigan business needs to grow and be friendly to small business. Jobs. Michigan needs jobs. It's been several years. Why is there still very few jobs and even fewer full time jobs? No one is coming to help you, Michiganders. Seize the day and make your own way ... or move to another state. Times aren't bad for many, many other states.

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 13, 2014 at 10:49 pm

Christine August 13, 2014 at 7:33 pm

Well said!

I don't think they respond to comments much here. I will respond to your question from my viewpoint.

'Why is there still very few jobs and even fewer full time jobs?' I think small businesses are being discouraged overall.

I did an analysis a few years ago and the amount missing, since 2008, from the small business credit market according to a government website, was almost exactly the same as the total amount the government borrowed, deficit spending. That amount nationally was 1 to 1.4 trillion dollars per year. This amount of indebtedness is also about the same as the total profit for those years for the entire American economy. The federal government essentially took ALL the profit from business in America and repurposed it to their self interests.

So small businesses create most of the new jobs and new growth. The government and the banks have caused this problem.

The solution: easier loans to small business.

This could be done by using a bank taken by the FDIC at the federal level or by purchasing 'a credit facility' at the state level or by an individual purchasing a credit facility and doing this plan. An 'easier' loan would be 0 percent for 10 years with a 10% reserve deposit from the small business. Example: \$250,000 deposit and a loan of 2.5 million. The amount of lending would have to replenish the 5 to 6 trillion shortfall we, the small business community, have seen.

I received a newsletter from Senator Levin and did an analysis of the Small Business Jobs Act 2010, he was taking credit for. I sent him the analysis. He mentioned a bank here in Michigan (Crestar) that had received 8.3 million dollars for 10 years. This bank was not a low interest loan bank. Their balance sheet for the previous year showed an 18.3 percent return on funds. 18 percent interest rates. My analysis showed that Michigan Small Business's could wind up paying over 800 million to this bank over 10 years. That is a 'cost' of 800 million to small businesses for using this credit facility. I understand about half of the small banks in America just diverted the funds to their TARP payments in Washington and did not lend to small businesses at all. The total amount of loans was only about 4 billion nationwide, so it was very little compared to the 5 to 6 trillion shortfall above.

Good luck.

Kim

August 14, 2014 at 8:25 pm

Leon, You obviously are very ignorant. You don't appear to even know how to spell the word "R-O-A-D"!!

Leon L. Hulett, PE

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 15, 2014 at 8:56 am

Kim August 14, 2014 at 8:25 pm

You are very correct!

That line should read, 'Dependency and Bounty Hunters, patrolling back-roads are symptoms of failure.'

You represent yourself as 'very smart.' Can you tell me why you have not personally solved all the other problems of public education in Michigan yet? (Joke)

You said, 'Leon, You obviously are very ignorant.' Unfortunately, this is very true as well....

If you like, I will share an apology from my son also:

'Yesterday was my fathers birthday. I forgot to call him. This man did an incredible job raising me. He would bring me to work and show me all the tools of his trade. He showed me how to stand up for your family and how to have patience with children. How amazing the world is and anything is within your reach. While other kids first computer was an atari 2600 mine was an IBM main frame. I once shutdown his companies brand new Multi-million dollar CAD-CAM system for a week. He took full responsibility for it at work and still brought me back in. I became fully trained on a mold injection lab before most kids take up baseball. I had helped tear down and rebuild a car engine by the time I was 11. I was able to do a brake job on the family car by myself by the time I was 15. I have many incredible memories and many abilities that I would not have if not for him. He has done many many amazing things. Thank You Dad. I love you. Sorry I didn't call yesterday.'

Love – Leon

David Zeman

August 12, 2014 at 5:21 pm

Hi Amanda,

The following link to the state website provides some information on the state's duty to educate the homeless and contact information for a state coordinator on this issue.

<http://1.usa.gov/1vELXa9>

Brenda Greenhoe is one of several coordinators across the state who work to get homeless children connected with schools and social service programs to help them get back on their feet.

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 13, 2014 at 10:51 pm

David,

That is an excellent link. Thank you.

Diana

August 13, 2014 at 2:29 pm

Try "Mike Karl", homeless Angels!

Patty Farrell-Cole

August 12, 2014 at 12:41 pm

Thank you, Pat and Bridge Magazine, for bringing to light the forgotten children and their families, who need help and encouragement.

Charles Richards

August 12, 2014 at 2:20 pm

The Free Press article this column links to says, "Although the number of homeless students has risen dramatically in the past few years as the economy has faltered, the problem is underreported because many homeless families try to hide their situation." There lies the key to the most effective remedy –although not as immediately effective as might

be wished. Economic growth, expansion of the work force is the surest, most powerful answer to the problem of homeless children. Doubtless, we need short-term, palliative measures, but they are not a long-term, permanent solution.

The Free Press article also says the majority of homeless children are considered so because they don't have a permanent, stable home. They are staying with relatives or family members; not sleeping outdoors. That is not the impression given by the article.

david zeman

August 12, 2014 at 5:16 pm

Hi Charles,

Yes, the Free Press article is correct in its description of the homeless, as is our article above, which has the following passage:

The homeless students Greenhoe helps are often not just living in tents and abandoned garages. Under federal law, students are considered homeless if they are moving from couch to couch in one home or another, or otherwise have no stable, long-term housing.

Charles Richards

August 18, 2014 at 4:17 pm

Thank you, David, for pointing that out. But while the article is technically correct, it did not make it clear that a majority of the homeless children were considered so because of the definition.

Burt Vincent

August 12, 2014 at 2:57 pm

I believe the truth lies somewhere in the middle of these comments. Government throwing money at the wrong places is at the heart of it. These parents have no homes and assuming no job and yet our borders are unsecure. The administration would like us to believe the children crossing our borders as preteens were able to walk penniless for hundreds of miles without help? I believe it is a political ruse and we need to help our own children first.

Norma Keech

August 12, 2014 at 10:19 pm

In one comment, one talks about borders and them being unsecured. Do we remember how WE GOT THEM BORDERS. Brenda talks about homelessness in and around four counties, one of which I live. I had nineteen clients at one time, almost a third of them were homeless, due to the backwardness of "the social service" system. Barriers are created and maintained by the system. If one wants to see homelessness, get out in the rural counties and suburbs, and you'll see it. Closing our eyes, blaming government spending on wrong programs, is not going to cure homelessness. We need a system of people helping people, people giving to people, people who cares what their neighbors needs are, what our parents need, tearing down our government and blaming homeless people for homelessness, just does not make sense. Let's all join in and give a handout. Pay it forward, give your empty bedroom to an individual, donate that car extra car to someone who needs a ride to work, or ask what you can do to break down the barriers that keeps the homeless homeless. to when one has an abundance Hire the people who are looking for jobs and struggling to make ends meet, find empty homes and put a homeless family in there, and help them acquire hope and instill human kindness for our fellow human beings.

I see hundreds of empty homes, cars for sale, empty apartments etc., give someone hope and take a chance on someone willing to work, willing to travel 50 miles for \$7.50 an hour. Who can afford appropriate housing on that wage???

People stop complaint about the homeless and start working in the solution. Give a damn about your neighbor, your aging parents, the disabled vets, as well as the mentally handicapped. Help create a system that will fail those who reach out for help. It is OK to ask for help. PAY IT FORWARD.

Don Grimes

Don Grimes

August 12, 2014 at 3:59 pm

During the 2001 to 2013 period the economy in these four counties performed relatively well. In terms of employment, Ionia and Isabella grew faster than the U.S. overall, they are among the very few counties in Michigan that outperformed the U.S. over this period. Gratiot county lost jobs during this period, but at a slower rate than Michigan overall. Only Montcalm suffered a greater percentage job loss than Michigan overall, primarily due to the Electrolux plant closure there.

The average wage, adjusted for inflation using the Detroit and U.S. Consumer Price Index, grew faster in Gratiot, Isabella, and Montcalm counties than in both Michigan and the U.S. Only in Ionia county did the real wage fall, by 18% between 2001 and 2013.

So in terms of employment growth two out of these four counties beat the U.S., and a third one did better than Michigan overall, and in terms of real wage growth three out of these four counties beat both the U.S. and Michigan. (The average wage in these four counties in 2013 was still substantially below the Michigan or U.S. average.)

So the high poverty rate in these four counties persists despite a comparatively strong economic performance during the 2001 to 2013 period. This may mean that we need to address poverty directly instead of relying on a growing economy to lift all boats.

John

August 12, 2014 at 4:51 pm

It is my understanding that there is a state law called project search. School districts are required by law to seek out and find students who are not receiving school services and get them connected to their public schools. It goes to that notion that all children are entitled to a free education. It amazes me how this can be seen as "bounty hunting". Instead of reading so much into it, maybe the thought of trying to help those in need...is this such a difficult concept?

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 14, 2014 at 12:07 am

John August 12, 2014 at 4:51 pm

regarding your comment, 'It amazes me how this can be seen as "bounty hunting"'

Let's see, this person works for the schools, not the 'home owners association', and the schools have \$20 to \$30 million to gain by these activities, finding these kids. Would you have any real difficulty in classifying this as a 'bounty' if one were to receive \$20 to 30 million extra dollars just for rounding up these 1500 or so kids? Now the police department, do they get some money for transporting these kids? I doubt it. Does social services get money for finding housing for these additional folks they have been neglecting? Not so much, maybe a fresh grant for services rendered. Who is the big winner here?

\$20 to 30 million cash payout for these kids, still sounds kind of 'bounteous' to me.

Now, this homeless kid, if he or she is in fact destitute, getting a warm safe place to live and eat, that sounds like help to me.

Now if this individual is given high paying, rewarding work that he or she loves to do and can feel productive doing, that sounds more like help to me. That is priceless! But of course that is not being done.

Now, if this kid is being forced, by the force of compulsory education laws, to return to an education he finds senseless and to have no meaning for him in his life, that in fact does not prepare him for life or work or pleasure, and that he has already rejected strongly. I do not view that as helpful. Do you? It sounds more like a hunter being hired to find and a bounty being paid to return this kid to what he considers as no better than jail.

We should consider any help offered from the viewpoint of the child. Ask any disappointed child about this education part.

I know there is a commenter that has commented on this issue.

Kim

August 14, 2014 at 8:31 pm

The law is entitled, "Child Find". "Project Search" is an extremely effective business led, employment training model for young adults with disability. Just and FYI!

Matt Pearson

August 12, 2014 at 4:52 pm

As we write our comments and cite statistics, point fingers and suggest solutions, we need to do one more thing that might make all the difference. Walk a mile in the shoes of the families who are experiencing the homelessness and poverty. I left the ranks of observers five years ago and took a position at one of the city of Detroit's most successful homeless organizations in the area and what an eyeopener being on the ground level with the problems of homelessness and poverty. These are our neighbors, our fellow Americans, our Michigan citizens, our children. We need to do more than feel sorry for them and comment on the situation, we need to walk that mile.

Norma Keech

August 12, 2014 at 10:22 pm

Exactly, help thy neighbor, whoever that might be.

sie

August 12, 2014 at 5:49 pm

My bravo comment was to Cathy Mueller for her empathetic remarks. I'm retired so many years past school days. However we lived in very poor conditions. Thanks to one particular teacher who kept encouraging me, helping after hours etc. I went on, with a few missteps, to higher ed and a professional career. Don't let these children be throw aways. Education is their way out of poverty,

steve

August 12, 2014 at 6:06 pm

I guess as long as they are not asking for help thats fine with some of us. then we don't have to make it a problem. I applaud this lovely woman and her efforts to help people!

C.H.

August 12, 2014 at 7:19 pm

I can appreciate this article, but where is the information on how people in dire situations can find help? I know a single, employed parent who is struggling, but eightcap won't return his calls for housing help.

Duane

August 12, 2014 at 9:57 pm

I have to admit my struggles with this article, what is the purpose. Is the author not sure if the readers understand there is poverty in Michigan and that it extends into rural parts of every county? Is it that those in poverty are less likely to be successful/attend school? Is that there are people who are trying, successfully, to locate those kids not attending school? Is that there can be students that are homeless? I won't say those things are something the vast majority of readers are aware of, rather I wonder why she did help us as readers to better understand those rural poverty students.

I would be interested in what are the academic success rates for those students, even the attendance rates would give me more insight into the problem. I would be interested in the barriers to those students succeeding, are the similar to other students in poverty, or to the non-poverty students, or to the successful students.

As an example, there was a mention of low expectations being a barrier, is this true of the other parts of the student population? If we better understand the barriers then we could begin to participate in activities to remove or lower those barriers.

It was mentioned how difficult it is for Ms. Greenhoe to find the students as they may be back on less traveled roads. Could that remoteness be a barrier to school and maybe rather than taking them to school during the summer the school should be brought to them? Could a re-outfitting a bus into a school room that could drive those back roads and provide those students some added learning opportunities to help them succeed?

This article/Bridge seems to reach a very interest and potentially energized audience, it is disappointing that it doesn't offer some link where the readers could have a conversation exploring new and different ways to approach such a

Along Michigan's back roads, thousands of homeless children offer some link where the readers could have a conversation exploring new and different ways to approach such a problem and even leading some to take individual actions.

Michelle Whitney

August 12, 2014 at 10:06 pm

How can I get involved!!!??

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 14, 2014 at 12:47 am

Michelle,

You might want to contact the website mentioned by David Zeman.

It will lead you to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and then on to the 50 states.

I think jobs, or participation resulting from that Act might actually be kind of elitist. Local participation might be better.

I would say, plan to make 10 local calls. Plan to invest an hour or two and take notes. We have a community center that gets involved with most things. Call your local people and ask them about what you would like to get involved with and who in your area are doing those types of things. They should say what they do and what the churches are doing, what seniors are doing, and what other good Samaritans are doing what the boys and girls clubs are doing, and if there are any food kitchens or homeless shelters.

With each person you talk to try to find the names and numbers of more people and groups. You should get the lay of the land real quick. You should include the Intermediate School District for your county and ask about what they do for the homeless.

I think you will find the Red Cross does these things under very limited and temporary conditions, like when an apartment burns down. Lots of people have to be housed and fed right in a very short time. It requires special training, but the Red Cross can provide that training and they have special equipment like food trucks. My wife and kids used to go out to the wild fires in California for the Red Cross and feed hundreds of firemen and police officers. They used to order 200 or 300 burgers at Burger King and go in and say, 'We are here for the 300 burger order.' After you have done some homework, and asked a bunch of the right questions to the right people, drive and walk around your community and look. Just look for couple of hours.

Once long ago my very young son woke me up in the night when we lived in Los Angeles California. He asked me to drive him around so he could see what the city looked like in the middle of the night. I just drove and he looked. He asked a few questions, but mostly I was amazed. He looked at the world as if it were completely new to him right now. It was kind of a rapture. You should look with such a viewpoint. Leave all your previous conceptions behind and just appreciate what you see now, that very moment only. As Ms Greenhoe said, once you get the feel for it, you will find such people and their locations very easy to find.

Let us know here how you are doing. I would love to hear what your adventures are.

Love, Leon

Denise

August 12, 2014 at 10:24 pm

Can you tell me if we were to try and help find people, person, or families, who would we contact? Brenda Greenhoe??? How would we contact her?? And do we then have any financial or shelter obligations, we would be responsible for?? My husband and myself let a homeless couple stay with us for a weekend and officers informed us legally to make them leave, we had to evict them, as they had verbal, vulgar arguments the whole weekend, so we will not want shelter or financial obligations, but if we could locate then let someone else know, we might try to help!!

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 14, 2014 at 12:53 am

Denise,

See my comments to Michelle Whitney on getting started. August 12, 2014 at 10:06 pm.

You sound like you and your husband need to be doing something and would be great

Let us know your adventures here.

Love – Leon

Becky

August 12, 2014 at 10:44 pm

MY family was once homeless and Brenda Greenhoe helped us out by getting us warm sleeping bags, making sure that we could get back and forth to the bus stop, and emotional support– which she did personally, she didn't outsource our family. We are in a much better place in life, with two graduated young adults, stable employment, and we are always on the lookout for other families who are in similar situations as we were once in. 10 months in a pop up camper, most of that during the cold months, were no picnic, but with Brenda's help, we survived and made it through the biggest rough patch we'd ever been through, and I personally have total respect for the program, as well as for Brenda. If you've never lived through it, you can't imagine how bad it can be. Honestly. Brenda even had the maturity to admit that she could only imagine our frustration at our situation. Not many people will go out of their way to help a family in need, much less a family that is tough to identify, because they have no place to call home. Brenda is no bounty hunter, as one jaded commenter has assumed, she genuinely cares about the families she helps. Even now, while our lives are far better than they have ever been (albeit far from rich, we DO have our own home, our own vehicle, jobs, and education, so we are now richer than we've ever been!), she STILL keeps in touch with us and keeps an eye out for things we may need, while out and about. And she never asks a dime, even if it is well past office hours!

Heather

August 13, 2014 at 7:43 pm

Becky,

I am going into social work and sometimes wonder if it will be worth it in the end because social workers are paid so poorly. Your story is very inspiring to me to continue my path, thank you for sharing! Social work is all about the outcome not the income. Far from bounty hunters!! You and your partner should be very proud!! You worked much harder to get where you are than anyone who would criticize people in that position, I assure you that!!

Becky

August 14, 2014 at 2:18 am

Heather–

NEVER give up on the dream of becoming a social worker! Many more are needed, than our society even imagines. I know of families in more dire situations than my husband and children and I endured, and they aren't afraid to ask me for help– because they know I've been through rough times– but I also help them reach out to any agencies they need to, to get other help. I'm a minister (I was before the homelessness, as well, but a former landlord wanted his rental to give to his son and we had very little income, so a suitable place was out of our reach for a long time), so I do quite a lot of social work, without a degree, but with my heart fully in it. I was lucky, we didn't need a whole lot of help, but we had Brenda in our lives and she kept giving us encouragement to push forward, and that in itself was what kept us going, when we felt at our wits end. She knew we were trying to get back on our feet and I already knew all the resources (except for the homeless student liaison program she works with), so it was a terrific relationship, that my family still appreciates and thinks VERY positively about. I have sent a couple of other families to the office, to get help from Brenda, too, because she can't always find those families bouncing around from couch to couch or relative to relative– but she sure does try! Heather, I sincerely hope that more people, like you, will reach out to families in need, offer a listening ear, guidance to resources that can help them, and positive encouragement!

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 14, 2014 at 1:05 am

Becky August 12, 2014 at 10:44 pm

I apologize profusely, if I offended you, your family or Brenda in any way.

I am an advocate for kids, parents and small businesses.

Once you have read over my comments here, if there is any resources I can assist you, or Brenda with, please let me know.

Love – Leon

Becky

August 14, 2014 at 2:27 am

Thank you, Leon. We are good, now, thankfully, and now we spread the love around the community, whenever we find a family in need, too. We had it bad, no denying that, but we were far better off than many families, and even as I write this, I have 6 cousins staying in my home, because they are also homeless and very low income. I am more than happy to help those in need, as I was helped, and I love that the work Brenda has done is helping so many families. She is a great person, with a heart of gold, and genuine concern for the kids and families she works with. The program she works with is a positive one, even when families reach out to her, because she doesn't do the work for the families, but she gives them the tools they need to reach out and get it themselves. She listens with her heart, not just her ears, and that makes her a very special person. If there are any resources you can direct to either Brenda or myself (I am a minister and gladly help anyone that I can, as well), I know I would appreciate them, and I suspect that Brenda would also, even though I cannot speak for her, I do know what type of person she is, and she loves to help others and find new programs that might fit families under her care. Thank you

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 15, 2014 at 10:30 am

Becky August 14, 2014 at 2:27 am

You mentioned, 'If there are any resources you can direct to either Brenda or myself...'

Please look over my suggestion to Thomas, at his comment, 'Thomas Ford August 13, 2014 at 1:56 pm'

Let me know if you or Brenda might have any interest at all in your four county area, in something like this.

Thomas Ford

August 13, 2014 at 1:56 pm

I live in Owosso. We are in dire need of a homeless shelter. A Catholic church has a rectory for the priest(s). The parish also has a vacant or nearly vacant convent that might be just what the community needs to convert into a homeless shelter. As far as I understand the situation, this suggestion has offered to the parish on a number of questions. The answers have been: we can't, it belongs to the Diocese of Lansing, the people in the adjoining neighborhood don't want "those" people living there and on and on and on.

With churches not willing to live up to their obligation to care for, among other things, the homeless how can we ever make headway in solving these kinds of problems?

This is not the only parish in Michigan that is confronted by such circumstances. A kind letter to each Bishop offering this suggestion as a means of putting a dent in the homeless numbers may be just what they need to realize the potential they now possess.

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 15, 2014 at 10:07 am

Thomas Ford August 13, 2014 at 1:56 pm

Can I offer a suggestion? Make it a place to transition 'the homeless' to 'productive, high income level, workers.'

Let me explain a little.

I was recently asked by a 'Maker's Group' for help. They wanted a permanent building just like you describe. They had one in mind. They had talked to people about low-income housing and had the grants ready to do this sort of thing. The upper part of the building would be the housing. The lower part would be the maker space to help kids and adults learn to do productive things. They had many businesses that wished to donate actual equipment that

could be used. They had a charter from a 4-H group making their 'maker' status official.

I looked over the building and made them a 'Master Plan' drawing they could use to purchase the building, talk to business people about their plans, and talk to funding people, and get permits for occupancy. I didn't have to do much, they had it all worked out.

What I am suggesting to you is, if the shelter has the purpose of putting folks back to work, then it will attract a different sort of homeless person, or attract most of them to a higher purpose. It will solve the problems you mentioned with the neighbors that do not want that sort close by. It will be more attractive to the community and may be more or less self-supporting.

I'm suggesting going further than the maker folks wanted to do. I'm into training people to work more productively. Once about 25 years ago, I was talking with friends about a company that hired 'drop-outs', High-School Dropouts. The idea was to make these seemingly unemployable people into highly productive workers and owners of their own businesses. I named our planned company 'M-2000'. The idea combined the idea of the future year 2000, but more importantly the idea of, the goal of, 2000 machine shops that employed these people. We talked with a man called Claude Wilson who started Wilson Concepts in Dayton, Ohio. He had come up with an idea in the 1960s that he had not pursued. He called it 'Coin Box.' He had taken certain machine shop workers, from his larger shop, and employed them to work on special machines, with a coin box. Each 15 minutes the employee had to put a quarter into the machine or it would not run. That paid for his use of the machine. Wilson Concepts would give him contracts to make parts for them on the machine. Very quickly these 'workers' got the entrepreneurial spirit. They found more productive ways to do things. These men were making \$90,000 to \$100,000 per year back in the '60s with this 'Coin Box' technology. Various things happen when you do that, but that might be a story for another day.

Would this be of interest to you? To provide a place where the homeless that want to work and benefit the community, can work, and can learn to work better, and can be employed at higher income levels? A lot of businesses and other groups could help you, but someone in Owosso would have to make this happen.

Theresa Smith

August 13, 2014 at 5:00 pm

Would love to get involved and get more information.

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 14, 2014 at 1:11 am

Theresa,

See my comments to Michelle Whitney on getting started. August 12, 2014 at 10:06 pm.

You sound like you need to be doing something.

Let us know your adventures here.

Love – Leon

Kathleen r

August 13, 2014 at 7:13 pm

Interesting that the Native Americans have a higher poverty rate with such luxurious casino/hotels in our state. I would think our N.A. Michiganders would take notice and maybe consider helping the children of other tribes, in addition to state aid, to improve the numbers and not be "singled out."

Some Aboriginal People of the Australian bush (outback) have government housing, but many of the adults would rather sleep/live outside. Their children like shelter and clothing, packaged food & snacks, and learning English(despite their elder's choices.) "The School of the Air" broadcasts & educates many children for thousands of miles in those many homes. It is an awesome system! And those very few teachers do a couple home visits annually. We have fewer miles and I know many, many people have great desktops, laptops, iPads, etc they "turn in" that could be used in "traveling homes," or shelters for these mobile children. Let's give our portable devices to individual children, not Apple, AT&T, Best Buy, etc and THEY WILL find free wifi and better themselves.

[and for those half-empty negatives of you, so they may play games or other things, or some sell or barter for food or whatever, but many WILL improve their lives and many of those children and parents will accept them, use them to improve all their lives and not feel hunted down)

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 14, 2014 at 1:32 am

Kathleen r August 13, 2014 at 7:13 pm

I think that is a great idea!

I had an idea last year to help students learn to apply what they were reading about.

I went to a local high school and taught a little course, I call 'The Applying Knowledge Workshop.' It only takes an hour or two.

I thought the kids learning robotics might like to learn more about how to build things, to build robots better.

I give lots of examples from my experiences building aircraft, engines, simulators and satellites, and environmental things.

I think this would be a very good course for native Americans to learn first hand about how to build, and to ask questions about, many of the things they see in the world around them, like commercial aircraft.

When I was working at a simulator company they were investing in a simulator to teach people not to drive when drinking. There was quite a lot to it. They called it a 'Drunk Driving Simulator.' I received a call from a native

American group. They said they had the highest accident rate for drunk driving of any county in America. The county was a NA reservation.

Let me know if I can help.

Love – Leon

durinda rowe

August 13, 2014 at 11:46 pm

There is a new ministry in Mt. Pleasant called Butterfly House Ministries. Angela Trofatter, Durinda Rowe and Tennia Benson are the co-founders. We are planning to open a women's center and a transitional living home for moms who are homeless with children or women who are pregnant. We are in the developing stages now. We are in need of a house or building. We are now operating out of one of the co-founder's homes and use a post office box for our mailing address. We know there is a huge need for this kind of service in our area. We are working to get it going as quickly as we can. As with everything funding is important. If anyone is interested in joining us in this cause and would like to send a donation, it can be sent to Butterfly House Ministries, P.O. Box 141, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858. We are a non-profit organization and your donations are tax deductible.

Jill

August 14, 2014 at 8:02 am

Does it matter if this is a paid program or not??? This is one thing that I would gladly have my tax money go to, if that were the case. We are talking about children who live in cars, garages, and other undesirable places. For Christ's sake stop making everything about politics and make it about helping a child who desperately needs and deserves a secure, safe and promising future!

Becky

August 14, 2014 at 4:17 pm

AGREED, Jill!!!! These are CHILDREN, not tax payers, not parents, not criminals. They are children in need of protection, education, and love, nothing in the world matters more to them, than to be heard and respected, then given the tools to survive– such as the right people to talk to about finding work, getting back in school to follow dreams they have given up on, and having full tummies! This isn't about politics, this is entirely about being good people that help children in need. More people need to take the blinders off and realize that these children, typically from no fault of their own, are living in situations that most adults are terrified to live in, themselves.

John

August 17, 2014 at 7:47 am

I believe Greenhoe's territory must span 2,400 SQUARE miles. As written, it infers 2,400 linear miles.

R.L.

August 17, 2014 at 10:26 am

There is nothing that saddens me more than to look into the eyes of a child living in dire poverty. It's not there fault and nothing they can do to change it. Dr Felice Leonardo Buscaglia said it best " We are all so much together but we are dying of loneliness" Travel any town ,city,country, road and you will see these faces of the poor. Look into their eyes and you will find it difficult to hold back a tear or simply walk away. Peace R.L.

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 18, 2014 at 12:35 pm

R.L. August 17, 2014 at 10:26 am

I refuse to accept that there is nothing an individual can do.

Especially, nothing you or I can do. There is something a child can do.

One can smile.

You or I, can smile when we meet and talk to this person. In the stage play and movie, 'Annie.' Annie sings, 'The sun will come out tomorrow!' We can teach each child to smile. It is not 'what' they have to smile about, it is just to 'smile.'

When I was substitute teaching I made up three rules. The first rule, 'Rule One.' Smile! I taught the kids what I meant, not just an upturned mouth, but an attitude. Courage and Confidence, from your heart, from you, in your ability to handle the situation before you. I said as a Professional Engineer Consultant, when I go into a new company, I have no idea what they might present me with. But I have a confidence that can handle what is presented and I always do. This is like the movie, The Wizard of Oz. A girl is walking a yellow brick road feeling lost, hopeless, with courage, without heart, maybe not smart enough, and meets people. One, the scarecrow, feels they are not smart enough. One feels he has no courage. One feels he has no heart. Each find those things within themselves. Dorothy finds these things in others, and finds them herself. We can do this. We can teach these things. A child can learn these things. A child can do these things. A child can be an inspiration for those around her or him.

Pat said, she asks each homeless person, 'What is your hope for the future?' 'What are your hopes for your kids?' she says. 'I ask them that, and I get this blank stare.' Do you know what that blank stare is? That is a soul telling you something with an emotion, their emotion, right there in their eyes, that very instant. It is a very negative emotion. They are not evading you. They are communicating what is truly in their heart at that instant. You or I, or Pat, right at that instant, could raise that very negative emotion to something more positive.

Pat did not say what she did at that instant, but this is what one might do. First I would not ask that question. If she asks it thousands of times, and always gets that answer, one might know what the situation is, and not feel the need to ask it one more time. One could smile, one could reach out and touch. Or one could reach down and raise this person up. Raise them up to a standing position. Get them something to eat. Get them dry clothes and things like that. See they have a warm dry place to sleep. One might joke around a bit to break the ice. One might get into communication with them and find out their situation.

Just between us, what do you think is the answer to Pat's question? I think the most basic answer is that person's basic purpose in life. His (or her) basic purpose is what he most wants to do in life. What he will be the most successful doing. If he feels unsuccessful, or does not feel what he is doing is up to his potential, he is comparing what he is doing with this basic purpose. It is revitalizing for a person to learn his basic purpose and to do that.

It is not likely that Pat knows how to re-energize someone's basic purpose in life. That is the answer to the question, so I would not ask that question. It may be she finds that does sort of motivate the person in some way. Okay, I have no problem with that. I would not ask it.

Leon

R.L.

August 17, 2014 at 10:29 am

Remember to be kind to those on your way up because you may meet them on your way down. Many are only one

paycheck, one day , from that terrible moment. R.L.

Laurel

August 17, 2014 at 11:09 am

The article focuses on poverty as the cause, but numerous studies have shown that at least 20% of homeless youth are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) kids kicked out of their homes by parents or guardians. So part of the solution to the problem of homeless youth is to improve the Michigan economy, but part of it also is to help parents love and protect their LGBT children. <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/lgbtq.html>

Leon L. Hulett, PE

August 18, 2014 at 11:43 am

Laurel August 17, 2014 at 11:09 am

I did read your link, thoughtfully.

I believe there can be many causes for a problem; like poverty or LGBT homelessness.

One could speculate endlessly on potential causes. I believe the best thing to do is to do something more effective, find a cause or solution or a plan that will cause the activity to improve. It may not be the most popular, it may not approach The Ultimate Truth. But this one cause can work with and the condition can then be improved, starting from that exact assumption, actually, whether it is true or not. If a potential 'cause' does nothing to improve the condition, then I discard it.

For example; from what I understand, what you describe is as old as time. An older generation is rejecting the values, the specific value, of a younger generation.

I suggest a third person to advocate for the family, the generations being together, come what may. Ministers and priests have done this down through the ages, but you or I or anyone, if they simply know to do this, could do this. First stand up to this and decide to do something. Second talk to each side and get their story individually or as a family. I'm just saying, communications. Be a communications facilitator. Get them to communicate.

There is one more thing. Just as a 'third party,' actively working to solve this, is the suggestion to fix this problem right now. There is also the idea that some 'third party' is actively causing this exact problem right now. One might call this, 'the third party law.' For two people or groups that should naturally do well together, and have not been doing well together and the problem seems unsolvable at this time. You look for a 'Third Party' that is actively and aggressively causing this specific problem. To use this law, the facilitator listens to each side to get the situation from their viewpoint. Then he asks, is someone saying something bad about the other person? the second party. There will be a 'mother-in-law', a co-worker, a class mate, or even possibly a person in a school system, that is brought to light. Most importantly it is a person, not a book or an idea. Find out what they say or do, in this regard. So you find out 'who', then 'what'. Then you could ask quietly, 'Is this what has driven you apart?' If they say, 'Yes.' You can indicate that back to them. 'This is what drove you apart!' They should agree. Do the same with second party. Then have them meet and go over all this.

Have fun, or at least be successful with these two ideas. – Leon

K Donaldson

August 17, 2014 at 5:07 pm

I'm sure the writer also found the same in the St. Petersburg area. It is a national problem. I am from northern lower Michigan and live about 60 miles east of St Petersburg, FL, so have seen it. People need to improve their attitudes about the poor, they need help.

James

August 19, 2014 at 7:46 am

How do i get help for someone

Sue

September 7, 2014 at 6:47 pm

.. ..

Hello everyone,

This post hits close to home. I just shared my experiences in being homeless with another writer here on Bridge. I'm hoping she shares my story.

I'm a single parent of an elementary school aged student, residing in a well to do suburb of Detroit. Educated, been gainfully employed for many years. Never thought I would get very sick, needing to go on job protected FMLA leave for several days/weeks unpaid, prior to having a major surgery. My recovery after surgery was nearly two months.

I lost my apartment. Couldn't afford to keep it, due to lack of income. Huge medical bills after my health insurance provider paid claims. Lived with a family member an hour away. When that family member relocated to the east coast with a new employer, my daughter and I resided in a hotel about two miles away from the school.

The school district found out we moved out and inquired of our whereabouts. When explaining about losing my residence and living in a hotel, the school district sent me a letter stating they were going to disenroll my daughter at the end of the 2013–2014 school year.

I contacted the school and even sent an email disputing their decision and that their decision was violating our rights under The McKinney Vento Act. The school district still disenrolled my daughter.

Just prior to the 2014 school year, I still hadn't obtained a permanent residence and was faced with my daughter not being enrolled in any school.

I had to contact The Michigan Department of Education and complain. The school district had to be MADE to re-enroll my daughter right away. I didn't find out who her teacher was, until Labor Day Weekend.

The reason the school district provided for dis-enrolling my daughter? Their homeless student liaison didn't read the email about our situation.

I've filed a complaint with the State of Michigan about how this was handled. A second complaint will be filed at the federal level.

I'm very disappointed how the situation was handled, especially knowing the school district has information about The McKinney Vento Act on their website and of their adherence. Obviously, this is false.

Good news is, my health is much better, still under a doctor's care. I've returned to my job a few month's back, and was able to save enough money to obtain my own residence back in the school district. It's going to take a few more months to get things back to where we were a year ago, we're on our way.

I'm very disappointed in how we were treated. We were treated very poorly by the school district. I never asked or requested any assistance from the school district or any social service agency. Worked hard to get back. The only situation I didn't expect to be a challenge, was my daughter's education.

The school principal, who made the decision to dis-enroll my daughter, has been silent. I have letters and email exchanges to confirm my story. I will not be silent about this.

Thanks.

James

January 15, 2015 at 4:49 pm

How do people become so cynical about our society attempting to secure the basic needs of children. Those who criticize programs designed to insure an education for all children are not only void of compassion but they miss the point completely. The majority of these homeless children did not choose to be homeless. I am sure they did not choose to be hungry, cold, or exposed to life as a "homeless" person. The minority of the kids that may have run away from home did not do so for no reason. I would suggest the people trying to rationalize homelessness as a character flaw have a mental illness which is not diagnosed. I hesitate to be crude and refer to some of them as being a pompous ass. Why would anyone have an issue over the schools getting State and Federal resources to pay for education? The State of Michigan has cut the per pupil funding in half over the past 6 years. The lottery was supposed to fund the schools but has not trickled down to support the direct cost of running a school. Teachers are having to take pay cuts as class sizes increase due to school closings because of budget cuts. If someone wants to turn the issue into an "entitlement" discussion they need to look a bit further than their narcissistic ego. Aside from the humanitarian issue; allowing an expansion of impoverished and uneducated citizens only makes it harder for us to compete in our global economy. The same people who sit back and deny the need for society to work towards elimination of this problem are the same ones who will criticize the new subculture's inability to be productive and self sufficient in the future. (Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) Let's stick with the program.

Theresa Bean

April 22, 2015 at 11:11 am

I do videos for homeless.org, free of charge. Bless you! <https://youtu.be/BtOtuaBYwMM>

DALE BRADLEY

December 3, 2015 at 11:43 pm

CAN YOU ADOPTED THESE CHILDREN THAT ARE HOMELESS?

©2016 Bridge Michigan. All Rights Reserved.