

**Give Us Your Poor:  
Homelessness & the United States**

**TEACHER HANDBOOK**

**Developed by:**

**Julia Soyer and Lula Guilbert,**  
Graduate College of Education, UMass Boston  
(Under the supervision of Peter Kiang, Ph.D.)

*In association with*  
The Center for Social Policy,  
McCormack Institute, UMass Boston

**Give Us Your Poor: Homelessness and the United States**

**Teacher Handbook**

Contents

***Part One – Introduction and Overview*.....3**

***Part Two – Before You Begin*.....5**

***Part Three – Scope and Sequence of Unit*.....9**

- a. Exploring existing student ideas about homelessness (p. 10)*
- b. Contrasting their initial ideas with a variety of alternative definitions and images that will serve to deepen their understanding of the issue (p.11)*
- c. Developing empathy through experiential learning (p.12)*
- d. Researching the history of homelessness to better define the problem (p. 14)*
- e. Understanding the current state of homelessness in the United States and in our local communities (p.25)*
- f. Exploring solutions on legislative, programmatic and philosophical levels (p.30)*
- g. Deciding on and implementing action initiatives (p.34)*

***Part Four – Ongoing Assessment Within the Unit*.....37**

***Part Five – Resource Suggestions*.....39**

***Part Six – Appendix*.....44**

## **Part One – Introduction and Overview**

### **Mission Statement**

Building on the themes and individual experiences introduced in the film, the classroom component will provide instructors with a framework for an interdisciplinary approach to teaching students about homelessness in the larger social, economic, and political context of the United States. Following the film's lead, the unit asks students to both bridge academic knowledge with personal engagement in the community and also to see that homelessness is a community problem. Through experiential and service-learning, students deepen their understanding about homelessness, sharpen their problem analysis and critical thinking skills, reduce their tendency to stereotype, and increase their sense of social responsibility and personal efficacy. Students will come away from this unit with some of the tools they need to address homelessness and play an active role in developing solutions to the problem.

### **Unit Overview**

In designing this unit, our overarching cognitive goal is to take students on a journey from a surface-level understanding of a complex issue (homelessness) to a critical understanding of the complexities that exist within the issue. We have chosen this approach both for its alignment with the goals of the film, and for its ability to be replicated the exploration of other social issues. In other words, once you and your students have taken this type of intellectual journey to examine the issue of homelessness, the process can serve as a model for learning about and addressing other pressing social issues.

The journey begins by exploring existing student ideas about homelessness. We have chosen this as our starting point because, contrary to what we might think, students come to school with a lot of information about homelessness, which may come from a variety of sources—media, family, peers, and personal observations. However, this information often lacks depth and is based primarily on stereotypes, misinformation, and fear. Alternatively, with the growing numbers of homeless families within communities across the nation, it is increasingly likely that a student in your class knows someone who is or has been homeless, perhaps even the student her/himself. In each case, it is clear that a more critical and comprehensive understanding of homelessness can help students to respond in ways that are socially responsible and personally meaningful.

This critical understanding comes when we involve students in the issue through personal reflection, historical perspective, and community contact. The personal reflection, which is ongoing, happens when students' initial ideas about homelessness expand when met with new information, ideas and insights. The focus on personal reflection creates a cyclical learning process. With each new phase of learning, students reexamine their previous perspective in light of the new information. This activity helps students document the shifts in their perspective

about homeless people while reinforcing the importance of information and reflection more generally. Similarly, the unit's attention to critical understanding not only provides a context for all research, but also affects the type of research that is conducted. For example, students are taught to pay attention to the effects, throughout history, of silencing the voice of the homeless person and the importance in their own study of homelessness of listening to that voice. This research is then supplemented by input from the local homeless community on their most pressing needs and concerns.

Once students have developed a critical understanding, through historical and current research using a variety of resources, they will move into a solutions focus. As the final synthesis project for this unit, students will take what they have learned over the course of the unit to develop a plan of action on legislative, programmatic, and philosophical fronts. They will design and vote on ballot measures related to which action they will take. Students will then implement these initiatives in their school and/or community. Ideally, these actions will help to develop a legacy of ongoing involvement and advocacy for the homeless people within their community.

## **Part Two – Before You Begin**

### *Starting out*

As is true anytime students and teacher discuss complex social, political, and/or interpersonal issues, it is important that the teacher take time to think about how to broach issues and face challenges that might arise—personal and interpersonal—for the group as a whole and for individuals in the group. The teacher must also examine her/his own attitudes and feelings on the topic before facilitating the group’s process of engagement.

Like our students, we as teachers come to the issue of homelessness with a lot of information and ideas that we may not have examined or be aware of. With this understanding in mind, in preparation for work on this unit, we looked for articles in the newspaper that addressed both the specific issue of homelessness, as well as articles about such topics as housing, welfare, budget decisions, medical insurance and medical care, all of which affect the state of poverty and homelessness in this country. We researched different homeless shelters, and, finally, visited a homeless shelter, Pine Street Inn, in Boston, Massachusetts.

### *Getting to know a shelter*

It is important that a teacher establish a relationship with a shelter before beginning the unit. Working with a shelter in mind will help the teacher as she/he explores the issue and imagines different scenarios for the final project.

In a very basic way, establishing a relationship with one shelter is also central to this unit—its philosophy and its practice—and consistent with the film’s intentions. Philosophically, working with one shelter is important because it provides students with a specific kind of experience of community service. A relationship with a shelter assures that student’s experience of community service includes building both an understanding of the community with which they are working and a respectful and reciprocal relationship with members of that community, while reinforcing the students’ image of themselves as active members of society, whose knowledge and work can have a meaningful and concrete effect. Working with one shelter is also consistent with the unit’s commitment to integrated rather than superficial solutions because it helps to provide important groundwork for an ongoing and long-term partnership between the school and the shelter. Practically, a connection with a shelter offers the teacher and students a good resource for the unit, a touchstone for local issues and events related to homelessness, and, of course, a concrete venue for action ideas—both programmatic and legislative.

At first you may be hesitant, as we were when beginning our research, to contact a shelter; however the process is quite simple. The first thing to do is to find a shelter in your community that you can contact. This could be done by using your local phonebook or by using one of the web resources we list at the back of this handbook. When you call, ask for someone who does community involvement, public relations, or just the director. Let them know about the unit you are planning and mention the video, as they will hopefully already be familiar with it. Feel free to share this handbook with whoever you speak to at the shelter and get their feedback on the lessons you are choosing to use in your classroom. We have found that people are very willing and enthusiastic about establishing a school-shelter (and indeed school-community) relationship if they know you are working toward developing deeper understanding and long-term solutions (e.g. not just a visit to serve food).

To show you how critical this step is, and how easy it is to get started, we will share with you our own visit to a local shelter.

### *Our shelter visit*

In the beginning stages of designing this unit, we went to Pine Street Inn shelter in Boston and spoke with John McDonald, Head of the Men's Emergency Shelter. Going to the shelter and speaking with John was invaluable. Not only did we begin to learn about what it is like to work, live, and visit a shelter, we were also able to get feedback on some of our ideas for the unit. We learned about shelter initiatives, the work shelter employees do to build trust between themselves and the residents, the early curfew, and the different types of people served by Pine Street. We also heard a frontline perspective on what policies would be most helpful and why.

When discussing our unit, the most important feedback we received had to do with the issue of including a visit to a shelter. We came to understand why bringing students to a shelter might not be the best idea. If done too early, seeing a large group of homeless people, students may become even more scared of this segment of our society. If done later in the unit, seeing people "looking like" stereotype of homeless people without hearing their stories and getting to know them as individuals might only undermine the work the students have done to unpack the stereotype. We also came to see that, although students might understand the myriad reasons why someone uses a shelter's services, from the perspective of the people living and using the shelter, it might feel insulting to have kids come in and look at them. John also pointed out that having the students come in to the shelter and "serve dinner" or do some other sort of one-time field trip undermines the chance that they will learn that volunteering is not about helping the helpless. Standing behind the food counter, students would not learn that a large percentage of the residents work 70-80 hours a day, have advanced degrees, and have valuable experiences and insights to share. In each of these circumstances, it is easy to see how a shelter visit may serve to distance students from the homeless people within their community, rather than helping them to connect to them.

In the end, it was interesting for us to hear John say that, in lieu of a visit, the more traditional clothing, blanket, school supply drive was more effective. Even though, at first glance, such a drive might seem superficial, it is made more meaningful by a service learning component that includes a visit from shelter employees and, if possible, a current or former shelter resident, or who will, as John did, discuss the complex reasons behind such a choice. The issue of visiting a shelter is a complex one, and, ultimately, the choice has to be made based on the needs, resources, and comfort level of the teacher, students, parents, school, and shelter.

If you feel strongly about having some sort of a shelter visit, we suggest speaking to your contact person at the shelter to get their input. Find out whether they already have something set up for school visits. Always be ready, however, to hear that bringing students to the shelter is not the best idea. They may have suggestions for doing this constructively or may have alternatives which can still meet your goals for your students. In some instances, a shelter might have a promotional film that might be used instead of a visit, some way for students to get a more concrete sense of the place and people for whom they hope to support.

If you live in a rural or suburban community, a visit to a shelter might make sense because shelter might already be a part of the student's lives through church or other community service programs or might be more integrated into the community as a whole. Ultimately, by talking to people "in the community," teachers and students begin to transform one of the habits

that has marred aid to the poor for centuries: not asking and not seeing the people one is aiming to support.

### *Can Homelessness be defined?*

The issue of homelessness, like many social phenomena, is not easily defined. According to the 1994 Stewart B. McKinney Act definition of homelessness, a person is considered homeless who:

Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence or; has a primary night time residency that is: (A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations... (B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or (C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.<sup>1</sup>

Some people have found that this definition focuses on people who fit a very narrow idea of homeless—people who literally have no homes—and leaves out a lot of people who are about to become homeless, are living with friends or family (often true in rural areas), or who are, due to economic reasons, living with another family (or families). The problems with this definition give teachers a chance to acknowledge that some ideas do not have simple definitions. One solution is to develop class “working” definitions for terms like homelessness and to keep revisiting it during the course of the unit.

### *Homeless people are not just “out there”*

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to remember that there may be students in your class who are, have been, or are on the verge of becoming homeless. Some students may have relatives who are in these types of situations. These realities are true for any community. (Talk to any shelter worker and she/he will tell you about the architect, doctor, lawyer, or millionaire who has come through the shelter doors.)

In preparation for this unit, teachers may want to talk to a guidance counselor or to shelter employees to ask for suggestions about how to be sensitive to students who may be familiar with homelessness; who may, during the unit come to realize that they are considered homeless; and, the specific students whom you may know are homeless. If you are aware of students who are personally familiar with the experience of homelessness, it is important that they are able to choose how and whether to share their own experiences.

If you and the student(s) talk about her/his situation, but other members of the class do not know, it might be important to talk privately with the student and allay fears about being put on the spot and, possibly, to ask for input about your ideas. There is a lot of shame attached to being homeless. This unit may be a chance for the student to, even if not in front of the class, see her/his experiences as an important resource. (As always, it is important that students are not burdened by a feeling that they have to educate or be an expert.) If you are already talking to the parent(s), it is important to let them know about the unit as well. Parents might want to participate in some way and use the unit as an opportunity to show their child that homelessness is not cause for shame. If a parent wants to come to class, you may want this to be done only

---

<sup>1</sup> The Minnesota Coalition For The Homeless, with assistance from Rayford Sims, Brian Gallagher, Jeffery J. Maday, Keith Roberts and Robin Maynard, "On the Street Where You Live: Lesson Plans on Homelessness for Middle School Students," 4th Edition, (Minnesota, November 1998): 4.

with the permission of the student. The parents may also feel ashamed of their situation, and not want to have anything to do with the unit.

*What does the film (and this unit) mean by Legislative, Programmatic, and Philosophical solutions?*

The film looks at three approaches to ending homelessness: legislative, programmatic, and philosophical. In the film, these categories not only address three distinct options to attend to the issue of homelessness, but they also provide a framework through which to evaluate programs past, present, and future. Like the film, the unit is designed so that these three categories are integrated into the various sections, sometimes overtly and sometimes more subtly. Eventually, students not only come to understand these categories, but are also able to use them to design different actions. Some examples of how students become familiar with the three approaches are listed below.

**Legislative** – Students learn about how a bill becomes a law, lobbyists, and the relationship between legislation and grassroots organizing. Students learn about legislation, past and present, that affects homelessness. Students learn to whom they write to advocate for changes to laws, levels of funding, and so on.

**Programmatic** – Students research and evaluate programs for the homeless throughout history and within their community. Students speak people who work in various programs about the ways in which the students can best be of service. Students examine the different effects, benefits, and shortcomings of short- and long-term options.

**Philosophical** – This is perhaps the most important, though least tangible of the solutions. Teachers and students talk about the importance of advocacy, empathy, and personal commitment to the goal of improving society by improving the circumstances of all of the members of society. Students research different philosophical approaches to homelessness—from the almshouse to the settlement house, and from the ideals of meritocracy to the ideals of democracy.

Combining these three categories with the focus on critical reflection, historical understanding, and community contact is especially effective. It means that, by the end of the unit, students are able to not only design responses to homelessness based on the specific needs of the people whom they seek to support, but also that they understand why this choice makes their contributions even more meaningful.

### **Part Three– Scope and Sequence of Unit**

This handbook, and part three in particular, contains suggestions for research, activities, assignments, and questions for reflection. These are not presented as a complete unit, but rather as a “menu” from which teachers can put together a unit that meets their own needs and the needs of their students. Our hope is that this flexibility will make this a more valuable and lasting tool in your classroom.

What follows is a sequence of topics that are designed to guide teachers through an examination of homelessness that is consistent with the values and ideas that define the documentary *Give Us Your Homeless*. Through an in-depth examination of homelessness—causes and responses past and present—and related activities that help “bring the experiences home” (designed especially for students who may not already be familiar with the realities of homelessness), students arrive at the end of the first part unit with new knowledge and insights about the issue of homelessness and the lives of people who, for various reasons, are living in our communities without a home. They then apply this more profound understanding as they research, choose, and implement positive and lasting solutions within their communities and themselves.

We have chosen this sequence because it provides both a linear path toward better defining and solving a problem and a recursive rhythm of student reflection on both the issue of homelessness and the way that their own thoughts and lives influence this issue. We believe these interrelated processes will empower students with both the critical thinking skills and personal efficacy to bring about real change not just in the issue of homelessness, but in other addressing other social problems they encounter.

We hope you find our suggestions and insights useful and wish you the best of luck as you modify them to meet the needs of your students and your community.

### **A. Exploring Existing student ideas about homelessness**

As the opening section of the unit, this section draws out perceptions students already have about homelessness and homeless people. The point of this specific section is not to analyze, but to get students to acknowledge privately their own initial understanding of homelessness. For this reason, as in a brainstorming activity for pre-writing, there are no “wrong” answers.

1. Home – Have class brainstorm together (e.g. on board) the associations and feelings they have about “home”. Next, you may choose to ask students how they would feel if they didn’t have a home. Share this in a brief discussion.
2. Homeless, Homelessness – Invite students to take a piece of paper (or, ideally, a page of perspective journals) and fold it in half. At the top of one half, ask them to write the word “homeless people” and on the other side write “homelessness”. They then brainstorm privately definitions/associations they have for each of these categories.
3. Complete the Thought – As an alternative activity, ask students to complete the thoughts “A home is...”, “A homeless person is...” and “Homelessness is...” on the first page of their perspective journals.

*Note:* While this section is intended for students to honestly reflect on their initial perceptions about homelessness and homeless people, this needs to be done in a way that is thoughtful and respectful of all students, including those who may be or know people who are homeless. In this vein, and to avoid exacerbating stereotypes, we suggest that students’ lists for homelessness and homeless people be kept private. There will be opportunities later in the unit to reflect on these initial lists in light of new information.

## **B. Contrasting these ideas with more expansive definitions and images**

### *Objectives*

Our goal in this section is to use the video and other sources to present students with diverse descriptions of and insights into homelessness and the lives of homeless people in order to challenge and expand their initial understanding of the issue. The focus here should be on reevaluating one's position in light of new evidence and insights. This is one section in particular where the perspective journals (see assessment section) will prove especially useful for student reflection.

This type of constructivist approach to student knowledge building, is in line with the National Council of Social Studies standards<sup>2</sup>. On their website, they note that “knowledge is constructed by learners as they attempt to fit new information, experiences, feelings, and relationships into their existing or emerging intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional constructs”. We also believe that students learn best in an environment which helps them to construct their own knowledge through richly textured academic experiences.

### *Description of Sample Lessons*

This is the point in the lesson where we introduce the video. The video is divided into two sections, and we will only be working with the first half of the video here, which focuses primarily on the causes and current state of homelessness in United States. The following are suggested activities to accompany/follow the video excerpts.

1. Freewrite – Due to the (potentially) emotional content of the film, it is important to give students an outlet for personally processing what they have just seen. A few minutes for writing down their thoughts and feelings (through words and/or pictures) will give students a place to respond. This can also serve as the beginnings of a class discussion in response to the film.
2. Class Discussion – Using freewrite sharing by a few students as a beginning, open a class discussion on the student response to the video. The format of this discussion will depend on your class and on student response.
3. Perspective Journals – As a homework assignment, have students look over their list of words from the first day and choose three that they would change or reconsider after watching the video. They can write about why they chose these words, explain their changes, or respond in other ways which require that they reflect on their initial understanding in the light of new information.

*Note:* In addition to viewing the video, many newspaper articles offer good supplemental resources. You may want to ask students might to start collecting articles in preparation for the unit.

---

<sup>2</sup> For the complete standards, please visit [www.ncss.org](http://www.ncss.org)

## **C. Developing empathy through experiential learning**

### *Objectives*

This experiential learning section is intended to provide opportunities for students to empathize with some of the experiences that people face when becoming or being homeless. This new perspective will help students to understand both the variety of reasons that people become homeless, as well as some of the difficulties people face when they do not have a place to live. What follows are two specific experiential learning activities that can be implemented for a period of time during the unit. Additionally, we have included several small-scale experiential learning activities in other sections of this unit.

### *Description of Sample Lessons*

#### The “Deskless”

Over the course of this unit, students will become one of the “deskless” through a series of choices and/or chances. The idea here is that, while some people make bad choices which lead them to homelessness, many others get there through circumstances beyond their control (e.g. medical expenses or injury). The exact way you choose to implement this idea will depend on your class and your students; however, here is a basic outline of the process:

1. Set-up - Have a series of index cards on which you will write various situations. These will be given to students when they enter the classroom each day during this unit (or during the portion of the unit for which you choose to implement this). One color should be given to students who still have desks, and another color to students who are “deskless”. For example, on the first day every student has a desk when they arrive to class so all students would get a green card. Some would be blank, which means they would just go to their seat as usual, while other cards will say “Move” and these students will have to leave their desk. The next day, the most students will still receive green cards (because, upon arrival) they have a desk; however the students who lost their desk on the previous day will now receive blue cards – again, some that are blank and some that are “move”.
2. Explanation of move cards
  - a. Students need only one “move” card to become deskless, but two to get back into their desk. This is meant to emphasize the fact that it is a lot easier for someone to become homeless than to get out of homelessness. The type of move cards will depend on if they are green (intended for people who have desks) or blue (intended for people who are deskless).
    - i. For those with desks, this means they lose their desk. There are three types of move cards which cause someone to become deskless: “Chance”, “Choice”, and “Combo”. You may choose to write these words at the top of the cards or to let students figure out for themselves what the cause of their move is. Here are examples of each of these types of cards:

1. Chance – You break your leg snowboarding and are unable to do your construction job. You are fired and can no longer afford to pay your rent.
2. Choice – You bought a new car which you really couldn't afford. Then you lost your job. You have chosen to keep the car and live in it for a little while until you can save some money.
3. Combo – You and your partner are both 17 and juniors in high school. One of you gets pregnant and you decide to keep the baby, drop out of school and start a family. Since neither of you have diplomas or experience, you are only able to get minimum wage jobs and this isn't enough for rent.

*Note:* Even in these examples, it is clear that even the “choice” situation is still a combination of personal choices and chance events. In many ways, this parallels the complex reasons that many people become homeless and our hope is that this ambiguity in the cards could lead your students to these parallels.

- ii. For the Deskless, they need to get two blue move cards to return to their desk. The categories of move cards are: personal effort, family and friends, government assistance, and community programs. Here is a descriptions of the types of situations that could be written for these categories.
  - a. Personal Effort – You struggle to bring yourself up by getting an extra job.
  - b. Family and Friends – A friend says that you can stay in their basement for a month until you find a place to live.
  - c. Government Assistance – You have registered for government assistance and are going to use this to help you get an apartment.
  - d. Community Programs – You contact the local shelter and they help you to get set-up in an apartment which doesn't require a deposit up front.
3. Discussion Points - You may choose to implement this (and supplement it) to whatever degree you feel is most beneficial for your class. Here are some relevant discussion topics that may come up during the course of the activity:
  - a. How do students respond when they lose their desk?
    - i. Emotionally
      1. Is it fun/funny? Does this feeling last?
      2. Are they frustrated? Which tasks in class are more difficult to do without a desk?
    - ii. Socially
      1. Do they partner up with friends who have desks?
      2. Do the “deskless” stick together and form a community?
      3. How do the students with and without desks relate to one another?

- iii. Economically
    - 1. Do they start to barter?
  - iv. Cognitively
    - 1. How do they solve the problems related to not having a desk.  
For example, where do they keep their school supplies?
  - b. There will probably be many connections between the students responses and the responses of people of become homeless. For example, many people who are about to lose their home “double-up” with family and friends for a short period of time. You can pull these connections into your discussions as a way to help students further empathize with people who become homeless.
4. Assessment
- a. Within the activity
    - i. Challenge students to make connections (oral or written) to what they are experiencing as compared to what people who become homeless experience.
    - ii. Notice the coping strategies that students use and discuss these with the class. Challenge them to find parallels between what they are doing in the classroom and what people do when faced with losing their homes rather than their desks.
    - iii. Use the reflection journals as a way of keeping track of student thinking and connections during this activity. Each day (either in-class or at home) as students to reflect on either their own feelings and actions or the actions and feelings expressed by their classmates.
  - b. After the activity
    - i. Ask the class “why do you think we did this activity?” and have a discussion around this. It may be enlightening to ask students both how valuable they thought it was and what they have learned from it. Doing this discussion both allows an opportunity for group reflection and invites student input into the teaching process.
    - ii. Ask students to connect the “move” cards to what they are learning about causes of homelessness and/or the different types of solutions they are researching (see later sections in this unit). For example, they can use their deskless experience as a way of forming an argument in favor of a solution.

Without a Home – As a shorter alternative to an experiential learning sequence, another way to have students empathize with the homeless experience is to guide them thinking about what it would be like to not have a home. This can be as simple as having students think about their own home and what it would be like if they left school today and went home to find that there was nothing there. This could be done as a class discussion, as a journal writing, or through other means. Some questions to help guide students thinking on this are:

- 5. What feelings might you have?
- 6. Where might you go? – Today, tomorrow, and long term.
- 7. What things would be more difficult? (e.g. sleep, homework, hygiene, etc...)
- 8. How would you get food? Money? Shelter?
- 9. What services might you need? Are these available in the community?

10. (Any other questions which help students to empathize and think critically about what it means to be without a home.)

#### **D. Researching the history of homelessness in order to better define the problem**

##### *Objectives*

An overall goal of the film and this unit is to help people understand that homelessness is not necessarily the fault of the homeless person, but the result of a complex mixture of social and personal realities—a mixture that is unique for each individual. While investigating the history of homelessness, an important point to make is that in many cases people do not often start out as the stereotypical image of a homeless person but may evolve into that stereotype. For example, if one is homeless, it may make sense to wear many layers of clothing, even in the summer, because otherwise the clothing may get stolen or one would have to carry it. If one does not have access to a shower, one may not smell clean. If one is living with the strain of homelessness, or impending homelessness, one may turn to alcohol or drugs. Similarly, this strain may lead one to feel depressed or to behave in seemingly irrational ways. Using these facts as a context, will provide some important depth and perspective to the discussion of homelessness in general, and will help the students begin to develop some more groundwork for their philosophical approach to the problem of homelessness.

In this section of the unit, students are asked also to look at the larger context of causes that lead to homelessness—they learn about economics, laws, civil rights, and the machinations of history as these topics affect the fact of homelessness in this country. These topics can be approached through four interrelated themes:

- the evolution of our society’s response to poverty;
- the local and national events connected to these historical moments;
- the patterns that undermined attempts to solve this seemingly solvable problem and similarities in the attempts to rectify the problem;
- how the underlying structure and attitudes of our society have prevented us from solving the problem of homelessness.

Each of these themes is explored below with some initial background information you may choose to use to guide student research.

1. *The evolution of our society’s response to poverty:*

In this section, students research and discuss the patterns of care for and attitudes towards the homeless from the colonial period to the current day. Some possible themes to explore might include:

a. *Who are “the homeless?”*

- i. Strangers—The notion of “the stranger” has taken different forms. but, if that stranger is poor, the effect of being seen as “other” has been similar.

1. *Colonial Era*—People would not welcome strangers because they might threaten an already precarious access to resources.
  2. *Pre Civil War*—Those who could not support themselves were labeled “degenerate.” These people were somehow to blame for their condition, were a burden on the society, and were in need of reform. As the United States was becoming more prosperous, any other explanation challenged the idea of this land of plenty (this perspective and rationale are still true today).
  3. *Immigration*—When poor immigrants were the main residents in the almshouse it became even easier to blame the individual and not the system. Not only is this attitude evident today, but it has supported racist attitudes for centuries.
  4. *1865-1930*—After the Civil War the “tramp” was seen as an evil person, most likely an immigrant. In fact, although immigrants did make up a large percentage of the tramp population, the true demographic was much more diverse and much more representative of the “average” American—literate, white, American-born men and women. The tramp was a result of the transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy. Not only were people moving to the cities, but there were large, quick changes in job availability. In addition, necessary job skills were changing and this left many people unemployed and, eventually, homeless.
- ii. Mentally or physically challenged - Throughout the history of homelessness in this country, people who are mentally or physically disabled have been part of the homeless population. Often, a combination of economic concerns and judgements about why people become homeless have meant that people’s rights as citizens are overlooked. This seems especially true in the case of the mentally and physically challenged. It is important to remind students that society is set up to be accessible to people with a specific set of physical abilities and mental faculties. The decision to try to make daily life more accessible to physically challenged people is relatively new and is still incomplete. Students should be asked to think about the whole notion of “disabled” or “challenged” as a construct of the way things are set up and not the way an individual is “built.” If workplaces are not accessible, if one cannot get the medication and support she/he needs to work, that person may become homeless. People from these groups may find themselves in this situation regardless of class, race, and ethnicity.
1. *Antebellum*—The almshouse was designed to “reform” its inhabitants and mold them into citizens who could participate in everyday life. The image of the resident was able-bodied and lazy. However, a large percentage of the inhabitants were blind, deaf, or insane. The “normal life” they were being prepared to enter was

designed for people who could see, hear, and who did not struggle with mental and/or emotional issues.

2. *1865-1930*—During the huge upheavals of this time, many workers who could not find new jobs, were displaced by younger workers, or were exhausted by having to move from one temporary or seasonal job to another became depressed and gave up trying to find work, some turned to alcohol.
  3. *The Depression*—Specialized institutions are set up to help people with mental health and physical issues. They are more about getting people off the streets than about helping people to live independent lives.
- iii. Mothers with children, women, orphans, and runaways— Women who are homeless have had to face some hardships that their male counterparts have not had to face. The threat of rape, the responsibility for children, and the inequality in wages.
1. *War*—When husbands are killed in the war, women often find themselves struggling to care for themselves and their children.
  2. *Sisters of the Road*—During the Depression, there are different versions of the female tramp. Some, like Boxcar Bertha Thompson, portrayed the women riding the rails as adventurers and rebels, others left home to see if they could send money back to their families. In New York, during the Depression, there were some shelters specifically for women that were set up in hotels. The number of homeless women went down during WWII, when women took the jobs of men who were fighting in Europe.
  3. *Domestic Violence*—Women are forced to leave their homes because of violent partners. This may lead to long periods of time moving from one shelter to another (sometimes one state to another) as women continue to be persecuted by their batterer. When these women have children, the struggle is harder. Women of all races, ethnicities, and classes can find themselves in this situation.
  4. *Unemployment*—When the main breadwinner is un- or underemployed, a family can often dissolve. This might leave the woman both in poverty and with her children.
  5. *Young People*—Between 1865-1920, many young people “took to the road” as a rebellious act against strict parents and schools. Others, however, chose homelessness because of unfair working conditions or brutal treatment at home—especially by stepparents. Many of these young people came from poverty, had little to lose, and were already familiar with hard work. Many young people today run away from home because of abusive parents or stepparents. Some are kicked out for behaviors of which their parents do not approve such as drugs, alcohol, or homosexuality.

- iv. People who have come on “hard times”—When we are busy blaming the victim, we often forget about the chance events in ones life that lead to homelessness.
  1. *Fire*—A person or family does not have the resources to rebuild their lives after a fire.
  2. *Natural disaster*—A person or family does not have the resources to rebuild their lives after a natural disaster.
  3. *Sale of a rental property*—People have to move from their apartment before they are able to find an affordable place to live. People do not have enough savings to pay first and last month’s rent.
  4. *Accident*—Someone is injured and can no longer work. She/he can no longer work at the job for which she/his is qualified and has to take a lower-paying job.
  5. *Medical bills*—A person becomes ill, was not able to afford medical insurance, and is overwhelmed by medical expenses. A person becomes ill, loses her/his medical insurance (or cannot pay for COBRA), and becomes overwhelmed by medical expenses.
  6. *Welfare Reform* - People may become homeless when their benefits are reduced. This was the case during the Reagan era, and as a result of President Clinton’s Welfare Reform Act of 1996, this Act did a lot to change welfare.
  
- v. Undereducated—There are an infinite number of reasons why someone might not be literate. Illiteracy means that one is not able to get high-paying work, it also means that, as the necessary skills change, that person has a harder time keeping up.
  1. *Economics*—Someone grew up in an underfunded school system and “fell through the cracks.”
  2. *Immigration*—Someone left a country where she/he was unsafe and, although that person might be educated, does not speak English and so is at a disadvantage. Someone may have also left a country or living in poverty and may not have had a solid education.
  
- b. *Housing Problems* – The availability and affordability of stable housing has always played a role in our society’s struggle with the issue of homelessness. Some specific periods/topics where your students can focus their research on housing issues and history are:
  - i. Early colonial practices
  - ii. Almshouse, lodging houses, Charity Organization Societies
  - iii. Settlement houses
  - iv. Immigrant agencies
  - v. The orphanages, mental institutions, and widow’s pensions of the Progressive Era (allowing women to stay at home)
  - vi. The contemporary homeless shelter
  - vii. Section 8 housing

- viii. Rent Control
- ix. Public housing

c. *Providing monetary support for people in need -*

- i. Community monies—Initially, this meant pooled money to be used for members of the community. As the colonies became more organized so did their methods for addressing the needs of the homeless. In 1601 and 1662, the colonies adopted the English Poor Laws, which made the colonies responsible for helping “worthy” poor. This began not only the cycle of poverty, homelessness, and relief, but also the assumed right of the helper to decide who was worthy of aid, what kind of aid, and the cause of the person’s situation.
- ii. Families—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was created as part of the New Deal. Under President Clinton’s Welfare Reform Act of 1996 this was changed to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TNAF). The new act made tighter restrictions on who could receive aid and limited the amount of time families could receive aid.
- iii. Charity—Religious and secular organizations of various kinds have offered a range of services to the homeless from meals and clothing to education and counseling.
- iv. State programs—During the 1930s, most of the relief programs were turned over to the states. For many southern states. States could decide how to distribute funds. This fact meant that many African Americans were denied welfare for many reasons, one being because white bureaucrats felt that because African Americans were familiar with poverty they could deal with it better than white people and, therefore, did not need the money. This was one reason some people thought we should nationalize welfare.
- v. Federal programs—During the Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt institutes the first national welfare act—The Federal Emergency Relief Act. He also created Social Security and unemployment insurance.

d. *Attitudes towards the poor*

- i. Almshouse—deviants in need of reforming.
- ii. Settlement house—victims of an unfair system
- iii. Welfare to Work—people choose to be on welfare

2. *The local and national events connected to these historical moments:*

In this section, students research and discuss the relationship between the individual and some of the forces that shape the time in which that person is living. Some possible themes might include:

a. *Economics*

- i. Colonial—Limited resources during the early colonial days
- ii. Early attempts at state legislation—State legislatures view almshouses as an economically appealing alternative to people wandering from town to

town (the beginning of the practice of *less eligible*—keeping aid to the poor substandard so they would be inspired to move on).

- iii. The stock market crash—how is the response to poverty different when it is the middle class who has suddenly become poor?
- iv. Education—How funding is provided to different neighborhoods and how this effects the types of schools in those neighborhoods.
- v. Inflation 1970s—The need to make American business competitive since, after WWII, other countries began to undersell the United States. Increasing competitive strength meant giving more money to rich people who would then spend it and/or invest it. This choice also meant cutting social programs to help the government get out of debt.
- vi. Ronald Reagan and “trickle down” economics.

b. *War*

- i. Civil War—Husbands and fathers killed in the war.
- ii. World War II—The world marketplace changes as countries, other than the United States begin to manufacture goods. These countries are able to export their goods to the United States and, because they pay their workers less, are able to undercut the United States-made products. Also, women, people of color, and younger workers were left out if the “capital-labor” truce, which responded to the changing market.
- iii. Vietnam—Homeless Vietnam Veterans
- iv. War in other countries—Central and South United States, Europe, Southeast Asia, Africa. (Students look at the United States’ role in these wars, and talk about the general concept of United States economic interests in other countries and our related responsibility to help the people who are adversely affected by our choice to pursue our interests.)

c. *Technology*

- i. Industrial Revolution—Influx of people to the cities, change in necessary job skills, increased rate of accidents.
- ii. Discovery of anti-depressant medication—More people being sent out of the institutions and away from regular care.
- iii. Information Age—People who do not have access to computer training and/or computers are left behind.

3. *The patterns that undermined attempts to solve this seemingly solvable problem and similarities in the attempts to rectify the problem :*

In this section, students examine different solutions and the motives for those solutions. For example, were/are the initiatives designed to move individuals through poverty or were/are they designed to create and/or perpetuate a class of menial workers?

a. Work Solutions—

- i. The almshouse, lodging houses, Charity Organization Societies: forcing children, elders, physically and mentally ill people to work at menial jobs.

- ii. Welfare to Work: Putting welfare recipients through skills training.
    - b. Patchwork solutions
      - i. Housing people in hotels
      - ii. Free medical care
    - c. Settlement houses
      - i. Providing education, social events, counseling, housing, and training for a range of individuals.
    - d. Less Eligible
      - i. Offering assistance that keeps people below the poverty line in a variety of ways such as: training them for low-paying jobs and refusing to provide ongoing support.
4. *How the underlying economic structure and attitudes of our society have prevented us from solving the problem of homelessness.*
- In this section, students take their knowledge of history and begin to engage the philosophical issues that have come to be connected with attempting to solve the problem of homelessness.
- a. One of the philosophical issues raised by this unit is the contrast between American ideals and the reality of the American, capitalist economic system.
    - i. *Economics*
      - 1. Cost of services—The state and/or federal government would have to allocate money to develop and provide services. Because many of their constituents feel that each person should be able to succeed on his or her own (meritocracy), they are against using tax dollars to help people they think are lazy or derelict.
      - 2. Unemployment Rates – One drawback to our capitalist economic system is that it relies on a reserve pool of labor
    - ii. *Citizenship*
      - 1. People would have to acknowledge that policies which make health care, education, housing, and food privileges and not rights are not consistent with democratic principles.
      - 2. Similarly, many of the other things which we consider rights of citizens are denied to people who are homeless. For example, if a person does not have an address, then they are not able to register to vote.
  - b. The other philosophical issue is that the overriding obstacle in solving the problem of homelessness is the attitude that people have towards homeless people. These attitudes can be seen in both the history of homelessness in America and in our current national and local dialogue. How we can work on changing these attitudes will be addressed more in Section F; however, for now it is important for students to think about how societal attitudes and social policy are related.
5. *Note:* There is a lot in the history component of this section. The teacher should pick and choose the areas on which she/he wants to focus. The themes, however, should serve as an outline that guides the lessons from facts about kinds of responses to homelessness to

a more complex analysis of those responses. Also, what is important is that students find patterns and relationships across time both among the attitudes and related solutions towards homelessness and the broader social forces.

### *Description of Sample Lessons*

1. Re-enacting *Callahan v. Carey* - Students read about Attorney Robert Hayes, who became involved with advocating for the homeless when he began to see more homeless people on his way to work in the late 1970's. Eventually, he began to talk with some of the people he saw on the street. Hearing their stories about the horrible conditions in the shelters, he was moved to speak to the city officials about the problem. Their response was to tell him that they kept the shelters unappealing on purpose in order to force people to find other living arrangements. Hayes turned to the New York State Constitution, but found very little that guaranteed the right of decent housing. Hayes' commitment to remedy the problem led to the 1979 case *Callahan v. Carey*, in which the judge ordered the city to provide shelter to any person who requested it. *The Visible Poor*, by Joel Blau, provides a short and interesting account of this trial. Students discuss and act out his story. Blau writes that "The *Callahan* case not only established a national movement by legal advocates; for much of the next decade, it defined the city's response" (140). As a result of this case, the Keener Building on Ward's island was established. (The teacher may also want to include the 1981 trail that attempted to address the overcrowding at Keener, and to have students research what has happened to Keener since.)
  - a. Students draw different roles from a bag and act out the events leading up to the case Hayes' personal experiences and the case itself.
    - i. Students research homelessness at the time and the case itself. They also research state constitutions, and injunctions. (If there is not enough time for all of this research, the teacher may do the research her/himself and give the students a synopsis to read for homework before attempting the improvisation.)
    - ii. Based on their research, students improvise Hayes' process of becoming involved in the issue of homelessness including the homeless people he spoke with and the city officials and the case. (The teacher should provide students with information about what it is like to participate in a trial: the language, the behavior, and so on. Giving students a script to follow for the opening and closing language of a trial will help make the experience fun and informative. If possible, you may want to have a visit by someone who is familiar with the law and court proceedings come in to talk with the students.)
    - iii. Have students write a brief essay connecting an experience in their lives to the choices Robert Hayes made that led to the 1979 trial. For example, they could write about a time that they saw something they felt wasn't right, and took action.

1. Note: These types of writing prompts are often used in standardized testing, and this provides an authentic opportunity to practice this skill.
2. The Themes - Students work in groups, or individually, on the four central themes of the history component.
  - a. The evolution of our society's response to poverty.
  - b. The local and national events connected to these historical moments.
  - c. The patterns that undermined attempts to solve this seemingly solvable problem and similarities in the attempts to rectify the problem.
  - d. How the underlying economic structure and attitudes of our society have prevented us from solving the problem of homelessness.
    - a. Students choose a format (other than a research paper) in which to present what they have found. Students may decide to write a script or a historic novel. They may decide to create a mural for a shelter or a city street. They may also decide to create a list of resources (Web, printed and audio visual media, "expert," primary sources) with short descriptions, that could be used to research one of the four themes.
      - i. For this, and all parts of this unit, it is important that students try to research different perspectives. For example, for theme number three, the Reagan administration claimed that it spent more on housing than the Carter administration. This is true, if one is only looking at the years; however, if one looks at the initiatives that led to that spending, they all originate in the previous administration. (Joel Blau gives a good explanation of this on pages 71-73.)
3. Primary Sources - By examining local civic records, students learn about homelessness and different responses to homelessness in their local community and/or state.
  - a. Students visit the local library, City Council, and/or State House and research the economic and population shifts in their city or state. If possible, they try to speak with a librarian or archivist about this issue.
4. Judicial Archives - In groups, students research legal cases related to homelessness. Because legal language can be rather cumbersome, students may want to focus on legal abstracts. This activity should also be preceded by a lesson that reviews some legal vocabulary, and possibly, a visit from somebody who knows about the law. Students may write up their findings, but re-enacting the court cases may be more fun. (Please see the above activity "Re-enacting *Callahan v. Carey*" for ideas about how to do this.)
5. Homelessness Timeline - Students work in small groups or individually to research the state of homelessness in United States at various times in history (e.g. 1890's, 1920's, 1930's, 1960's, 1980's, and 1990's).
  - a. The teacher may want to ask students to come up with a list of possible items to include on the timeline, and then allow them to choose the topics they would like to research.
  - b. Throughout the unit, items will be checked off and more items can be added to the list.
  - c. Some possible topics to include in the timeline are:

- i. number of homeless people;
  - ii. number of shelters;
  - iii. money spent at different times on homeless issues in the country, state, and city;
  - iv. unemployment rates;
  - v. important legislation and court cases;
  - vi. shelters built;
  - vii. wars;
  - viii. changes to welfare;
  - ix. changes in medical coverage;
  - x. technology;
  - xi. gentrification;
  - xii. and, responses by the homeless to their situation.
- d. Analysis - As the items on the timeline become more numerous, students reflect on the trends they see. Have things changed? If so, what has changed? If not, what remains the same? The teacher may draw students' attention to specific issues. At the outset of the timeline, students may be asked to make a certain number of entries in their perspective journals. "Reading the timeline" could become a free-time activity.
6. State or Federal Responsibility (The Debate) Students debate whether state or federal government should be responsible for funding and/or providing services.
- a. One side feels that the welfare of the homeless should depend primarily on the state. One side feels that the welfare of the homeless should be split between the state and federal governments. Students divide (or are divided) into two groups and research existing and construct their own arguments.
    - a. Students might benefit from learning about the Stewart B. McKinney Act (1987). The state versus federal funding issue plagued, and still affects, this important Act. For some history of the McKinney Act and how it is still being used with regard to educating homeless youth, see the Web site: <http://nch.ari.net/edchild.html>
7. State or Federal Responsibility (History) Using a critique of the Reagan era and the McKinney Act as touchstones, students go back in time and examine attempts to address the issue of homelessness: fragmentation of services, arguments over local or national funding, level of interest shown by the federal government. For some history of the McKinney Act and how it is still being used with regard to educating homeless youth, see the Web site: <http://nch.ari.net/edchild.html>

## **E. Understanding the current state of homelessness in the United States and in our local communities**

### *Objectives*

This segment uses the film to bring a contemporary aspect and a personal connection to the previous lesson. Students begin by watching and discussing one of the personal histories documented in *Give Us Your Poor*. The class may watch more than one segment, but the purpose in focusing on one story at a time is to give students a chance to engage with particular experiences in a more in-depth manner. Additionally, there are a number of suggested activities here which serve to connect students to the current state of homelessness in their communities. Together, the video and activities prepare students for speaking with a homeless or formally homeless person, while deepening their own personal understanding of and connection to the issue of homelessness.

### *Description of Sample Lessons*

1. Video - Compare and Contrast—Students compare and contrast what they learned about the history of homelessness with what they hear in the account(s) of the people in the film. Do the person's experiences sound similar to or different from how things were 300, 200, 100, even 50 or 60 years ago? Is this surprising? Why? Why not? What did they think would be different?
2. Return to Historical Timeline – Return to the historical timeline and continue it through the present. Students might want to include items such as newspapers by the homeless, the formation of The National Coalition to End Homelessness, high-focus activities such as sleep-ins at different sites about to be developed. Students might find information in back issues of local papers, and by talking to long-time workers in shelters. You may want to encourage students to look for examples of homeless people standing up for their rights.
3. History of Homelessness in the Making - Students keep an ongoing file of articles from newspapers and segments from television and radio (some of these segments are transcribed online and can be printed out and added to the file). Because students may want to put many of the items on the timeline, the end of the timeline could be broken down into months. The class can come up with a way to decide which items get filed and which items are placed on the timeline. It all depends on the focus of the student's work. If they are focusing on the rights of homeless people, an article about how hard it is for homeless people to vote in an election may go on the timeline. If students are focusing on the representation of homeless people, an article about an exhibit about homelessness may go on the timeline. Generally, all articles about policy, political action, welfare reform, will probably end up on the timeline.
  - a. Math Extension Students chart numbers and look for trends in the various topics. This could be extended by comparing two charts (e.g. unemployment rates and homeless shelter populations) and trying to determine relationships.
4. Housing Issues - Bring in the classified/Real Estate section of a local newspaper for students to look over. Discuss how much it would cost to rent or buy a home, including

issues of first and last month's rent (plus possible realtor's fee) for renters and the issue of a down payment for homebuyers.

a. Math/Social Studies Connection

- i. Average Housing Costs in our Neighborhood - Have students find average costs for a one/two/three bedroom apartment, using five different ads as data sources.
- ii. What does "Affordable Housing" mean? - Have students choose an ad they like for a house or apartment. Then, have them figure out how much money they would need to make a month in order to afford this (by afford, the rent/mortgage payment should be less than or equal to 1/3 of monthly income).
- iii. The Salary-Rent Connection - Have students choose an ad for an apartment, then figure out how much they would spend on rent alone for one year. Next, have them look through the classified section of the paper and figure out which jobs would enable them to afford it (using  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$  of income as a guide).
- iv. All Grown Up (This is a more extensive version of the above activities i-iii, and could integrate them.)
  1. Ask each student to think of a possible profession she/he might like to enter (suggestions should be realistic—what they would fall back on if they didn't become famous singers, athletes, or actors).
  2. Now, ask students to think about what they would like their adult lives to look like. (Students can use the Web, want ads, magazines, and other resources to answer the following questions.)
  3. Tabulate expenses based on life choices.
    - a. Items to consider: Do they want a family, a car, a house? How much do groceries cost? How much do electricity and heat cost? How much do clothes cost? Where do they want to live—suburbs, city, rural community? Will they have health insurance? Will they send their children to college? What kind of "extras" do they want—Web access, a cellular phone, vacations? Do they want to think about savings? Have students research how much their lives would cost.
  4. Next, have students research how much they would make in their chosen profession? Now, have students make a budget—comparing income to expenses.
  5. Ask students to share what they found and to apply what they have learned to the issue of homelessness.

b. Economics Extensions - Supply and Demand – The Housing Shortage provides a clear way to explain the economic theory of supply and demand to students. Here are a few ideas of how this could be done:

- i. Experiential - Take half of the desks out of your classroom and tell students that if they want a desk, they will have to "pay" for it (though how they do this can be negotiated). Afterwards, discuss with students what happened when the supply of desks diminished while the demand for desks stayed the same. Relate this to housing shortages.

- ii. Skit – Line a 3-4 chairs up at the front of the room and invite students to come sit in them. Give the students each \$3600 in fake paper bills. Tell them that this is their rent money for a year (let them figure out how much they have to spend each month). Next, ask a student to come up who will be the landlord. (S)he will go around to each of the students and collect the rent, while the teacher announces the month. After two months, invite a few new students up to try to move into the apartment building. Supply them with extra money (\$6000) and have them try to negotiate their way into the building by offering more money. While the landlord can't evict the people who live there without cause, he can raise their rent up to what the new tenants would be willing to pay. Have students act this process out, discussing the relationship to supply and demand economics and to the ways in which housing shortages contribute to the problem of homelessness.
  - iii. Wealth Distribution – 1% have 73% of the wealth Cite OXFAM \*\* activity and have students work out the percentages.
5. Education – The link between education and homelessness is one that is relevant to students' immediate lives and can help to inspire students to become advocates for social justice; however, some students may misinterpret this information as a decree that they themselves will become homeless. For this reason, and for the potential for this area to lead students away from the central issue of homelessness, we have reservations about including a discussion of education in this unit. Nevertheless, there are a number of topics worth exploring in this area and we would like to offer a few of them to you:
- How MCAS and other “high-stakes” standardized testing effect students' future;
  - The relationship between demographics, economics, and educational inequity;
  - How a lack of functional and/or social literacy can severely limit opportunity;
  - Computer literacy and the social divide.
6. Medical Services – Students can look at what services are currently available for people who need medical services, including, but not limited too, people who are mentally ill, have substance abuse issues, are veterans, or do not have a job that provides medical insurance. This could be as broad or narrow of a research project as you feel necessary; however, here are some key questions to keep in mind:
- a. Obtaining Services - How difficult are services to obtain? For example, what kinds of paperwork do people need to fill out? What if they have language/literacy issues? What if they don't have an address? Additionally, many homeless people work during the day and are unable to get time off (or childcare) to go to an office during regular office hours. How does this limit who gets services?
  - b. Insurance - Do homeless people have medical insurance? What do they do when they get sick? How much does it cost our government each year to pay for medical services for people who are uninsured? For example, many people without insurance will go the emergency room when they get a cold and these visits are exponentially more expensive than routine doctor visits would be.

### Living Model

In order to help solve the current problems related to homelessness, we must turn to the people who are deeply involved in the issue. The unit will not be as effective without their

perspective and insights. In this regard, we think it is vitally important to collaborate with people from the homeless community.

One way to do this is to invite people from the homeless community into our classroom to serve as a panel of “experts” who can share their insights and experiences with the class<sup>3</sup>. (In the “Before You Begin” section, we provide some general information and guidelines for establishing this relationship.) While most of the other lesson ideas in this handbook are optional, we believe that this piece is central to having a thoughtful and effective curriculum and highly recommend its inclusion in any program. If time is an issue, one panel visit can be combined to address both the problems/issues and the solutions (see Section F). Here is a description of ideas to support this visit:

### 1. Preparing for the Panel

- a. Speak with your contact person at the shelter to get suggestions of people to invite. Some options are: a shelter worker, a formerly homeless person, a homeless advocate, etc. A powerful panel could be done with just one person (though it is then more of an interview than a panel), so don’t be discouraged if you are not able to get a variety of guest speakers.
  - *Note:* Due to the feelings of shame that many people experience when they become homeless, we advise not inviting someone who is currently homeless.
- b. Where to hold your panel is also a decision which will require a bit of forethought. If you choose to stay in your own classroom, you may want to think about how to restructure the seating arrangement to best meet the goals of having the living model (e.g. a large circle may help to give students a sense that these “experts” are here to collaborate with students, not lecture them). Feel free to take students to other places on the school campus which you have access to, but be aware that time to travel to the new location may detract from time for the panel itself.
- c. Developing thoughtful questions to ask the panel is essential to having a positive and productive panel visit. One suggestion for doing this is to:
  - At the end of one class, have each student anonymously write down one or two questions that they think are thoughtful and relevant.
  - The teacher can collect the slips of paper and type or rewrite them for use the following day.
  - The next day, put student in groups of 3-4 and give them 4-6 questions to discuss in terms of relevance to what they would like to learn and in terms of how thoughtful the questions are. Groups can choose 2-3 questions from their collection to use, and can explain in their groups the reasons for their choices.
  - The teacher can collect the questions and redistribute them to the groups on the day of the panel visit.

### 2. The Panel Visit

---

<sup>3</sup> We use the term “panel” loosely throughout this section and the solutions section to refer to a person or group of people who come into the classroom to share their insights and collaborate with the students.

- a. The format for the panel could be decided on ahead of time by you and your students and/or you and your guests. While the format of panels can vary, here are some components you may choose to include:
  - Narrative by panel members – What are their connections to and experiences with homeless people within the community?
  - Interview questions raised by students (as created and chosen in the above section).
  - Spontaneous questions by students, as raised by the speaker’s comments.
  - Videotape the panel session so that students can use it as a resource later in the unit and so you can add it to your resources.

3. After the Visit

- a. Journals - Have students write in their perspective journals about two or three things that they learned from the speakers. If desired, you can use the guide questions for the discussion (see below) to help stimulate student reflection.
- b. Class Discussion – Ask students to reflect on how the panel influenced their thinking about specific topics already discussed in this unit (e.g. housing). Here are some ideas for questions which can guide the discussion:
  - Did anything our guest(s) said surprise/puzzle you?
  - Can you think of anything our guest(s) said which supported or contradicted our earlier research on the causes of homelessness?
  - How complete do you think our guest(s) information is? What are some of the strengths? What are some of the limitations?
  - Was there anything that our guest(s) said that you have questions about or would like to know more about? How could we answer these questions and/or get more information?
  - *Note:* Please add questions which are relevant to the specific interests of your class and/or the specific topics and insights which were discussed in your panel.

## **F. Exploring Solutions**

### *Objectives*

By the time students have gotten to this point in the unit, they should have a deeper and more complex understanding of the issue of homeless and they are now ready to start exploring some solutions. The film lays out three avenues of solutions which need to be integrated in order to bring about positive, structural and lasting solutions to the problems of homelessness: legislative, programmatic and philosophical. Students can use these categories as a way to organize and develop their own solutions to problems of homelessness within their community. The focus in this section is threefold: first, to develop an understanding that complex problems such as homelessness require multi-faceted solutions; second, to develop problem solving skills by exploring the merits and limitations of various solutions; and third, to collaborate on solutions with homeless advocates within the students' community. Students will then use this information in the next section of the unit to create a class action plan and begin implementing their chosen solutions.

### *Section Overview*

Consistent with the film, we have chosen to organize this section into the Legislative, Programmatic and Philosophical solution approaches. Within each section are suggestions for first connecting students to the video and then connecting them to their own communities. Our hope is that students will use the video as one source of information, but then turn to their own communities to get information on specific needs and insights into how they as a class can help meet those needs. After discussing each solution path, this section returns to the Living Model approach for helping the class to generate and evaluate solutions. We feel it is vital to involve the voice of someone from within the homeless community as part of our dialogue on solutions, since one of our overarching goals is to connect and collaborate with people from the homeless community in order to implement solutions that benefit our larger community<sup>4</sup>.

### *Description of Sample Lessons*

**Legislative Solutions** – What impact do laws and ordinances have on the issue of homelessness and the homeless community? How do people influence laws and legislation? What kinds of solutions are possible for students to help implement in this area?

1. Video –
  - a. Watch the section of the video on legislative solutions and have students respond through:
    - i. Class discussion
    - ii. Small group discussion
    - iii. Perspective Journals
  - b. Have students work in small groups to research one aspect of the legislative solutions that were brought up in the video.

---

<sup>4</sup> Again, we suggest this be someone who is formerly homeless or is professionally/philosophically involved in the homeless community. See Section E for more information.

2. Community/Civics – This unit provides a wonderful opportunity to introduce or expand students’ understanding of the legislative process. For more information on this process, please call your Secretary of State’s office and/or your town hall and they should be able to provide you with this information as well as with resources related to our civic processes.
  - a. Students visit the State House/City Hall and learn about different local legislation that has been passed (or is pending) and has to do with the rights of the homeless.
  - b. Students do online research at the city, county, state and national level on legislation related to homelessness. The class can collect what they find and evaluate them on terms of how much the help people who are homeless in lasting and tangible ways.
    - i. As an extension activity, students could pick a few of these laws, rate them and then chart them to see which ones students judge as the most effective.
    - ii. Alternatively, students could pick the law they think is most effective and explain why through a small group discussion or presentation and/or a journal entry.

Programmatic Solutions – What programs are there at local, state, and national levels that address the needs of people who are homeless? What agencies are there that advocate for homeless citizens? How could our class help meet the needs of programs within our own community?

1. Video
  - a. Watch the section of the video on programmatic solutions and have students respond by:
    - i. Recording the different types of programs (e.g. non-profit, governmental, faith based, etc.) that are mentioned in the video. They can then discuss the different types and make a class list. Next, challenge the class to:
      1. Find out which programs exist locally to help homeless people within their community and place the programs in their respective categories.
    - ii. While watching this section of the video, students can choose one of the programs mentioned in the video and write down the services that this program provides. Afterwards, students can be split into groups based on which program they focused on and can discuss why they think these services are needed, any additional services that might help, and if the services provide temporary or long-term help (or both).
2. Community/Civics
  - a. Working in pairs, have students conduct a phone interview of a program in their community that helps meet the needs of people without homes. A list of agencies to contact could be given to the class or split up so that one name and phone number is given to each pair. If there are not enough programs within your community, students could call the state or national

headquarters of homeless advocacy agencies<sup>5</sup>. It may be wise to give students (or generate with them) a list of interview questions, leaving a few blanks for them to fill in themselves. Here are some questions which you may choose to include:

- i. How long has your program been around?
- ii. Where do you get your funding?
- iii. What services do you provide?
- iv. How many people do you help?
- v. If a class were to offer you some help, what items/services would be most helpful?

Philosophical Solutions – How do the perceptions of people who are not homeless affect the lives of people who are? How can we as a class, and as individuals, work to move beyond stereotypes and help people in our community to see homeless people in a better and more realistic light? What changes can I make within myself that will help me be an effective advocate for homeless issues and homeless people?

1. Video

- a. Have the students watch the section of the video on philosophical solutions and reflect on it as a class, in small groups or individually in their perspective journals. Some questions to guide reflection would be:
  - i. What message did you get out of this section of the video? If you were to paraphrase the message in one sentence, what would it be?
  - ii. Can you connect any thoughts or feelings that the video presented with your own life/experiences?
  - iii. Has this video and this unit changed the way you think about people who are homeless? Has it changed any of your actions?
- b. Discuss with the students what the video means by a philosophical solution:
  - i. Can you think of some examples of a philosophical solution?
  - ii. Do you think that these types of solutions are important?
  - iii. Are you willing to make a change within yourself that will have positive impact on the issue of homelessness and the lives of homeless people?

2. Community/Civics

- a. Community Survey on Attitudes Toward Homelessness.
  - i. Students work in groups to make up a list of questions that they could use to explore the attitudes of people within their community regarding homelessness. For this activity, their “community” could refer to their school, their family and friends, and/or their neighbors. We suggest collaborating with students to develop questions; however, here are some sample questions to guide the process:
    1. Do you have any personal experience with people who are or have been homeless? Can you briefly share this?
    2. Can you give three reasons why people become homeless?
    3. Do you think homelessness is a problem in our community?
    4. Do you think that homelessness personally effects you or your family? Why/why not?

---

<sup>5</sup> You can refer to the Resources Guide at the end of this handbook for contact information.

5. Can you think of three solutions that might help end homelessness in our community?
  - ii. Each group shares their findings with the class through a display, oral report or dialogue.
  - iii. The class discusses what kinds of attitudinal problems exist and

### Living Model

Since our goal is to develop solutions that will have a positive and lasting benefit on the lives of homeless people within our community, it is critical that we turn to people from within the homeless community to help guide our actions. They are going to be the ones who can provide the most valuable feedback and let us know what their most pressing needs are. The format for this Living Model visit can mimic the first visit (see section E – Panel Visit), except that the focus will be on developing workable solutions that the class can implement to both meet the needs of homeless people within their community and to help solve the problem of homelessness on broader (e.g. statewide) and deeper (e.g. personal) levels. Here is a brief overview of the process for implementing a living model:

1. Invite contact person at shelter (or other program) to work with kids. If you are dealing with one shelter, bring in someone from that shelter to speak/offer ideas and suggestions. If you are not working exclusively with one shelter, you may want to bring in more than one person.
2. Develop questions ahead of time in groups. Try to have a variety of Legislative, Programmatic and Philosophical solutions to ask. Here are some examples of the types of questions that address each of these approaches:
  - a. Legislative – “Is there any pending legislation that will affect people who are homeless?” “If we choose to write to a politician, who should we write to – who will have the most influence?”
  - b. Programmatic – “What are some specific needs that your shelter/agency has that our class could help meet?” “What ideas do you have for developing an ongoing ‘sister shelter’ relationship?”
  - c. Philosophical – “Which attitudes toward homeless people and the issue of homelessness do you think keep us from solving the problem of homelessness?” “What can we do to raise consciousness and help change these attitudes?”
3. Use the information and ideas from this visit as a way to develop possible class solutions (see section G, below).

## **G. Deciding on and implementing action initiatives - Lula**

### *Objectives*

After reaching this point, the students should have a deep understanding of both the multiplicity of causes of homelessness, as well the pros and cons of various solutions. The final section in this unit asks students to reflect back on all they have learned about the issue of homelessness in order to develop and enact thoughtful, effective solutions of their own. The class will (to whichever extent possible) brainstorm potential solutions (several legislative, programmatic, and philosophical). They will then turn these suggestions into ballot measures, which will be voted on by the class. The class will then begin working on the options that receive the most votes in each of the action areas.

We have chosen this approach because it integrates both a Service Learning model – in which students produce something meaningful for the benefit of their community – and an authentic lesson in citizenship and civics. While we offer only this model as the culminating project for the unit, we are confident that, again, you will take from it what you need.

### *Description of Lesson Sequence*

#### Day One – This could be done at the end of class, after another lesson.

1. Introduce Ballot and Voting Procedure
  - a. Discuss with the class that as the final project in this unit, they will be designing a ballot of action initiatives, voting on them and enacting them. Review what a ballot is, the basics of voting procedures and make connections to civic voting procedures.
2. Brainstorming Ballot Measures for petition
  - a. Ask students to think about and look over what they have learned so far in this unit in relation to developing effective solutions. Also, ask them to think about what is realistic for them as a class to do.
  - b. Brainstorm with the class one example of each of the types of solutions.
  - c. Give each student a BALLOT PETITION form (see appendix) and ask them to take it home, look over their notes from the unit, and come up with one to three Ballot Measures that they think would be effective, lasting, and manageable solutions. They will bring these the next day for the next part of the lesson.

#### Day Two

1. Getting Signatures (15-20 minutes)
  - a. Review with students the ballot process.
    - i. If desired you could share with them some of the measures that have been passed by various states (e.g. California’s Prop 209, which essentially eliminated affirmative action programs).
  - b. Invite students to walk around the room and try to collect signatures for their ballot measures. Here are a few “rules” that might help them:

- i. Five signatures are required in order to get the measure to the next stage in the ballot process.
    - ii. The person sponsoring the ballot is allowed to sign their own ballot.
    - iii. Each person is only allowed to sign **five** ballot measures.
      - 1. This is intended to prevent students from just randomly signing every petition put in front of them.
      - 2. *Note:* Students may need to be guided into signing forms in a diplomatic and thoughtful way. For example, the temptation to have only your friends sign your form may be great. This could be addressed by establishing guidelines with your class.
        - a. For example, if you have five rows in you class, you could say that each row is a neighborhood (or voting district) and that students need to get a signature from each.
    - ii. If two or more people have the same measure, they can form a coalition and fill out a new form for people to sign.
      - 1. *Note:* If a new form is used, the signatures from the old forms are void.
2. Deciding on Final Ballot Measures
- a. After students have collected signatures, divide the board into three sections: Legislative, Judicial and Philosophical.
  - b. Invite students to come up and write the title of their ballot measure under the category which it addresses, but only if they have five signatures to support it. They should hand their petition to the teacher (or to class election officials) for verification.
    - i. *Assessment Note:* All students should turn in their ballot petition as an assessment tool. Some things to assess are:
      - 1. Does their proposal reflect the issues and ideas discussed in the unit?
      - 2. Does their proposal demonstrate clear understanding of what is meant by Legislative, Programmatic, or Philosophical solutions?
      - 3. Have they made an effort to collect signatures to support their ballot measure?
  - c. Once all the ballot titles have been posted, ask the sponsoring students to say a few words about why they think theirs is the best solution.
    - i. Students should be encouraged to write down the pros and cons of each solution (or, at least the ones they are considering voting on). These could be paraphrased in their perspective journals or written in their notes.
  - d. Tell students that they should go home and decide which **one** measure they will vote for in each category when they come to school tomorrow. Here are some options for students to write about their voting choices:
    - i. Have them write a rough draft essay of why they are voting for the measures they chose.
    - ii. Have students write one paragraph about each measure they are voting for and why they chose it.

- iii. *Assessment note:* This writing assignment serves as another assessment tool in this unit. You may wish to have students refer directly to things they have learned over the course of this unit.

### Day Three

1. At the end of day two, gather the ballot measures and design a ballot for the class to vote on the next day. The form of the ballot will depend on your class and if you want to mimic ballots used in your city/state. Regardless of the ballot style you choose, voting should be private and confidential.
2. Students enter the class and vote.
3. Tabulate votes as a class and discuss how you will begin implementing the measures that have been voted in.

### Ongoing

Regardless of which actions your class decides to take, we hope that this unit is only the beginning of their involvement in advocating for social justice and the betterment of their communities. Our hope is that the video and this unit have led your students to both a better understanding of the issue and to effective and lasting solutions that they can be involved in. We thank you for taking the time to learn about and teach your students about homelessness in America and in their local communities. We also want to wish you the best as you continue to educate your students about this and other issues that, directly or indirectly, affect their lives and future.

## **Part Four – Ongoing Assessment Strategies**

In order for our assessment of our students to be both meaningful and authentic, it is important that it be integrated into our teaching, rather than added as an afterthought. In this regard, we have tried to incorporate numerous strategies for assessment within this unit. Here is a brief review of some of the assessment strategies we have included:

### *Perspective Journals*

These provide an opportunity for students to engage in critical and reflective thinking throughout the unit, while providing you with a record of each student's growth over time. Since these are journals, you may want to offer students the option of taping or stapling together pages which they feel are too personal to share (though the regulations here would have to be worked out with your students to avoid completely stapled books). In addition to providing students with an opportunity to reflect and respond critically to what they are learning, the journals also provide a non-threatening context for students (especially struggling writers and/or second language learners) to practice their writing skills. We highly encourage the use of the perspective journal as a teaching/assessment tool throughout this unit.

### *Living Model*

Preparing interview questions for the panel visit(s) are a wonderful opportunity to assess how well your students are able to ask questions that get at the heart of the issues discussed in this unit. Since this preparation is done in groups, it provides a context for students who may not excel in written communication to share their insights orally. Additionally, since the questions are decided on by the group, they will practice problem solving and communication skills as they work toward a group consensus of the most thoughtful questions. To make this assessment more tangible (for your records), you may want to have each group turn in their final list of questions with a brief explanation of the importance of each question they chose.

### *Independent/Small group research projects*

We have tried to provide you with ideas for a number of projects that can be done by students individually or in small groups. For example, in the History section (section D), students (or groups) can choose different topics to research for the creation of the class timeline on homelessness in America. Projects such as this one require collaboration, design, synthesis and presentation skills that help to develop higher order thinking skills and help us to assess this development in an authentic context. These skills are critical to teaching students to thrive in today's information-rich society.

### *Civics in Action*

We have designed the final project for this unit as a lesson in civics and the voting process. You may choose to do this ballot creation and voting activity on as large (or small)

of a scale as you desire. There is certainly the potential here for creating an extensive sub-unit on the voting process and ballot measures, though this is up to you. In addition to providing a meaningful civics lesson, this final activity also provides a way for you to assess what students have learned about the issue of homelessness throughout the unit. When students first create and then make informed voting decisions about various ballot measures, they are synthesizing all that they have learned earlier in the unit to implement a solution. The degree to which they are synthesizing should be evident both in the types of solutions they create and vote for and in their explanations of why they are making and/or voting for them. We have tried to include reflective writing in this lesson in order to facilitate this type of reflective synthesis. You may choose to modify this final lesson in a way that provides more guidance for your students in terms of how much justification they need to provide for their choices.

### *Service Learning*

The final component in this unit is the one that is perhaps the best assessment measure because it assesses what your students do with their learning when they go out into the world. For example, if they have decided that their philosophical solution is to have an information campaign at their school to improve their peers' and teachers' perceptions of homeless people, then what do they do to make this happen? Do they only make posters and flyers or do you see them engaging in conversations and becoming personally involved in the issue? This is certainly a less tangible form of assessment, but is perhaps the best measure of how much of an impact our lessons and teaching will have on their lives.

## **Part Five – Suggested Resources**

### **Internet:**

Sites from different parts of the United States, offer an opportunity for students to learn about contemporary initiatives, to compare and contrast different responses to homelessness, and to compare homelessness in other parts of the country with the situation in their own community.

The Web sites can also help a teacher find people and programs to contact when she/he begins to build a relationship with a shelter.

The Forget Me Not Campaign (organized by the National Coalition for the Homeless):

<http://nch.ari.net/fmnindex.html>

This is a kind of letter-writing campaign designed for school children. Burpee Seeds donates seeds to the NCH who, in turn, sends them out. This campaign is part of the NCH's support of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, a small yet effective program, removes barriers and provides homeless children and youth with a free, appropriate education. EHCY, originally part of the McKinney Act of 1987, provides help in enrolling in school, school supplies, transportation assistance, glasses, and more. Communities learn more about homelessness and what they can do to help alleviate suffering. No other program does all this! EHCY needs more support to help more children. The site gives information about past successes and bills that address the needs of homeless youth that are currently being considered by Congress.

<http://nch.ari.net/reauthnews.html> Offers a sample letter to a U.S. Representative on McKinney-vento reauthorization: H.R. 623. I imagine that this letter is updated along with the site.

Homelessness Education Program: <http://www.homelessinfo.org/materials/materials.htm>

The Homelessness Project's Education Program is committed to educating the public about the root causes of homelessness and mobilizing people to become active. Along with grassroots education, we provide materials to support education, advocacy, and service projects for your classroom or group. This site contains some curriculum ideas K-12.

Inn Vision: <http://www.innvision.org/index.htm>

Inn Vision has been serving the poor and homeless in the Silicon Valley (located in northern California) since 1973 and is now a major provider of shelter, transitional housing, and other assistance. This site includes a history of Inn Vision.

Institute for Research on Poverty: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/irp/>

This institute is a national, university-based center for research into the causes and consequences of poverty and social inequality in the United states. It is nonprofit and

nonpartisan. It is one of two centers designated as a National Poverty Research Center by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The site addresses questions such as:

- How is poverty measured in the United States?
- Poverty guidelines and poverty thresholds: What are they and how are they used?
- Who is poor?
- Who is poor in your state?
- How many children are poor?
- What is the Consumer Price Index and how is it used?
- What are good sources of information on basic trends in poverty, welfare, and related issues?
- How will we know if welfare reform is successful?

The Institute for the Study of Civic Values: <http://www.libertynet.org/edcivic/welfref.html> .

This site is focused primarily on the Welfare Reform Act of 1996. It has sections such as Ongoing Implementation and Debate and Welfare Reform: Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Each section contains many links.

The Minnesota Coalition For The Homeless: <http://www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/>

In 1998, they created a lesson plan called "On the Street Where You Live." (They seem to have created a few curriculum units.) Included in their units are helpful statistics.

Many of their statistics have to do with Minnesota, but not all of them. It might be interesting to compare Minnesota with your student's own state. You may contact them at the above Web address or at 122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 5 / Minneapolis, MN 55404. Their phone and numbers are (612) 870-7073, by fax at (612) 870-9085.

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

The National Coalition for the Homeless is a national advocacy network of homeless persons, activists, service providers, and others committed to ending homelessness through public education, policy advocacy, grassroots organizing, and technical assistance.

National Council of Social Studies: [www.ncss.org](http://www.ncss.org)

This site provides standards for pedagogy and practice in social studies curriculum and other resource information for teachers of social studies at various grade levels.

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty: <http://www.nlchp.org/>

This center's mission is to alleviate, ameliorate and end homelessness by serving as the legal arm of the nationwide movement to end homelessness. The site offers informative sections titled: Homelessness & Poverty in America, Causes of Homelessness & Poverty in America, Solutions to Homelessness & Poverty in America.

Pine Street Inn: [www.pinestreetinn.org](http://www.pinestreetinn.org)

This site provides information about Pine Street Inn in Boston, Massachusetts. Their Photo Album has a nice selection of various photos of people who have benefited from Pine Street's services.

Project ACT: <http://www.projectact.com/>

Action For Children and Youth in Transition, the Cleveland Municipal School District's, Project ACT, in the Division of Student and Family Support Services provides direct instructional and support services to children and youth residing in temporary emergency shelters. Support services include all that is necessary to accomplish this goal of meeting physical, social and emotional needs and empowering parents to support their children in this endeavor. This site contains the first national online chat for homeless and housed children as well as examples other initiatives to help homeless people.

Rosie's Place: <http://www.rosies.org>

The underlying philosophy of Rosie's Place, located in Boston, Massachusetts, is to provide a safe and nurturing environment to help poor and homeless women maintain their dignity, seek opportunity and find security in their lives. This site offers information about homeless women, homelessness, and Rosie's Place initiatives and services.

Theology Library on Homelessness: <http://www.mcgill.pvt.k12.al.us/jerryd/cm/homeless.htm>

This site has over 50 links that include local initiatives to address homelessness, homeless newspapers from around the country, and a factsheet about homelessness. There is also a link to an online game called Hobson's Choice. This game could serve as an introduction to any activities aimed at giving students a glimmer into the frustration of homelessness.

At present, the game offers six possible ways to get off the street. The player might get lucky and get into a place right away. Or, she/he might not. The instructions tell the player "It's important to keep trying. Things that don't work the first time you try might on the tenth. Repetition is part of the experience. Good luck."

U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources: <http://www.dhhs.gov/>

You may search this site for homelessness. The list that came up were mainly abstracts.

54 Ways You Can Help the Homeless: <http://earthsystems.org/>

This site offers a list of ways to help the homeless from buying gift certificates for fast food to signing up your school or some other community organization to conduct a fundraiser for a shelter.

### **Books (Resource and Research):**

*The Visible Poor: Homelessness in the United States* (1992), by Joel Blau. This book gives a good overview of the causes of, responses to, needs of, and policies addressing homelessness. Much of his information focuses on New York City. He included some historical background as well.

*Social Welfare* (1976), by Walter Dean Myers. This book is geared towards young people. Even though it is dated, it does give a good and easy to understand explanation of welfare, what it is, how to get on it, how to get off of it, alternatives and so on.

*On Being Homeless: Historical Perspectives* (1987), edited by Rick Beard. This book was amazingly helpful. It is a series of essays published to accompany an exhibit, by the same name, held at the Museum of the City of New York. Even though many of the essays focused on New York, some of them gave informative historical accounts of homelessness in this country. There is also a chapter on homeless women from the 1600s to 1987.

*Shooting Back: A Photographic View of Life by Homeless Children* (1991), photos selected by Jim Hubbard with an introduction by Dr. Robert Coles. This book has a range of wonderful photographs taken by homeless youth from Washington D.C., Virginia, and Maryland. The book also includes captions to accompany some of the photos; sometimes they are the statements of the photographer and sometimes they are the statements of young people with homes who went to the exhibit. One problem I have with the book is that the young people are mainly African American. A teacher using this book might want to find other images that give a more representative view of who is homeless.

*Twenty Years at Hull House* (1960), by Jane Addams, with a forward by Henry Steele Commager. This book provides perspective into the settlement movement and the times it was responding to.

### **Books (Children's Literature)**

(This list was culled from various lesson plans. We did not have time to look at all of these books.)

*A Change to Grow* E. Sandy Powell, 1992

*A Rose for Abby* Donna Gutherie, 1988

*Changing Places* Margie Chalofsky, Glen Finland, Judy Wallace, 1995

*Fly Away Home* Eve Bunting, 1991

*Goodbye House* Frank Asch, 1986

*Hotel Boy* Curt Kaufman, Gita Kaufman, Kaufman Curt (Illustrator), 1987

*I can Hear the Sun* Patricia Polacco, 1996 (

*Julie of the Wolves* Jean Craighead George, 1972

*Monkey Island* Paula Fox, 1991

*Mr. Bow Tie* Karen Barbour, 1991

*Our Wish* Ralph da Costa Nuñez, 1997 (This was published by the Institute for Children and Poverty, Inc.)

*Someplace to Go* Maria Testa, 1996

*Uncle Wille and the Soup Kitchen* DyAnne Disalvo-Ryan, 1991

*We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy* Maurice Sendak, 1993

*Where's Home?* Jonathon London, 1995

**BALLOT PETITION**

**Title of Proposed Ballot Measure:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Measure for (circle one):**    **Legislative**                      **Programmatic**                      **Philosophical**

**Description of Ballot Measure:**

**By signing your name below, you are stating that you:**

- 1. Are eligible to vote in the upcoming election;**
- 2. Support this ballot measure.**

**Print Name**

**Sign Name**

**Today's Date**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Ballot Sponsor(s):** \_\_\_\_\_