

Teen Homelessness

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Teen Homelessness is a problem that plagues the Casper area. The problem is getting on the radar of the people in power in Casper. Although Wyoming has one of the lowest homeless populations compared to the rest of the country, homelessness is still a problem that needs to be addressed and dealt with. As the years pass the population of homeless people increases. To stop this steady incline there needs to be a change and help needs to be administered. "A reported 648 people were experiencing homelessness in Wyoming in January 2022, and an estimated 9.9% of them were unsheltered, the eighth smallest share among the 50 states. The number of people experiencing homelessness in Wyoming increased by 5.9% since 2020 and is up by 11.9% since 2010" (The Center Square, Stebbins). These numbers are frightening and people need to understand the gravity of the situation. Many aren't educated enough to know really how bad things actually are, and therefore don't know how to help or how to support those in need.

Team homelessness is a very troubling topic. Many that are in this situation are there because of unsupportive family members or because of ongoing addiction or not being able to afford the current housing market or other outlining reasons. One of those reasons that could be a cause of homelessness is the use of drugs and addiction in other forms. "According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, substance abuse is more prevalent in people who are

homeless than in those who are not.¹ In many instances, substance abuse is the result of the stress of homelessness, rather than the other way around. Many people begin using drugs or alcohol as a way of coping with the pressures of homelessness” (American Addiction Centers, 2023). When those with addictions become fully immersed and drowning from their addiction the last thing that they would think about is house. As a result a large portion of all their money is dumped into drugs and other things. The way to fight this cycle is support from others that care for them enough to get them the help they need. If there aren't people that are able to do that, who are close to them, organizations need to be ready and find those who are struggling and help them. An overarching theme that doesn't get considered as a reason why homelessness occurs across the state is due to the outlandish housing market. It makes buying or even renting a home or living space unaffordable even for those who have jobs. This isn't something that can truly be controlled but there are ways to support those that are in a position to be able to find affordable housing. (LaCroix, Ranney 2024). As a result of these two things many get stuck on the streets in a never ending cycle of falling short. This cycle keeps many teens from getting a place of their own and escaping the life that they are stuck in.

Even though many may feel trapped there are places that teens are able to go to obtain help. The Unaccompanied Students Initiative gives those without a place to go hope for the future. It provides a “safe and stable home to develop sustainable independence for students ages 16-20” (The Unaccompanied Students Initiative). This resource can give teens guidance when they have nothing left. It is important for the homeless to find a support system to be able to stay afloat and survive. It is important that people in the community know about this horrible situation and with that knowledge aspire to help and to be a place that homeless teens can go to find the guidance that they so desperately need.

Bibliography

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