



**HEAR US Inc.**

*...giving voice & visibility to homeless children & youth...*

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## What You Can Do to Help – Start a ‘Compassion Epidemic’

We’d like to offer a few ways you can channel your compassion.

### Help Homeless Families/Youth in Your Community

- **IF** your community has a shelter for homeless families/youth, consider volunteering or donating money and/or supplies. Check with them first to discover their top needs. Be patient as you wait for a reply. They’re busy!
- Investigate the reality of what happens to homeless families/youth in your community. Chances are local leaders haven’t given this as much attention as it needs and your rudimentary inquiries can spur action.
- Dispel myths. Challenge nay-sayers to watch *on the edge*, *My Own Four Walls*, or to read *Crossing the Line: Taking Steps to End Homelessness*, or the children’s books in the *It’s About the Children* series. (Available through HEAR US.)
- Gather friends in a “compassion epidemic” group. Pick a project, watch a film, read a book. Strength in numbers!

### Help HEAR US

- Check out the resource rich HEAR US website. Order awareness-raising products. Make a donation. Become a monthly donor (small amounts fine!).
- Become a HEAR US Facebook friend. Lots of worthwhile sharing occurs daily and you’ll be able to keep up with Diane’s travels.
- Invite Diane to your place of worship, service community or other gathering to speak.
- Connect HEAR US with your friends at local colleges, universities, grade and high schools. All HEAR US materials are geared toward the education world.

*Ultimately this is a journey of the heart. The added task for those of us who are aware and have the luxury and privilege of options, is to make room enough in our own hearts so that those who don't yet see can make this journey with us.*

David Eisenberg

### Learn More about Homelessness

- Realize you don’t need a social work degree to become knowledgeable about homelessness. HEAR US website has many resources.
- Spend time talking with homeless parents and kids. Open your mind to the reality that homelessness is likely rampant in your community.
- Read *Crossing the Line*, Diane’s reader-friendly book filled with stories and facts about homelessness.

#### WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

- What resources really exist for families/youth when they lose housing?
- What outreach is currently being done? What more could be done?
- What motels, camping areas are likely used?
- How do families/youth access food? Laundry? Transportation?
- What do community safety personnel know about McKinney-Vento?

#### WHAT CAN YOU and YOUR STUDENTS DO?

- Read a book, watch a video to start the discussion. Discuss impact of bullying, shame, peer pressure.
- Develop student-led responses: food collections (especially for weekends), buddy programs, socks/undies collections, bus passes, hygiene items, etc.
- Discuss how the kids in *My Own Four Walls* took a risk to help kids all over.