

# Irony of the area

Even one of the wealthiest areas in Texas houses the homeless

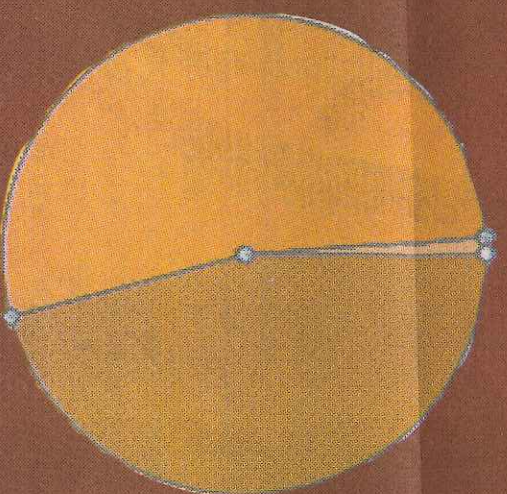


Graphic By Lyndon Su





In the United States, four in every 10 youth under 18 are homeless. That is 25% of the U.S. population of youth.



In Texas, 141,584 children under the age of 6 are homeless. In grades K-8 (enrolled) 164,086 children are homeless. In grades 9-12 (enrolled), 31,435 are homeless.

-Taylor Crosby, Staff Writer and Gaby Garcia, Managing Editor

Sitting alone outside the headlights of a car reflect off the window of an abandoned locked building. The car meanders on, heading

toward the city. A kid sitting outside the building watches the passing car with a yearning gleam in his eyes, seeing a family with a car, imagining food, clean water, and most of all a place to stay - a home to soon welcome the family warmly after their drive home. Anxiety and longing grips the child's heart.

Being homeless has become a major problem in the United States and other countries as well, and in the community of Collin County where Lovejoy students reside, this problem is not remote. Collin County has more than 3,000 homeless students, according to recent reports, and was also shared in a study called In High School and Homeless by KERA news.

There are more than 610,000 homeless people in the United States, and in Texas alone there are 29,615 people and counting. Reports show that in Allen and Lovejoy combined there were about 45 homeless students in 2014, and in McKinney there were more than 1,000.

"It's kinda depressing actually. They don't have houses like ours. They don't have as much. We can fix that. We could raise money, do some fund-raisers, and donate to some charities," said Nabeel Syed, seventh grade.

"I think that we can help our community through Hands For Hope by donating money through school functions, and through the Internet," said Shea Daugherty, eighth grade.

Multiple things can cause homelessness. A few of the major causes are loss of job, being at 35%, Earnings take second place by 15%, and evicted by family member at 13%. Another contributing factor that could instantly flip the switch is an unknown bill or a family death, which can change a person's lifestyle completely.

"I think it's sad. There are lots of ways to fix that and make their lives easier," said Kylie Cass, seventh grade.

While it may appear that there is always a solution to every problem and situation, for this one, the answer is not easy to determine. In most cases, going to a homeless shelter can be a first resort for homeless students, but the problem most find is that shelters reach mass capacity instantly when they open. The overflow of homeless individuals can usually instantly send people to the streets once shelters reach max capacity. The need is greater than what can be housed.

Although, helping out in homeless shelters is something that always needs volunteers, and those who are being served greatly appreciate the consideration. People could go beyond given opportunities by going out of their way to make homeless people happy by paying for a random meal, holding grocery bags to someone's car for them, or just talking to someone you don't know.

"Everyone should have a home, and have food and water; basically they should have the same resources. It can be fixed because there is a way to make sure that everyone has a home and other necessities," said eighth grader Amya Johnson.

This year, in response to this growing concern, students will participate in a service project at Vogel Alcove, a place in Dallas for Homeless children, and additionally, Hands for Hope, a new club created by three WSMS teachers actively works with students to create a solution. The club has a plentiful count with well over twenty kids in the club and other students who are also in PALS (Peer Assistance Leadership) class supporting the club initiatives.

The teachers, Nicole Sanders, Amy Snodgrass, and Tamara Sakuda, are asking the kids involved in Hands for Hope and PALS to come up with ideas as to how they could help the kids in need. Since then, the students have responded with fervent attitudes and dedication club leaders said. For example, Lily McCutcheon, eighth grader, started a Twitter site, @Hands4HopeCollinCounty, and Shea Daugherty, eighth grader, created website [www.HandsforHope@mcclb.com](http://www.HandsforHope@mcclb.com). McCutcheon also wants to start selling T-shirts to help raise money as well.

"I think that we're very fortunate that we have so many people with permanent homes, 45 compared to 1000. I just think that this is something close to my heart because we're very fortunate here in Lovejoy. This is the sort of thing that we all need to recognize because we're in such a wealthy district, and we only have a few kids that are homeless, while 20 minutes away, McKinney has near 1000," said McCutcheon.

The club is student driven, meaning student initiatives and plans drive the club's endeavors, rather than parents or teachers.

"I joined the club because I can't imagine what it would be like to not have a home and a family," said Sydney Wigginton, seventh grader and club participant.

Teachers knew first how compassionate students could be if shown and taught how to care for others. Club members said the response to the need for putting an end to homelessness multiplies with campus and area support. The club met again on October 23 to initiate ideas to be considered and work with PALS to see which next steps will be needed. The club will have more meetings in the future as well.

"We've been calling churches and organizations to help donate. I think this club will be very successful," said Ella Goldsmith, eighth grader.

The club has also received approval to have funds or items from the next school dance benefit area homeless programs, such as Family Promise, Samaritan Inn, and Hands for Hope. An activity account to collect funds students raise to benefit homeless non-profit organizations is being determined. Individuals wishing to donate or volunteer with Hands for Hope can contact the school or club sponsors- Family Promise or the Samaritan Inn.