

GEORGIA CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD HOMELESSNESS



Ending Child Homelessness in Georgia

Child Homelessness in Georgia

- More than 45,500 children experience homelessness each year in Georgia.
- Children experiencing homelessness are sick four times more often than other children.
- Homeless children go hungry at twice the rate of other children.
- Children experiencing homelessness are four times more likely to show delayed development and twice as likely to have learning disabilities.
- Children who are homeless experience a number of traumatic stressors that can lead to educational and developmental challenges.

2013: What the Georgia Legislature and State Government Can Do

Ending child homelessness in Georgia is urgent and possible. In March 2011, the Georgia Campaign released the *Georgia Plan to End Child Homelessness*. The following recommendations from the *Georgia Plan* begin to lay the path towards preventing and ending child and family homelessness throughout the state:

- Expand the supply of affordable housing units and include a priority for homeless families with children, survivors of domestic violence, and homeless youth through the State Housing Trust Fund and other potential resources.
- Establish a committee in the Georgia General Assembly to address the state's budget and investment in homelessness as well as applicable laws, standards of care, and other issues that impact children, youth, and families who are homeless.
- Prioritize homeless families in all affordable housing programs including waiting lists for Section 8.
- Provide dedicated state funding so that all homeless students have access to education and succeed in school. Prioritize access to early childhood education and public pre-school programs for children who are homeless.
- Restore state funding for the statewide homeless coalition to support and build the work of local coalitions that are serving families, youth, and individuals who are homeless across Georgia.

For More Information

To read the *Georgia Plan to End Child Homelessness* and learn more about the Georgia Campaign to End Child Homelessness, visit www.gahomeless.org and www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org or contact us at Campaign@familyhomelessness.org.

About the Georgia Campaign to End Child Homelessness

The Georgia Campaign to End Child Homelessness seeks to galvanize the will necessary to end this crisis. Because it is unacceptable for any child to be homeless for even one night, the Georgia Campaign to End Child Homelessness is a call to action with the goals of increasing public awareness, informing state and local policies, and improving programs and services to better address the needs of homeless children and families. The Georgia Campaign is an initiative of the Campaign to End Child Homelessness at The National Center on Family Homelessness in partnership with the Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness.

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Homeless Families: Their Stories

Need for Long-Term Stability

Melissa is 31 years-old and the mother of three children. Her youngest son, Joshua, has special needs and has been diagnosed with autism. Melissa and her young family were evicted from their apartment when the building where they lived was condemned for numerous building code violations that the landlord refused to repair. She is very concerned about Joshua because routines are extremely important to his well-being. Moving from shelter to shelter after maxing out time limits at each has been hard for all of her children, especially Joshua. Melissa sees the stress of being homeless taking a toll on her children, and she is concerned about what will happen when they have to move again.



Overcrowded and Overwhelmed

Jessica is a 39 year old mother of two teenage sons and a young daughter. They have been homeless for over a year and on waiting lists for shelters that will accept teenage boys. After fleeing domestic violence, Jessica and her children lived with relatives in an overcrowded two-bedroom apartment, but they were asked to leave shortly after moving in. They had no choice but to live in their car until finally being accepted into a shelter. Jessica feels her family is stable now for the first time in awhile, but fears the trauma of being homeless has affected her children. They attend school regularly, but are behind in their studies and are having discipline problems. Jessica is hopeful for the future, but she sees a long road ahead before her family can be in a home of their own.

Striving for Economic Independence

Mark is unemployed, and Nadia works part-time cleaning houses. Nadia, Mark and their three children had to leave the house they lived in for six years after they noticed their family was feeling sick and it was determined that they were suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning. A faulty heating system was to blame, and not having any financial resources to fix it, the family had no choice but to move out. They lived in an extended-stay hotel, but funds soon ran out and left them with nowhere to go. They are currently living in one room at a homeless shelter, but are grateful to have that space. Mark will be starting a new job soon, and between his and Nadia's paychecks, they are hoping to move out of the shelter and into an apartment of their own within six months.

