



WORKING TO END
FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

ANNUAL REPORT



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Family Homelessness

for every child, a chance



ONE IN 50 OF OUR NATION'S CHILDREN GOES TO SLEEP WITHOUT A HOME EACH YEAR

The National Center on Family Homelessness is determined to end family homelessness. Sheltering families provides a temporary safe haven. Connecting families to permanent housing, essential services, and critical supports can change their lives forever. Through research we learn what families need to rebound from the housing, economic, social, medical, and mental health problems that put them on the streets. Through program evaluation, we identify strategies that work. We use this knowledge to design innovative practices, bring training and technical assistance to community-based service providers, and transform policies across the nation.



We can end this national tragedy

Homeless families have lost more than their homes. They've lost their safety, health, and ability to support themselves. Their children are anxious, depressed, and withdrawn. Today, they need shelter. To rebuild their lives, they need our support.

Housing is essential for ending homelessness, but for many families it is not sufficient. They need much more than temporary shelter. We must address the full range of issues that lead to homelessness so that we can help families change their lives.

Our ground-breaking research clarifies why families become homeless and what we can do about it. We develop innovative programs and best practices that help to stabilize families and return them to productive lives. Our practical, real world solutions change the way communities support homeless children and families. By reaching out to state and national leaders and the media, we are building a growing consensus for action.

For more than two decades, we have been the leading voice for homeless children and families. With the power of knowledge, we can end family homelessness and give every child a chance.

Ellen Bassuk, MD

Ellen L. Bassuk, MD

Founder & President



FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN

The numbers are startling. Hundreds of thousands of families are homeless in America each year. On any given night, more than 200,000 children have no home of their own. Annually, more than 1.5 million children experience homelessness in our nation—one in every 50 children. They live in every state and community in our nation.

These families are often young, with parents in their late twenties and children under age six. Losing their home, possessions, pets, family, friends—along with the terrifying burden of finding food, shelter, and medicine—leaves parents fearful, sad, and hopeless. Children look to them for answers, but there is very little to say.

In addition to lacking a home, many children experience high rates of acute and chronic illness and traumatic stress. It is not surprising that they have difficulty learning in school.



AMERICA

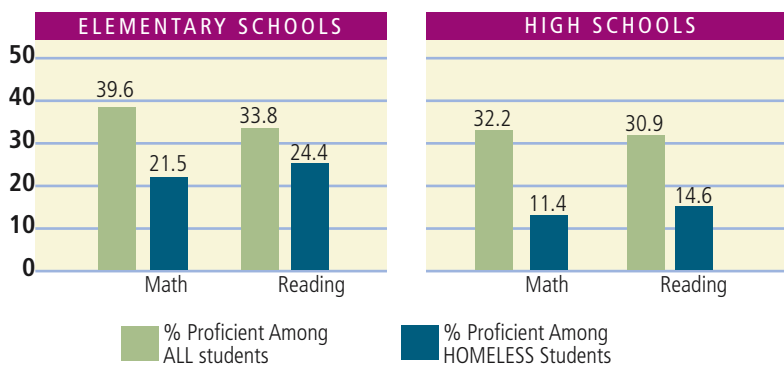
HEALTH

Illness: Homeless children are sick **4 times** as often as other children, with very high rates of respiratory infections, ear infections, stomach problems, and asthma.

Traumatic Stress: More than **3 times** as many children experiencing homelessness are in households where adults “hit or throw things,” compared to middle-class children.

Emotional Disturbances: **1 in 6** children experiencing homelessness have emotional disturbances. This rate is twice that experienced by middle-class children.

EDUCATION





RESEARCH Finding Solutions

Ending family homelessness requires knowledge-based solutions. At The National Center on Family Homelessness, we have learned what families need to rebound from the problems that put them on the streets. We use this knowledge to design innovative programs and services, bring state-of-the-art training to communities, and inform state and national policy.

Understanding the needs of homeless families & children

Our research has transformed service delivery for homeless families. Understanding their needs is critical for designing services that work to rebuild stable lives. For example, our research first identified the pervasiveness of violence in the lives of homeless families and documented its devastating impact on housing stability and well-being.

Now, programs across the country have developed services that address the adverse effects of trauma on homeless children and parents.



Stability and independence for struggling families

Since the early 1990s, low-income and single parent families in Rochester, NY have received housing and on-site services at **Wilson Commencement Park**. With support from the Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation, we examined how these families are faring five to ten years after they have left the program. The findings offer new insights into the combination of housing and services that can bring stability, self-sufficiency, and independence to struggling families.

A second project supported by the Wilson Foundation compares three different approaches to family housing in four upstate New York communities. **Service and Housing Interventions for Families in Transition (SHIFT)** examines outcomes over time for families who are in shelters, transitional housing, or permanent housing. The detailed data about parents and children, health and mental health, and personal strengths will point the way to designing more effective programs.

Controlling cost while improving lives

Our evaluation of the **Minnesota Supportive Housing and Managed Care Pilot** has shed new light on how to help adults and families who have been homeless for long periods, and who also suffer from serious physical and mental health problems. The pilot's intensive service model featured low caseloads and comprehensive in-house services.

Among our findings: program participants significantly improved their housing stability, had fewer mental health symptoms and less drug and alcohol use, and experienced a greater sense of safety. By looking closely at health care, we were able to determine that the greater use of routine and preventive care resulted in lower costs and improved quality of life, largely due to a shift from inpatient to outpatient care.



TRAINING

Supporting Service Providers

Training is essential for providing quality services to homeless families and children. Service providers need access to training that focuses on basic knowledge and skills, and also provides supports that prevent burnout and high turnover.

The National Center on Family Homelessness is a leading provider of training and technical assistance to frontline staff. Our trainers travel across the country to meet service providers where they work, bringing knowledge and skills to implement best practices. In a single year, we have trained more than 2,000 service providers in 20 states. After Hurricane Katrina, we trained more than 3,000 frontline staff to help them better meet the needs of homeless children and families.

Nutrition and exercise for children in shelters

PEACH (Physical and Emotional Awareness for Children Who Are Homeless) teaches young children living in shelters about nutrition, physical activity, and how to deal with the stress of being homeless. Sessions on emotional health help children deal with their reactions to homelessness. Developed in collaboration with the creators of the award-winning OrganWise Guys curriculum, we have brought PEACH to thousands of children across America.



The future of online training

The National Center on Family Homelessness in collaboration with the Center for Social Innovation is launching a new Training Institute for people working in human services. **T3** will offer online and on-site learning opportunities to equip service providers with the knowledge and skills they need to provide high quality services and supports. It will debut with a 12-session basic knowledge course on homelessness that distills what we have learned from two decades of research and program development. Following the rollout of the basic course, T3 will offer advanced courses focused on building skills.

Our Most Popular Trainings

- **Creating Trauma-Informed Services and Programs:** How to incorporate trauma-informed care into an organization's culture and services.
- **Self-Care: Addressing and Preventing Staff Burnout:** The impact of working with trauma survivors, and tips and tools to address provider self-care.

HUD community development technical assistance

The National Center on Family Homelessness was recently selected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be a provider of Community Development Technical Assistance. We will assist non-profits, local and state governments, and other groups nationwide to develop and implement community initiatives to prevent and end homelessness.

Putting our knowledge to work

Our research would mean little if we did not bring it into the real world to help children and families escape the nightmare of homelessness. With more than 20 years of research and work on the front lines, The National Center on Family Homelessness is uniquely able to develop effective programs and services

Strengthening family connections for returning veterans

Veterans of military service are at high risk for homelessness. We developed **Community Circles of Support for Veterans' Families** to offer new resources to the returning veteran's support network consisting of families, partners, and friends.

The Community Circles program enhances family communication, provides service providers with specialized skills, and educates the community about the experiences of veterans and their families. Recognizing how combat trauma can destabilize families, the program provides access to comprehensive community-based mental health and support services.

With support from Walmart Foundation, Blue Shield of California and "Welcome Back Vets" (a program of Major League Baseball and the McCormick Foundation) Community Circles is now active in Illinois, Oregon, and California.

Building local capacity to address homelessness

The **Community Collaborative for Change** is a new network of community and faith-based organizations in Boston that serve individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. We are convening this collaborative to build local capacity through individual and group training and technical assistance, cross-site learning and support, and capacity building grants.





Supporting young mothers and children

Homelessness often strikes the youngest families.

Strengthening At Risk and Homeless Young Mothers and Children establishes locally-based partnerships that unite housing, homelessness, and child development agencies, as well as those addressing family preservation, domestic violence, mental health, and substance use.

The program, supported by Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, is a collaboration with the National Alliance to End Homelessness and ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. At program sites in California, Minnesota, and Illinois, we work with skilled teams and community-based staff to achieve better outcomes for young families, implement innovative policies and practices, and establish lasting alliances among local agencies.

An early look at program benefits indicates greater housing stability and safety, stronger parenting skills, improvements in children's emotional and academic development, and better connections between social service agencies and the families they serve.





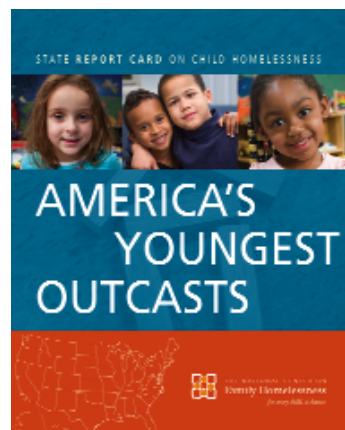
POLICY

Ending Child Homelessness

True to our mission, we launched **The Campaign To End Child Homelessness** with the release of *America's Youngest Outcasts* in 2009. The report updated our landmark 1999 study of homeless families and created a Report Card for all 50 states.

Among the shocking findings in our report: **one in every 50 children in America experiences homelessness annually—more than 1.5 million children.** By combining and analyzing over 70 variables, *America's Youngest Outcasts* offers a detailed snapshot of the status of homeless children nationally and in each state.

With the current recession and mounting home foreclosures as a backdrop, interest in *America's Youngest Outcasts* is high. More than 3,000 media stories have brought the report's findings to every corner of the nation. For the first time, the plight of America's homeless children has been exposed for all to see. The report generated interest from the White House and Congress in addressing this once invisible issue.



CAMPAIGN TO END CHILD HOMELESSNESS



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One out of every 50 — or approximately 1.5 million — American children go to sleep without a home of their own each year. They are America's Youngest Outcasts.

View the full report card:
America's Youngest Outcasts

Click here for an interactive state map with state scores

Join the conversation — let us know about your state

Latest media coverage

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Link and photo here for the Kids Helping Kids Initiative.
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Ellen Bossert, featured in the trailer for The Homeless Child: A Documentary
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Print out how to contact your legislator to take action to end child homelessness.
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Join the conversation! Log on to our state-by-state blog and tell us about conditions and programs in your state.
[More](#)



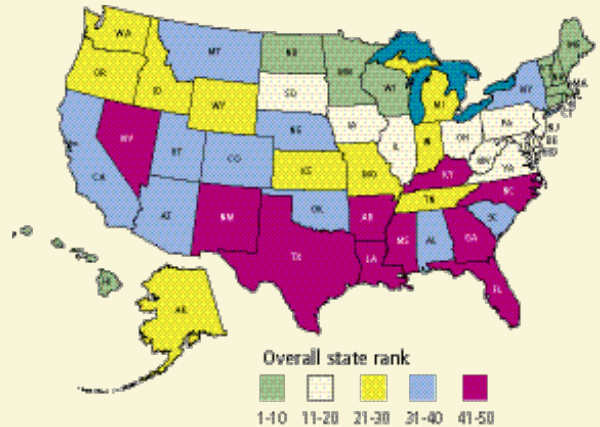
The complete report and all findings can be viewed at www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org

State Rankings

America's Youngest Outcasts ranks all 50 U.S. states according to overall performance in four areas:

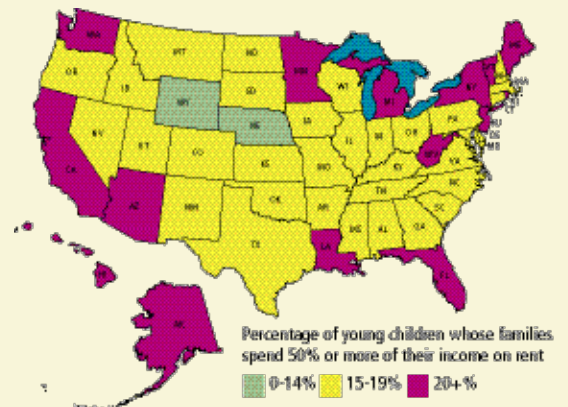
- Extent of child homelessness
- Child well-being
- Risk for child homelessness
- State policy and planning efforts

Packed with information, the 220-page document is made accessible to policymakers, the media, and the public through its attractive design and an interactive web site (www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org).



Florida Listening Tour

In Florida, the Campaign conducted a statewide Listening Tour anchored by former Massachusetts Lt. Governor Kerry Murphy Healy, who also serves on The National Center's Board of Directors. We talked with service providers, advocates, and elected officials from Miami to Tallahassee about the needs of homeless children and families and the opportunities to help. These local connections are the foundation for a sustained effort to end child homelessness in Florida. Progress is also being made in raising funds from generous Floridians to help defray Campaign costs.



Our people

Our work is made possible by skilled and dedicated people who have committed themselves to helping the most vulnerable families in our society. We are also guided and supported by generous colleagues who serve on our Board. Meet three of our staff members who exemplify the values we share.

Rose Clervil: Raising a voice for both consensus and change



Rose has dedicated more than 15 years to understanding the needs of people who are homeless. Joining us in 2005 to manage our *National Collaborative for Trauma-Surviving Homeless Children*, she is a leader in ensuring that our work bridges cultures and is sensitive to consumers. “My lifelong interest is in bringing the best services to those who need them most. As a vigorous advocate for dignity and justice, my work allows me to be a voice in the community for both consensus and change.”

Risa Greendlinger: Bringing entrepreneurial skills to community service



Risa is Project Director of *Community Circles of Support for Veterans' Families*. Her prior experience in sales and new business development at United Way, Ceridian Corporation, and America Works brings an entrepreneurial flair to her work with us. “Seemingly intractable problems like veteran homelessness can be tackled head on by creating public/private partnerships that align resources of government, business, and community non-profits.”

Debra Medeiros: Realizing a commitment to human rights



Debra is Director of Programs, providing management and oversight to the many initiatives that put our knowledge to work. She also oversees *Strengthening At Risk and Homeless Young Mothers and Children*. “As a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic, I developed a strong interest in human rights and encouraging self-sufficiency. It is exciting and rewarding to continue this work on behalf of homeless families.”

Board of Directors

The National Center on Family Homelessness is fortunate to have an active Board of Directors with a broad range of skills and experience and a deep commitment to children and families with the greatest needs.

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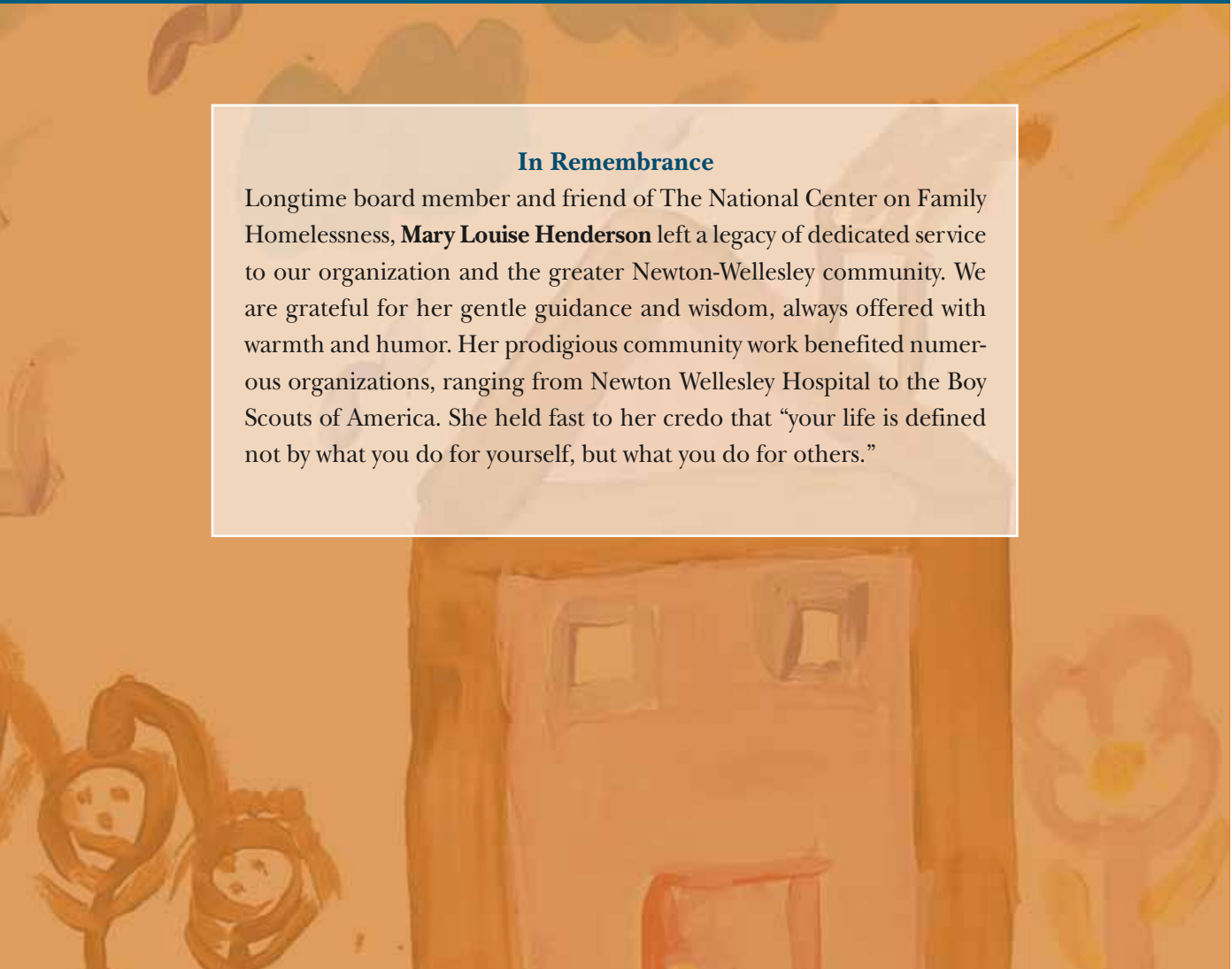


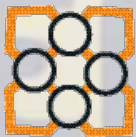
We are a non-profit charity relying on our generous supporters

The National Center on Family Homelessness is a not-for-profit 501c(3) charity. We rely on financial support from private foundations, corporations, and individual donors. We are grateful to the generous people and organizations who donate to our work. For information about the many ways to contribute, please visit www.familyhomelessness.org or call Debra Dutcher at 617-558-0005.

In Remembrance

Longtime board member and friend of The National Center on Family Homelessness, **Mary Louise Henderson** left a legacy of dedicated service to our organization and the greater Newton-Wellesley community. We are grateful for her gentle guidance and wisdom, always offered with warmth and humor. Her prodigious community work benefited numerous organizations, ranging from Newton Wellesley Hospital to the Boy Scouts of America. She held fast to her credo that “your life is defined not by what you do for yourself, but what you do for others.”





THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Family Homelessness

for every child, a chance

The National Center on Family Homelessness is the leading organization focused solely on ending homelessness for children and families. With the power of knowledge and the will to act, we can end family homelessness in America and give every child a chance.

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www.FamilyHomelessness.org

www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org