**Homelessness is beginning with the youth**

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**Poverty, housing insecurity, mental health and substance use disorders are only some ways youth in the United States are finding themselves homeless. Factoring in child welfare and complications with the juvenile justice systems creates an even larger platform of significant trauma, being vulnerable and becoming victims of sexual trafficking.**

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**Nearly 41,000 unaccompanied youth were counted as homeless in 2017, according to the**[**National Alliance to End Homelessness**](https://sitebuilder.homestead.com/~site/builder/stage.jsp?pageId=x4e6577732d616e642d4d656469612e787066)**. The ages of youth among that 41,000 fluctuate between 18 and 24, about five thousand of that are under the age of 18. These young adults can experience episodes of homelessness that last up to a week or longer over the course of a year.**

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**Youth facing the struggle of homelessness experience a wide range of physical, mental, emotional and behavioral issues, but can be turned around with basic life needs. If these young adults are able to access basic or stable housing, connections to caring and supportive adults, access to education, workforce development or long-term employment, they are able to heal and go on to live healthy, full lives, according to the**[**National Network for Youth**](https://sitebuilder.homestead.com/~site/builder/stage.jsp?pageId=x4e6577732d616e642d4d656469612e787066)**.**

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**One of our partners in Omaha,**[**Youth Emergency Services**](https://sitebuilder.homestead.com/~site/builder/stage.jsp?pageId=x4e6577732d616e642d4d656469612e787066)**, (YES) offers a wide variety of services to youth in crisis. Their program Street Outreach, involves YES workers hitting the streets of Omaha carrying backpacks filled with basic needs and supplies. Workers also monitor areas known for having at-risk youth. These youths are provided with immediate information, services and are invited to the YES Outreach Center for hot meals, health care and hygienic care.**

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**Providing care and support to programs like YES is extremely important to monitoring and decreasing the amount of homeless youths in the Omaha area. Homelessness can start at any age, but is primarily important to monitor when young. Youths provided with the right information and needs are able to rise up against homelessness and live fuller lives.**

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