WAYS YOU CAN CONTINUE YOUR PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT OMAHA EXPERIENCE LOCALLY

"You have not lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you." ~John Bunyan

Project Homeless Connect – You don’t have to be a student to volunteer! Sign up each year to volunteer at project homeless connect Omaha and stay involved.

Get Involved with the Continuum of Care – The Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH) is a network of providers committed to preventing and ending homelessness. Go their website www.macchomeless.org to sign up to for the list serve and stay informed or find a task force meeting that interests you and participate in monthly meetings.

Pass out the MACCH Resource Card - Carry a card that lists local shelters and other essential services so you can hand them out to the homeless. You can pick these up at the MACCH offices or print them from their website.

Support the 100K Homes Omaha Campaign – “like” the campaign on facebook to stay informed of upcoming developments and progress in the Omaha area.

Assemble a Move-in Kit – Many people who are moving from chronic homelessness do not own dishes, cooking pots and utensils, a pillow...simple items that are truly necessities. MACCH is looking for interested individuals/organizations to participate in a project known as Welcome Home, which provides assistance to individuals in making a house a home. Please contact Laura Peet Erkes at (402) 250-5379 or lauraerkes@gmail.com to find out more.

Help Someone Move - the Welcome Home initiative is working to develop a list of interested individuals or groups who may wish to assist with move-in, by supplying pick-up trucks, drivers, and move-in helpers. Please contact Laura Peet Erkes at (402) 250-5379 or lauraerkes@gmail.com to sign up to help.

OTHER WAYS TO HELP PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Understand Who the Homeless Are - Help dispel the stereotypes about the homeless. Learn about the different reasons for homelessness, and remember, every situation is unique.

Respect the Homeless as Individuals - Give the homeless people the same courtesy and respect you would accord your friends, your family, your employer. Treat them as you would wish to be treated if you needed assistance. We can make quite a difference in the lives of the homeless when we respond to them, rather than ignore or dismiss them.

Bring Food - It’s as simple as taking a few extra sandwiches when you go out. When you pass someone who asks for change, offer him or her something to eat. If you take a lunch, pack a little extra. When you eat at a restaurant, order something to take with you when you leave.

Give Money - One of the most direct ways to aid the homeless is to give money. Donations to nonprofit organizations that serve the homeless go a long way.

Give an In-kind Donation - Next time you do your spring or fall cleaning, keep an eye out for those clothes that you no longer wear and donate them to organizations that provide housing for the homeless. Load up a bag full of nonperishable groceries, and donate it to a food drive in your area. You can donate toys, books, and games to family shelters to distribute to homeless children. For Christmas or Chanukah, ask your friends and co-workers to buy and wrap gifts for homeless children.

Volunteer At A Shelter - Shelters thrive on the work of volunteers, from those who sign people in, to those who serve meals, to others who counsel the homeless on where to get social services. For the homeless, a shelter can be as little as a place to sleep out of the rain or as much as a step forward to self-sufficiency.
**Volunteer Your Professional Talents** - No matter what you do for a living, you can help the homeless with your on-the-job talents and skills. Those with clerical skills can train those with little skills. Doctors, psychiatrists, counselors, and dentists can treat the homeless in clinics. Lawyers can help with legal concerns. The homeless' needs are bountiful -- your time and talent won't be wasted. Contact MACCH for opportunities to get involved.

**Teach About The Homeless** - If you do volunteer work with the homeless, you can become an enthusiast and extend your enthusiasm to others. You can infect others with your own sense of devotion by writing letters to the editor of your local paper and by pressing housing issues at election time.

**Educate Your Children About The Homeless** - Help your children to see the homeless as people. If you do volunteer work, take your sons and daughters along so they can meet with homeless people and see what can be done to help them. Volunteer as a family in a soup kitchen or shelter. Suggest that they sort through the toys, books, and clothes they no longer use and donate them to organizations that assist the poor.

**Sign Up Your Company/School** - Ask your company or school to host fund-raising events, such as raffles or craft sales and donate the proceeds to nonprofit organizations that aid the homeless. You can also ask your company or school to match whatever funds you and your co-workers or friends can raise to help the homeless.

**Recruit Local Business** - One of the easiest ways to involve local businesses is to organize food and/or clothing drives. Contact local organizations to find out what is needed, approach local grocery or clothing shops about setting up containers on their premises in which people can drop off donations, ask local businesses to donate goods to the drive, and publicize the drive by placing announcements in local papers and on community bulletin boards and by posting signs and posters around your neighborhood.

**Create Lists Of Needed Donations** - Call all the organizations in your community that aid the homeless and ask them what supplies they need on a regular basis. Make a list for each organization, along with its address, telephone number, and the name of a contact person. Then mail these lists to community organizations that may wish to help with donations -- every place from religious centers to children's organizations such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

**Employ the Homeless** - HELP WANTED General Office Work. Welfare recipient, parolee, ex-addict OK. Good salary, benefits. Will train. That's the way Wildcat Service Corporations's Supported Work Program invites the "unemployable" to learn to work. Best of all-the program works! More than half the people who sign on find permanent, well-paying jobs, often in maintenance, construction, clerical, or security work.

**Stand Up For The Civil Rights Of The Homeless** - In recent elections, for example, volunteers at shelters and elsewhere helped homeless people register to vote . . . even though they had "no fixed address" at the moment. Some officials would not permit citizens without a permanent address to vote.

**Write To Corporations** - Some of the largest corporations in America have joined the battle for low-income housing. Through the use of the tax credit or by outright grants, they are participating with federal and state government, not-for-profit and community-based groups to build desperately needed housing in Chicago, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and dozens of other cities. Contact various organizations and ask them what they are doing.

**Contact Your Government Representatives** - Our legislators rarely receive more than three visits or ten letters about any subject. When the numbers exceed that amount, they sit up and take note. Personal visits are the most potent. Letters are next; telephone calls are third best. Housing issues don't come up that often, so your public officials will listen. Find your state representatives. Go to [www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org) to learn more about policy issues.

*Adapted from https://www.justgive.org/ways/50wayshomeless.jsp*