



These are just a few of the people living on the streets of Seattle and Portland. Thank you to Joseph P. Wankelman (JPW), Kevin Dahlgren (KD), and Tara Faul (TF) for capturing their portraits and caring deeply about what happens to them.

Human Homelessness is a ~~Housing~~ Problem

Calling it anything else limits our thinking and solutions

At last count, 266,320 people were living and sleeping on the streets of America. The real number is almost certainly higher.

To call this “a crisis” is a big mistake: It is 266,320 crises, each experienced by a unique person with unique circumstances. To suggest there is one solution for all is absurd — like suggesting there can be one treatment plan for a hospital full of patients.

Yet, there are common themes: Among the unsheltered homeless, it’s clear that addiction, untreated mental illness, and trauma (often beginning in childhood) are prevalent.

It’s also clear that crime, violence, and human degradation of every kind is the daily backdrop to life on the streets. We normalize this to our shame.

It can sound compassionate to reduce or remove the social friction caused by laws that seem to directly impact the homeless — penalties for drug activities, public disturbance, camping, loitering, and littering — but it’s not compassionate. The homeless need the protection and accountability of the law as much as everyone else; they should not exist above or beneath it.

Permissive drug laws combined with synthetic manufacturing have allowed mass proliferation of the deadliest street drugs we’ve ever seen. People who use illicit drugs are far more likely to lose jobs, work too little to afford rent, exhaust all social resources, and turn to crime to support addiction and survival. If they survive at all.

High housing costs are a factor in homelessness, yes — not because they directly cause the crisis, but because they function as a tipping point for this already high-risk group.

Meanwhile, everyone in surrounding communities suffers from the increased crime, unsafe conditions, and deteriorating public spaces that come with poorly managed homelessness.

Fortunately, there are principles, practices, and common sense that can be wisely applied to help the homeless and protect communities. That’s what this publication explores.

Ultimately, finding and pursuing effective responses to homelessness requires complete honesty, genuine humility, effective compassion, and a persistent willingness to open our minds to the whole of reality — not just the pieces of it that happen to serve or confirm our particular interests.

While some are tempted to make impossible promises to win support for a particular policy, organization, or spending proposal, there is no way to universally “end homelessness.” There are only ways to end *a particular person’s* homelessness. Enabling and supporting the local providers and programs that effectively do so should be the aim of all public policy.

You see, ending homelessness is always personal and always local. While solutions to homelessness can be discussed around conference tables, they are achieved

face-to-face, person-by-person. Only when specific work is done over and over again do measurable results show on a grand scale.

Success must be measured by the outcomes that matter: transformed lives and thriving communities.

The greatest hinderance to effective work is, of course, people. Homelessness is a human problem. Every one of us — the helper and the helped — is prone to mistakes, misjudgments, weaknesses, and failures. Yet there is hope for every single person.

We must ask good questions and fearlessly pursue true answers. Then we must translate those answers into action. □

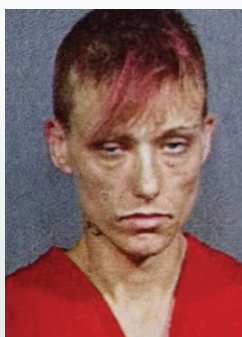
When Ideology Overrules Common Sense

by Kevin Dahlgren

For years, the political left has controlled the conversation around homelessness, addiction, and mental illness in most major West Coast cities. They control the nonprofits. They control the bureaucracies. They control the county commissions, the grant systems, the academic language, and most of the policy decisions. And yet the crisis keeps getting worse. That should tell us something.

At some point, we have to stop judging these policies by their intentions and start judging them by their results. Because no matter how compassionate the language sounds, the outcome is obvious to anyone

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 ...



Ginny Burton, before and after.

READ GINNY’S STORY ON PAGE 11

What Does it Look Like to “End Homelessness”?

Battles against homelessness can be decisively won in the lives of real people. A person can recover from addiction, heal from trauma, stabilize with treatment for mental illness, build new habits and thought patterns, detach from harmful social networks, earn and bestow trust, grow in healthy relationships, train in new skills, and rebuild accounts and credit. A person can be restored to a dignified and self-sufficient life. Ginny Burton won the battle. So have many others, with the help of the programs and people you will read about in this publication. Many more need help and hope. □

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First, Let’s Reason Together

by Discovery Institute

Engaging in sincere and meaningful conversation — reasoning together — is the most effective way to arrive at right conclusions. The word “conversation” itself is insightful, coming from the Latin verb *conversare*, which means literally “to turn” or “to be turned.” When we converse together, our thoughts are turned, in small ways and big, hopefully ever more toward reality and truth.

Enjoying and contributing to good conversation requires certain qualities: humility, patience, grace, and a sincere desire for truth and the good of others. It would be silly to expect everyone to see the world just as we do. The fact that we do not is what allows us to learn from each other, and to improve and expand our own limited thinking and experience.

Certainly, we should avoid demonizing people just because they disagree with us. Negative labels, name-calling, assumptions about motive, and accusations of racism, fascism, or authoritarianism tend to silence meaningful conversations. All too often, that may be the point.

Yet, a caution: We are all prone to self-deception. This insight used to be common. A century ago, the author of a children’s encyclopedia wrote that thinking is a purposeful act, “and, as we all know, sometimes a very difficult one, and just as tiring as hard running or as swimming.” Hard work can be uncomfortable, but the author encouraged children to embrace it: “Thinking is not a thing that happens to us, but a thing that we do.”

Most important of all, he addressed motive: “In all doing a motive power has to come from somewhere. The motive power in this great doing of the mind, which we call thinking, is interest.” But, he warned, not all interests are worthy:

There are false or doubtful kinds of interest as well as good ones. Worst of all, perhaps, is the kind of interest which sets men studying things only in order to defeat someone else, or to prove that they are right, or to make a success for the party or the class or the church to which they belong. Unfortunately, interest of this kind and interest in money are the driving power of most of the work of thinking that is done in the world. If interest of this kind resulted in the discovery of truth, that would be good; but, as a rule, it does not.

...There is a certain amount of deliberate deception, but the great key to the differences of opinion which divide even intelligent men is self-deception, depending on the way in which our [thinking is] spoiled by our feelings and interests.

Still, the author gave this encouragement:

Everywhere, in all ages, there are a few men who are real lovers of truth.

Such may we be. In many cases, lives depend on it.

We hope this publication encourages conversations about the difficult human problem of homelessness, and

we invite you to brew up a cup and read and ponder slowly. We hope what we present here sparks conversations with the people in your life, and we welcome you to share your thoughts with us as well: What did we get right? What did we get wrong? How might we work together to tackle this particular problem of human suffering in our own communities?

We welcome your thoughts: mmichaelis@discovery.org.



DEFINITION

REASON (noun): The cause, ground, principle or motive of any thing said or done; that which supports or justifies a determination, plan or measure.

REASON (verb): To exercise the faculty of reason; to infer conclusions from premises, or to deduce new or unknown propositions from previous propositions which are known or evident. To debate; to confer or inquire by discussion or mutual communication of thoughts, arguments or reasons; to endeavor to inform, convince or persuade by argument; to discourse; to talk; to take or give an account.

BOOK HIGHLIGHT

Stories can allow us to enter and feel the plight of people suffering in poverty and depravity.

In Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, we meet the unforgettable Fantine, a beautiful young woman betrayed by her lover to raise their child alone; Thenardier, a predator who, in poverty or plenty, hatches endless schemes to exploit others; and Jean Valjean, an ex-convict, redeemed from poverty and prison to live transformed.

Charles Dickens introduces us to *Oliver Twist*, an orphan lured into crime and slavery and later rescued by a caring family; and, in *Hard Times*, he shows how addiction destroys a person and everything they touch.

Who doesn’t ache for Hans Christian Andersen’s *Little Match Girl*, as she goes barefoot, hungry, and eventually freezes to death trying to sell enough matches to appease her abusive father?

These fictional characters awaken our sympathy and indignation toward their real-life counterparts. They point to the need for both justice and mercy, and show us how to wisely apply these virtues.

Who Are the Homeless?

We must answer this question truthfully, or no policy or program aimed at helping the homeless will ever be as effective as it needs to be.

Just like everyone else, homeless people make decisions every day — sometimes good ones, sometimes bad. They have strengths and weaknesses, gifts and failings, and a lifetime of experiences and thoughts. Some have good intentions, others don’t. Some are noble, others scoundrels.

Yet there is one way in which homeless people as a group are quite different from the general population:

“Homeless adults have usually suffered physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect, along with exposure to domestic violence. Nearly nine in ten homeless adults have been exposed to at least one early traumatic experience, and more than half have been exposed to four or more. The incidence among the general population is 3-5%.” (The Lancet, Childhood Adversity, November 2021)

In addition to almost universal trauma, a large majority of people living on the streets report suffering from addiction or mental illness — often both. These con-

ditions don’t excuse criminal behavior or bad decisions; they *should* move our compassion and inform our efforts.

The fact is, *healthy* people have homes; they have some personal claim on a place that provides safety, security, shelter, belonging, closeness, and warmth, and they contribute positively to that place. Healthy people have legitimate ways to meet their own basic needs.

By definition, then, something serious has gone wrong in the life of a homeless person. Something is broken or injured in their physical, mental, or social wellbeing. And, while some have the ability and willpower to address these issues and injuries on their own, many do not. We must help them.

Admonish the idle.
Encourage the fainthearted.
Help the weak.
Be patient with them all.

—The Bible, 1 Thessalonians 5:14

“Falsehood rarely announces itself plainly. It comes through euphemism, ambiguity, distortion, sentimental language, and the quiet redefinition of words. The therapeutic language of modern society is especially vulnerable to this misuse. Genuine mental illness exists. Real trauma wounds people deeply. Anxiety, depression, compulsion, and psychological disorder must be treated with compassion, seriousness, and wisdom. But therapeutic language becomes destructive when it is used to erase moral agency altogether. A diagnosis may explain a temptation, a weakness, or a pattern of behavior. It does not automatically remove responsibility. Compassion does not require falsehood, and mercy does not require us to rename sin. Indeed, mercy depends upon truth. A physician who refuses to name a disease cannot heal it. A culture that cannot name its disorders cannot correct them.”

— The Rev. Dr. Ronald Moore

PERCENTAGE OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESS PEOPLE WHO REPORT:



Source: California Policy Lab

Look for root causes in individual lives

by Tom Wolf

Many factors can lead to homelessness. My drug addiction caused my homelessness. According to HUD Secretary Scott Turner, 75% of unsheltered homeless individuals struggle with addiction or “co-occurring” disorders, such as mental illness and substance use disorder. We’ve learned that by downplaying drug addiction and its role in homelessness, our solutions have been flawed, leading to a compounding problem of unchecked drug use both in and out of housing. We need solutions that work. And those solutions can begin when we admit what we’ve been doing isn’t working.



Tom Wolf is a Senior Fellow with Discovery Institute’s Center for Wealth & Poverty, working on the Fix Homelessness initiative.

The ABC’s of Effective Compassion

by Marsha Michaelis

Most of us have compassionate feelings. We see or hear about another person’s suffering and we feel sorrow and sympathy. We pity and desire to help. This is good. But do we act with compassion?

The word compassion is built out of two Latin words: *com* (with) and *passion* (suffering). It literally means “suffer with.” Compassion is a feeling, certainly, but it is also the act of entering into suffering with others. True compassion is always personal. It will always cost us something. We do not enter into suffering with statistics, or with the subjects of our news feed headlines. Compassion *suffers with*. It makes withdrawals from our own accounts of labor, love, time, emotion, and money. It looks into the eyes of fellow humans, calls them by name, and extends hands toward them.

In his book, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, journalist Marvin Olasky identified what he calls the “seven marks of compassion,” which correspond with the first seven letters of the alphabet. I summarize them here, and urge readers to consider how our homelessness policies can be crafted to reflect and empower this kind of compassion:

True compassion is always personal. It will always cost us something.

Affiliation: At the heart of this word (literally) is family: people need their families and communities. Wise compassion works to strengthen and restore family and other close social and community bonds. When someone presents with a need, help begins by investigating how the threads that bound them to others were snapped, and whether and how any can be safely and healthily re-tied.

Bonding: Some people are genuinely alone in the world, without family and friends. This is when compassion invests deeply, becoming family to those who have none. The secret to belonging is to *be* for a *long* time. This is rarely easy; people are messy, particularly when suffering. Compassion walks into that mess, bringing with it enduring hope and diligence for mending broken things.

Categorization: Effective compassion does not treat everyone the same. Many things contribute to a person’s poverty and need. Some are outside their control (think of tragedy, abuse, age, injury, or illness), others are a direct result of character and choices (think of continued addictions, sloth, vice, or violence). The Bible talks of “admonishing the idle, encouraging the fainthearted, and helping the weak.” Every person has a different set of needs requiring a tailored remedy.

Discernment: Compassion recognizes that not everyone is who they claim; not every need is what it seems. Discernment is not unkind: it is necessary to the efficient use of limited resources, and to the morale of those who are genuinely struggling to overcome.

Employment: Work blesses. In addition to its obvious and practical fruit, contributing in a tangible way to our own lives and families and communities is at the heart of human dignity. But work is also work; it requires expending effort and energy, and this is often uncomfortable. As comfort-loving creatures, humans have always been prone to laziness and sloth. We must will ourselves to work, and some are not willing. Intelligent compassion knows the difference between unwilling and unable, and encourages employment (productive action) that fits an individual’s abilities.

Freedom: People must be free to work and free from enslavement to addiction and mental illness. Policy can create or prolong poverty if it hinders work or enables addiction.

God: People have physical, mental, and spiritual needs. None can be ignored; wise compassion treats them all. We must acknowledge brokenness, and understand that some healing and restoration is truly miraculous. Many have hope in the midst of suffering because they trust a God who suffered for them.

How can federal and state policy be crafted to support and empower true compassion?

Marsha Michaelis is a Research Fellow with Discovery Institute’s Center on Wealth & Poverty.

Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers.
– Susan Sontag

DEFINITION
COMPASSION (noun): Compounded from the Latin *com* (with) and *passus* (suffering). Suffering with another; painful sympathy; a sensation of sorrow excited by the distress or misfortunes of another; pity; commiseration. Compassion is a mixed passion, compounded of love and sorrow.

BOOK HIGHLIGHT

The Tragedy of American Compassion

by Marvin Olasky

Americans in urban areas a century ago faced many of the problems we face today, and they came up with truly compassionate solutions. We may not realize this, because only two kinds of books on the overall history of poverty-fighting in America

are now available. A few of the books argue that the free market itself solves all the problems of poverty. The more conventional approach stresses government intervention to restructure economic relations. But neither kind emphasizes the crucial role of truly compassionate individuals and groups in the long fight against poverty.

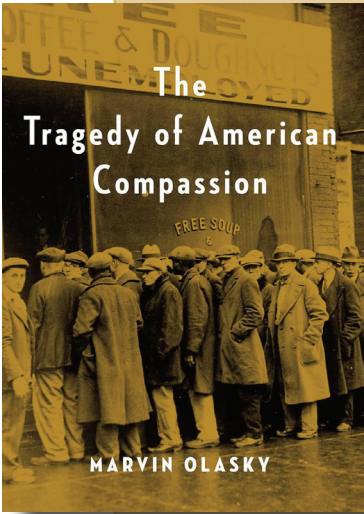
Many lives can be saved if we recapture

the vision that changed lives up to a century ago, when our concept of compassion was not so corrupt. In one sense, we have thought ourselves into this social disaster — and we can think ourselves out of it. The key to the future, as always, is understanding the past.

The century-old question — Does any given “scheme of help ... make great demands on men to give themselves to their brethren?” — is still the right one to ask.

Each of us needs to ask that question not in the abstract, but personally. Most of our twentieth-century schemes, based on having someone else take action, are proven failures. It’s time to learn from the warm hearts and hard heads of earlier times, and to bring that understanding into our own lives.

Excerpted from the book.



In a national comparison, in 2024 Washington had:

- the 1st highest ratio of chronic homelessness
- the 1st highest growth of per-capita overdose deaths
- the 3rd highest unhoused population
- the 4th highest rate of adult mental illness
- the 1st highest per-capita rate of fentanyl/opioid overdoses seen in ERs

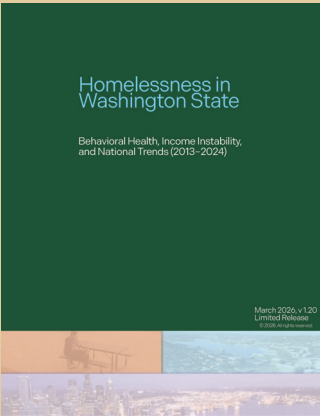
Why is Washington’s Homelessness Crisis Among the Worst in the Nation?

“We’ve made decisions ... Compared to all the other states, we’ve been especially—especially—energetic at deconstructing the barriers that would typically stand between someone who wants to sell drugs and someone who wants to buy drugs.

Washington has gone further than any other state in the country in removing the intermediary role that government has in blocking that transaction.

Low barriers are strongly associated with crises. The states that are successful [at reducing homelessness] are the ones that impose barriers. Barriers are good.”

– Eric Zimmerman, Mayor, Normandy Park, WA
Director, Public Safety Solutions Policy, Washington Policy Center
Author, “Homelessness in Washington State,” March 2026



QUOTE

Is accountability cruel, or life-giving?

My awareness of homelessness and my drive to confront it emerged through the culmination of my professional and personal experiences. Early on, I believed that if we could just provide enough resources, we could end homelessness.

My turning point came during my time as a probation officer in Seattle’s specialized courts. I saw firsthand how the system often fostered dependency instead of self-reliance. I was determined to pair accountability with compassion.

My shift in philosophy away from idealism and toward structured realism ... was sharpened by seeing how people responded not just to offers of help, but to clear expectations; moments when they realized someone cared enough to say, “You can’t keep living like this.” We developed structured programs to help people regain control of their lives. Programs that treat people like humans, not cases—that offer structure and expectations, but also support and second chances.

Kent Hay, author of “Managing Homelessness: How Cities Can Take Back Control with Compassion and Accountability.”

Is Homelessness a Housing Problem?

BOOK REVIEW

Homelessness is [Not] a Housing Problem

by Marsha Michaelis

A book written and applauded by experts can tempt you to doubt your common sense and quietly surrender intellectual ground. One in particular — *Homelessness is a Housing Problem*, by Gregg Colburn and Jason Page Aldern — has become a formidable weapon in the hands of housing advocates, who assign adjectives like “data-driven,” “evidence-based,” and “proven” to their favored policy prescription.

If you haven’t read the book, you might wonder if someone really *has* proven that the complex human issue of homelessness can be solved with government housing projects.

I read it cover-to-endnotes, and I’ve concluded a much sillier book sheds better light on the modern debate over homelessness.

In the 1979 cult classic, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, a humanoid alien race designs a super (duper) computer named Deep Thought, and asks it to answer the “Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything.” As the computer whirrs to life, members of the Philosopher’s Union storm in demanding the machine be shut down before it puts them out of business. Deep Thought appeases them: it will take seven-and-a-half-million years to calculate the answer, guaranteeing generations of philosophers will make fortunes speculating about it.

Finally, after seven-and-a-half-million years, Deep Thought reveals the answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything: “42.”

The tensely impatient spectators are incredulous, but “I checked it very thoroughly,” says Deep Thought,

“and that quite definitely is the answer. I think the problem, to be quite honest with you, is that you’ve never actually known what the question is.”

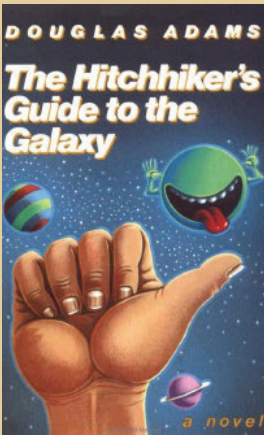
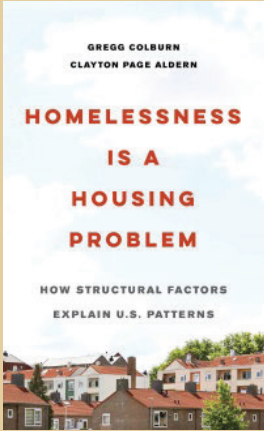
That comic script offers an apt parallel for the Colburn-Aldern book and similar intellectual exercises.

First, when a dizzyingly-calculated answer to a complex social problem seems inadequate and out-of-touch with observable reality, it probably is, and you needn’t waste time retracing its algorithms.

Second, there is a modern Philosophers Union: An entire industry now exists to build, buy, and manage government-subsidized housing units. Substantial fortunes are made by it, and that alone should provoke close scrutiny.

Third, Colburn and Aldern brazenly reject asking the right questions about homelessness. “Central to this book,” they admit, “is a concerted effort to focus our attention on differences between cities rather than those between individual people.”

Yet only individual people—who have a stunning array of personal agency, circumstance, and motivation—are capable of entering, experiencing, and exiting homelessness. The first and most desperate need for many is not a permanent subsidized housing unit, but warm and safe shelter coupled with relentless intervention, targeted clinical services, and compassionate accountability.



Noting all this, one book reviewer (Christopher J. Calton of the Independent Institute) said, “Colburn and Aldern’s emphasis on regional variations alone seems, at times, to be designed to produce a misleadingly monocausal explanation.”

Yes, especially because they make a jarring series of genuinely insightful observations about the individual causes and risk factors for homelessness—and then repeatedly and nonchalantly dismiss their relevance.

Colburn and Aldern boldly conclude that “policymakers must increase the number of affordable housing units and provide subsidies and rental assistance to households to ensure they can access housing.”

It’s worth noting that Mr. Colburn serves on the board of Seattle-based Bellwether Housing, a nonprofit that receives millions of taxpayer dollars and reported holding \$200 million worth of real estate assets in 2024, while its top eight employees took home a combined \$2 million in salary and benefits.

In the end, whether or not Colburn and Aldern’s answer is right doesn’t really matter; they asked the wrong question. So, I encourage you: Don’t let the existence of such a book hoodwink you into rejecting common sense. Don’t accept the claim that statistical analysis has somehow disproven observable reality.

Marsha Michaelis is a Research Fellow with Discovery Institute’s Center on Wealth & Poverty.

DEFINITION

We speak of fixing “homelessness” with housing, and forget that a house is not necessarily a home. A person can be housed, but still homeless. Feel the difference:

HOUSE (noun): The primary sense is a covering. A building or edifice for the habitation of man. It may be of any size and composed of any materials whatever, wood, stone, brick, etc.

HOME (noun): The primary sense is to enclose, to cover, to make fast; signifying secret, and pressed close. A dwelling; one’s own country; one’s own habitation.

Temporary shelter and housing can be a home when it is provided in a safe, stable, caring environment that helps a person recover and regain self-sufficiency. From there, they can rebuild a home of their own.

Do Housing Prices Matter?

Yes, of course, the rising cost of homes is a serious concern that affects everyone, and especially people on the margins. But what is driving up costs? Here are some of the factors:

- High taxes (property, sales, etc.)
- Costly building codes
- Burdensome regulations
- Expensive and slow permitting processes
- Restrictive land use policies
- Mass illegal immigration
- Unrestricted corporate purchasing of single-family homes
- Inflationary money policies
- Savings erosion (driven by devaluation of dollar)
- Manipulation of mortgage interest rates

Government cannot buy or build its way out of a housing affordability crisis largely created by its own policies.

Wise Homelessness Policies are Good for People and the Environment

by Michele Steeb

For more than a decade, America’s homelessness response has largely measured success by a single metric: whether someone is housed. In the process, what should have been an important milestone on the journey toward self-sufficiency became the destination itself.

Housing is essential, but housing alone does not resolve addiction, untreated mental illness, trauma, family breakdown, unemployment, or the loss of purpose and community that often accompany homelessness. By elevating housing above recovery, the system has too often confused occupancy with transformation. People continue to struggle with the same underlying barriers that led to homelessness, yet they are frequently counted as successes because of where they sleep rather than whether they are healing, rebuilding, and moving toward independence.

The consequences of this approach extend far beyond those experiencing homelessness.

After more than a decade of a housing-centered national strategy, homelessness has continued to rise while communities across America grapple with expanding encampments, deteriorating public spaces, and growing public frustration.

The downstream ramifications are profound. Communities bear escalating costs through repeated encampment cleanups, increased demands on law enforcement, emergency medical services, hospitals, behavioral health systems, jails, sanitation departments, and public works agencies. Parks become unusable, businesses struggle, tourism suffers, neighborhoods decline, and residents lose confidence that government can solve the crisis.

Environmental damage is another overlooked consequence. Encampments frequently generate enormous amounts of trash, hazardous waste, human waste, discarded needles, abandoned shopping carts, batteries, propane cylinders, and other pollutants that contaminate creeks, rivers, wetlands, and drinking water sources.

Public agencies spend millions of taxpayer dollars repeatedly cleaning the same locations, only to return weeks later because the underlying causes of homelessness remain unaddressed. The result is a costly cycle of environmental degradation that mirrors the human tragedy unfolding on the streets.

A more compassionate approach begins by asking a different question: What would it take to help each individual become as healthy, stable, and self-sufficient as possible?

When self-sufficiency becomes the goal, housing remains important, but it becomes one component of a broader pathway toward restoration. Treatment, recovery, behavioral healthcare, life skills, employment, accountability, healthy relationships, and community become equally important measures of success.

Not everyone will achieve complete independence, nor should perfection become the standard for success. Yet progress matters. A person who enters treatment, stabilizes a mental illness, reduces substance use, reconnects with family, gains employment, or transitions from

an encampment into a structured recovery environment has achieved meaningful success. Raising expectations does not diminish compassion—it reflects confidence in human potential.

The benefits of this approach ripple throughout society. Individuals become healthier. Families are restored. Public spaces become safer and more welcoming. Emergency rooms, jails, and crisis systems face less strain. Waterways and neighborhoods are protected. Taxpayer dollars shift from repeatedly managing emergencies to producing lasting outcomes that strengthen both individuals and communities.

It is high time to raise the bar.

Michele Steeb is a Senior Fellow with Discovery Institute and founder of the Free Up Foundation. This article is excerpted from its first publication at FoxNews.com.



Courageous Compassion, Courageous Journalism



Andrea Suarez of We Heart Seattle doesn't just talk, she walks. She and her fellow volunteers have helped hundreds of people find a better life off the streets, and have cleared more than 2 million pounds of trash from parks and public spaces. Andrea often hires homeless people to help with the job, giving them an invaluable sense of purpose, dignity, and ownership. Learn more about her organization and work at weheartseattle.org.



Jonathan Choe is an independent investigative journalist and Senior Fellow with Discovery Institute. He reports firsthand on the sordid conditions in and around many permanent housing facilities, including the one featured here. He also reports on fraud, waste, and abuse uncovered in homelessness policies and programs. Follow his work on X [@choeshow](https://twitter.com/choeshow) or at fixhomelessness.org.

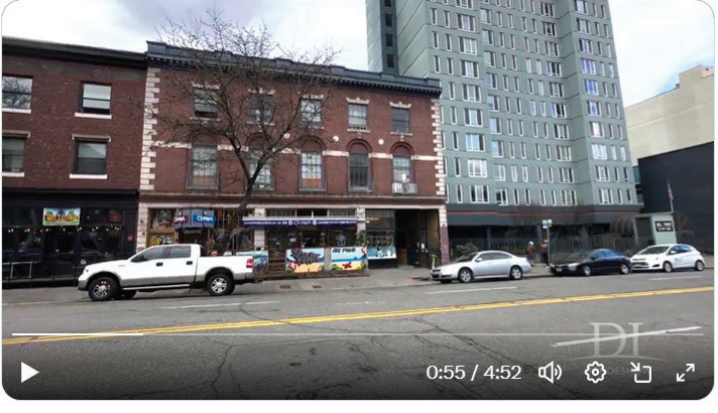


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EXCLUSIVE: I spent a year investigating Seattle's "low barrier" homeless housing and uncovered a nightmare of drugs, crime, chaos, and death. But local lawmakers are doubling down, committing millions to failed "housing first" policies that only compound the problems. Here is the first installment of my series. Watch now.



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In February 2024, Mike Matzik invited us inside his apartment at Plymouth Housing's Lewiston Scargo building in downtown Seattle. We walked through hallways soiled with various spills and stains, at one point even stepping over what appeared to be human feces. "I'd say someone overdosed and crapped right here in the hall," observed Andrea. Mike showed us signs warning of bed bug infestations, and explained how difficult it was to get staff to respond to basic maintenance needs, like the front door on his apartment that had a broken lock and could not be secured. Staff turnover in the building was so high, residents often did not know who to call for help.



Mike Matzik
Plymouth Housing Resident



Drug use inside rooms is a regular occurrence.



Mike's friends were in his room doing drugs when we visited.



This is a harm reduction place.



"This is a harm reduction place. They provide the paraphernalia."



No.



"I thought you had a case manager that was gonna get you transferred out of here."



Mike died of a drug overdose in his apartment just three months later, in May of 2024.

THE END



Andrea Suarez: "You can see they didn't say 'get outta here.' They're telling their story because it's a cry for help. They're crying out loud for help."

Jonathan Choe: "The city, the county, keeps funding these types of situations. How come?"

Andrea Suarez: "Because they refuse to change their minds. They refuse to acknowledge that it's not working."

COMMON SENSE continued from page 1 ...

willing to walk the streets: more tents, more overdoses, more untreated mental illness, more open-air drug use, more crime, more suffering, and more people slowly dying in public. The problem is not that the left does not care. Many do. The problem is that their ideology often prevents them from telling the truth about what is actually happening. They have reduced homelessness to one word: housing.

Housing matters, but homelessness in America today, especially in cities like Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia, is not simply a housing crisis. It is an addiction crisis. It is a mental illness crisis. It is a broken family crisis. It is a criminal justice crisis, and above all, it is a crisis of accountability. But the modern left often refuses to acknowledge that reality because once you admit addiction, untreated psychosis, violence, and self-destruction are major drivers of street homelessness, you are forced to support policies that go far beyond rent assistance and permanent supportive housing. You have to support detox. You have to support treatment. You have to support civil commitment reform. You have to support consequences for public drug use. You have to support removing people from the streets when they are clearly unable to care for themselves. You have to support boundaries. And

boundaries are where the ideology collapses.

The left has built an entire homeless response system around the idea that saying "no" is harmful, expectations are oppressive, and accountability is punishment. That sounds compassionate in a classroom. It sounds enlightened in a nonprofit training. But on the streets, it is a disaster. I have interviewed thousands of homeless people. I have watched people smoke fentanyl next to outreach workers. I have seen people passed out in doorways while cities debate whether asking them to move violates their dignity. I have watched people steal from stores in broad daylight because they know nobody will stop them. I have seen people handed supplies to keep using drugs while nobody has a serious plan to get them sober. That is not compassion. That is abandonment dressed up as tolerance.

The clearest example of this failure is modern harm reduction. Narcan saves lives, and I fully support it. But handing an addict foil, straws, and pipes while calling it compassion is not ending addiction. It is maintaining it. There is a difference between keeping someone alive long enough to get them into treatment and building a system that makes it easier for them to keep using. Too many cities have crossed that line. When you hand someone supplies to smoke fentanyl, snort drugs, or

continue using without any serious expectation of detox, treatment, recovery, or change, what message are you really sending? You are not saying, "We believe you can recover." You are saying, "We expect you to keep using." That is the dark truth nobody wants to say out loud.

Harm reduction was supposed to reduce harm. In many cities, it has become harm maintenance. Workers hand out supplies, call it public health, and then walk away while the same person keeps spiraling. The goal should not be helping people use drugs more safely forever. The goal should be helping people stop using drugs. The same problem exists with Housing First. Housing matters. Some people simply need a stable place to live and support to get back on their feet. But Housing First failed when it became housing only. The original idea was housing with services. Housing with support.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ...



Photo courtesy of Kevin Dahlgren

Homeless Housing Is Big Money

The French economist Frederic Bastiat observed almost two hundred years ago that public policy is easily “perverted by the influence of two entirely different causes: stupid greed and false philanthropy.”

We can see the consequences of false philanthropy — multiplied human suffering and destroyed communities — in the Housing First and Harm Reduction policies that ignore the deep human need for compassionate accountability and justice. These can only be delivered by the equal application and consistent enforcement of laws that provide safety and accountability for every person.

We can see the effects of “stupid greed” in the lavish salaries and massive real estate empires of many government-subsidized non-profits that have operated for too long without meaningful oversight or expectations.

While we can never know the true motives of another person’s heart, we must acknowledge some basic realities of human nature: First, we tend to spend “other people’s money” differently (and less carefully) than we spend our own earnings. Second, we tend to defend the sources of our own livelihoods, overlooking even obvious failures in programs or policies. Third, we tend

to forget the real source of charity when givers and getters are separated by a domineering third party (government).

It’s for these reasons that dollars spent from the public treasury are uniquely vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse — a fact confirmed almost daily by news headlines uncovering mismanagement and theft of public funds.

It’s also why most privately-funded charitable programs are more efficient and effective than government-funded efforts. When a person donates what she has personally earned, she tends to keep a close eye on how an organization manages her contribution.

And it’s why those in need of help and restoration have a better chance at recovery when they can look their helpers in the eye and see the sacrifices made on their behalf.

The federal government has collected billions of dollars for the purpose of alleviating the homelessness crisis, and the very best thing it can do is direct that money into recovery-oriented programs. Then, it must carefully steward that investment with clear expectations and meaningful oversight.



Created by Tom Wolf

Still, it would be wise for new recipients of those funds, particularly those with a faith-based mission, to craft their exit strategy before they accept the first dollar. They, too, are human. □

A Sampling of Non-Profit Housing Organizations (Publicly-Subsidized), Washington State			
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION	CITY	NET ASSETS	CEO COMPENSATION
Plymouth Housing Group	Seattle, WA	\$159,071,999	\$435,150
Bellwether Housing	Seattle, WA	\$98,591,545	\$399,698
Compass Housing Alliance	Seattle, WA	\$22,265,499	\$320,912*
Opportunity Council	Bellingham, WA	\$26,016,625	\$178,684
Pioneer Human Services	Seattle, WA	\$58,240,251	\$548,990
Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI)	Seattle, WA	\$204,282,385	\$350,035
Hopelink	Redmond, WA	\$50,047,457	\$303,982
Catholic Housing Services (Eastern WA)	Spokane, WA	\$50,648,385	\$292,829**
Catholic Charities of Spokane	Spokane, WA	\$20,985,392	\$294,119**
Catholic Community Services (Western WA)	Seattle, WA	\$101,992,786	\$453,317

*Salary for a partial year, through October. **Same CEO, total collected salary for 2024: \$585,948.

Source: ProPublica NonProfit Explorer, IRS 990s, for tax year 2024, filed 2025

HIGH RISK PROPERTY INSURANCE: Layered on top of the homeless housing industry are lucrative secondary insurance companies, many created by former low income housing leaders, that provide high risk liability insurance for these organizations (many of which find it impossible to secure primary market insurance). As noted by authors of a report commissioned by Washington State’s Insurance Commissioner: “[L]ower barriers to entry ... are expected by the insurers to expand behaviors that may result in property damage and liability claims.”

These high risk insurers operate in a secondary market with fewer regulations and less scrutiny than regular insurance companies. Not surprisingly, insurance CEOs can take home massive salaries.

Incentive to Defend Failed Homeless Policies

The Housing First model is built on the claim that we will end homelessness by putting homeless people — most suffering from deeply disruptive and life-destroying mental illness or addiction — inside permanently subsidized housing units as quickly as possible.

Faith in this myopic approach is so strong that even modest safeguards or delays are discouraged or prohibited outright — like requiring treatment, carefully screening criminal backgrounds, enforcing public health and safety laws impacting homeless populations, or sharing funding with programs that prioritize personal recovery.

So incentivized are housing units that a whole pillar of Congress’s homelessness mandate has been neglected since Housing First was formally adopted by the federal government in 2013. One of four stated purposes for federal Continuum of Care funds (totaling \$4 billion taxpayer dollars this year) is that recipient agencies and programs “optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.”

Yet the failed Housing First model is still being aggressively administered: According to the federal 2025 Annual Homeless Assessment, annual taxpayer subsidies for homeless housing and beds have doubled (in some categories almost tripled) under the policy.

Protecting the industry that has ballooned to capitalize on this money requires pretending away the obvious: homelessness today is a human crisis largely driven by addiction and mental illness.

The pretense is devastating. Since 2013, homelessness across all measured categories has increased 27%, while the number of people living on the streets is up 36%, and chronic homelessness is up 81%.

With little incentive to invest in treatment and no meaningful governance of tenants, homeless housing developments are predictably hellish: filled with drug use, filth, violence, and despair. Some managers admit

that death — not recovery — is the expected outcome: “Not to sound morbid,” testified a director from Seattle’s Plymouth Housing, “but as soon as people move in, they’re with us until they pass away.”

Meanwhile, many who profit from homeless housing developments do not themselves live near them, or experience the disorder that often spills into the surrounding community. □

Transparency & Accountability are a Must

Too often, weak or non-existent oversight of federal homelessness spending has opened the door to waste, fraud, and abuse — and many bad actors have taken advantage.

We must establish rigorous accountability for every public dollar. Funding should be transparent and traceable to measurable outcomes in treatment, recovery, and employment. Independent audits should be conducted to promote integrity and prevent misuse of taxpayer resources.

New federal reforms rightly place emphasis on accountability for well-defined outcomes and competitive awarding of monies available, rather than continued automatic renewals of housing grants.

Organizations receiving program operating funds and recipients receiving direct services benefit from meaningful accountability and oversight. Both should demonstrate productive use of public funds.

See next page for a summary of federal homelessness reforms.

Federal Reforms and New Opportunities

Helping people attain self-sufficiency through treatment and recovery

Housing First — the policy of providing subsidized permanent housing without requiring participation in treatment, recovery, or employment programs — inspired hundreds of “Ten-Year Plans to End Homelessness.”

In 2010, President Obama pledged to end veteran and chronic homelessness by 2015, family homelessness by 2020, and all homelessness by 2023. In 2013, Housing First became official federal policy. Simultaneously, “Harm Reduction” approaches normalized and legalized drug use and removed incentives for recovery.

The results are unmistakable. Since 2013, homelessness has increased dramatically nationwide. Beyond the data, the evidence is visible in the streets, alleys, and parks of every major city. Housing First was a well-intended but ill-conceived experiment that has deepened the crisis it sought to solve.

In response, the Trump administration has issued a series of executive orders and implemented reforms to federal homelessness policy. These reforms center on four key shifts:

1. Ending failed Housing First and Harm Reduction mandates.
2. Increasing funding for treatment and recovery programs while demanding accountability and measurable progress toward self-sufficiency.
3. Restoring the use of civil commitment laws for individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others.
4. Reinforcing essential public health and safety laws.

In June 2026, Discovery Institute’s Fix Homelessness team published an updated policy brief offering guidance to Continuums of Care (CoCs), local governmental jurisdictions, and service agencies on how to take advantage of these reforms to promote more effective, compassionate, and lasting change in their communities.

COMMON SENSE continued from Page 5 ...



Housing with case management. Housing with a path toward stability. But too often, it has become housing without expectations: no treatment requirement, no sobriety requirement, no real accountability, and no serious plan to address the addiction, psychosis, violence, trauma, or chaos that made someone unable to stay housed in the first place.

Then everyone acts shocked when the person destroys the unit, gets evicted, overdoses inside, or turns the building into

the same chaos they were living in outside. That is not just a housing failure. That is a policy failure. You cannot take someone in full-blown fentanyl addiction, hand them keys, ask nothing of them, and call that a solution. You may have moved the suffering indoors, but you have not ended it. Housing without expectations becomes warehousing. People get housing, but the addiction comes with them. The dealers come with them. The untreated mental illness comes with them. The trauma comes with them. If we do not address those issues, then we are not solving homelessness. We are just changing the location of the crisis.

That is why the national conversation is starting to shift. HUD Secretary Scott Turner has called Housing First a failed ideology and is moving federal policy away from simply funding housing with no expectations and toward treatment, recovery, employment training, mental health support, and self-sufficiency. That is the debate we should have been having years ago. For too long, the homeless industrial complex treated Housing First like a religion. If you questioned it, you were cruel. If you asked for treatment requirements, you were criminalizing poverty. If you asked for work programs, you did not understand trauma. If you asked for accountability, you were blaming the victim. But what is crueler? Expecting someone to get help? Or handing them keys while they continue smoking fentanyl until they die inside the unit?

The left loves to talk about root causes, but then refuses to deal with the most obvious ones right in front of us: addiction, mental illness, broken fami-

lies, trauma, criminal behavior, and a complete lack of accountability. Instead, they blame capitalism. They blame landlords. They blame rent. They blame police. They blame everyone except the failed system they created and continue to defend. Another major problem is the left’s obsession with victimhood. Everyone on the street is treated as if they are simply a victim of capitalism, rent prices, racism, or bad luck. Some are. Many people have been deeply harmed by trauma, poverty, abuse, and broken systems. But that is not the whole story.

People also make choices. Addiction involves choices. Crime involves choices. Refusing shelter involves choices. Destroying housing involves choices. Assaulting outreach workers involves choices. Rejecting treatment over and over again involves choices. Acknowledging that does not mean we hate homeless people. It means we respect them enough to see them as human beings with agency, not helpless political symbols. The left claims to believe in dignity, but there is nothing dignified about letting someone rot in a tent for years while calling it autonomy. There is nothing dignified about allowing a severely mentally ill person to scream at invisible voices on a sidewalk because forced treatment makes activists uncomfortable. There is nothing dignified about letting addicts smoke fentanyl in front of children because enforcing laws might be called criminalization.

We have confused freedom with neglect. A person trapped in addiction is not free. A person dying from untreated schizophrenia is not free. A person being trafficked inside an encampment is not free. A person living in filth, surrounded by stolen property, violence,

and fentanyl smoke, is not free. They are abandoned. And the people abandoning them are often the same people claiming the moral high ground. The nonprofit industrial complex also has to be confronted. Billions of dollars have been spent across the country, yet the streets look worse in city after city. Where

is the accountability? Where are the results? Where are the clear metrics? How many people got sober? How many were reunited with family? How many left the streets permanently? How many entered treatment and stayed there?

Too often, success is measured by contacts, supplies handed out, meetings attended, grants received, and beds funded. But the public does not care how many meetings were held. The public wants to know why the same person is still sleeping in the same doorway three years later. More importantly, that person deserves better than another clipboard conversation. The left has also created a system

Discovery Institute
Report | Updated June 2026

HOW LOCAL JURISDICTIONS CAN LEVERAGE FEDERAL HOMELESSNESS REFORMS

DEFINING SUCCESS AS HELPING PEOPLE ATTAIN SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

[FIXHOMELESSNESS.ORG](https://fixhomelessness.org)

RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

Continuums of Care (CoC) & Local Governments

1. Move from Housing First and Harm Reduction approaches toward treatment-based recovery models.
2. Repurpose some funding from permanent supportive housing to transitional recovery housing.
3. Partner with established high performing agencies to expand emergency and wrap-around services.
4. Create multidisciplinary Outreach Teams that include law enforcement, emergency medical responders, and licensed mental health professionals.
5. Enforce essential public health and safety laws, as allowed for in the *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson* Supreme Court decision.
6. Foster competition in grant applications to improve outcomes, accountability, and innovation.
7. Redefine success: measure self-sufficiency and recovery and not how many people receive taxpayer subsidies.
8. Ensure strict transparency and accountability for all public expenditures.
9. Actively include faith-based and law enforcement partners in local homelessness strategies.

Service Agencies

1. Define success by the number of individuals who achieve recovery and self-sufficiency.
2. Coordinate closely with CoCs to design integrated and innovative care systems.
3. When collaboration is obstructed by a CoC, apply for HUD grants as a “sole applicant.”
4. Maintain full transparency in spending, operations, and outcomes.

The truly compassionate path is to replace broken systems with those that work—to reject abstract promises of “ending homelessness” and instead commit to increasing self-sufficiency, one person at a time.

Read the full report at fixhomelessness.org.

What are the Root Causes of Homelessness?

Addressing Addiction

by President Donald Trump

48.4 million Americans, or 16.8 percent of our Nation’s population, suffer from addiction. Addiction is a chronic, treatable disease with relapse rates similar to other chronic diseases.

The framework for addiction treatment should parallel that of other chronic diseases—utilizing evidence-based care, scientific advancement, continuous support, and community connection. My Administration will drive a new national response to the disease of addiction that will create stronger coordination across government, the healthcare sector, faith communities, and the private sector in order to save lives, restore families, strengthen our communities.

We will take appropriate actions to increase awareness of the disease of addiction, help Americans receive the treatment they need, and foster a culture that celebrates recovery.

Excerpted from an Executive Order titled “Addressing Addiction through the Great American Recovery Initiative,” signed January 29, 2026, by President Donald Trump.

DEFINITION

ADDICT (verb): From the Latin addico, to devote; ad and dico, to dedicate. To apply onself habitually; to devote time and attention by customary or constant practice.

QUOTE

And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

– The Bible, Matthew 25:40

Untreated Mental Illness: The Invisible Scandal in Front of Your Nose

by Bruce Chapman

A deranged psychotic, Waldo Mejia of the Bronx in New York, yelled on the street, “I’m with Satan!” and thrust a knife into 14-year-old Caleb Rijos’s chest, killing him.

It would be nice to think this kind of grave, senseless incident from last spring was rare, but we see comparable cases almost daily, especially in big cities. People pushed onto subway tracks. Elderly people sucker-punched on a streetcorner.

Some offenders are prosecuted and get treatment in jail. Much more often, if poor and left to themselves, they and the much more numerous ordinary denizens of the sidewalks and tent camps die of suicide or of exposure and disease. Estimates vary widely about what percentage of people in homeless camps are mentally ill, but it is a large piece of a growing pie. In the camps they often become drug-addicted.

Mental illness as such is largely ignored by the media. That’s because the prevailing attitude has been that the general run of people with mental illnesses should not be stigmatized by the statistically unusual violence of a person suffering from, say, paranoid schizophrenia.

All too often, people with a mental illness who commit violent crimes that do not result in injury or death are released back to the street. One never-cited reason may be the unspoken concern that it will cost the taxpayers plenty to incarcerate a mentally disturbed person.

The shameful neglect of mental illness in the 21st century is the result of a mostly well-meaning decision made in the middle of the 20th century to undertake a slow “deinstitutionalization” of state mental hospitals. The promised “community-based” alternatives failed to materialize, so, people with serious mental illnesses, especially the poor, usually wind up on the streets, in jail, in hospital emergency rooms, or dead.

This is the scandal in front of your nose that governments want to ignore. They don’t want to spend the money needed to live up to the long-standing public responsibility to help the mentally ill, even though many state constitutions plainly assert that responsibility.

There is no study I know of yet that tabulates the implicit costs of not caring for the mentally ill. A proper accounting likely would show that while mental health care is expensive, it is not as expensive as the present neglect that swells public spending on jails, ambulances and hospital emergency rooms, and lowers the quality of living for people who live near the problems.

Officials also dread confronting well-financed civil liberties groups like the ACLU that want homelessness and random crime to be understood as a product of capitalism and lack of affordable housing.

Perhaps the saddest part of this picture is the decline of state mental institutions. Presently, a sixty-year-old Medicaid policy — the “IMD Exclusion” that was enacted to encourage deinstitutionalization — prohibits Medicaid reimbursements in Institutions of Medical Disease with more than 16 beds, except for those serving



Photo by Tara Faul

very young and old patients. But good psychiatric care at only 16 or fewer beds is hard to provide. Congress must repeal this exclusion.

Surely state and federal officials need to cooperate in reinvigorating state care in modern facilities, better run, of course, than 60 years ago, and maybe somewhat smaller.

Officials also need to enact — and seriously implement — involuntary commitment laws, and in the cases where mentally ill persons have committed a crime, a more extensive use of the threat of jail as an incentive for addicts and mentally ill persons to accept treatment as an alternative.

Meanwhile, federal housing funds should be trimmed and redirected to act as a serious backup for policies to help the mentally ill (and the drug addicted). This in fact is the new direction HUD is going.

The benefits of these reforms enacted at federal, state and local levels, will be quickly felt. Downtown cores will revive and thrive. Disturbing random crimes will decline. The quiet despair of families whose loved ones have been abandoned to the streets will be relieved.

The lives of suffering thousands will be retrieved.

Bruce Chapman, a White House aide to President Reagan, is founder and Board Chair of Discovery Institute.

What about the Children?

by Marsha Michaelis

A shocking story published in December 2025 by Charlie Harger of KIRO News Radio told of a 9-year-old boy living in a tent in one of Seattle’s public parks. He lived there with his parents, when they were around. His mother was a fentanyl addict and prostitute who made the boy wait outside in the bushes while she serviced clients in the tent. His father reportedly had a long criminal history.

Neighbors said the boy was filthy, had a rasping chest cough, and did not go to school. They said he was left alone in the tent long hours every day while his father worked, and sometimes all night. Occasionally, his mother disappeared for days at a time. Neighbors, social workers, and law enforcement officers offered the family help — food, clothes, rides to school, a room for the mother and her son. Both parents refused. Both parents, with hostile expletives, denied the boy is neglected.

Under Washington’s new “Keeping Families Together Act,” Child Protective Services and Seattle police officers determined there was no legal authority for

removing the boy from the situation. He had “appropriate food and bedding” in the tent. He was not at “imminent risk of physical harm.”

Yet the situation outrages and distresses every decent person. It has no place in a civilized society. What should be done?

Should the boy be forcibly taken from his parents and placed in foster care? That’s deeply traumatic — a lot like being kidnapped and imprisoned by strangers — and sometimes foster care is not safer.

Offering services clearly falls short in this case. Poverty is not the real issue; willful depravity and vice are the issues.

Should the parents be arrested and imprisoned for the crimes of neglect, dereliction of duty, illicit drug use, prostitution, public camping? That would be just, but where does that leave the boy?

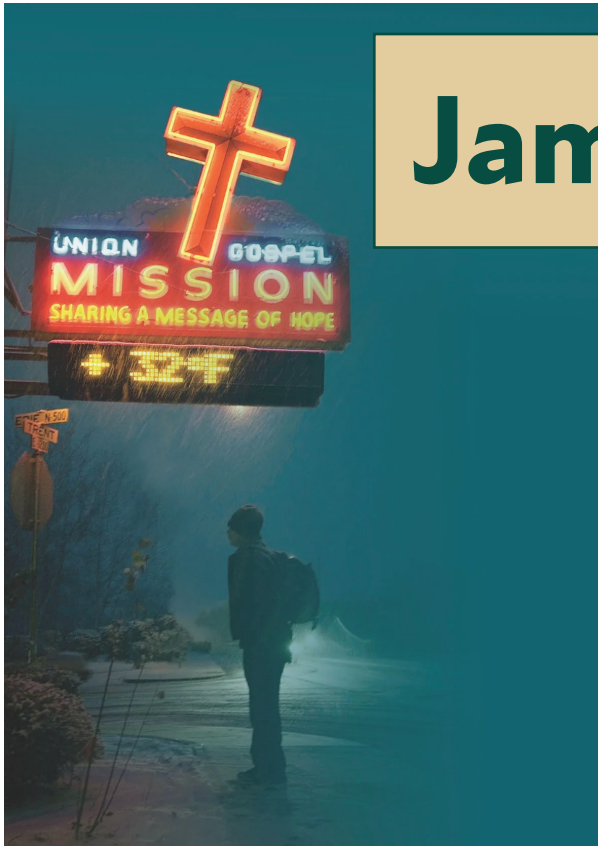
Any appropriate response will be traumatic. Someone must be displaced, interrupted, removed from harmful influences, and forced into a new routine. The parents should bear the brunt of that trauma; the boy should not.



Photos by Andrea Suarez, WeHeartSeattle

Conditions inside and outside the family’s tent.

A possible remedy? Commit this family, together, to a humane, court-ordered, involuntary, physically secure, family rehabilitation program. That program should provide 1) a warm and safe place for the whole family; 2) nourishing food, adequate clothing, urgent



James’s Story

Most of my struggles ... I didn’t even know they were part of me until I came to the Mission. I didn’t realize I was so broken. I was hardened from the time I was a baby.”

It never occurred to James to think of his life experiences as anything other than normal until he saw the distress of a counselor upon hearing his story.

Abandoned by his father in infancy, James always thought of his dad as someone who never did anything wrong. He just wasn’t there.

His mother’s life revolved around her drug addiction: “When she had drugs, she was happy.”

Foster care, CPS, and the juvenile justice system were familiar institutions for him and his siblings, and he wonders now: “Why didn’t somebody save us?” But no one ever intervened in his life’s trajectory.

Any authority he feared in his family circle was related to the family’s drug business: You didn’t mess with the drugs. When he grew up, he sold drugs, too. He can’t remember a single relationship before the age of 45 that wasn’t cultivated, secured, and centered around drugs.

Prison was part of his family compound; cumulatively he spent “ten or twelve years” there. “I did prison well,” he says. Prison was part family reunion, part “me time.” It was a chance to sit back, think, detox.

It never occurred to James until later, but “I was homeless my whole life, except as a little kid.” He always had plenty of money and drugs, but “home” was a revolving door of foster care, juvenile detention, friends’ houses, motel stays, prison. At least he didn’t have to live on the streets.

That is, until he broke one of those unspoken rules surrounding the family business. Threats of violence followed and he fled to Spokane, Washington, where he lived in his car. Eventually he lost the car and moved into a tent.

It was around this time that the law began to factor into his decision-making. While he didn’t mind occasional visits to prison, Washington had strict mandatory sentencing laws for repeat felons. He’d maxed out his “felony points,” public camping was illegal, and he knew it wasn’t “if” but “when” he’d be caught.

After some months on the streets, he was cold and hungry. He felt sick all the time. He knew about the local Union Gospel Mission (UGM), and one night decided to go there and get a hot meal. The “price” was attendance at a short chapel service. “I thought it was dumb at the time,” James remembers, “but it was only 45 minutes, and the food was good.”

The “guy on the stage” that night was visibly emotional talking about his son in the military. James

had never seen such an obvious display of a father’s love before. “It got my attention.”

Two months later, James was shivering in his tent on a mid-December night. “I was sick as a dog,” he remembers. “Prison’s sounding pretty good right now.”

In desperation, he went back to the Mission, where he saw the same man who’d spoken before. James asked if they could talk, and the man, Ron Moline, took him aside and asked how he could help.

“I’m TIRED,” was all James could manage before he broke down and wept for the first time in his life. Never before had he allowed himself to cry; in his family and culture crying was shameful and dangerous.

That day, he found himself “giving my life to this guy named Jesus.”

As he learned about the Mission, James said it all “sounded too good to be true.” He’d been through plenty of court-ordered programs before and never found change or healing. But this time, “I knew I needed to trust someone.”

At UGM, staff and volunteers understand the basic human need for physical and emotional safety; it’s why the Mission has a few basic ground rules: residents must be sober, must participate in some small way in daily operations, and cannot be violent.

When a person first comes to UGM, they’re given several days to adjust and find rest in the experience of safety. Then, in addition to the warm and safe shelter, early days will include basic medical care, three hearty meals each day, assignment of a daily chore, participation in chapel and classes, introductions to the program’s self-evaluation process, and help quitting nicotine if they need it.

James understood he needed to trust and be trustworthy. When he failed an on-site drug test that first day, he was afraid Ron would think he’d lied. UGM typically doesn’t allow a person to come into the building unless they’re clean.

But Ron told James the Mission would work with him. While he waited for the drugs to clear, he could spend his days in the Mission’s day room for men, and Ron arranged for him to stay nights at a nearby emergency shelter.

This kind of practical grace is built in to UGM’s programs. Staff understand that a path to healing and recovery often has set-backs and detours.

When he finally got his clean drug screen and a medical exam, the doctor prescribed two things: First, to treat his malnourishment, James should eat everything that sounded good to him for the next year. Second, he received a prescription slip with one word on it: “Program.” James was being invited into UGM’s full-time, 18- to 24-month residential recovery program, designed to help people “deal with overwhelming

issues such as addiction, personal trauma, or a criminal record.” James could check “all of the above.”

James decided to trust Ron, but it wasn’t a blind trust: “If even one thing hadn’t matched up, I would have left, but everything he said about the UGM program was true, times ten.”

So began two years of hard and often painful work. James had to learn things most learn as children from their parents: healthy boundaries, basic right and wrong, the names and existence of all kinds of deeper emotions. The idea that true recovery takes time is central to UGM’s program.

When James graduated out of the first phase of the residential program, he was invited to move upstairs into a room shared with just one other person, and he had more time to himself. He was allowed to visit the Mission’s thrift store once a week and choose some new clothes.

The experience of having his basic needs met in a caring environment was completely new to James. “I’ve never really had a home like that,” he said.

He was also assigned a personal counselor and mentor. “I wanted a counselor who was a recovered addict,” he remembers. But instead, they “gave me a NERD counselor with no recovery story!” When he questioned the choice, he was told, “He has what you need. You already know everything about drugs.”

The third phase of the program got harder: It was time for James to face his past and “get through the bad stuff.” He had to learn to recognize and address the underlying thoughts, feelings and behaviors that motivated destructive behaviors. He had to learn to see things as they really were.

UGM’s fourth phase included a work practicum to give participants a chance to re-enter the job environment with an employer who partners in their recovery. They work free of charge for 240 hours, and meet with counselors to address any issues.

Ultimately, James got a job hauling donated vehicles for UGM Motors, the Mission’s used car business. He loves it. He gets to meet the people who donate to the Mission, develop all kinds of “cool relationships,” and share the story of his redemption “four or five times a day sometimes.”

Six months after James came to UGM, Washington state decriminalized drug possession and public camping. James said those laws were part of what saved his life. He’s sorry that enforcement isn’t there now to nudge people toward a better life.

These days, thanks to God and UGM, James has been clean and sober for seven years. He has a car, a home of his own, and a job he loves. His isolation is over: on his phone is “an eight-swipe contact list,” filled with people he can bless and be blessed by. He tries to make it over to the men’s shelter at least once a week to talk with other men, remembering clearly what it’s like to run to drugs to treat the overwhelming pain, shame, and regret of a life without hope.

What he tells other men is that “the things I can’t explain are the reasons I’m still here.” It’s because God wants him here. With Jesus, a will and desire to change, and the relentless help of others, it’s possible to be reborn. □

Union Gospel Mission’s steps toward recovery



Step 1: Safety.

Before an individual in crisis can effectively build a better life, they need a safe place to stabilize. A clean and sober environment, safe people, warm meals, medical attention, and basic resources provide the soil where hope can grow.



Step 2: A plan.

Once basic needs are met, men and women can start to face the issues that have perpetuated their unwanted situation. Through case management, employment therapy, or holistic recovery, they can form a plan that will move them toward new life.



Step 3: Time.

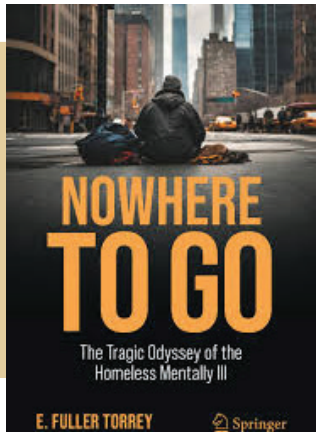
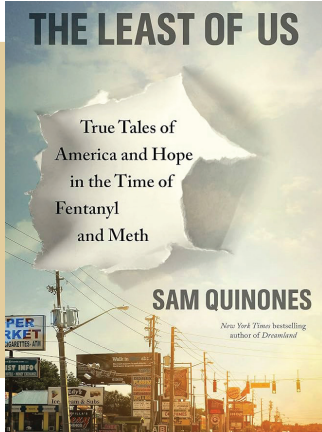
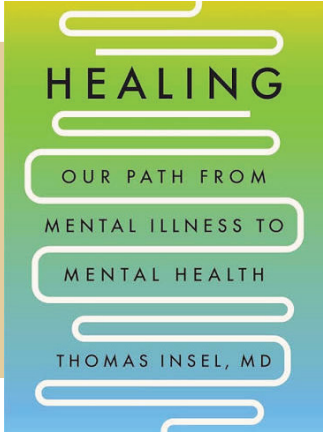
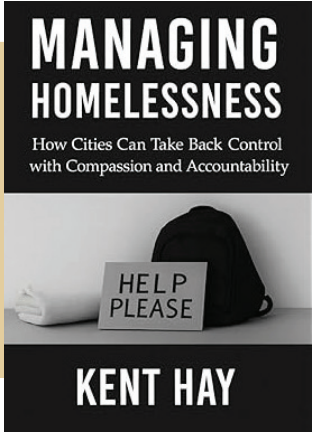
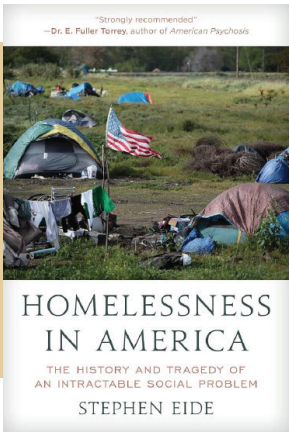
To overcome a lifetime of trauma and addiction takes time. A chance of long-term success reaches 85% after the first five years of sobriety. It takes ongoing mentorship, employment, housing, childcare, and a supportive community.



Community.

Then there’s you, me, and everyone else. Community isn’t a step of the process, but something we all must partake in. We must come alongside those in recovery and help them in their lifelong journey.

BOOKS WORTH READING



Who is Doing a Good Job Helping the Homeless?

The following organizations focus on compassionately helping people grow in self-sufficiency, with results to show for it. Each has an effective program worth learning about, supporting, and imitating. We encourage you to look them up and learn more.



Citygate Network

A movement of gospel-centered ministries serving people facing homelessness, trauma, poverty, and addiction and equipping leaders to respond with excellence and compassion.
citygatenetwork.org | (719) 266-8300
info@citygatenetwork.org

TeenChallenge USA

Christ-centered drug and alcohol recovery. There are over 220 Adult & Teen Challenge USA residential programs throughout the United States.
teenchallengeusa.org | (855) 363-2334
info@teenchallengeusa.org

Salvation Army

One of the largest social service providers in the United States, with homeless shelters and addiction recovery programs among its many services.

salvationarmyusa.org | 1-800-SAL-ARMY

Community First Village

A master planned neighborhood that provides affordable, permanent housing and supportive community for people coming out of chronic homelessness.
mlf.org/community-first | (512) 328-7299
Austin, TX

Haven for Hope

A recovery-oriented homeless shelter that addresses root causes of homelessness by offering programs tailored to individual needs.

havenforhope.org | (210) 220-2100
info@havenforhope.org | San Antonio, TX

Delancey Street Foundation

The country's leading residential self-help organization for substance abusers, ex-convicts, homeless and others who have hit bottom.

delanceystreetfoundation.org | (415) 512-5191
San Francisco, CA

Free Up Foundation

Helps communities build recovery-focused systems to restore lives and strengthen neighborhoods.
freeupfoundation.com | (916) 832-7626
michele@freeupfoundation.com

Rocky Mountain Refuge

Shelter for unhoused people with terminal illness. Provides a place to live, laundry, cleaning, companionship, and hospice services.

rockymountainrefuge.org | Denver, CO

The Dream Center

The Dream Center is a faith-based nonprofit in L.A. meeting practical and spiritual needs: restoring hope, rebuilding futures, and empowering people to live healthy, purpose-filled lives.

dreamcenter.org | (213) 273-7000



O-UT

Overhaul-Unrelenting Transfiguration (O-UT), founded by Chris and Ginny Burton, is an intentional accountability program designed to help individuals change their lives for good.
vginnyburton.com | (206) 601-1823
vb@vginnyburton.com

The Way Out Initiative

A recovery-focused homeless initiative designed to restore lives. A project of the Salvation Army of San Francisco, it offers an effective model for others.

westernusa.salvationarmy.org | 1-800-SAL-ARMY

We Heart Seattle

Action-based, boots-on-the-ground movement that organizes trash cleanups in public spaces and offers resources to those in need.

weheartseattle.org | info@weheartseattle.org
Seattle, WA

Hope & Chance

Provides mental health support, housing assistance, recovery resources, peer mentorship, and wraparound services to help individuals and families move toward stability with dignity.
hopeandchanceintegratedhealth.com
(206) 353-0489 | Seattle, WA

The More We Love

We provide pathways of hope to those experiencing homelessness, addiction, domestic violence, and trafficking.

themorewelove.org | (425) 333-7100
connect@themorewelove.org | Kirkland, WA

Gabriel's Challenge

A community coalition dedicated to preventing substance-related harm, supporting long-term recovery, and advancing a No Wrong Door approach to care.
gabrielschallenge.org | (509) 559-9909
Spokane, WA

Battlefield Addiction

Using a Family-First approach, we teach families how to take action—reconnect, reengage, and guide their loved ones into full recovery and independence.
battlefieldaddiction.com | (253) 242-9760
info@battlefieldaddiction.com

Bread of Life Mission

Life transformation is possible with Christ-centered compassion. We often see either accountability with no support, or support with no accountability. We strive to provide both.
breadoflifemission.org | (206) 682-3579
info@breadoflifemission.org | Seattle, WA

Union Gospel Mission-Seattle

We address root causes and break the cycle of homelessness by meeting urgent physical needs, building relationships, and offering long-term recovery programs.
ugm.org | (206) 501-HELP
getHELP@ugm.org | Seattle, WA

Union Gospel Mission-Spokane

Our services include comprehensive addiction and trauma recovery, legal and financial services, jobs and job-training, one-on-one counseling, and much more.
uniongospelmission.org | (509) 535-8510
Inland Northwest, WA

Ascenda Sober Living

A family-friendly, affordable, sober living apartment complex with onsite care and support services to promote and maintain long-term recovery.
ascendasoberliving.com | (509) 951-6381
info@ascendasoberliving.com | Spokane, WA

Forged in Fire *by Ginny Burton*

My life is a testament to everything society claims cannot be changed. According to every metric, every report, every system designed to categorize and predict human outcomes, I should be dead or warehoused.

My dad went to prison when I was four. My mother introduced me to drugs when I was seven.

By the time I was old enough to form opinions about the world, I had already learned its most dangerous lessons: love was transactional, violence masqueraded as love, and survival meant being harder and meaner than anyone who might hurt you first. And everyone will hurt you if you let them.

I was feral. Wild. Criminally minded in ways that seemed like survival to me. I was violent because violence was the currency I'd grown up with. I stole because taking things before someone took them from me was control. I used drugs early and often because they silenced the contradiction in my spirit and the screaming in my head.

My addiction spanned thirty years. During that time, I became what I swore I never would: a worthless addict, an absent parent, and a waste of life despite my intentions and misguided perceptions.

No matter the amount of destruction, I chose patterns, familiarity, and self-imposed imprisonment over and over again. I was married to Jay in 2011. Jay was violent in a way that felt like home. But he took things to another level that frightened even me, which was pretty hard to do.

At times I was homeless and living in my car. I was penniless and strung out on heroin and meth, a combination that created a specific kind of hell where you're simultaneously numb and hyper-aware, floating and drowning. Everything I owned was stolen or destroyed. My dignity was gone.

Then came the night everything shifted.

Jay came through the door of a friend's apartment with a hammer raised above his shoulder. I backed into the bathroom. I had pills in my backpack, over four hundred amitriptyline tablets I'd acquired to drug and rob people. Now they offered a different kind of escape.

I dumped all of them into my mouth. The quantity was staggering. I forced them down my throat with a bottle of water. I was certain I was going to die this time, finally, after years of wanting to end my perpetual failure. The thought filled me with a strange peace. Somewhere in the fading minutes of my awareness, Jay screamed at me to vomit. When I finally came to after four days unconscious, heroin withdrawal screaming through my body, the first thing I did was reach for the small bag of heroin I recalled having in my urine-soaked pants.

But then clarity hit me: I had inadvertently survived the worst phase of withdrawal. For the first time in recent memory, these sensations felt like they might actually be endurable. And again something shifted. My hatred for heroin's grip suddenly seemed more powerful than my need for it. The drug had transformed me into an easy target. Its constant demands had left me vulnerable to predators like Jay. It had nearly killed me, and when it failed at that job, it had proven itself utterly unreliable. Though I didn't stop using everything, I stopped my relationship with heroin that day.

My saving grace was being arrested.

I had warrants out for my arrest. I'd been printing checks and running schemes all over town to keep myself

afloat. That is what addicts do, whatever they can to keep on using. On December 5, 2012, when the police attempted to pull me over on Pacific Avenue in Spanaway, WA, I punched the gas. As I bent the corner on B Street, I nearly lost control of the truck. I slid and drifted through the backyard of a small apartment building, coming to a stop right next to a big tree.

When the officer approached me, he wasn't aggressive. He spoke with kindness, which was wild to me. As he placed me under arrest, something in me was able to release a huge sigh of relief. My addiction wanted to keep using, to stay free, but something deeper understood: the nightmare was finally over. It was a feeling

I'll never forget. I melted into the backseat and fell immediately asleep, that deep, immediate sleep that comes when you know you're about to be locked up for a while. I was tired. Not depressed. Tired in a way that meant I wasn't running anymore. I was grateful.

I had prayed for death. But instead, I was arrested. I was dying to a life that no longer served me. I was separated from choices I couldn't control.

Thank God for accountability. I spent over six months in jail, not caring whether I'd go

to prison. Jail gave me what I couldn't give myself: Distance. Clarity. Time to look inward.

I treated incarceration as an opportunity. Though jail had little to offer officially, I created my own program. I meditated, read, and attended every 12-step meeting available. Anything to build the foundation I'd need outside. With the support of key people, I was accepted into drug court in Seattle. That's where the real work began. I studied. I worked on myself. I began to understand the line between my circumstances and my choices, between what had been done to me and what I had done with what had been done. My mother introduced things into my life. That was her responsibility. How I chose to show up for those things — that was mine.

For years, I blamed my circumstances. My mother did beat me. My addiction was real. The violence happened. But none of them put the needle in my arm. I did that. I returned to violence and crime. I stole. I chose all of this over my children. Every single day, I chose the path I was on.

Victimhood is a death sentence. Every time I blame someone else for my situation, I give away my power to change it. I surrender the only agency I actually possess: the agency to choose differently, starting right now.

This realization didn't come all at once. It came in fragments, in moments of clarity followed by periods of regression.

I realized that victimhood is one of the most self-centered places to be, and it leads absolutely nowhere. It was time for me to start making different choices. I had to if I wanted to be free.

I made these new decisions because something whispered that there is another way. This was present all my life. I knew I was living in a contradiction, but was caught in patterns I couldn't seem to escape. That day when I was arrested, I knew without a doubt the life I was trapped in was over. I realized that if I want something different, I have to do something different.

When I was released six months later in 2013, I wasn't transformed. But I had resolve, clarity, and a start. I was released to a homeless shelter with no certainty I'd ever see my kids again. No matter. I was going to stabilize my life regardless. The Union Gospel Mission's women's program, Hope Place, gave me somewhere to stay clean and sober until I got on my feet. I was filled with gratitude, willingness, and determination.

Ginny Burton is the founder of the O-UT Impact Program, a holistic, lived experience, behavior change program focused on addressing underlying causes of homelessness, incarceration, and addiction. This story is excerpted and adapted from her book "The Gabriel Plan." Find out more at vginnyburton.com or outimpact.org.



Graduates of Ginny's O-UT program.



Ginny Burton

BOOK HIGHLIGHT

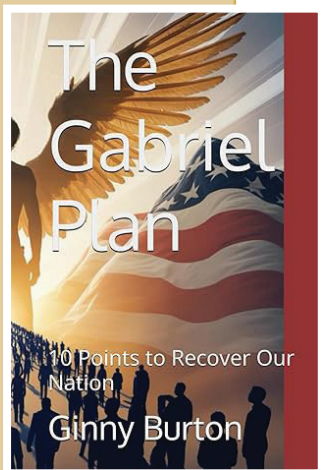
The Gabriel Plan

by Ginny Burton

Over the last decade, our leaders have decided that a city overrun by crime and addiction is somehow acceptable. There have been moments throughout my life in addiction when I thought to myself: wouldn't it be awesome if we had free reign in the city to do whatever we want? To not have to worry about cops, people being able to defend themselves, or just having the ability to use and sell drugs with impunity. Those thoughts were the product of addiction, fantasies born from a mind enslaved to drugs, desperate to justify destructive behavior and escape consequences.

I say this clearly: as a clean and sober person with thirteen years of recovery, I by no means want free reign and pandemonium in our cities. I don't want the chaos I once craved for ease of the hustle. I want order, safety, and cities where people can raise families. Places where businesses can thrive and communities are intact.

Ginny's book is available for purchase on Amazon.com. Find out more about her program at outimpact.org.



THE CHILDREN continued from Page 8 ...

medical care, and counseling; 3) education for the child; 4) clinical treatment and recovery support for the mother; and 5) work for the father.

Does this solution violate someone's civil or human rights? No. A decent society recognizes that dereliction of duty, neglect of a child, illicit drug use, selling sex, and camping in a public city park are not rights; they are crimes. Rights can be forfeit when a person chooses to violate the law, yet the purpose of law is to uphold the rights of the innocent. Children have a right to the dutiful care of their own parents.

We spend billions on social services, law enforcement, prisons, rehabilitation, treatment, education, and housing. When justice demands, we apply these

programs and remedies to individuals without their consent. Perhaps it's time to consider applying them to whole families when children are involved.

A wise (just, compassionate, and fitting) application of the law and services to situations like this one might just save children from the trauma that puts them at high risk for becoming the next generation of homeless adults.

Perhaps some children can be saved *with* their parents, instead of *from* them.

Marsha Michaelis is a Research Fellow with Discovery Institutes's Fix Homelessness Initiative.

How You Can Help

First, thank you for reading this publication. We would be pleased to hear your thoughts: mmichaelis@discovery.org.

Whether you have just minutes to spare or more time to invest, a few dollars or many thousands, here are some ways you can help address the difficult human issue of homelessness in your own community:

1. Share this publication with friends, either digitally, or by requesting hard copies to be mailed to you (contact mmichaelis@discovery.org or 206-292-0401).
2. Did any idea stand out? Consider how it applies in your local community, share it with others, and take appropriate action.
3. Investigate: Who in your community is suffering? Who is helping them? Is there a need not being met? Is there a way you can participate in meeting it?
4. Invite friends for coffee; discuss how to serve people in your area; team up.
5. Donate to a local homeless charity, or to any of those highlighted on page 10, or to support the work of Discovery Institute.
6. Volunteer at a local charity.
7. Print information about local resources on a card to hand to out to those in need.
8. If you feel safe doing so, introduce yourself to someone experiencing homelessness and learn about their circumstances. Connect them with appropriate help.
9. Read one of the books highlighted in this publication. Host a discussion.
10. Explore how your local government approaches these issues; take a meaningful part in shaping policy. Start with the recommendations and resources on page 7.
11. Communicate: write a letter to the editor, post on social media, discuss at a community event, contact your elected officials. Share copies of this publication.
12. Pray for those who suffer and those who help. Call a local organization, or one of those mentioned in this publication, and ask them to give you the first name of a client or staff member to pray for regularly. Encourage them in their work.
13. Visit fixhomelessness.org for regular news and updates on homelessness and related issues.

COMMON SENSE continued from Page 7 ...

where the people least affected by bad policy are the ones making the rules. The activists demanding no sweeps do not usually live next to the encampments. The officials opposing enforcement are not stepping over needles outside their front doors. The nonprofit executives talking about lived experience are not the ones trying to run a small business next to an open-air drug market.

Working-class neighborhoods pay the price. Families pay the price. Small businesses pay the price. And yes, the homeless themselves pay the biggest price of all. Because when cities refuse to enforce basic standards, the streets become governed by whoever is strongest, most violent, or most addicted. I have seen it over and over again. Encampments develop their own power structure. Predators move in. Women are exploited. Elderly and disabled homeless people are victimized. Addicts steal from each other. Dealers take control. That is what happens when government steps back and calls it compassion.

The answer is not cruelty. The answer is not simply sweeping people from block to block. The answer is not pretending jail alone will fix addiction. But the answer is also not endless permissiveness. We need a recovery-based system. We need shelter with expectations. We need sanctioned camping with rules and services while banning street camping outside of those areas. We need real detox on demand. We need long-term treatment, not just a brochure and a phone number. We need mental health beds. We need civil commitment for people who are clearly unable to care for themselves. We need employment training. We need reunification programs. We need transitional housing

that actually transitions people somewhere. And we need to stop pretending every person on the street is one apartment away from stability.

We need to separate the person who lost their job and needs short-term help from the person smoking fentanyl all day and refusing every offer of treatment. We need to bring back accountability, not because we hate homeless people, but because we want them to live. The left's greatest failure is that it has mistaken compassion for permission. Permission to use. Permission to steal. Permission to camp anywhere. Permission to refuse help forever. Permission to destroy neighborhoods. Permission to die slowly in public while everyone around them is told to call it dignity.

That is not love. Love intervenes. Love sets boundaries. Love tells the truth. Love says you cannot keep living like this. Love says we will help you, but we will not help you destroy yourself. Until our cities are willing to say that, nothing will change. We will keep spending billions. We will keep creating new committees. We will keep renaming programs. We will keep blaming capitalism, housing costs, and lack of funding. And the bodies will keep dropping.

The crisis will not end until we reject the ideology that created this disaster and return to common sense: treatment, accountability, shelter, enforcement, recovery, and compassion that actually saves lives. Because compassion without accountability is not compassion. It is cruelty.



Kevin Dahlgren (R) poses with a young man named Michael who is starting a street-based boxing program in Portland, OR, to help the homeless find connection and purpose.

Kevin Dahlgren is an independent journalist working with Discovery Institute's Fix Homelessness Initiative. Follow his work on X @kevinvdahlgren or at truthonthestreets.substack.com.

ABOUT DISCOVERY INSTITUTE AND THIS PUBLICATION

Founded in 1991, Discovery Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan organization focused on research, education, action, and cultural renewal. Headquartered in Seattle, the Institute sponsors research in the sciences, humanities, and public policy. It organizes conferences, seminars, and educational programs for both young people and adults. It produces and disseminates books, articles, reports, and a wide array of multimedia content designed to inform the public.

This publication is a project of our Fix Homelessness initiative, which aims to offer innovative research and compassionate solutions to address the crisis of homelessness, addiction, and untreated mental illness facing many in the United States. The project's mission is to serve as a resource for all who seek to meaningfully reduce homelessness, restore public safety and protect healthy civic life, while helping those who are suffering reach their full human potential. We are equally committed to supporting communities affected by the consequences of unmanaged homelessness — including crime, open drug use, unsafe conditions, and deteriorating public spaces — by advancing policies that promote both human dignity and neighborhood wellbeing.

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Disclaimer: The authors featured in this publication are not all affiliated with Discovery Institute and do not necessarily agree with everything we publish (and vice versa). We are grateful for their valuable work and contributions to this issue.

A Side of Common Sense with that Burger, Please *by Marsha Michaelis*

I had an hour to wait in Colville, Washington, so I went to McDonalds, ordered a meal, and sat at a table with my computer. A woman sitting nearby asked about my work. When I explained I work on homelessness policy, she said: "I'd like to help the homeless."

"How would you do that?" I asked. She thought for just a few seconds, then said: "I'd get some property, and I'd put some buildings on it, with rooms in them. And I'd invite the homeless to come live there as long as they stayed clean and sober. And I'd give them some clothes to wear every day when they went out to look for a job. And I'd also give them some work to do to help out around the property."

Frankly, that's a really good answer. The woman spoke from experience — she had been homeless herself for a time. Why? It was a familiar theme: "My daughter got addicted to drugs

and stole all my money." Addiction and untreated mental illness are at the root of most unsheltered homelessness. "But people have to want to change," said my McDonald's acquaintance. She's right. Our laws and systems and policies should give people compelling reasons to choose the hard work of treatment and recovery over continued enslavement to addiction and untreated mental illness, even as we recognize and account for the fact that some people are not in a fit state to make a decision to help themselves.

The lady in McDonalds knew all of that. She had common sense and that gritty no-nonsense compassion that refuses to pretend enabling is helping. It's high time for our public policies to reflect this kind of common sense.



QUOTE

"Having a heart for our homeless brothers and sisters does not mean indefinitely subsidizing housing without accountability and proper requirements for treatment, recovery, and pathways for self-sufficiency. Having a heart for our homeless brothers and sisters means helping them get back on their feet through a holistic approach so that the tough times will be temporary, and our streets and communities will be safer."

—Scott Turner, Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development