

Outside In Project: *Harvard Square*



Youth are homeless for three reasons: home doesn't exist, home isn't safe, or home isn't supportive.

Each year in Massachusetts, thousands of young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 find themselves without adult supervision and experiencing homelessness. They age out of the foster care system, get kicked out because of their sexual orientation, leave abusive situations, or are in families that are unable to financially support them. Without a safe place to stay, they find themselves taken advantage of in adult shelters, staying up all night to stay safe on the streets, or turning to drugs and alcohol to cope.

You Can Be Part of the Solution.

You can give your time, your financial support and your voice to end youth homelessness and support the young adults who find themselves experiencing extremely difficult challenges and life situations. You can get involved by partnering with organizations working to end homelessness. **Progressive organizations to consider include:**



Youth on Fire is a drop-in center for homeless youth aged 14-24 in Harvard Square, and a prevention program of the AIDS Action Committee. Open Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m., the program responds to homeless youths' basic needs, connects them to appropriate care, and partners with community organizations to address short and long-term effects of youth homelessness. Youth On Fire provides a broad spectrum of *vital services, supports and opportunities* based on Maslow's Hierarchy of



Needs and Positive Youth Development principles. Donations and volunteers are always needed. To learn more about Youth on Fire and the AIDS Action Committee: www.aac.org/yof and <http://www.facebook.com/YouthOnFireMA>.

The **Invisible Faces Project** is a portraiture series that seeks to expose the many faces of youth homelessness in Massachusetts. Photographer and homelessness advocate Anthony Pira works to raise awareness of the youth homeless epidemic by first making the community aware of these faces and then by raising money to help bring them off the street. Many of these young adults spend their entire life being ignored by society. The damage this does to one's mind, identity and sense of self often contributes to a deep sense of worthlessness and can inhibit their motivation and ability to change. Capturing their strength and resilience on film not only helps society understand who these homeless youth are, it allows the youth to see themselves in another light. Instead of merely someone who struggles to find safety, sleep, and other basic needs, it allows the young person to see himself or herself as the strong, passionate, soulful and powerful person who is captured in these images. To learn more about the work of Anthony Pira and the Invisible Faces Project, please see: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Invisible-Faces/> and www.anthonypira.com.

The mission of the **Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless** is to eradicate homelessness from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Through legislative action and community organizing, the Coalition led the effort to pass legislation to establish a new statewide commission on *Unaccompanied Homeless Youth*. With the creation of this new commission, a wide range of stakeholders from across the state, for the first time, will work collectively to ensure safe, stable housing and access to necessary supports and services for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. The commission will hold its inaugural meeting on December 17th, bringing together stakeholders to better understand the unmet needs of unaccompanied youth and to work for change. The Coalition will continue to push for the passage of comprehensive legislation to expand access to housing and support services for unaccompanied youth, and invites the community to take part in the upcoming Youth on the Hill Day on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at the Massachusetts State House. For more information, please go to www.mahomeless.org.



Center for Social Innovation brings a fresh perspective to our society's most difficult social problems. We believe the solutions to homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, and community violence are already known. To implement them, we must close the gap between research and practice. Our skilled clinicians, researchers, writers, trainers, and advocates translate the newest research into real-world tools, training, and technical assistance. Clients in government, business, and the social services turn to us for training, web-based solutions, and innovative products that are practical, accessible, and adaptable to any service setting. To learn more about the Center for Social Innovation, please see: <http://www.center4si.com/index.cfm>.

Ending homelessness starts with community organizing and providing opportunities for people to work together to develop strategies for ending homelessness.

The following are among the strategies developed, and when used together, we know are effective at ending homelessness:

- **Housing First** – the quickest way to end homelessness is to help secure affordable, long-term housing. The Housing First model places people into subsidized and fair-market housing no matter what their circumstances. Housing First has been documented and proven to be the critical first step toward a permanent transition out of homelessness.
- **Supportive Services** – people are interdependent. We rely on one another in many aspects of our lives. Supportive services include healthcare, counseling, addictions treatment, employment, educational opportunities and the sense of purpose and connection that comes from being in long-term creative communities where people can share experiences, be heard and listen to other. When supportive services are partnered with Housing First, study after study validates the effectiveness of these tools in ending the experience of homelessness.
- **Social Capital** – meaningful relationships, healthy pursuits, and significant contributions are all ways that people gain security and satisfaction in their lives. Helping people who have experienced homelessness reconnect through “bridging relationships” such as family, friends, and faith based affiliations, is a powerful tool to end social marginalization. The power of social capital can only be truly realized if poverty, racism and social inequality and other forms of discrimination are addressed.

www.outsidein.center4si.com