

The Problem

It's estimated that each month dozens of youth end up living on the streets. It's natural to ask why. Reasons are complex but suspected social factors straining families include drastic economic shifts, increased costs of living, inadequate living wages, higher incidents of mental health issues, increased substance abuse and deep cuts to support programs. The majority of homeless youth have suffered from physical, emotional or sexual abuse before leaving home. Some youth end up homeless because they are literally abandoned by their parents. The stark reality may be the streets are safer than their former living environments.

- Portland has one of the highest homeless youth populations per capita in the U.S..
- There are an estimated few thousand homeless youth in the Portland/SW Washington area. That number continues to grow.
- Shelters are full; addiction and prevention programs are also over service capacity.
- Homeless youth have a continual need for a broad scope of survival necessities including the basics of food, water, clothing, and shelter, to assistance with education, job training and job placement.

CASE STUDY

Sarah had been in foster care since age 9 because her mother was renting her out for sex. Her second day on the streets, at the age of 14, she was raped. Following the rape and a hospital visit, the police brought her to an approved shelter because there was nowhere else to take her.