

WILLIS DADY
HOMELESS SERVICES
SUPPORT • STABILITY • OPPORTUNITY

GETTING INVOLVED AS A **FAMILY**

We want our clients to feel safe and respected. This translates to how we handle confidentiality and liability. We often cannot have groups (including families) in our shelter because of this.

If you want to involve your kids in the fight against homelessness, consider the suggestions on the following pages.

START WITH YOURSELF

Before you can talk to your kids about homelessness, you need to understand the topic and your own attitudes. Ask yourself what myths or stereotypes you might currently believe. Take steps to find the truth. If you have a partner or co-parent, talk with them about homelessness and try to get on the same page. Presenting the facts and your opinions as a unit will help your kids better understand the topic.

Example Questions:

- Will I hand out money to people who ask or would I prefer to donate directly to an organization?
- What topics surrounding homelessness would I like to be better informed on?

RECOMMENDED READING

There is a list of books we have compiled at the end of this document. For some online articles, see those listed below:

- “How can we talk to young children about homelessness?” by Emma Woolley, Research Assistant at the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
 - <https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/how-can-we-talk-young-children-about-homelessness>
- “Myths and Questions about Homelessness” by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
 - <https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/myths-and-questions-about-homelessness>
- “7 Myths about Homelessness” by Portland Rescue Mission
 - <https://portlandrescuemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PRM-Infographic-7-Myths-About-Homelessness-1.1.pdf>

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNGER KIDS



Younger kids might not be able to understand all the complexities of homelessness. That doesn't mean you can't start the conversation or take steps to get them involved in their community!

The following pages contain suggested activities to introduce the topic to your younger kids.

WHAT MAKES A HOME

ACTIVITY

- What makes a place a home? Have them list things you can find in a home How would they feel if they didn't have these things?
 - Where are some places people may need to sleep if they don't have a bed?
 - With a friend, at a shelter, outside, in their car
- Where are some places people might shower?
 - Pay for one at a truck stop or buy a gym membership
 - NOTE: Willis Dady has the only free, public shower in Cedar Rapids.
- Where are some places people might get food?
 - At a food pantry, some churches/organizations have meal programs
- Go through the list that your kids have made and try to find local resources that people can access.
- Talk with your kids about how it can be hard to find these resources especially if you don't have a phone, computer, or internet to look them up.

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

ACTIVITY

1. Have your children make a list of things they are grateful for. Do the same yourself.
2. Share your lists and identify the things that you are grateful for that a person experiencing homelessness might not have. Have a discussion about privilege and being thankful for things others might not have.
3. Identify things on your lists that a person experiencing homelessness might also be grateful for. This helps to connect the fact that people experiencing homelessness are just that – people!
4. Make it a habit to express gratitude as a family. This will help your children see the privileges they have while also making connections to those around them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR OLDER KIDS



Older kids are often more aware of the world around them. They might have even begun learning about economics or sociology in school.

The following pages contain suggested activities to explore the topic with your older kids.

ONLINE ACTIVITY

A great online game to play is: <http://playspent.org>.

**Urban Ministries of Durham serves
over 6,000 people every year. But
you'd never need help, right?**

PROVE IT

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

~~SPENT~~

Spent is an online game about surviving poverty and homelessness. It shows the consequences of different decisions and how difficult those decisions can become when you're already in a tough spot. Will you accept the challenge?

BUDGETING

ACTIVITY

Here is an online resource to show budgeting while making the minimum wage: <https://www.povertyusa.org/adult-education-activity-1>.

- Has your child starting earning their own money? What would their budget look like if they were working full time?
- Does your child know what they want to do in the future? Look up the salary and begin building a budget. Have them research apartments/houses in their dream city and budget for other expenses. Is it harder or easier than they expected?
 - (Tip: <http://financesonline.org/budgeting-and-saving/#50-20-30-rule>)

For further discussion, read this article about real people who are living paycheck-to-paycheck:

<https://www.npr.org/2020/12/16/941292021/paycheck-to-paycheck-nation-how-life-in-america-adds-up>

WAYS TO HELP AS A **FAMILY**



There are several ways for families to get involved at Willis Dady even if they can't volunteer in person. See the next several pages for our suggestions!

MAKE A FINANCIAL DONATION

Consider donating financially to Willis Dady. You can do this online at <https://www.willisdady.org/donate> or by mailing a check to 1247 4th Ave SE.

If your kids get an allowance, talk to them about putting aside a certain percentage or dollar amount to donate. We can even send them an individualized thank you letter in the mail!

If you have any questions about making a financial donation, please reach out to our Development Coordinator at allison@willisdady.org.

EVERY DOLLAR HAS AN

IMPACT

\$10

Purchases an ID for a client to apply for housing

\$25

Pays for a one-on-one session of case management through our programs

\$50

Provides a week of transportation for a client staying at our shelter to stable employment

\$75

Provides five nights of emergency shelter

\$100

Pays for a month of case management at our supportive housing units for one individual

\$500

Provides education trainings for our clients to enter a high-demand job

\$1,000

Covers the deposit to get an individual or family into housing

MAKE A GOODS DONATION

Almost all of the goods we hand out to clients are donated. We rely on continuous support to hand out things like granola bars and trail mix, pillows and towels, shampoo and body wash, toilet paper and paper towels, and 13 and 55 gallon trash bags. Some of these items get donated less frequently than others. For this reason we've developed a Shopping Donor volunteer position.

We ask these donors to add one (or several) of our high-need items to their shopping list. You commit to donating that item as often as you like (every week, every other week, or once a month). This would be a great way to keep a child engaged during a shopping trip. Put them in charge of picking out the perfect paper towels for Willis Dady!

For more information about becoming a Shopping Donor, please reach out to our Volunteer Coordinator at sierra@willisdady.org.

CONTINUE TO EDUCATE YOURSELVES AND OTHERS

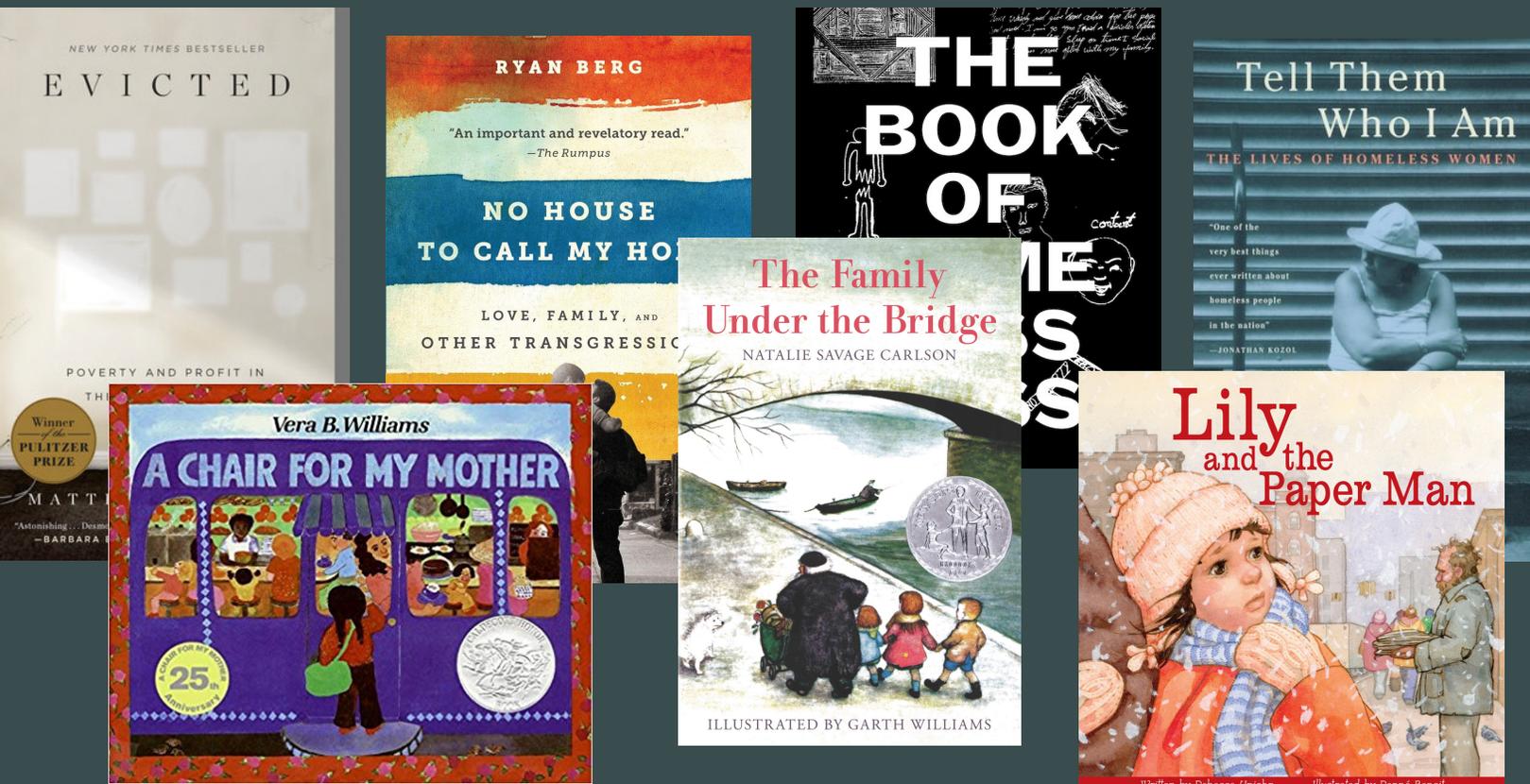
Did you know Willis Dady has a blog? You can find it at www.willisdady.org/blog. We publish staff and VOLUNTEER submissions. Have your kids work on their research skills or write about a personal experience. To sign up to write a blog post or ask any question, please reach out to our Volunteer Coordinator at sierra@willisdady.org.

Don't forget to follow us on social media to stay up to date on Willis Dady happenings:

- <https://www.facebook.com/WillisDadyHomelessServices>
- <https://www.instagram.com/willisdady/?hl=en>
- <https://mobile.twitter.com/willisdady?lang=en>

Continue to read news articles and stay current on topics related to homelessness and poverty!

RECOMMENDED READING



Some of these books are meant for adult reading while others are meant for children. It is ultimately up to the parent to determine age appropriate reading materials for their children.

WILLIS DADY
HOMELESS SERVICES
SUPPORT • STABILITY • OPPORTUNITY

DON'T HESITATE TO REACH
OUT FOR MORE INFORMATION!

THANK YOU!