



An All Too Common Story

The trouble had been brewing for years. A father who'd left for a job out of state and never came back. An overwhelmed mother swallowed up by a world of addiction. Family members who slowly disappeared as conflict emerged. Yet the boys remained, flexing with every new apartment, sleeping through every party, staying with every friend or relative or acquaintance that would still have them, and growing up despite it all.

When the step father came, things changed. There were new rules, expectations, and alcoholism. They knew there would be trouble if his drinking started early. It usually did. One night it went too far. Angry and aggressive, a brother against the wall, blue lights, and State workers.

The next three years were a blur of foster homes, new schools, supervised visits with family, court proceedings, psychiatric hospitalizations, and residential treatment. People came and went. New relationships began and dissolved with each transition. New schools, new rules, and new expectations at every turn. Family and familiar grew further and further away with time. Brother lived in a foster home three hours away with visits only around Christmas. Uncertainty became familiar. Anger bubbled up in every new foster home as the routines offered reminders of those things left behind, or never received. Loneliness and isolation turned to despair - no one understood the path that he had walked and there seemed to be no way back to the life that he wanted.

Despite feeling he was invisible within the busy world around him, with everyone going about their business without noticing his state of distress and homelessness, one day two people did see him. The Shaw House Outreach team who were out and about looking for youth who may be homeless and in need of some help. The worker took her time, talking mostly to the youth around him first, the ones she



already knew. Then came small offerings - a snack, directions to the shelter, and a friendly look in the eye. She then offered to help, and made a referral to the Independent Living Program of Shaw House, a program where youth can live while working towards living independently. The program taught him to ride the city bus, helped him find an apartment, tried talking him out of getting a cat, helped him budget for cat litter and food when he got the cat anyway, and answered the phone when life felt too fast. He always knew they were there when he ran into a brick wall. They became something he never had - trusting adults who were simply there for him when he needed a hand.

Today he is living in apartment with the cat. He likes to camp, but for fun, not survival. He has friends that are also living in apartments in the area and sometimes they get together to talk about the hardest parts about living alone and not having family. With counseling, he is beginning to make peace with his past, recognizing and embracing the strength that it took to survive his experiences. He is becoming proud of the way that he navigated the challenges in his life. He completed a job skills training program and has certifications that allow him to find work. He spent time with his brother after years of separation and learned that his brother had become an activist for abused kids.

Showing Support Throughout Covid-19



The **Shaw House Homeless Youth Shelter** has continued to provide emergency shelter and support services to homeless youth throughout this difficult period of COVID-19. While meeting the needs of homeless youth due to over-stretched resources is a monumental challenge on a typical day, it has proven to be an even greater challenge during a pandemic. From March 1st through May 30th, the height of COVID-19, the Shaw House provided safe shelter and support to 64 homeless youth. Extraordinary measures were taken to re-arrange the areas within the building that would allow for social distancing, any necessary quarantine, and safe screening of youth entering the building. The dedicated and caring staff of the Shaw House went above and beyond in remaining on the front line and continuing to come to work to support youth, allowing all Shaw House services to remain fully in operation.

The Shaw House would like to thank the following foundations for coming forward and offering financial support which contributed to the success of the Shaw House in providing shelter and support to homeless youth during this precarious period of time:

John T. Gorman Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, Sadie and Harry Davis Foundation

The Shaw House also extends a heart-felt appreciation to our individual donors and volunteers who have reached out to donate and/or prepare and deliver meals. The Shaw House is incredibly fortunate to have the backing and support of generous individuals and passionate foundations as we carry out of our mission of serving homeless youth in Maine.



Resident of the Shaw House Transitional Living Program Interview with Tim

How long have you been receiving support from the Shaw House?

About 3 years.

Can you identify 2-3 ways Shaw House has helped you?

School, work, emancipation, and getting an apartment – moving soon!

Where do you see yourself in the next 2 years?

In a secure apartment and holding down my job. Getting my driver’s license and a car. Back into school.

What are some of the struggles you face being homeless?

There is a lot of judgement from people at school and work. You get judged. Being turned down from jobs because they think I won’t be reliable because I am homeless. You struggle to keep a roof over your head [until I came to Shaw House]. Staying at trap houses which is something you never want to do. It isn’t the best place to be – where you can get hooked on a lot of bad stuff like drugs and other things that are bad that are in the world.

There are a lot of myths out there about youth homelessness. If you were talking to large group of people about youth homeless what would you want them to know?

Not all homeless people are complacent. There are some who are trying to do something with their lives and turn things around. You can’t judge a book by its cover.

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Homelessness is really hard because it is about disconnection. It is a breakdown of those things that are supposed to protect the life of a child and then it's about a world often too busy to notice. Homelessness often highlights the strength of the young person experiencing it. It takes strength to try again, to persist, to not give up. Especially when it seems like people can't, or don't want to notice you. Because of the existence of the Shaw House, this incredible young man was not only 'noticed' but guided towards a path of safety and independence. And more importantly he was given the experience every youth should have – the experience of being cared for and cared about.

A Word from the Executive Director

- David McCluskey



Each day, the great staff at Shaw House work diligently to help youth who are homeless. No big surprise there, right? It is a youth homeless shelter after all, and this is what they should be doing. **What they are doing is pretty impressive - but how they are doing it is remarkable.** If you were able to see a staff member in action, you would see their diligent efforts towards building a trusting relationship with each youth because, as we all know, trust is the corner stone to healthy relationships. Trust that reassures the youth that they will not be lied to, harmed, tricked, used, or judged – things that they have come to know all too well in relationships with adults. We know that youth who are homeless experience all sorts of traumatic experiences before they leave their homes. Extreme family conflict, parental drug abuse, physical and sexual abuse, struggles with mental health, and rejection due to their choice in sexuality are some of the many reasons a youth may leave home, or be asked to leave.

Some youth who arrive at Shaw House come directly from their home, while many have been surviving on their own. They will attempt to stay with friends or other family members with varying degrees of success, or will find themselves sleeping on the streets if they are without resources, which further exposes them to dangerous situations, subjecting them to additional trauma. **Recognizing the importance of developing a trusting relationship is a critical step when helping a young person transition from homelessness.** Due to the varying experiences of each youth, some youth are understandably more guarded than others. The staff members spend hours getting to know a youth by listening to where they have been, where they are now, and where they would like to be. Trust is built incrementally through each small success. **Most youth come to the Shaw House to receive the help they need in transitioning to a better living situation.** We have learned that youth transition from homelessness and from Shaw House more quickly than others - when we look deeper into the reasons why, we find that although Shaw House is a shelter with rotating staff shifts and all the uncertainty that comes with shelter living, it is also the place where they have trusting relationships with caring adults that keep them returning each day.

To all the Shaw House employees and employees of other shelters around Maine - **We thank you and appreciate your dedication and all that you do to support homeless youth.** You are the experts in helping youth through what is probably the worst period of their lives. Your compassion, selflessness, and resilience are humbling and inspiring.

→ Thank You



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Supporting Maine's Homeless Youth

Monetary donations to support the Shaw House can be made through PayPal at info@shawhouse.us or by check to: Shaw House, Attn: Finance Department
P.O. Box 1578, Bangor, ME 04401

Other items needed:

1. **Low value gift-cards** (\$5 value) to Dollar Tree, Dunkin Donuts, McDonald's, etc. to be used as incentives for youth
2. **Heat and Eat items** such as Chef Boyardee canned goods, soup, etc. and packaged food/snacks to be used when conducting Outreach to provide youth living on the street with food that they can eat easily.
3. **Hygiene items**
4. **New undergarments** (adult size sports bras, boxer shorts, underwear, socks, etc.)

November is Homeless Youth Awareness Month

Prevalence of Youth Homelessness in Maine

Between July 1st, 2018 and June 30th, 2019, **6,454 homeless** individuals sought shelter within the state of Maine. Nearly one-third of those experiencing homelessness are under the age of 25, with 19% (**1,219**) being youth under the age of 18 (*Maine State Housing Authority*)

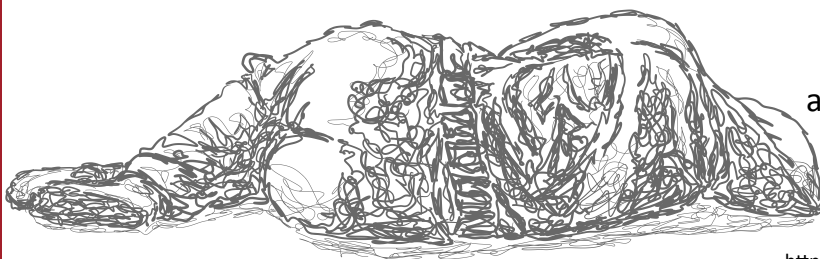
Prevalence of Youth Homelessness in America

1 in 10

Number of young adults ages **18-25** who experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period.
That's **3.5 million** young adults.

1 in 30

Number of youth ages **13-17** who experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period.
That's about **700,000** youth.



References and to learn more about youth homelessness:

<https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/>

https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/housing-reports/2017-2018-state-fiscal-year-homeless-statistics.pdf?sfvrsn=eb32bd15_4

Shaw House Annual Report FY20



Number of Homeless Youth Served

Emergency Shelter: 85

Day Program: 90

Mason Place Transitional Living Program: 17

Street Outreach Program: 67

Total number of unduplicated youth served in total by all Shaw House Programs: 131

Population of Youth Served

Total minor youth served: 52

Total youth 18-20 years of age: 79

Number of minors in DHHS custody: 9

Total Bed Nights

3,466

Potential Bed Night Capacity

5,480

The **Emergency Shelter** provides a safe haven during night time hours for homeless youth up to age 21 with the capacity to serve 16 youth.

The **Day Program** serves as the service hub for the Shaw House, providing youth with case management services, on-site mental health counseling, family mediation, support groups, and skills building groups. The Day Program plays an instrumental role in assisting youth in transitioning from homelessness.

The **Mason Place** serves as a Transitional Living Program supporting youth 16-20 years of age in transitioning successfully to independent living.

The **Street Outreach Program** brings services to homeless youth on the streets, connecting youth with supports, services, safe shelter, and providing youth food/ other basic necessities.

Thank you to our generous supporters in FY19!

King Foundation

United Way of Eastern Maine

Hannaford Helps Program

Maine Community Foundation

John T. Gorman Foundation

Machias Savings Bank

Sadie and Harry Davis Foundation

Lyndsay Trust Foundation

Bangor Savings Bank

DHHS/DOC

United Way of Eastern Maine

Maine State Housing Authority

FEMA

Camden National Bank

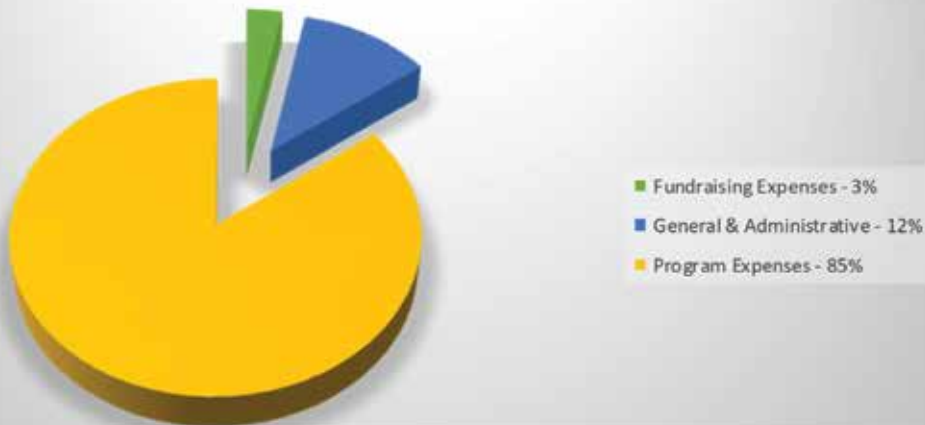
Child/Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

FYSB

All Soul's Congregation

As well as to the numerous individuals, businesses and organizations who have so generously supported the Shaw House. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of homeless youth.

Shaw House Expenses



Shaw House Revenue

