



Felons in Homelessness – Attempts to Spread Peace & Respect in Homeless Communities

By Allison Armijo

In a pessimistic society, it is sometimes difficult to have an optimistic view on life in general, or even the next few days. However, this negative thinking is lethal and can have harmful repercussions on today's community of homeless, especially homeless felons. With such a negative connotation on homelessness, those suffering from society's discrimination are forced to view themselves as scum; lowlifes with no place in today's world. However, this is the antithesis of the truth. With rehabilitation programs and educational classes, there has never been a better time for homeless felons to contribute to society in a positive way. Therefore, homeless felons are in need of a greater appreciation for their position and society as a whole should take into account the resources needed to improve the condition of homelessness as well as what actions can be taken to avoid felons in the future.

Just like toxic relationships, the vicious cycle of homelessness and felons is prevalent in today's society. The National Health Care for the Homeless Council reports how "homelessness contributes to the risk for incarceration, and incarceration contributes to the higher risks of homelessness". With nowhere to turn, homeless felons are caught between a rock and a hard spot. The article by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council shows that "homelessness contributes to the risk for incarceration" through evidence like how the homeless community is vulnerable to negative influences, for example excessive use of drugs and alcohol. These are dangers to the minds of homeless because when taken in great amounts, both drugs and alcohol can impair thinking and lead to poor decision-making. This "poor decision-making" is what contributes to incarceration because the homeless may commit crimes if under the influence of drugs or alcohol; therefore, showing how homelessness, in an overall context, leads to incarceration. On the other hand, incarceration leads to homelessness because of the negative connotation associated with felons. This occurs because when felons are released from prison or jail, sometimes they have nowhere to turn, leading to a life on the streets. Then, felons are back to square one (in terms of the negative influences associated with homelessness).

On another note, reports show how homelessness of felons creates additional barriers which contributes to the difficulties experienced by the homeless community. For example R. Jan Gurley, contributor to Center for Health Journalism at USC, describes in detail multiple barriers that homeless face when they re-enter society. One of her reasons is, “you probably have no relationships left”. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, with no one to go to or stay with, some people only have the option to be homeless. This then has the potential to lead to incarceration, creating a vicious cycle.

In conclusion, the homeless felon community is misunderstood and encounters many barriers when entering the homeless environment. The vicious cycle that is homelessness and incarceration contributes to a pessimistic view of society because the homeless cannot afford to be optimistic in such dreary times. However, the homeless community deserves a greater understanding of their condition because of all of the hardships they face. With respect and peace, everyone can make the world a more tolerable place.

Resources

<https://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Criminal-Justice-2012.pdf><https://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Criminal-Justice-2012.pdf>

<https://www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/blogs/are-prison-release-practices-creating-homelessness>