

New Hampshire Homeless Teen Task Force

Established in 2008, the New Hampshire Homeless Teen Task Force is comprised of members who represent various organizations in the state of New Hampshire, including the Department of Education, Health and Human Services, DCYT, Childcare Licensing, homeless school liaisons, state representatives, county officials, law enforcement personnel, and other concerned members of the community who come together to address that challenges of youth homelessness.

The Teen Task Force's mission is to investigate the needs of homeless and unaccompanied youth in New Hampshire and to find solutions to addressing those needs. The Teen Task Force also strives to raise awareness throughout New Hampshire on the issue of youth homelessness, as well as to educate the public about the unique needs and challenge faced by youth living in homelessness.

The Teen Task Force has pooled together talents from members serving a variety of organizations throughout the state of New Hampshire to host meetings and presentations on the issue of youth homelessness. New Hampshire's school professionals and service providers are committed to ending homelessness. The group meets on a monthly basis to move forward the work of its mission.



Image courtesy of Lucy Langdon from
moz.com

In January of 2014, the Department of Education in collaboration with the Rochester School Department and Claremont school district hosted a Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Health Care Access Symposium held at Lakes Region Community College, where Patricia Julianelle, legal counsel for the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) and attorneys Todd Hathaway and Iris Lowery from the Manchester law firm Wadleigh, Starr & Peters, PLLC presented on the challenges and barriers homeless, and in particular, unaccompanied youth face when attempting to access health care services.

Katy McDermott, homeless youth advocate and former director with the Chase Home in Portsmouth, NH and the Teen Task Force have been exploring many options to provide emergency overnight housing for homeless youth, such as the possibility of converting phased out group homes into emergency and transitional housing facilities. Host homes and educational workshops for homeless and unaccompanied youth in the state are future possibilities, and the group welcomes all new ideas that can help with the mission to assist one of the state's most vulnerable and needy populations. The group is excited about the accomplishments that have been made so far, and looks forward to continually strive towards to the ultimate goal of ending homelessness.



Image courtesy of Hanford Church of
the Nazarene