

A few questions

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Q: Why are there homeless young people?

A: Families often experience challenges and problems — abuse, neglect, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, financial challenges — that leave young people vulnerable, and sometimes, expendable.

Q: What does Covenant House do? What does “covenant” mean in the title?

A: We provide shelter and services to youth and young adults up to age 21, including mothers and their children. “Covenant” reflects our goal to develop positive, healthy relationships with young adults based on absolute respect and unconditional love without any expectation of anything in return.

Q: Are you religiously affiliated?

A: Covenant House was founded by a Catholic priest over 40 years ago, and many of our philosophies are based in Catholic Church teachings. However, we don’t practice a particular faith or require youth to participate in any religious activities.

Q: What do you want to see happen during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (Nov. 15-23)?

A: I would like to see people recognize the need, particularly of these vulnerable teens and young adults, and step up by providing their time, talent or treasure.

Q: What is the Covenant House Executive Sleep Out?

It is a national initiative to generate funds and exposure for our cause. Business leaders sleep on the pavement in the elements to experience homelessness for a night. Last year, 21 executives braved the pouring rain and raised \$92,000. This year’s Sleep Out is Nov. 20, and we’re still accepting participants.

Q: Have you ever been homeless?

A: No, but as a teen I came up against many challenges that today’s young people also face. I was only one bad choice away from going down the same path as some of the young people we serve. My guiding statement is, “There but for the grace of God, go I.”

Q: Are you seeing a decrease in gay teens being homeless as acceptance becomes more widespread?

A: No. We still see a lot of kids who have revealed their sexual identity to their families and are kicked out of their homes as a result.

Q: How can parents keep kids at home and on track?

A: Be consistent, affirming, loving role models to their best ability. Nothing is a guarantee, but this will keep them grounded and hopefully on the right track.

Q: What about foster kids?

A: It simply does not make sense to expect an 18 year old coming out of foster care to be a productive member of society. We estimate that 20 percent of the young people we serve have been in foster care.

Q: What is on your iPod?

A: Everything Jimmy Buffet. And lots of 70s and 80s rock.