



Harnessing the Power of Your Community

Homeless Awareness Month Toolkit



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2021 Sponsor

2021
November
HOMELESS AWARENESS MONTH

“Alone, we
can do so little; together,
we can do so much.”

- Helen Keller



Harnessing the Power of Your Community



The Power of Your Community

Homeless Awareness Month (HAM) takes place every November in Michigan to raise awareness about issues relating to housing insecurity and homelessness and to get communities invested in making a difference. The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) promotes HAM throughout Michigan, providing support for local partner events and leading the state's communication and awareness raising campaign.

Michigan's observance, which has taken place for nearly 20 years, has become an essential part of our collective effort to promote awareness and understanding of those experiencing homelessness.

2021

This year was predictably unpredictable. Providing services and securing housing for our communities' most vulnerable residents is always challenging, but this year homeless service providers have had to continue this difficult work while adapting to more clients, constantly changing health and safety guidelines, and drastic changes in their own lives.

The ability of you and your community to continue helping others despite their personal and professional lives being turned upside down is nothing short of amazing. Needs of a vulnerable community do not disappear during a pandemic, so homeless service providers are rising to the challenge and carrying on. You and members of your community have found a way to manage their new normal with life at home AND found solutions to additional roadblocks to serve others.

In addition to our regular work to raise awareness around experiences of homelessness in our state, for this year's theme we want to honor the amazing communities we live in, and recognize your steadfast commitment to making sure the most vulnerable in our community are safe and healthy. You are the behind the scenes essential workers and your efforts are valued and critical to making sure that every one of us is safe, healthy, and has access to essential support.



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Preparing for Homeless Awareness Month

The goal of Homeless Awareness Month (HAM) is to raise awareness about issues related to homelessness and to call in your community as partners in the work to prevent and end homelessness.

Whether you are a seasoned veteran or this is your first time hosting a HAM event, remember that you do not need an event or activity for each day. It might be better to focus on one or two well-planned, marketed, and attended activities to increase your impact without unnecessarily increasing your workload. Homelessness cannot be solved in a month, but a creative, dedicated, and timely effort will contribute greatly to your organization and our collective cause.

MCAH recommends pulling together an informed, dedicated committee to plan and implement your HAM activities. This can be done whether your planning begins months, weeks, or even days before November 1st.

Considerations for your committee:

- What is our capacity for hosting well executed, successful events and activities?
- What does 'success' look like for us and how do we measure it?
- What is our primary goal? (educate, advocate, raise funds, etc)
- Who is our target audience? (general public, stakeholders, decision makers, volunteers, businesses, etc)
- How are we incorporating individuals who have experienced homelessness into our planning process?

Considerations for your event:

- What community organizations, local businesses, schools, or other entities should we engage with to partner, sponsor, or market our event or activity?
- What individuals (members, donors, staff, volunteers, etc) might want to participate in our event or activity?
- Who is knowledgeable about organizing events within the community?
- What is the value of our event or activity for our community, agency, or individuals experiencing homelessness?
- What information (data, policy/advocacy info, stories, etc) would be helpful for our event or activity?
- How do we market and publicize our event or activity?
- When and where should the events take place?
- How many people should coordinate each event?
- How can we get decision makers and people in power (local elected officials, state legislators, members of Congress, business, funders, media, etc) to participate or attend our event or activity?



Registration and Support

Please take the time to contact MCAH and let us know about your event! Having a complete list of all activities happening around the state allows us to support your efforts, but it also gives us crucial information we can take to decision makers. By illustrating just how many communities host HAM events, we are showing our elected officials that this is an issue that our communities care about and want to see more resources and attention paid to ending homelessness.



- [Register your event](#)



- Join the [Homeless Awareness Month](#) Facebook group.



- Questions? Contact Khal Malik (kmalik@mihomeless.org)



Educate

Homeless Awareness Month is the perfect time to educate your community about housing and homelessness issues. This is an opportunity to call in your partners and the public on how housing insecurity and homelessness impacts everyone in the community, and how we can all work together to find solutions.

Data and statistics should create the base of your educational efforts, but they can't stand alone. While creating educational materials or opportunities, make sure to incorporate personal narratives by elevating the stories of individuals who experience homelessness in your community. Data and narrative, when combined, tell a crucial story about what homelessness looks like and directs us toward tangible ways that we can be involved in the work to prevent and end homelessness in our community.

Acknowledging the Impact of COVID-19

This year homeless service providers had to significantly adjust how community members can access services as they adapted to constantly evolving guidance on safely operating during a global pandemic. During COVID-19, homeless service providers became some of our most important essential workers as the basic needs of people experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness continued despite the pandemic. Staff providing these services had to adjust practices to adhere to social distancing and sanitizing mandates all while juggling the changes going on in their own households.

During your Homeless Awareness Month activities, we encourage you to acknowledge and discuss the challenges COVID-19 has presented for homeless service providers and individuals experiencing homelessness. This can include educating the community about issues such as:

- New policies and procedures needed to keep staff and clients safe
- The need to move people experiencing homelessness to new and different locations like hotels and motels
- The restrictions placed on unsheltered individuals that reduced their access to public facilities and other easily accessible locations where they could keep up with the basic hygiene practices necessary to prevent the spread of coronavirus
- How the constant challenges homeless service providers face have not only remained but become amplified, including that
 - assisting clients with employment access became much more difficult when many workplaces shut down or moved to working from home
 - already overcrowded shelters have had to struggle in adapting to social distancing guidelines
 - essential employees of homeless service providers have seen a significant increase in their workload with more complicated and time consuming health and safety procedures.
- Above all else, take the time to recognize and honor the work of the community's homeless service providers for their dedication and perseverance during difficult times



Suggested Activities

There are many activities that you can use to educate your community during Homeless Awareness Month. Consider the following:

- Engage with schools by asking to join an online classroom. You could encourage the class to read a book or share a documentary and follow up with questions and discussion
- Host (virtual) movie night. Pick a movie from our list and hold a group discussion
- Share educational materials (MCAH infographics, stories from your organization, etc.) on social media, websites, and local media outlets
- Reach out to local businesses to see if they are interested in becoming partners in your educational efforts by:
 - sharing your social media messages during the month and in turn recognize the contributions of your local supporters
 - donating a percentage of their profits during a period of time to a local homeless service provider
- Sponsor a blanket, food, or essential items drive or organize the collection of nonperishable items such as food, hygiene products, clothing, blankets, books, toys etc. at local business and use this as an opportunity to educate the public about basic needs for those experiencing homelessness

Resources

Additional resources are updated throughout the year on our HAM Facebook page. Join other organizations and agencies for ideas and advice. Content on the FB group is tagged according to category. For a quick look up of information, select the topic from the right side of page.



Join the [Homeless Awareness Month](#) Facebook group.

Teacher's Lesson Plans

HAM Facebook group – [Teacher's section](#)



[be homeful project](#): lesson plans for all ages

Launched by the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) in 2015, the be homeful project aims to give kids aged 2-17, families, and their communities tools to have meaningful conversations about how homelessness affects families in their community and to take action to help prevent others from becoming homeless in the first place.

<http://www.behomeful.org/>



Children's Books on Homelessness

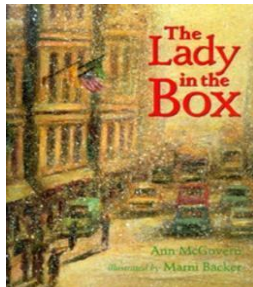
HAM Facebook group – [Children's Books section](#)



Almost Home, 2012

by Joan Bauer

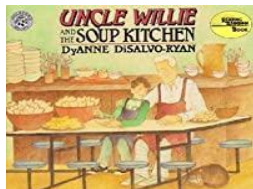
When twelve-year-old Sugar's grandfather dies and her gambling father takes off yet again, Sugar and her mother lose their home in Missouri. They head to Chicago for a fresh start, only to discover that fresh starts aren't so easy to come by for the homeless. Nevertheless, Sugar's mother has taught her to be grateful no matter what, so Sugar does her best.



The Lady in the Box, 1997

by Marni Backer, Ann McGovern

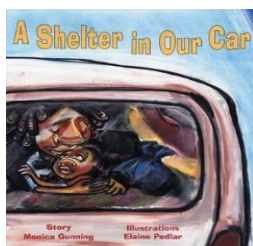
It is wintertime in the city, and Christmas decorations are everywhere. But in Lizzie and Ben's neighborhood, a woman lives in a box, grateful for the warm air that escapes through a vent in the sidewalk. After watching this lady in a box, the brother and sister decide to help her, despite their mother's admonition to never talk to strangers. The children worry about the kind-looking lady and begin sneaking food and clothes out of their apartment for her.



Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen, 1991

by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan

DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan's sensitive text and pictures show a bustling, friendly group of workers who welcome the young narrator into the caring world of the soup kitchen as she deals with the problem of hunger at the level for children to understand. Full-color illustrations.

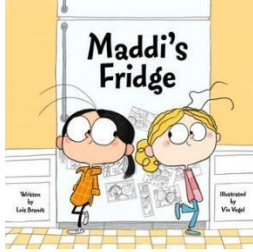


A Shelter in Our Car, 2004

by Monica Gunnin

Since she left Jamaica for America after her father died, Zettie lives in a car with her mother while they both go to school and plan for a real home.





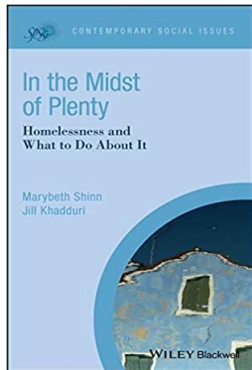
Maddi's Fridge, 2014

by Lois Brandt (Goodreads Author), Vin Vogel (Illustrator)

Best friends Sofia and Maddi live in the same neighborhood, go to the same school, and play in the same park, but while Sofia's fridge at home is full of nutritious food, the fridge at Maddi's house is empty. Sofia learns that Maddi's family doesn't have enough money to fill their fridge and promises Maddi she'll keep this discovery a secret.

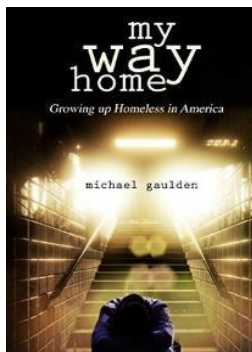
Adult Books on Homelessness

HAM Facebook group – [Books section](#)



In the Midst of Plenty: Homelessness and What to Do About It, 2020 by Jill Khadduri and Marybeth Shinn

This book explains how to end the U.S. homelessness crisis by bringing together the best scholarship on the subject and sharing solutions that both local communities and national policy-makers can apply now.



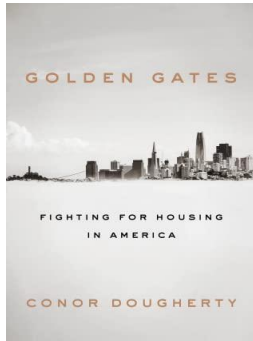
My Way Home: Growing Up Homeless in America, 2017

by Michael Gaulden

His life was barely worth a dollar. He slept outside, on park benches, in stairwells, under bushes. Michael Gaulden lived in shelter after shelter across the United States. With his father incarcerated and mother disabled, he stayed homeless for ten years.

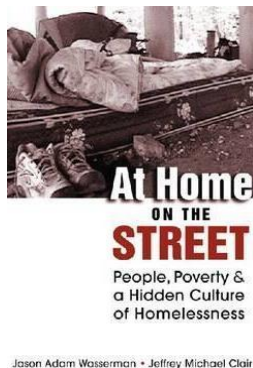


Homeless Awareness Month
#HAM2021



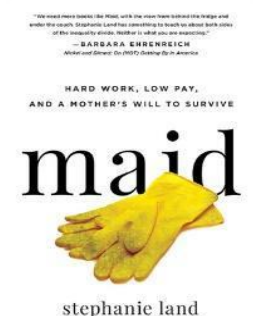
Golden Gates: Fighting for Housing in America, 2020
by Conor Dougherty

A stunning, deeply reported investigation into the housing crisis. Spacious and affordable homes used to be the hallmark of American prosperity. Today, however, punishing rents and the increasingly prohibitive cost of ownership have turned housing into the foremost symbol of inequality and an economy gone wrong. Nowhere is this more visible than in the San Francisco Bay Area, where fleets of private buses ferry software engineers past the tarp-and-plywood shanties.



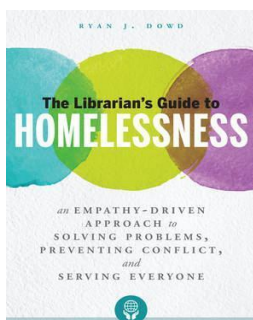
At Home on the Street: People, Poverty, and a Hidden Culture of Homelessness, 2009
by Jason Adam Wasserman, Jeffrey Michael Clair

In their compelling examination of what it means to be truly at home on the street, Jason Wasserman and Jeffrey Clair argue that programs and policies addressing homeless people too often serve only to alienate them. Wasserman and Clair delve into the complex realities of homelessness to paint a gripping picture of individuals - not cases or pathologies - living on the street.



Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive, 2019
by Stephanie Land (Goodreads Author), Barbara Ehrenreich (Foreword)

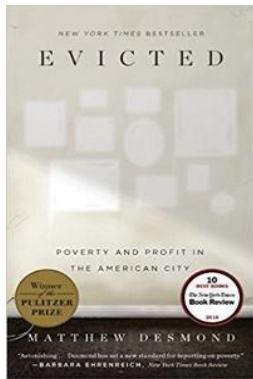
Stephanie Land's memoir about working as a maid is a beautiful and gritty exploration of poverty in America. Stephanie Land worked for years as a maid, pulling long hours while struggling as a single mom to keep a roof over her daughter's head. In *Maid*, she reveals the dark truth of what it takes to survive and thrive in today's inequitable society.



The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness: An Empathy-Driven Approach to Solving Problems, Preventing Conflict, and Serving Everyone, 2018
by Ryan J. Dowd

Homelessness is a perennial topic of concern at libraries. In fact, staff at public libraries interact with almost as many homeless individuals as staff at shelters do. Empathy and understanding, along with specific actionable advice that's drawn from experience, makes all the difference in working with this group. Filled with real life stories that illustrate the effectiveness of Dowd's approach, this one-of-a-kind guide will empower library staff to treat homeless individuals with dignity.



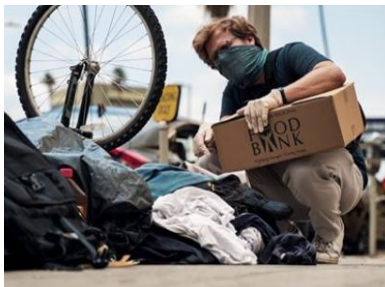


Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City, 2016 by Matthew Desmond

In *Evicted*, Harvard sociologist and MacArthur “Genius” Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Hailed as “wrenching and revelatory” (*The Nation*), “vivid and unsettling” (*New York Review of Books*), *Evicted* transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of 21st-century America’s most devastating problems.

Short Videos

HAM Facebook group – [Movies/Documentaries section](#)



INSPIRING Volunteers Helping Homeless People During COVID-19 in Los Angeles

<https://youtu.be/8pWTs9hxKIs>

SELAH Neighborhood Homeless Coalition is a group of normal folks that decided to take tangible actions to help their homeless neighbors. What started as just giving out 25 food boxes a week has grown into an organization that’s helping people with basic needs like food and water and connecting them with resources.



Faces of Homelessness

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLD6f2anyof-BkCJWq6St5Fg89ToyNjiJg>

Created and updated by the National Coalition for Homelessness, this YouTube collection features multiple videos that explain homelessness, often from those who have experienced it directly.





Invisible People

<https://invisiblepeople.tv/>

Vlogger Mark Horvath creates short videos featuring individuals currently experiencing homelessness, often asking “If you had three wishes right now, what would they be?” The answers give you a glimpse into the daily struggles of those living unsheltered and are framed by Mark’s own lived experience with homelessness.



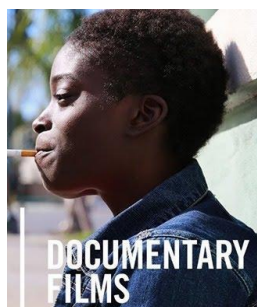
How Housing Changed My Life

<http://bit.ly/HousingChangedMyLife>

At a July, 2017 rally at the Michigan State Capitol, MCAH asked 9 individuals who had experienced homelessness one question: How did housing change your life? Their answers provide a roadmap for the resources we need and the impact our collective efforts make on the individual and family right here in Michigan.

Full Length Movies and Documentaries

HAM Facebook group – [Movies/Documentaries section](#)



SHELTER DOCUMENTARY, 2018

<https://youtu.be/KUfNbNBFwRI>

A feature length documentary following a year in the life of homeless youth in New Orleans. For video updates from the young people and staff featured in the film - and to learn how you can help - visit

<http://www.shelterdocumentary.com>.



American Winter, 2013

www.americanwinterfilm.com – discussion guides and additional information

Documentary that follows the personal stories of families struggling in the aftermath of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Filmed over the course of one winter in one American city, the film presents an intimate snapshot of the state of the nation's economy as it is playing out in millions of American families, and highlights the human consequences of the decline of the middle class and the fracturing of the American Dream.





The Homestretch, 2014

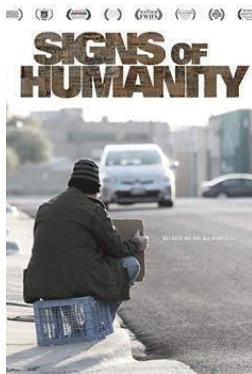
Three homeless teenagers brave the Chicago winters, the pressures of high school, and life on the streets to build a brighter future.

Show: Independent Lens



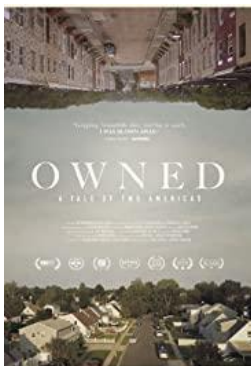
United States of Tents, 2019

An estimated 500,000 U.S. citizens, veterans and children are homeless across the nation. A newly released documentary by filmmaker Dennis Michael Lynch tackles the homeless crisis in America head-on. "United States of Tents," takes you on a journey to several homeless camps across the country and includes interviews with leaders in many communities who are addressing this devastating crisis.



Signs of Humanity, 2016

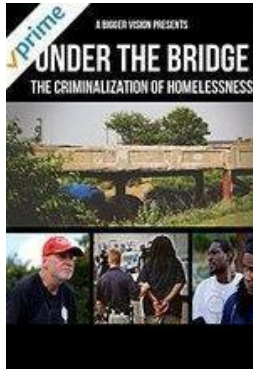
Signs of Humanity explores themes of home, homelessness, and compassion. Artist and Professor Willie Baronet has bought over 1,800 homeless signs from people on the streets since 1993 and uses them to create installations to raise awareness about homelessness. In 2014, he drove across the United States buying signs and talking to the people behind them. This is a film about that trip.



Owned: A Tale of Two Americas, 2018

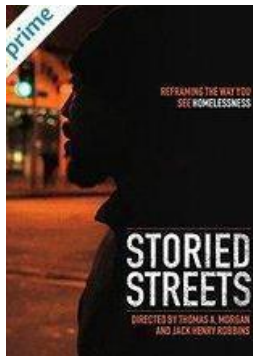
'Owned' is a fever dream vision into the dark history behind the US housing economy. Tracking its overtly racist beginnings to its unbridled commoditization, the doc exposes a foundational story few Americans understand as their own.





Under the Bridge: the Criminalization of Homelessness, 2017

By the production team A Bigger Vision, Under the Bridge: Criminalization of Homelessness is a documentary film about one summer in Indianapolis, a tent city under a bridge, and the criminalization of homelessness in the United States.



Storied Streets, 2015

Storied Streets explores homelessness across America by telling the stories of those who live it every day.

In 2019, there were over 15,000 children in Michigan experiencing homelessness, with an average age of just seven years old. In an effort to help children develop empathy for the homeless, Julie Vitale and True North Community Services have partnered with area libraries to hold Story Time sessions where children's books about homelessness are read. **True North Community Services took the following steps to introduce the program to seven area libraries for Homeless Awareness Month last November:**

1. Find children's books centered around homelessness to purchase for area libraries.
 - a. Books should be interesting to a wide age-range of children
 - b. Books should contain uplifting themes.
 - c. If possible, the books should be fairly new, as libraries are always looking to add new titles.
2. Contact area libraries to see if they would be interested in holding the Story Time sessions.
 - a. Vitale offered books to libraries even if they declined to hold sessions.
 - b. Most libraries hold story time sessions routinely, call far in advance to reserve a spot.
3. Purchase and distribute books and other materials needed by the library to hold sessions.
 - a. Some libraries made displays about homelessness, combining new books with others already available.
 - b. It could be helpful to provide libraries with posters or handouts to help spread awareness.
 - c. If purchasing the books would be a financial burden consider seeking sponsors or grants to fund the initiative.
4. Consider expanding the program.
 - a. Vitale said she was interested in expanding the program to local Elementary schools, but is waiting for the uncertainties presented by the pandemic to subside.
 - b. Make readings available over Zoom or Facebook Live, so they are available to those not able to attend in person.



Advocate

Advocacy is the act of showing public support with the aim to influence decisions in political, economic, and social institutions. Advocacy outreach has been shown to help with the recruitment of individuals for events, gaining public support and participation, and ultimately influencing public policy in your community.

Advocacy can be an explicit goal for your event but even if it is not, remember that the information you present can shape the minds of those who enact policy in your community. Make sure your information is accurate and properly reflects the need in your area. Using reliable data - like the Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness' 2019 annual report - will ensure your audience has the most accurate regional information.

Want to include specific advocacy asks in your event? In addition to any local advocacy work being done, consider incorporating information about [MCAH's 2019-2021 legislative priorities](#):

- Increasing access to affordable housing by permanently funding the [Michigan Housing & Community Development Fund](#)
- Decreasing barriers to affordable housing by creating [source of income protections](#)
- Funding Homelessness Services

For more information about how to incorporate these into your activities, contact Eleanor Kolasinski (ekolasinski@mihomeless.org)

Suggested Activities

There are many activities that can engage decision makers in your community during Homeless Awareness Month. Consider the following:

- In Michigan, official proclamations have been secured by MCAH for more than 20 years from the Governor and/or the legislature. This can be easily replicated at the local level (see Communications section) and is a good way to raise awareness in your community and increase engagement with decision-makers
- Assist homeless and low-income individuals in registering to vote
 - Michiganders can now register to vote up to and including election day! By encouraging civic engagement, you are empowering them to use their voice and the power of their vote to support candidates who can enact change for Michigan's homeless response system and those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity
 - MCAH is leading state efforts to encourage [voter registration, education, and candidate engagement](#) and we play a role in national efforts to increase voter participation like [Our Homes, Our Votes](#) and [Every One Votes](#)
- Encourage grassroots participation in advocating for solutions to housing insecurity and homelessness by helping people in your community:
 - write their elected officials about the importance of programs for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and at risk of experiencing homelessness.



- discuss the issues surrounding homelessness and then write their opinions in Letters to the Editor in their local, state, and national newspapers; and
- join MCAH's Legislative Action Committee (LAC). LAC is a vehicle for volunteers to help shape policy on issues of homelessness in Michigan. [Sign up](#) for our eNewsletter to join LAC and receive updates on MCAH legislative activities.

Resources

- MCAH Advocate website - <https://mihomeless.org/index.php/advocate/>
- LAC eNewsletter - <https://mihomeless.org/#subscribe>
- LAC Meetings recordings available on [MCAH's YouTube Channel](#)
- State and Federal representatives
 - Michigan House of Representatives Website: [Find Your Representative](#)
 - Michigan Senate's Website: [Find Your Senator](#)
 - GovTrack Website: [US Congress](#)

Housing Search Initiative Instructions

In honor of Homeless Awareness Month in 2020, Good Samaritan Ministries in Ottawa County worked with a team of volunteers to hold a Housing Search Initiative that built connections with dozens of local landlords. The following is a guide explaining how the Good Samaritan team set up and carried out the program, and how you can too!

1. Gather landlord contact information - property name, contact name, email, phone number, address, etc.
 - a. It helps to do this over a period of time when encountering landlords through eviction diversion programs. (The internet can also be used to find contact information.)
2. Create a questionnaire.
 - a. Include questions centered around finding out how many units are available, how much units and utilities cost, unit size, and renting requirements or restrictions.
 - b. Make sure questions will gather information that will be helpful in connecting clients with landlords or property managers.
3. Build a team of employees or volunteers to call landlords from the contact list.
 - a. Train employees on how to interact with landlords. It's important callers are able to build relationships with renters, so they feel comfortable reaching out to your agency as units open up.
4. Create a script to help callers greet landlords and transition to asking questions.
 - a. It helps to include what to say when sent to voicemail.
5. Decide on a day to call landlords.
 - a. In one day, Good Samaritan Ministries was able to call about 80 landlords, and connect with around 50. Of these 50, 34 were interested in working with Good Samaritan going forward!
6. After the Housing Search Initiative ends, continue to collect landlord contact information as you encounter them. This way, your agency can reload and hold another Housing Search Initiative later on.



Communicate

Homeless Awareness Month is first and foremost an opportunity to talk about homelessness with a wide range of audiences: from donors, to the general public who rarely thinks about housing insecurity, to local and state decision-makers. MCAH, along with service providers throughout the state, coordinates messaging and activities designed to build awareness, break stereotypes, and create champions for issues related to homelessness. In 2021, we're also celebrating the essential workers who have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic and have kept those experiencing homelessness in Michigan safe and healthy.

Suggested Activities

- Participate in MCAH's HAM social media campaign by sharing our daily content and engaging in conversation about the data and narratives used in our materials. Make sure to tag us on Facebook and Twitter at @mihomeless, and to use our hashtags: #HAM2021 and #EndMIHomelessness
- Engage with traditional media (such as your local newspaper and radio or news stations) to produce content related to homelessness, such as educational information, stories from people who are now experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness, and homeless service providers
- Promote your HAM events in the local newspaper
- Partner with the graphics department at a local school or business to create flyers and posters for your events or fact sheets with information about homelessness (and offer recognition opportunities to those who participate/contribute)
- Utilize the social media of your organization and your network to expand your influence and raise awareness for your event
- Market your events, activities, and educational materials to community organizations, schools, and businesses and ask them to help disseminate through their networks.
- Let MCAH promote your events, activities, and educational materials to a statewide audience! [Register](#) your activities with us and we'll post on social media and our [website](#).

Resources

- Your agency or organization's contact list (for email or mailing) and the contact list of your community partners
- Local media such as TV, newspaper, radio, student publications, and local influencers
- Your social media accounts like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Use the hashtag #HAM2021 and #EndMIHomelessness to connect to the larger statewide conversation
 - Feel free to check out our own [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and [retweet](#)/share our materials, or modify them to include your local info
- MCAH communication templates (see below)



Sample Communication Templates

Below are samples of news content that you may use for your promotion. Please feel free to alter any material to better suit your community.

Sample Press Release/Media Advisory

LETTERHEAD

For immediate release

Contact: (Name)

November 1, 2021

555-555-5555

Local Organizations Host Homeless Awareness Month Activities

Subhead

(LOCATION), Mich. – (Local group name) will be sponsoring (your event/activity title) as part of Homeless Awareness Month at (place) on (date). The program will include (brief description of your activities).

This is an opportunity for (your target audience: community members, elected officials, etc) to start a discussion and learn about homelessness issues in our community. (More description about your event/activity)

(Quote about homelessness in your community)

November is Michigan's Homeless Awareness Month and it provides an annual opportunity to engage around issues relating to homelessness and housing insecurity. (Local Group Name) is sponsoring this in (your community). Other events include (event name), (date), (other event), (date) and (event name), (date).

For more information about our local Homeless Awareness Month events and activities and how to get involved, please call (your name) at (number). Please visit the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness at www.mihomeless.org to learn more about the statewide Homeless Awareness Month activities and issues related to homelessness in Michigan.

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Sample Proclamation from a Governmental Unit

A RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING NOVEMBER 2021, AS HOMELESS AWARENESS MONTH IN [INSERT NAME OF COMMUNITY HERE]

By [your city council/mayor/county commission]

Date Proclamation Issued: [DATE]

WHEREAS, more than twenty years, the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness and its partners have actively promoted Homeless Awareness Month throughout the state of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the proclamation is to educate the public about the many reasons people are homeless including the shortage of affordable housing in [INSERT COMMUNITY HERE] for very low income residents, and to encourage support for homeless assistance service providers as well as community service opportunities for students and school service organizations; and

WHEREAS, there are many organizations committed to sheltering, providing supportive services as well as meals and food supplies to the homeless including: [INCLUDE ALL AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE HAM OBSERVANCE ACTIVITIES HERE]; and

WHEREAS, the theme of Homeless Awareness Month 2021 is Home is Essential; and

WHEREAS, the [INSERT NAME OF BODY MAKING THE PROCLAMATION HERE] recognize that homelessness continues to be a serious problem for many individuals and families in [INSERT NAME OF COMMUNITY HERE]; and

WHEREAS, the intent of Homeless Awareness Month is consistent with the activities of [INSERT LOCAL PARTICIPATING AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS HERE].

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the [INSERT NAME OF BODY MAKING THE PROCLAMATION HERE] hereby proclaims November 2021, as Homeless Awareness Month.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [INSERT NAME OF BODY MAKING THE PROCLAMATION HERE] encourages all citizens to recognize that many people do not have housing and need support from citizens and private/public nonprofit service entities.



Sample Invitation to Elected Official

November 1, 2021

(Title) (First & Last Name)

(street address)

(city, st, zip code)

RE: "Event"

Dear XXX:

We invite you to participate in our Homeless Awareness Month event, (title), to help raise awareness about the many issues relating to homelessness in our community. (Description of event and purpose).

Did you know that...

- Data points from your community and/or
- Personal stories of homelessness
- Examples of your agency's or communities impact

It's with great pleasure that we extend this formal invitation for your participation in this upcoming event. In addition to being an opportunity for you to engage constituents about homelessness, your involvement would speak volumes to the importance of greater dialog regarding this issue and its impact on real people who live in our communities.

Enclosed please find some additional information about the event that I hope you'll find helpful. Please expect to hear from us by (date) in follow-up to this invitation.

Thank you for your continued work on behalf of the people of our district.

Sincerely,

XXX

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Wrapping Up Awareness Month

When Homeless Awareness Month has concluded, there will still be a few loose ends that you will need to tie up.

- Remember to send thank you letters to all your contacts and your support network. You or other Homeless Awareness Month organizers will probably refer to these same people in the future.
- Meet with your team to discuss what went right and what went wrong during Homeless Awareness Month. Make sure everyone evaluates their own project, as well as how they viewed Homeless Awareness Month as a whole. Gather these individual and group evaluations to comprise a resource folder—one that you and other groups will be able to refer to in following years. This resource will allow you to have a foundation upon which to build your future awareness activities.
- Contact the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness to let us know how things went with your awareness activities — send us newspaper clippings, posters, commentary, and other news! Forward to kmalik@mihomeless.org.
- Start planning for next year!

Organizational Contact

The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness is your statewide contact for technical support and other resources to help you plan and carry out Homeless Awareness Month activities in your community.

Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness

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