

'A Place to Call Home'

The Problem...

Why do we see growing numbers of homeless families?

The answer is almost too simple. They cannot find an affordable place to live. In the United States today, there are only 37 rental homes available and affordable for every 100 households with incomes below 30% of their area median income. The scarcity of housing that the poorest families can afford is the principle cause of homelessness in the United States.¹

Families are the fastest growing part of the homeless population and today, nearly 40% of all homeless are families.²

Twelve million households, or 1 in 10 spends an unsustainable 50 % or more of their income on housing, leaving little else for food, insurance, or savings for a 'rainy day'.

In a nation with unemployment at nearly 10%, and the numbers of foreclosures putting even greater demands on a rental market, it is no surprise that so many families have had 'rainy days' for which they are not prepared.

Six million homes have been foreclosed and an additional 3 million foreclosures are expected.³ An estimated 40% of households displaced by foreclosure are renters.⁴ Landlords who still hold properties are looking for higher rents, even as property values decline.⁵

There is a national shortage of 2.8 million affordable homes, one additional affordable home or rental for every forty existing homes. Our nation builds 100,000 affordable units per year. That is not enough. For every one we build two are lost to deterioration, abandonment or conversion to more expensive housing.⁶ Preserving affordable housing built in the 60s and 70s is necessary before it becomes market rate housing.

One result of this affordable housing shortage is that one in fifty American children will experience homelessness before they become 18.⁷

We'll ask Congress to join us in stating that every child deserves **A Place To Call Home**. To make that possible we are advocating a few steps to expand and preserve the number of affordable housing units available.

¹ NLIHC Letter 4/12/10

² HUD

³ CBS News 2/2/10

⁴ (NLIHC 2009)

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⁶ (NHT)

⁷ America's Youngest Outcasts, 2009 National Center for Family Homelessness

'A Place to Call Home' *continued*

The Family Promise national advocacy program, Voices Uniting, has initiated this campaign to facilitate the multi-level participation of affiliates and friends as we work to obtain a commitment from Congress that every child should have a place to call home. To make that possible, we are advocating for the expansion and preservation of this nation's affordable housing opportunities. Join us as we work with our national partners to provide **A Place to Call Home** for every child.

National Campaign Goals

To Obtain a Resolution from Congress that a Child Has a Right to Housing

We support H. Res. 582, A Child's Right to Housing Resolution, introduced by Rep. Maxine Waters. This resolution asks for a 'sense of the congress' that every child has a right to housing. It does not at this time commit Congress to any further action. This Right is stated in many documents the U.S. has signed including the UN Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

To Preserve Existing Affordable Housing

We urge the swift passage of the Housing Preservation and Tenant Protection Act of 2010. (H.R. 4868) This bill provides resources and incentives to prevent the further loss of affordable housing units; prevents the displacement of disabled, elderly and other low-income tenants; renews a rural housing initiative successfully tested in 2006; and establishes a national database to further preservation.

To Expand Affordable Housing

We seek an initial capitalization of the National Housing Trust Fund at \$1 billion dollars with another \$65 million for housing vouchers. Every \$1 billion provided to the Trust Fund will support the immediate construction of 10,000 rental homes, creating 15,100 new construction jobs and 3,800 new jobs in ongoing operations.⁸ We advocate this funding until a permanent source of funding is found or the proposed sources (Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac) are profitable again.

Local Campaign

The national office will support your local efforts to:

- Expand the number of advocates within your network,
- Educate volunteers and guests about the critical nature of advocacy,
- Originate or expand meetings local state and federal representatives,
- Train advocates, guests and former guests for that purpose,
- Begin or expand collaboration with other local or state advocacy groups.

In addition we will provide monthly newsletter updates and facts and an electronic toolkit for participating in this campaign.

⁸ NLIHC 2010