

the navigator

Directions and Trends in Higher Education Policy

Education and Homeless Youth: Policy Implementations

The stereotype of a homeless person is an older male, possibly a veteran, who lives on the street and struggles with substance abuse. This image fails to capture the majority of persons that are experiencing homelessness. Large numbers of families and emancipated youth without a stable home exist. Between five and seven percent of all youth in the United States will experience homelessness before they turn 18. Although the effects of homelessness have been studied by medical scholars, little research has been conducted to understand the educational impact of homelessness.

CHEPA received a grant from the Haynes Foundation to study the educational experiences of homeless youth in Los Angeles. The research team of Bill Tierney, Jarrett Gupton, and Ronn Hallett, has spent the past nine months interviewing youth who qualify for educational supports under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Youth are asked to speak about their residential history, identify people who offer guidance, and discuss their educational experiences. Interviews have also been conducted with people who work directly with the youth (i.e. school counselors, after school program staff, and outreach workers) and program directors. The goals of the project are twofold: 1) to assist the public school system in developing programs and procedures that improve educational outcomes for homeless youth and 2) to present data to policymakers and advocacy. We are particularly interested in public policies that will assist high school students who have postsecondary aspirations.

in shelters, McKinney-Vento defines homelessness ambitiously as not having a fixed, regular, and adequate residence, and includes 'doubled up' families that have been forced to seek residence in another person's home as a result of financial crises. The federal legislation requires each school district to assign a liaison to ensure that homeless students have access to public education. Schools must provide the basic resources that homeless youth may be unable to access as a result of their living instability including transportation, uniforms, and any other items that may be required for school attendance. In addition, schools must enroll homeless youth without delay, whether or not the parents have proof of residency, immunization records, or transcripts from previous schools of attendance. The Act ensures that if a youth begins the year in a school and then moves out of the school's geographic area, he or she is allowed to remain at the school and the district must provide transportation. These rights, which are not afforded to all students, have been difficult to enforce. School personnel are trained to deny enrollment to students outside of the school boundaries and frequently do not ask the appropriate questions to determine if the child is protected under McKinney-Vento. Due to a lack of information, few parents are knowledgeable of their rights and therefore do not know to advocate for their children.

Although the McKinney-Vento Act identifies several different types of students

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The federal government has responded to the growing number of homeless youth in the public school system. Since 2002, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act has been the law that defines how policymakers and schools respond to homeless students. Unlike traditional definitions of homelessness which may only include youth on the streets or

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As an undergraduate English major at Tufts University in the 1970s I needed money to make ends meet and saw an ad in an alternative newspaper for a job at the Pine Street Inn, a "home for homeless men" in Boston's red light district. I didn't know it at the time but we would eventually call this kind of experience "service-learning" and it would turn out to be one of the most compelling educational experiences I have had.

I worked four nights a week for three years at a shelter that housed 300 individuals between the ages of 17 and 80. The Pine Street Inn had three rules: no drinking, no drugs, no fighting. I almost ran away from the place on a bitterly cold February afternoon when I went for my job interview. The cavernous lobby was jammed with homeless people; the smell, the smoke, the atmosphere scared the hell out of me. Even though I had a gun pulled on me three times and I was almost knifed once, I learned to enjoy the work and liked the people. I came to discover as a 19 year-old that people who sure seemed different from me weren't very different from me.

One early morning about a year after I had started, as I walked back toward the subway, I turned onto Washington Street and stumbled upon Raymond Coppage's body. He was a 19 year-old Native American who had found his way to Boston and ended up in the Pine Street

Inn. When he was sober he was funny, thoughtful, and optimistic. The support structures weren't there for such a young man and he wasn't able to make it on his own and finally froze to death in an alley one winter night when I found him.

Thirty years later we are finding that support structures still don't exist for homeless youth. This issue of the Navigator pertains to a project we are involved with about homeless adolescents that is funded by the Haynes Foundation. Over the last several years, CHEPA has done a great deal of research about how to increase access to college for low-income urban youth. Obviously, all students are not alike; the problems that undocumented high school students face, for example, differ from their documented counterparts.

Homeless youth face specific challenges unlike other poor students. Yes, some problems are similar - they mostly attend under-funded schools with inadequate resources. But the transient nature of their young lives causes social and emotional problems unique to those who are homeless. We are trying to figure out what might be done to improve educational opportunity.

Over the years I have reflected a great deal on those initial experiences I had at the Pine Street Inn. I wonder today what Raymond Coppage might have



accomplished, how he might have benefited the country if we had provided the necessary support to help him succeed. We know that the likelihood is if someone is homeless as a teenager he or she will most likely experience homelessness as an adult. What does the country lose when we throw children aside with a collective shrug of our shoulders? In a democracy that is predicated on its citizenry having high wage and high skill jobs so that we all might participate in the public sphere can we afford to ignore children who are most at risk?

--Bill Tierney

CHEPA Comings, Goings, and News

Sterling Foundation has awarded CHEPA \$10,000 toward the *Increasing Access via Mentoring (I AM)* program. More information about the *I AM* program can be found on page 4.

Darnell Cole, Associate Professor, and Melora Sundt, Associate Dean for External Relations, received a Teagle Foundation planning grant, *Assessing the Impact of Diversity Courses on Student Learning and Skill Development*.

Shikha Ahuja, computer science Master's student, has joined CHEPA to develop a database system for the Teagle Foundation project.

Diane Yoon recently joined CHEPA as the Outreach Programs Advisor and coordinates

various facets of the I AM (Increasing Access via Mentoring) Program. A 2001 USC alumna, Diane most recently served as an Admissions Counselor at California State University, Sacramento, where she completed a Master's degree in Higher Education Leadership.

Hannah Yang has joined CHEPA as a Research Associate, working with Adrianna Kezar on her qualitative study of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). Hannah is a 2007 graduate of the Postsecondary Administration and Student Affairs Master's program at USC.

We welcome new CHEPA research assistants Laurel Beesemyer and Chiara Paz, both members of this year's new Ph.D. cohort. Laurel recently earned her M.A. in

Higher and Postsecondary Education from Teacher's College, Columbia University. Chiara comes to us from UCLA, where she earned her M.A. in Higher Education & Organizational Change while serving as the Credential Counselor and Student Affairs Officer for the Teacher Education Program.

Dr. Clarissa Neves, a Fulbright New Century Scholar, will be in residence from mid-September until early November. Dr. Neves is a sociology professor at the Federal University of Rio Grande in Brazil.

Erika Tucker, former CHEPA undergraduate student worker, has graduated and is now employed by Workman Publishing in New York. We wish her all the best and will miss all of the help she provided in the center!

Education and Homeless Youth

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that fall under the category of homeless, the Act mandates a 'catch all' solution. However, homeless youth face many different situations that require a multifaceted approach. Accompanied youth, for example, are youth under 18 who have a parent or guardian and the family is without adequate shelter; unaccompanied youth are young people under 18 without any adult supervision and living in unstable or inadequate housing. Throwaway youth are young persons who have been told to leave home by a parent or guardian and are away overnight and prevented from returning home. Those young individuals who reside in high-risk environments such as under bridges or abandoned buildings are known as street youth, and adolescents who have been in and out of government systems such as juvenile justice and foster care are referred to as systems youth. Obviously, these categories often overlap. An individual considered a throwaway youth may also be a street youth. Someone who is unaccompanied may have recently been a systems youth. The fluidity of these terms and categories complicates attempts to determine what kinds of educational support systems need to be developed.

The public school system must figure out how to address the diverse needs of this vulnerable student population. If one is homeless and living on the street, for example, the problems that exist differ from an individual living in a long-term shelter. The person who is "doubled up" and resides in the garage of a family friend's home has different needs from his or her counterpart who moves from shelter to shelter. The overall challenge of homelessness, obviously, is that an individual lacks a stable residence, but insofar as individuals are homeless in different ways, systems need to be able to respond in different ways. Social welfare systems are not up to the challenge.

The barriers to school enrollment are slowly coming down; however, many barriers still need to be addressed once the students have overcome the hurdles of getting registered, securing transportation and acquiring necessary supplies. Currently, few schools offer services for homeless youth once they are enrolled. Based upon the data we have collected, we offer the following preliminary recommendations for discussion:

1. *Provide referrals for housing:* The best way to improve the educational attainment of homeless youth is to ensure that they are no longer homeless. This is typically out of the hands of the public school system; however, school counselors should be educated on emergency and transitional living programs.

2. *Establish residential schools:* A residential charter school geared toward drop-out prevention has the potential of providing stability. Currently, the McKinney-Vento Act does not allow for segregation of the homeless. We appreciate the spirit behind the mandate of inclusion. However, for a small percentage of youth who have been disconnected from the education system, it may be appropriate to create a residential program that focuses on reintegration.

3. *Assign mentors and tutors:* Homeless youth need to be assigned a long-standing mentor who stays with the student throughout high school. This person can offer a sense of stability that few homeless youth have in their personal lives. Beyond psychological support, the mentor can guide the youth through educational choices in high school and give support as they prepare for postsecondary opportunities.

4. *Provide referrals for intensive support:* Those students who have been psychologically traumatized need services beyond the capacity of the school district. Many youth have needs well beyond what a school is typically able to meet (i.e. teen prostitutes or drug addicts). The district should develop close partnerships with social service agencies and nonprofit organizations that specialize in meeting these needs.

5. *Develop educational services where students are located:* Shelters need to create relationships with educational organizations so that programs exist on a systemic basis within the shelter. The school site may not be the most appropriate place for an after school program for homeless youth; however, tutoring and mentoring programs at a shelter give students greater access to support.

6. *Support families as they transition back into homes:* Insofar as homeless families are likely to transition in and out of

In Fact

- Roughly 3.5 million people will experience homelessness over the course of a year. (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006)
- Nearly half of the homeless population is part of a family seeking shelter. (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006)
- Current research suggests that the lack of affordable housing is a primary cause in family homelessness. (Burt, 2001)
- Twenty to thirty percent of homeless individuals reside in shelters with the remaining people seeking alternative refuge in other ways, including sharing homes with other families, staying in abandoned buildings, or sleeping on the streets. (Tepper, 2004)
- At least one out of every twenty people under the age of 18 will experience homelessness at some point in their lives. (Ringwalt, Green, Robertson, McPheeters, 1998)
- Nationwide, 1.5 million youth experience homelessness over the course of a year. (Ringwalt, Green, Robertson, McPheeters, 1998)
- Emancipated foster youth are overrepresented among homeless individuals. (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006)

homelessness, services under McKinney-Vento should be offered until the end of the school year after the family has been in a 'stable' home for 12 months. Although families may have recently acquired a home, there is no guarantee that their situation is stabilized. The services provided to homeless youth may be the only stable aspect of their life and should continue until the school is reasonably certain the family has a stabilized residence.

The passage of the McKinney-Vento Act provided federal protection for homeless youth and families in terms of getting students enrolled, securing transportation to school, and acquiring necessary supplies. The next step is to consider the services that are needed for students as they arrive on the school campus. Unlike the stereotype of an aimless homeless person suffering from addiction, the majority of homeless youth desire to attend school and be successful. The solutions are difficult and require a creative use of resources and collaboration between multiple services providers. However, it is possible to help these students move towards a more stable future. -Ronn Hallett

Increasing Access via Mentoring Program (I AM)

In its third year, the Increasing Access via Mentoring (I AM) Program continues its partnership with nine local Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) high schools located near USC. In 2007-2008, the I AM program will provide over 200 high school students with college admissions and financial aid preparation through one-on-one mentoring.

This year, 100 USC mentors--including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff--will work with juniors and seniors from underserved and low-income populations. During the Fall 2007 semester, mentors will meet with students twice a month assisting them with college applications and financial aid. Mentors will ensure each student meets deadlines regarding the college admissions process and students will have an opportunity to ask questions about the high school to college transition. During the Spring 2008 semester, mentors play a critical role in helping students make informed decisions about which college or university to attend. At the end of the mentoring program, students will be invited to participate in the 7th annual SummerTIME writing program, to be held on the USC campus in July. CHEPA has received funding from the Goldman Sachs Foundation to include juniors for

the second time and will partner with five local high schools to prepare these students to be college-eligible and competitive.

In addition to the mentoring program, CHEPA has formed a College Counselor Advisory Board. The board allows I AM coordinators to meet with the college counselors from the nine collaborating schools to discuss issues that are pertinent to the students that they serve. Through biannual meetings, the Advisory Board serves as a mutual partnership between CHEPA and schools in the surrounding community. School personnel are able to provide feedback to help strengthen the I AM program while CHEPA staff members are able to provide information and resources to help address the needs of the college counselors. I AM and the creation of the Advisory Board build on USC's and CHEPA's commitment to working with the surrounding community and to increasing the number of students from diverse backgrounds at postsecondary institutions in California and across the nation.

For more information about the I AM program and CHEPA, please visit the website at www.usc.edu/dept/chepa or contact Director of Outreach, Victor Garcia at victorg@usc.edu.

Community Outreach: Partnering with Homeless Youth and Agencies

A part of our research project on homelessness includes taking time to work with homeless adolescents at various high schools and community organizations. During the spring, CHEPA staff accompanied several homeless youth to a USC baseball game. While the trip allowed youth some relief from the stress of being homeless, it also provided them with an opportunity to tour a college campus for the first time. CHEPA staff members have provided assistance to homeless youth in reaching their educational goals. Staff members have helped teens re-enroll in school and have provided tutoring at School on Wheels, an after school program designed to help homeless youth with their academic achievement. Over the next year, CHEPA staff will work to include eligible homeless students in pre-existing outreach efforts, such as the Increasing Access via Mentoring (I AM) Program and the

SummerTIME Writing Program.

During the Fall semester of 2007, CHEPA will hold multiple advisory meetings with school and community members regarding our research project on homeless adolescents. The advisory meetings allow school personnel and those who work with homeless youth an opportunity to share their thoughts on project findings and future directions. Finally, in the fall, CHEPA will convene a seminar of school and community practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to discuss the preliminary findings from the project and how these findings might be used to improve educational services to homeless youth. The purpose of the meeting is to foster communication regarding improving the education of homeless youth and the ways multiple agencies might collaborate to support each other in this endeavor.

On the Web

National Agency for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) <http://www.naehcy.org>

NAEHCY is a grassroots national organization that provides information to schools and communities regarding the education of homeless students. NAEHCY advocates for reform regarding homeless youth and educational policy; provides legislative updates to its members; holds an annual conference, and has established a scholarship fund for homeless youth.

National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>

NCH is a national network of organizations dedicated to ending homelessness in the United States. NCH offers online reports and publications related to homelessness, directories of housing and service organizations, as well as a directory of State Coordinators for Homeless Education.

National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) <http://www.endhomelessness.org>

NAEH is non-partisan organization working to prevent and end homelessness in the U.S. NAEH provides data and research to legislatures and community organizations in an effort to create solutions for preventing homelessness. NAEH also offers training guides for those interested in taking action to prevent and end homelessness in their communities.

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) <http://www.nlchp.org>

NLCHP works to prevent homelessness through the law. They focus on litigation, policy advocacy, and public education. NLCHP addresses homelessness as an aspect of poverty and works to provide affordable housing, ensure an adequate income for those in poverty, and increase educational opportunities.

National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE <http://www.serve.org/nche>

The National Center for Homeless Education is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and offers an online clearinghouse for information on homeless youth and education with links to state and local resources and best practice guides for working with homeless youth.



Fast Forward

OCTOBER

National College Access Network, Los Angeles, CA: October 7-10, 2007.

Victor Garcia, Kristan Venegas, and Doug Burleson, with Tricia Bryan and Arty Christianto:

- *Promoting college access through mentoring*

Kristan Venegas with Alma Salazar and Daniel Mendez:

- *Using the internet to access college admission and financial aid*

Ronn Hallett and Zoe Blumberg Corwin:

- *College access for homeless and foster care students: Challenges, trends and strategies*

The Tomas Rivera Policy Institute 4th Annual Conference, Long Beach, CA: October 15, 2007.

Kristan Venegas, Victor Garcia, Doug Burleson, and Diane Yoon:

- *Developing mentoring relationships with college-bound Latino high school students: Four models of practice*

NASPA Western Regional Conference, Las Vegas, NV: Oct 30-Nov 3, 2007.

Kristan Venegas, Victor Garcia, and Alex Jun:

- *Inspiring incredible expectations: Student affairs interns mentoring urban high school students*

Kristan Venegas and Alex Jun:

- *Professors, practitioners, and purposeful partnerships: Successful collaborative strategies to enhance graduate student learning*

NOVEMBER

Annual Meeting, Association for the Study of Higher Education, Louisville, KY: November 8-10, 2007.

Doug Burleson and Ronn Hallett:

- *What do students know?: Evaluation of*

urban high school students' knowledge of college processes

Darnell Cole with Anthony Rolle:

- *A discussion of the relationship between student characteristics and self-conceptions on modes of social interaction at institutes of higher education*

Jarrett Gupton:

- *Biography and college access: Opening the narrative and theoretical imagination*
- *The postmodern urban university*

Adrianna Kezar:

- *New frameworks for understanding leadership and leadership development of faculty and administrators in higher education.*
- *Paving a new road to access: Individual development accounts*

Margaret Sallee:

- *Legislated out: The costs of denying benefits to gay and lesbian faculty*

Margaret Sallee with Frank Harris III:

- *The role of gender in feminist research*

William Tierney with Vicente Lechuga, Kevin Kinser, and Anna Chung:

- *Higher education's expanding market: For-profit institutions as schools and businesses*

Kristan Venegas:

- *The ASHE/Lumina Fellows Program: Insights from the first five years and information for prospective fellows*

Kristan Venegas with R. Evely Gildersleeve, Angela Bell, and Kristen Renn:

- *Sites of access: Ecological approaches for studying college-going*

National Agency for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth's 19th Annual Conference, Portland, OR: November 10-13, 2007.

Ronn Hallett and William Tierney:

- *Using research to guide the education of homeless youth in California: Evaluation and research*

First Person

Like many other teenagers, Franklin Arburtha has experienced homelessness in different periods of his life. However, Franklin is special in that he has also made a film to document his experiences. For more information on the film, please visit Franklin's website at <http://kids-row.wowtv.tv/>

I, Franklin Arburtha, am sixteen years old. I recently lived in Skid Row where I saw a lot of things, both good and bad. One of the good things is I had a lot of friends. One of the bad things is I saw a lot of people throw their lives away by smoking crack, prostitution, and murder. Most of that stuff takes places in the hotels where families live at. My family stayed in a hotel called the Ford Hotel; about three hundred people lived in there with us. The rooms were small, about the same size of a walk-in closet, but my family and I had two rooms. Six people lived in the two rooms, we had two bunk beds. Two of my sisters Jamaica and Egypt slept on the bottom of one bunk. My other sister Ankara slept right above them on the top bunk. My mom, Grace, and my little brother, Joel, slept on the bottom of the second bunk and I slept right above them. We had a hot plate so we could cook and we had a mini refrigerator to keep our food good. The small bathrooms were in the hallway and we had to share them with three hundred people, people got sick a lot. There were a lot of kids and all of them were my friends. Living down there got me stronger because it numbed me up, but now I'm immune to most stuff that is harder for other people. After seeing my friend's mom get killed on the side of the hotel I made a documentary. One of my goals in life is to make films.

The name of my documentary is *We're Not Bad Kids*. I made it in 2003, when my friend's mom passed away. Her name was Doris and she was killed on the corner. My sister, my friend and I were on the fourth floor balcony. We saw a man grab her and start stabbing her. I think she got stabbed 17 times. After he stabbed her, he ran off and cut his wrist, but the police caught him. After that I wanted to do a candlelight vigil on film. I started talking to some of the kids about it and they told me it should be turned into documentary. The reason I think people should watch it is so that they can see how it feels to be a homeless child on Skid Row. Most people think that we are bad kids. I think this film proves we're not.

CHEPA HOSTS SPEAKER SERIES ON GLOBALIZATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

◆ September 17, 2007

Dr. Jamil Salmi, Tertiary Education Coordinator, World Bank: *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*

◆ September 26, 2007

Dr. Joseph Duffey, Senior Vice President of Laureate International Universities: *Recent Trajectories in International Higher Education: Globalization, Privatization and how we got here from there*

◆ November 12, 2007

Dr. Simon Marginson, Australian Professorial Fellow & Professor of Higher Education in the Centre for the the Study of Higher Education, Melbourne University: *Globalization, Universities and the Creative Economy*

in WPH 403
at noon

What should be done to better serve homeless youth?

In this issue, we asked four scholars and homeless advocates to discuss how homeless youth might be better served.



Patricia Julianelle
Pro Bono Counsel
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)

The best way to serve young people who are homeless is to prevent and end their homelessness. Such prevention requires significant reforms in the child welfare system to: (1) provide better crisis-intervention services to help strengthen families; (2) offer teenagers in the child welfare system more appropriate placement options; and (3) prepare youth in the child welfare system for independence. Homelessness is also inextricably related to poverty. Nationwide programs to alleviate poverty will have a direct effect on the number of youth who are homeless.

Ending youth homelessness also requires a major investment in shelters, supportive transitional housing, independent living programs, and permanent affordable housing for homeless youth. Such housing programs must offer shelter to youth without restrictions based on age, gender, or parental contact. Legal reforms are also necessary to ensure that youth who are under 18 and on their own can access health care, social services, public benefits, housing, employment, and other services without parental consent or approval.

Perhaps the most important action policymakers, community leaders, and ordinary people can undertake to help youth in homeless situations is to listen to the youth themselves. We must never succumb to the temptation to imagine homeless youth as a static group of young people who are all the same. A teenager who experiences homelessness is first a teenager, with all the strengths and challenges of any teenager. We must constantly listen to young people as they express their own needs, strengths, and goals and implement strategies in partnership with them.



Mark Kleger-Heine
Education Advisor to
Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa

It is society's responsibility to address the holistic needs of homeless children so that they have the opportunities to develop into

mature adults. We should begin by ensuring that all homeless youth have access to basic needs such as adequate shelter, food and clothing, as well as supportive services to help youth transition from homelessness into stable housing. However, the work cannot stop there. The myriad developmental needs that all children have are particularly acute for youth who have experienced the trauma of being homeless. As a result, homeless youth need access to a full range of services that are customized to their needs-including education and counseling, among other services.

Yet not all homeless youth are alike, and solutions must account for individual differences. Youth become homeless due to a dizzying array of personal circumstances: some have run away or been ostracized by their families; others get lost when it comes time to emancipate from the foster care, juvenile justice or mental health systems; and many others are members of families that are homeless. In Los Angeles County's latest "homeless count," for example, 0.4% of respondents were younger than age 17, while 4.1% of homeless families were living with children under the age of 18 (these families had, on average, 2.1 children)¹. Thus, one determining factor for the type of services necessary for homeless youth is each child's path into homelessness.

What is government's role in addressing these issues? Government has the responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of our society by ensuring that publicly funded housing and service programs are efficacious and cost effective. Government also must rally different sectors to work together by coordinating private, public and not-for-profit service providers to develop an integrated and holistic plan that fully addresses the developmental and housing needs of all of our children.

¹. <http://www.lahsa.org/homelesscount2005>



Susan Rabinovitz
Associate Director
Division of Adolescent Medicine, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles

Here are my immediate thoughts, presented in no particular order.

First, given that adult brain maturity is not achieved until the third decade of life, we must design services and systems to help youth attain stability and economic independence. We need

to extend federal entitlement programs for youth through age 24, including the Independent Living Program and EPSDT coverage, and keep youth out of adult facilities, extending the duration of juvenile probation through age 24.

Second, many homeless youth were never served by the dependency system, but have histories of abuse and neglect that would have made them eligible. A new entitlement program offering services, housing, and health care should be established for homeless youth to help them achieve independence.

Third, foster care and probation should never be allowed to discharge youth without long-term housing plans. We need to keep youth off of the streets and away from the street economy - research demonstrates that after three months of homelessness, risk behaviors increase. Fourth, given the complex histories of trauma experienced by many homeless youth, services need to be trauma-informed, and focus on building positive, secure connections with youth and providing opportunities for youth to be engaged in meaningful ways.

Fifth, youth need a full continuum of housing to minimize the time they're homeless, with new, low-barrier housing models and increases in the availability of housing. Finally, services need to be responsive to special populations, including GLBT youth, immigrant youth, and youth with mental health and substance abuse problems



Susan Finley

Professor, Washington State University-Vancouver and Community Activist for Homeless Individuals and Organizations

When I think about the question of what can be done to better support homeless youths, my optimism is challenged by what are now ongoing and pervasive trends in government that have created and sustained the many and great divides between people in poverty and those with wealth. If poor students are severely disadvantaged by current economic and social policy, their disadvantage is multiplied and complicated still further in the instance of homeless youths. To bridge the gaps in academic achievement, technological literacy, and access to schooling for homeless youths may seem to be unachievable goals, but I do believe such ends can be accomplished through a massive shift in social values. In the U.S., we may be on the brink of such a shift as the citizenry expresses its disillusionment with social policies that have increased child poverty, created a culture of homelessness, put a nation at risk in terms of lack of available health care, and have undermined the U.S. education system.

Most importantly, a paradigm of respect for human dignity needs to be accomplished if we are to better serve homeless youths. Homeless youths cannot continue to be "invisible" and "untouchable" or, when they are acknowledged, they cannot continue either to be feared or pitied. Instead, we need to focus attention on the potential homeless youths offer as valuable assets to our communities. Their integration into local communities will benefit all. Instead of thinking of them in terms of the deficits to their educations due to school leaving and lack of traditional instruction, we need to recognize that successful living on the streets takes incredible resourcefulness and resiliency, often accompanied by quick wit and a sense of humor that trumps adversity. Rather than devalue homeless youths as being a difficult population, we must remove roadblocks that prevent their re-integration into communities that value difference. Wisdom would reach out to homeless youths to engage them intellectually as collaborators in change to address the societal dysfunctions that were precursors to their status as homeless.

Approaches to service to enact these values of respect and care would include holistic and community-based social networks to support children and youths. It is important to: 1) form community partnerships that include educational institutions, service agencies, and homeless youths; 2) support pre-K, elementary, middle school, and high school programs that address the educational gaps that limit access to higher education for children and youths who live in economic poverty or who are homeless; 3) create diverse ways to credential individuals, to encourage briefer periods of study--perhaps that materialize across a lifetime to replace the four- to six-year hiatus post high school--and to discover more and different opportunities for education to occur in workplaces (including public service works) so that learning and earning can be simultaneous.

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Selected CHEPA Publications

Kezar, A. (2007). Tools for a time and place: Phased leadership strategies for advancing campus diversity. *Review of Higher Education*, 30(4), 413-439.

Kezar, A. (2007, July/August). Learning to ensure the success for students of color: A systemic approach to effecting change. *Change*, 19-25.

Kezar, A. (2007). Successful student engagement: Aligning and fostering institutional ethos. *About Campus*, 11(6), 13-19.

Kezar, A. & Tierney, W. (2007). Are public governing boards unique? *Trusteeship, Nov/Dec*, 28-31.

Tierney, W. G., Sallee, M. W., & Venegas, K. M. (2007). Access and financial aid: How American Indian students pay for college. *Journal of College Admission*, 14-23.

Venegas, K. (2007). Low-income urban Latinas' student aid decisions: The effect of family ties. *ASHE/Lumina Fellows Series Policy Brief*. Issue 1.

Venegas, K. (2007, August 9). Expert interview with Dr. Kristan Venegas. *Financialaidpodcast.com Available for download from:*
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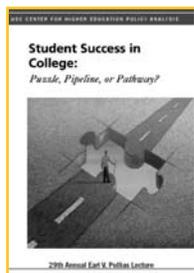
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Lecture: *Student Success in College: Puzzle, Pipeline, or Pathway?*

By George D. Kuh

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