

The Journey Home: Three Pathways Toward Ending Youth Homelessness



With your support, we will focus on building three pathways to end youth homelessness for future generations.

PATHWAY 1: PREVENTION

When we create the conditions that mitigate homelessness, we can prevent youth from ever having to enter systems of care. We plan to accomplish this by **advocating to change laws and practices that lead to youth homelessness, raising awareness through community education, and offering short-term interventions for youth.**

Your help today paves the way to prevention. Anything you give will support our development of affordable housing advocacy platforms, short-term interventions, and community education campaigns that we will use to keep young people from ever having to enter the cycle of homelessness.

PATHWAY 2: INTERVENTION

By adopting our data-driven Covenant House Program Model across all sites, we can ensure youth homeless experiences are rare, brief, and non-recurring. Our program model will be adaptable, using data, evaluation, and research to inform our practices and produce the best outcomes for our kids.

Our research already shows that increasing investment in **mental health services, workforce development,** and other programs such as our **Young Families** and **Anti-Human Trafficking** work are crucial to helping youth overcome homelessness. Your generosity today will support these transformational programs while also allowing continued data analysis so we can be most effective.

PATHWAY 3: RESTORATION

To best support young people after they leave Covenant House, we will develop a wraparound support system by expanding the alumni network and developing effective affordable-for-youth housing.

Your support helps build these systems while also growing our resources for short-term interventions to keep alumni stably housed in times of crisis.

With you by our side, we can build these three pathways effectively, changing the way young people enter into, experience, and overcome homelessness.

Helping Young Families

Of those facing homelessness, about 44% of women and 18% of men between the ages of 18–25 report being a current or expecting parent.

Homelessness is extremely traumatic for young families, often leading to serious lifelong effects for both the child and the parent. Yet Covenant House is only one of a handful of youth shelters who offer holistic care to young families. That is why we are expanding our capacity to care for this underserved demographic in our specialized Young Families program.



You are playing a critical role in helping pregnant and parenting youth, and I invite you to stay connected with us as we expand our program. We will focus on key areas, providing parenting and life skills, family success planning, job readiness and workforce development, transitional and permanent housing, and financial literacy to help youth build a stable future for themselves and their child.

Emergency Response

Covenant House is there for our youth during the most difficult times in their lives. In addition to the lifesaving work we do each day, this past year, Covenant House International faced challenges we were only able to overcome thanks to the immediate response of our donors.

In New York, a nearby crane collapsed, causing dust and debris to fill the surrounding area, including our shelter. No one was hurt, but we had to evacuate 119 youth and 20 staff members. Our supporters took action, helping to provide the funds needed to temporarily house, clothe, and feed our youth while also cleaning our building to make it safe again.

And in Honduras, a fire broke out a block away from our site, resulting in the immediate evacuation of 70 youth residents in the building. Due to the toxic fumes, all of the food in our pantry had to be thrown out, along with many personal belongings. But our donors made sure these kids were housed and safe as their home was cleaned out, even sending stuffed animals to bring comfort to these children in need of love. Thanks to amazing friends like you, we were able to quickly intervene and make a difference for kids who are already at their most vulnerable, keeping them safe.



Advocacy

Covenant House is committed to implementing transformational change. To do that, we are taking our youth's stories to Congress directly. We held our first annual Covenant House Hill Day, bringing together a diverse set of Covenant House champions from across the U.S. to advocate on behalf of key policy priorities, like the *Trafficking Victims Protection Act* and *The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Program*.



These programs will have a huge impact on our kids. With this legislation, youth who have experienced human trafficking will be able to find safe haven where they can heal from the traumas they faced. Thanks to friends like you, Covenant House will be walking alongside them every step of the way.



Even with these challenges, our biggest fight is shifting the understanding of homelessness. As a Covenant House member, you know that homelessness is not one size fits all. While some homeless youth are literally living on the streets, some are drifting between different friends' couches each night and some are trying to escape the dangers of abusive adults in their lives. All are missing a safe home.

These youth are in great need, but because of outdated definitions of homelessness, they aren't eligible for aid, leading many of them into worse situations until they finally find Covenant House. By working with lawmakers to help them understand the breadth of youth homelessness, we can prevent youth from ever experiencing the dangers of the streets. **This is what it means to fight to end youth homelessness!**

Anti-Human Trafficking

One in five young people at Covenant House have experienced human trafficking in some capacity. Yet, some youth go through our entire program never having disclosed their experiences.

If we are unaware of their traumatic pasts, young people may not receive the specialized services they need and may instead return to the dangers of the streets.

Your support for our anti-human trafficking initiatives will help employ new, validated screening and assessment tools across our sites to identify young people with trafficking histories earlier in their stay so we can more quickly provide specialized trauma-sensitive care, including legal support, mental health care, and an array of supportive services.