

DISCUSSION / VIEWER GUIDE



This Discussion Guide is made possible by

New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department

In association with
SafeTeen New Mexico
New Mexico Public Education Department
Independent Insurance Agents of New Mexico
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NM Coalition of School Administrators
NM School Boards Association

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KRQE-TV
KRWG-TV
KENW-TV
New Mexico PTA

Created by
Christopher Productions, LLC

Thank you for your interest in the **LOOKING IN** Discussion/Viewing Guide. We want to empower and support communities to discover solutions and bring an end to child homelessness. We also want parents, educators and youth to fully understand how homelessness happens, dispel myths around this issue and encourage action that helps to make sustainable change.

Enclosed are some ideas for discussion and activities for students and adults. Feel free to alter any of these suggestions for a better fit with your particular group. This is intended as a guide and starting point.

You may find it helpful to visit our websites:

www.ChristopherProductions.org or www.SafeTeenNM.org

for further information on this and other issues of concern for young people including risks kids take and why, illegal use of prescription drugs, mental health issues, alcohol and drug issues, and distracted driving.

RESPONSE REQUESTED: We supply these materials to you free of charge, in the hope that they support your efforts in reaching students with enlivened discussions about difficult situations and adolescent curiosity, insecurity and empowerment.

The only thing we ask in return is that you let us know if you are using this so we can track the number of participants and the lives you've affected. A response page can be found at the end of this guide.

On behalf of SafeTeen New Mexico and Christopher Productions, we want to thank you for working with young people and helping to brighten their future.

Sincerely,

Thom Turbett
President
SafeTeen New Mexico

Chris Schueler
President
Christopher Productions, LLC

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SHOW OVERVIEW

“LOOKING IN” is a half hour television program designed to help people understand how homelessness happens, dispel the various myths around homelessness and discover ways to help. We hope this will also help generate discussion about what communities can do to end this situation.

A years worth of research went into the information in the program including “think tanks” with experts in all areas related to being in a homeless situation.

This show is meant to be a catalyst for discussion, which means that there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose is to encourage discussion about the issue so people can discover, for themselves, what is happening in their community and how to get involved in a meaningful way. Young people should be encouraged to actively participate in exchanging ideas and researching related topics of interest.

Portions of the show may not be appropriate for some young people to watch. Please read the script and watch the program prior to sharing it with students. This will make discussion with your students easier and more effective.

THE SCRIPT IS AVAILABLE THROUGH

www.SafeTeen.net

and

www.ChristopherProductions.org

Please download, read and have available prior to viewing program.

This guide includes discussion and activity ideas for involving students at various levels of development. **Further information and a complete list of additional resources are included at the end of this guide.** Our hope is that this is just the beginning, and that together we can make an important difference in our communities and in the lives of our children.

GENERAL INFO

PROJECT BACKGROUND

According to the New Mexico Public Education Department, the number of **identified homeless youth has DOUBLED** from 2006-07 to 2008-09.

Albuquerque Public Schools had approximately 2000 **homeless students** enrolled in March 2008. One year later, 2009, the number was nearly **4,300**.

The National Center on Family Homelessness ranked **New Mexico 47th in child homelessness** across the 50 states in March 2009.

According to Cuidando Los Ninos, well over **10,000 New Mexican children** will experience homelessness in 2010. Homeless children are more likely to have moderate to severe health issues, difficulties in school, and emotional disturbances.

THE PROJECT

“Looking In” is a comprehensive campaign to help PARENTS, EDUCATORS and COMMUNITIES throughout New Mexico discuss and address homelessness as it relates to education. It will give communities a moment to rally around their local schools efforts to help homeless students.

The project involved parents, teens and experts extensively in the creative process and centers on the production of a 40 minute documentary along with a 20 minute live community conversation phone in program that will be broadcast in fall of 2010 just as school is beginning. It also includes a series of television informational promos and a shortened version of the program for public talks.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for this campaign is **EDUCATORS** (counselors, teachers, social workers, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria staff, nurses and administrators) **AND COMMUNITY LEADERS** statewide as well as **LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP**.

The public will learn about homelessness in their community and its effect on their lives and future generations. This will be an opportunity for schools and communities to come together and discuss this issue in a way that is productive and helpful.

APPROACH

While the video highlights homelessness in youth, it also shows the **effect of homelessness on communities and the education system**. It reinforces how education is a means out of the situation and how homeless youth must be supported to stay in school.

The documentary follows the lives of four young people who are or have been homeless. We discover how this happened to them, how they coped and where they are now. In each case we see how the education system can help and has helped them in a variety of ways.

The campaign also includes basic information about the homeless issue and how it affects all aspects of a community. Additionally, the program gives the viewers **specific ways to help and address the issue in their community and through their local school**.

BROADCAST PARTNER AND DISTRIBUTION

In addition to a prime time broadcast on New Mexico's CBS affiliate KRQE TV 13, the issue was highlighted through a series of news stories run on the station along with a series of informational promos about homelessness. The PBS affiliate in Las Cruces, KRWG, and Portales, KENW, also broadcast the program to viewers in southern and eastern New Mexico.

A shortened version of the documentary was created in order to facilitate live discussion in other youth group and school settings and this curriculum/viewer guide was created to assist in that outreach.

The full documentary and shortened version was distributed to all superintendents in New Mexico along with all the PTA's in the state. This was facilitated by Cooperative Educational Services, the New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators, the New Mexico School Boards Association and New Mexico PTA.

ORGANIZE TO HELP YOUR COMMUNITY END CHILD HOMELESSNESS

The main purpose of this project is:

To give **YOU** a tool...something to rally around...to address homelessness and END IT in **YOUR community**. Check out your tools below:

- DVD of the TV show “LOOKING IN”
30 MIN. DOC / 20 MIN VERSION
- Discussion guide for classroom or group use
- Online resources (see “resources” at the end of this guide)

To get copies of these tools, please visit:

www.SafeTeen.net

or

www.ChristopherProductions.org

V I E W I N G S U G G E S T I O N S

- **Provide additional information and instruction.**

The information and stories in “LOOKING IN” are presented in a style that serves as a catalyst for thoughtful discussion. It is assumed by the creators of the program that more in-depth information and instruction will be provided by the group leader or teacher. Some of this information can be found in the resource section of this guide.

- **Discuss the content before watching the show.**

Briefly discuss the content before watching the show in order to make the discussion after the show more effective. Discuss the difference between a documentary (real life) and a fictional movie (created script). Mention that this is about youth and families here in New Mexico. Suggest that some of this may be difficult to understand and that these things will be discussed after the program.

- **Set ground rules prior to viewing.**

Teachers or group leaders need to be prepared to offset disruptions in order to guarantee respect for those students wanting to see the show. Talk to students ahead of time and agree on appropriate behavior during the viewing. This should include **no talking or asking questions** until the show is concluded. You should also supply or **have available paper and pens or pencils** so that students can **jot down ideas and questions during the viewing for later discussion**.

- **Use “Discussion and Activities” for your grade.**

There are many ways to encourage open discussion. Since the need for facilitation and supervision will vary among ages, more age-specific suggestions are given on the following pages.

P R I O R T O V I E W I N G

Instructors: Please keep in mind that this guide contains discussion questions that may be sensitive in nature and may cause uncomfortable feelings and emotions to surface for some students due to personal experience or other reasons.

Have resource information readily accessible to students and discuss only those questions that you feel comfortable handling.

PRIOR TO SHOWING THE DOCUMENTARY:

1. Be certain to preview the video and read through this guide.
2. Gather and have available print resources (reference resources list at the end of this guide).
3. Download and read the script of the video.
4. Determine how much time you will have and what the discussion goal will be.
5. If you can, ask a trained expert to assist with the discussion (perhaps your school counselor).
6. Use clear guidelines. Avoid general, unstructured discussion.
7. Allow enough time to discuss the topics after the viewing.
8. Discuss only those questions that you feel comfortable handling

Go over the following with your group **prior to viewing**:

1. Explain that this is about understanding and making a difference.
2. Be certain all cell phones and pagers are turned off.
3. Be sure everyone has pen and paper and encourage them to jot down notes, ideas, and questions. (perhaps review questions you'll be asking after the show – see "Discussion" Section.)
4. Explain the program is 40 minutes long and then a discussion about the program will follow.
5. Explain that the video was created here in our state and that all the **interviews and scenes are real**. You might explain the difference between a documentary (real stories and people) and a fictional film (written and not real).
6. Tell your group that if they feel uncomfortable at any point they may choose not to watch (be sure to arrange for a place where they can go in advance).
7. Explain that the program can be an emotional experience and to respect everyone's personal feelings.

AFTER VIEWING

Because it is important to protect everyone during the discussion, ask the group **not to use any names**, and set ground rules that include using the phrase “a person I know” OR REFERRING TO THE PEOPLE IN THE VIDEO each time. This may allow a more open discussion for everyone.

- 1. Give everyone a few moments to jot down ideas and questions they may have about the information in the documentary.**
- 2. Explain that this is not a way to talk about other students or families in this situation.**
- 3. Say that this will be a discussion about the facts and what can be done about the homeless situation.**
- 4. Follow some of the ideas for discussion in this guide or from other sources.**
- 5. Be sure to leave enough time for adequate discussion. If time is short after the viewing (30 minutes or less), you may want to take just one of the discussion topics and leave the rest for later.**

DISCUSSION

Middle School Students

It is important that young people realize that homelessness is NOT a type of person and that all people have value no matter their financial or home situation. All discussions should be conducted with this in mind. Young people need to also understand that they can have an impact on this issue.

- Discuss how people can become homeless based on the video.
- Discuss what the kids in the video were able to accomplish even though they were in a difficult situation.
- Discuss the word “respect” and how, even though the kids in the video perhaps didn’t have all the nice things some people have, they were still just kids.
- Discuss how being without a home doesn’t change who you are as a person.

ACTIVITIES

Middle School Students

- Have the students write a story about a kid who is homeless:
 - That has a happy ending.
 - That shows how someone or group helped the young person.
 - That shows how education helped the young person succeed.
- Have the students do posters about Respect of everyone.
- Have the students write about ways to help:
 - What the School can do to help.
 - What the Community can do to help.
 - What they personally can do to help.

DISCUSSION

High School Students

It is important that young people understand that situations can come along that make anyone have to deal with things they don't want to deal with. And that these situations don't change who the person is as a human being although it may change how that person behaves or has to live.

Initiate a discussion and then let the students direct its course. This will allow them to reach their own conclusions. However, ground rules will need to be set regarding respecting each other's opinions. Also, have everyone use the phrase "someone I know" or have them just refer to the people in the video. It is extremely important **not** to allow personal stories.

Ask the students the following:

- What causes someone to be homeless? What were the causes to the people in the video?
- What kinds of things did the people in the video have to contend with in order to survive? Would that be difficult for you and how would you deal with it?
- Ask the students the following:
 - What kinds of things change for a person who becomes homeless?
 - When and how could someone help a peer who is in that situation?
 - What is the school's role in helping the situation?
 - How can we show respect to someone who needs our help?
 - What is the communities role in helping someone who is homeless?
 - Why should we help people who are in these situations?

A C T I V I T I E S

High School Students

CREATE A CAMPAIGN:

Discuss what needs to be done in your school or community to help people who don't have a home.

Gather information on the school/community to see what needs to be done to end child homelessness.

Determine three to five things that can help the situation.

Design a local campaign to accomplish those things.

This could include:

- A poster campaign.

- Letters to the Editor of the local newspaper

- Radio PSA's.

- Television PSA's.

- In school announcements

- A local community or school fundraiser

- An in school showing of the video for awareness.

Decide how the campaign can be evaluated.

How will we know if it is successful (what will be the gage)?

ENACT the CAMPAIGN:

Based on the information you've gathered, create at least a portion of the campaign if not the entire thing.

DISCUSSION

PARENTS

Initiate a discussion and then let the parents direct its course. As with all discussion, ground rules will need to be set regarding respecting each other's opinions. As with the students, say up front that you DO NOT want personal stories during the discussion.

DISCUSS:

How people who are in homeless situations have changed since the 1980s (In the 80's, most people who were homeless were white single males and alcoholism played a major role. As how that has changed to today.)

Discuss how difficult it would be to have a family and be in a homeless situation.

Discuss the current resources you know of in your community for people who don't have a home. Base that discussion on the facts from the previous question.

- Ask the parents the following:
 - What surprised you about what you learned from the program?
 - Why is it important for our community to address this issue?
 - What are the personal barriers that people have to helping?

ACTIVITIES

PARENTS

- Make a list of the resources needed to end homelessness in your community.
- Make a list of the current resources THAT YOUR COMMUNITY CURRENTLY HAS for this situation.
- Decide what would need to happen to get the resources that you need to end homelessness.
- Make an action plan for your community to take concrete steps to address this issue.

F A C T S t o D I S C U S S

- In 2006-07 the identified homeless youth in New Mexico in school was 4,383. By 2008-09 that number had increased to 8,380.
2010 NM Public Education Department
- Nationally, 794,617 students enrolled in school that were identified as homeless in 2007-2008.
First Focus Campaign for Children
- In New Mexico between 2006 and 2009 there was a 91% increase in students who were homeless.
First Focus Campaign for Children
- Each year about 17,000 New Mexicans are homeless for at least part of the year.
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness
- An estimated 62% of teens who are homeless attempt suicide.
Stanford University
- On any given night, there can be up to 2,700 homeless children in Albuquerque.
New Day Youth and Family Services
- 2.8 million youth run away from their homes each year.
Greene J., Ringwalt, Kelly, Iachan, & Cohen
- 162,000 homeless youth are estimated to be victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the United States.
Research & Advocacy Digest
- The New Mexico Campaign to End Child Homelessness created a Summit Event in Albuquerque in March 2010.
FamilyHomelessness.org

Q U E S T I O N S t o A S K

START BY SAYING: “I need your help on this. Bear with me and see what you come up with.”

- Is this video a fair representation of homelessness?
- Are the people who made this video or the people who are concerned about this issue making much ado about nothing?
- Is this issue as important as the video suggests?
- Is homelessness really a problem in our (school, community, state)?
- Whose problem is it?
- Is there a solution or solutions?
- Where is this issue in terms of priorities for our community?
- Are there simple ways we can help?
- Does homelessness affect us and if so, how?
- Is it possible for individuals to make a difference regarding this?
- What role should (schools, communities, churches) play in these situations?
- How does knowing about this issue help us help others?

CONTINUE TO ASK “why?”, “why not?”, “can you explain that?” and “how?” after each answer.

- This might lead into a discussion about the group you’re working with designing a plan to help. If so, suggest another meeting date/time/place to continue to develop solutions.

R E S O U R C E S

Children Youth and Families Department, New Mexico	www.CYFD.org
New Mexico Public Education Department	www.ped.state.nm.us
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness www.newmexicohomeless.org	
New Mexico Voices for Children	www.nmvoices.org
Cuidando Los Ninos, Caring for Children of Homeless Families	www.clnkids.org
Joy Junction Homeless Shelter 888-882-7051 tollfree	www.joyjunction.org
Healthcare for the Homeless, 1217 1 st St. NW, Abq.	www.Abqhch.org
St. Martin's Hospitality Center, 1110 Second St. NW, Abq.	www.smhd-nm.org
Albuquerque Rescue Mission, 509 Second St. SW, Abq.	505-924-1311
International All Faith Center, 217 Iron Ave. SW, Abq.	505-243-1789
Southwest Samaritan House, 1020 Eubank Blvd. NE, Abq.	505-332-0847
Federal Plan to End Homelessness http://www.usich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors_2010_FSPPreventEndHomeless.pdf	
SafeTeen New Mexico	www.SafeTeen.net
National Institute of Mental Health	www.nimh.nih.gov/
Healthy Minds New Mexico	www.healthymindsnm.org
Life Skills Training, Institute for Prevention Research	www.lifeskillstraining.com
National Organizations for Youth Safety	www.noys.com
Christopher Productions Social Issues Information	www.ChristopherProductions.org
New Mexico Parent Teacher Association	www.nmpta.org



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Television to Touch the Heart

LOOKING IN

Order Form Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.

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Name: _____

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Documentary 30 minutes and Shortened Version

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SafeTeen New Mexico
1511 University Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

PLEASE NOTE: YOU CAN ORDER THIS VIDEO ON LINE AND
AT www.SafeTeen.net

LOOKING IN:

RESPONSE FORM:

Please take a moment to fill out the information below and then EMAIL to us as a word doc: Chris@ChristopherProductions.org

Thanks for letting us know how you're using the materials.

Name:

Organization:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Which materials were used (documentary, curriculum):

Date(s) materials used:

Group(s) using materials (i.e. Class, Club, Group – what kind?)

Number of people using the materials:

Youth:

Adults:

Other comments about the materials and your discussion: