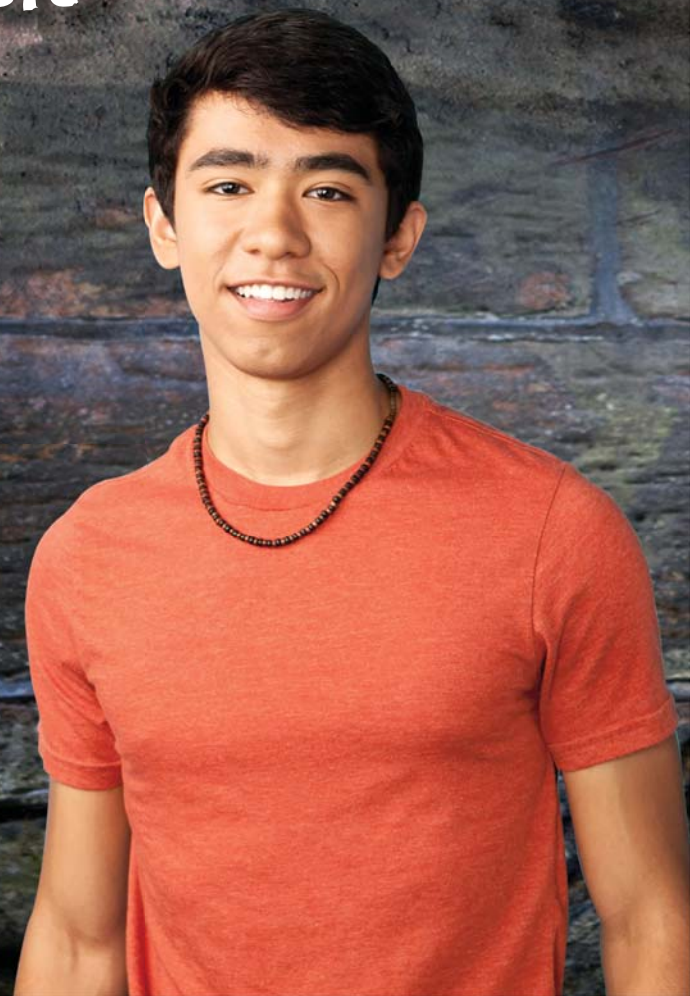




ACTIVITY KIT

For Leaders



Sleep Out Activities Book

Here you will find a collection of activities that you can incorporate into your Sleep Out event. Each activity can accommodate large or small groups, and each requires creativity and teamwork, and will foster empathy and encourage participants to put themselves in the shoes of homeless youth.

Facilitators for these activities will ideally be your student leadership team. Each activity requires at least two facilitators and you should determine whether you need more, depending on the number of participants doing each activity.

If you have a small number of participants, you can do each activity in one long block back-to-back. This will help to lower the number of facilitators you'll need to recruit.

If you have a larger number of participants, you might want to break them up into smaller groups at the beginning of the Sleep Out and have the groups rotate through the stations. Each group should be joined by a student leader or adult volunteer to ensure they're attending all the activities. This also provides a great opportunity for teambuilding throughout the evening.

Please refer to the Sample Schedules included in your Leader Kit for sample schedules. You can even print these and fill them in for your own event!

Each station should be attended by an adult volunteer to monitor the activity and help the student facilitators if necessary.

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Opening Ceremony

After registration and before you begin your schedule of activities, plan a rally or opening ceremony to get your participants pumped-up, energized and ready to take on their Sleep Out challenge!

You can use this ceremony to announce your fundraising total and congratulate top fundraisers on their success. If you invite parents or local dignitaries to your event, this is a great time to demonstrate how hard your participants have worked to raise money to help homeless kids in Toronto.

You can assign a Master of Ceremonies for this event or leave it up to the facilitating team to run. Here are some ideas you can plan into your ceremony.

Group Cheer

In advance of your event, have your facilitation team come up with a group cheer to lead at the opening ceremony. It can be anything, maybe even one of your school cheers. But our personal favorite is: "When I say SPEAK OUT, you say SLEEP OUT!"

Moment of Silence

Announce a moment of silence for the youth who have not survived the street, or the ones who are still out there.

Show Sleep Out video

If you have the tech capabilities, show the Sleep Out video from our website.

Trivia

While you have everyone together, host a little trivia game to get everyone thinking. Collect some prizes (something simple, like candy bars) to hand out for the correct answers, and assign one of your facilitators to play the game host. You can create the trivia questions from the statistics on our website.

The Opening Ceremony is also a good time to give your group a rundown of how the evening will go and perhaps share a schedule of activities with them. If you're breaking them up into smaller groups, schedule some ice breakers before sending them out for their scheduled activities.

1

2

3

4

Ice Breakers

These activities are intended to get everybody talking and moving at the beginning of the event. They might be especially useful if you use the Small Group format, as these activities will get the different groups interacting with each other in a communal space before they split into their separate activities for the evening. You should plan on 10-15 minutes per ice-breaker and will require at least two facilitators, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

1

The Human Knot

This exercise requires teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills – all the same requirements for solving the homeless youth problem in our community.

Participants stand in a tight circle and each of them takes the hand of someone else in the circle. You must reach out to a different person with each hand. The participants then attempt to unravel themselves back into a circle without letting go of each other's hands. They will do this by talking clearly with each other and working together to spot problems and create solutions.

2

Trust Fall

This exercise requires clear communication and trust – two things street kids must learn quickly to survive.

Break your participants up into groups of six. You may want to have facilitators demonstrate a proper Trust Fall before letting the groups do it.

One person, the "Faller", stands with their back to their group, their arms folded over their chest. Their group, the "Catchers" stand two steps behind the "Faller"; four of the catchers stand in groups of two, side by side, facing each other on either side of the Faller, with their arms held out just above waist height towards each other, bent slightly at the elbow; one Catcher should be the assigned "Head" Catcher and stand between the other four Catchers, facing the Faller.

Here is the call-and-response process each group should follow in their Trust Fall:

Faller (when ready to fall): Catchers ready?

Head Catcher: Ready! Faller ready?

Faller: Ready! Falling!

Keeping their arms folded over their chest, the Faller falls straight backwards, into the waiting arms of the Catchers.

Once the weight of the Faller is fully supported, the Catchers lower the Faller very gently to the ground. The Head Catcher takes responsibility for ensuring the head of the Faller is lowered gently and safely. The Trust Fall is completed once the Faller is lying fully and safely on the ground.

If the Catchers are not ready, i.e., properly in position to catch the Faller, they must call out "Not Ready!" to ensure the Faller does not fall before the group is properly prepared. Then the Faller waits a moment or two for the Catchers to get ready and repeats "Catchers ready?"

Ice Breakers cont'd

If the Faller is not ready, they should call out "Not ready!" And they take as much time as they need to prepare themselves. For some people, it is very difficult to fall backwards and believe your teammates will catch you. When the Faller feels ready, they will start the process over again by calling "Catchers ready?"

Each group member rotates until they have all had the chance to be the Faller.

Role Play!

This activity will take a **minimum of 30 minutes** and will require at least **two facilitators** for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

Supplies:

Various collected props (optional but fun)
A hat/bowl for slips of paper
Enough room to move around
The enclosed "homelessness factors"

Instructions:

Student leaders give a quick presentation of the most common factors of youth homelessness, both before and after they leave home. (Research can be done on the Covenant House website.)

After the quick presentation, facilitators break the group up into teams of two or three. Each team pulls a "homeless factor" out of the hat and they're given three minutes to come up with a way to "play" this factor, without explicitly saying what it is. They can do it silently, like charades, or they can create a brief skit that displays the factor without naming it. The rest of the group tries to guess which factor is being presented.

Print and cut out these factors and if your student facilitators can think of more, please feel free to add them in.

Physical Abuse	Poverty	Sex Trafficking	PTSD
Sexual Abuse	Kicked Out	Addiction	Malnutrition
Neglect	Gangs	Schizophrenia	Starvation
Verbal Abuse	Violence	Depression	The Flu/Common Cold

If all the teams have presented and there is still time left before rotation, willing teams may take another turn.

Each factor offers some great opportunity for debrief and discussion afterwards. Review the factors in advance and if you believe there are some that are too sensitive or triggering for your students, feel free to omit them from the game.

Street Survivor

This activity will take **a minimum of 30 minutes** and will require at least **two facilitators** for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

Supplies:

The enclosed scenario
The enclosed "Chance" cards
The enclosed budget sheet or blank paper
Pens, pencils

Instructions:

Facilitators break the group into teams of four or five and each team is given a copy of the enclosed scenario. The facilitator reads the scenario out loud for everyone. After the scenario has been read, the second facilitator goes around to each team and has them draw a Chance card.

Each team must find a way to budget that circumstance into their scenario. They must have money leftover at the end of each month, regardless of what the Chance card throws at them.

After the first Chance card is drawn, the teams get 5-7 minutes to come up with a solution. Each team should appoint a secretary to keep track of the decisions on the budget sheet or a piece of paper. When time is up, the facilitators ask each group if they made it through the month with money left over. If yes, they may play another round. If no, they are out of the game.

For teams still in the game, a second round of chance cards are drawn, and another ten minutes are taken for discussion. Teams in the second round get to carry their savings forward and a new months' salary. After another discussion time period, repeat the questions above and eliminate teams that did not make it through the month.

Depending on time, you may play until only one team is left standing (or until they're all eliminated). If necessary, you can play just two or three rounds and make time at the end for more group discussion.

Some teams might actually do well. Some won't. Even for the teams who successfully remain independent, there should be a discussion about the things they are sacrificing to remain so.

The point of this activity is to help students understand how easily homelessness can happen; how even very smart or privileged people can become victims of their own circumstances and end up with only a few bad options. Repeatedly ask teams the question: do you think you could live this way? Why or why not?

Street Survivor cont'd

You've left home. The reasons are complicated and you don't really want to talk about it anyway. But let's just say that you're better off – safer, even – out of that house.

You're in the last year of high school, you're a good student, and you feel pretty capable of taking care of yourself. You have a good part-time job already and you applied for Ontario Works financial assistance (OW).

- You work 25 hours a month at the student minimum wage of \$9.60/hour.
- You are in school for 7 hours a day, five days a week. You spend an hour on homework every day, including weekends.
- Finally, you volunteer one hour a week for your mandatory volunteer hours.

With the OW and your part-time job, you make **\$839/month** (reflects tax deductions).

You find a small bachelor apartment and start working out your budget:

- **Rent = \$525/month (utilities included)** – This cannot be negotiated or late, no matter how desperate you are. If you cannot make rent, you will be evicted.
- **Food = \$100/month** – This includes money spent in restaurants, take-out, Tim Hortons, and grocery stores. If you decide to take money out of the food budget, keep in mind that your physical and mental health will suffer because you aren't feeding your body properly.
- **Cell Phone = \$40/month** – You do need a lifeline to the rest of the world, and who doesn't want a decent phone? You can't cut this amount to less than \$30 without losing your phone.
- **Laundry = \$15/month** – This is how much it will cost you to do one load a week in quarters and detergent. If you cut money out of your laundry budget, you might lose your job because you don't look (or smell) very professional.
- **Personal Hygiene = \$20/month** – You can't afford anything fancy, but that's ok. If you cut money from this budget, you might lose your job because you don't smell very professional. You'll also be more subject to illness.
- **Clothes = \$30/month** – You will need new clothes eventually and clothes aren't cheap. If you cut this budget too low, you won't be able to buy new underwear when you need it.
- **Fun and Entertainment = \$40/month** – What is the point of being independent if you can't have any fun? This is for movie theatres and nights out with friends. Feel free to cut it if you need to, but your emotional wellbeing could suffer.
- **Transportation** – Because you volunteer, your student Metropass is provided for free by the OW. If you quit volunteering, you will need to pay **\$89/month** for your pass.

Total Monthly income: \$839

Total Monthly expenses: \$770

Leftover: \$69

Street Survivor Chance Cards

D-

Uh-oh. Your grades are slipping because between work, school, and a social life, you just don't have enough time to study. But grades are very important to you, so you have to make a choice:

1. Cut back your work hours (subtract **-\$9.60** from your monthly income for each hour you cut)
2. Quit volunteering (lose Metropass, add **+\$89** to your expenses)
3. Cut back hours and make up the money by trimming your spending elsewhere in your budget. Pay attention to the sacrifices you're making!

Recalculate your new salary and expenses based on your decision. What did you sacrifice to make ends meet?

Sickness

You have a cough that won't quit. You skip a work shift to go to the walk-in clinic (subtract **-\$28.80** from your monthly income).

The doctor tells you that you have strep throat and you need antibiotics. You don't have a health card, so the co-pay at the drugstore is \$60. Subtract **-\$60** from your left over money.

Recalculate your salary and expenses based on these circumstances. What did you sacrifice to make ends meet?

Partied too Hard

It's easier to get a little crazy with the fun you're having when you don't have anyone waiting for you to get home. You went out with friends and blew way more than \$40 – more like \$150 on drinks, food and cab rides.

Add the difference **+\$110** to your monthly expenses.

You also missed a work shift while you were hungover, so subtract **-\$19.20** from your income.

Subtract your new monthly expenses from your new monthly income. What else might have been sacrificed by the decision to spend money this way?

Got Robbed

Let's face it: your apartment is so cheap because it's in a slightly rough part of town. And when you got off the bus last night after work, you got mugged.

They took your wallet, which had two weeks of your pay in it. Subtract **-\$96** from your salary.

Your wallet also had your ID, so you must pay the fee to replace it. Add **+\$50** to your expenses.

They also took your phone. Do you have the money to replace it? If not, you'll have to live without one for a while.

Recalculate you salary and expenses.

Rent Increase

Your landlord is raising your rent and you don't get a say in the matter. It's illegal to raise the rent that much, but you don't know how to get anyone to help you fight it. And moving would mean to an even worse neighborhood even farther from your work.

Add **+\$100** to your rent budget.

Recalculate your monthly expenses and subtract it from your monthly income.

Adopt a Kitten

You were walking home from work last night and came across a tiny kitten under a bush by the side of the road. The mom had been hit by a car. The kitten seems to trust you right away, and when you pick her up you realize she has no one in the world to care for her – so you take her home with you.

You know this is a little irresponsible, but she purrs as she lies next to you on your bed and you realize you're not going to sleep lonely – for the first time in months.

You will need an additional **+\$40** a month to care for this kitten. Add it into your budget.

Recalculate your monthly expenses and subtract it from your monthly income.

Street Survivor Chance Cards

Pay Cut

Business is bad at your job, and your boss has to cut your hours. He cuts you from 5 hours a week to 3 hours a week.

Subtract **-\$76.80** from your monthly salary.

Go through your monthly expenses and find ways to save money – any way you can.

Recalculate your monthly salary subtract your monthly expenses. What sacrifices are you making?

Gift From Grandma

Your grandma has sent you a birthday gift: **\$200!**

What are you going to do with this money? You can put it towards your monthly expenses, you can save it, or you can spend it.

Decide how you will use it and make note of it in your budget. If you spend it all, don't write anything down – just that you spent it all.

Addicted

You started smoking and now you can't stop. Cigarettes have become the best thing about your day.

You smoke 5 du Mauriers a day, which cost about \$10.25 per pack (of 25). That's \$78 a month.

Add **+\$78** to your monthly expenses. Recalculate your expenses and subtract them from your salary. Is smoking a habit you can afford?

Let's hope you don't start needing more than 5 a day.

Friend Needs Help

One of your best friends needs a place to stay for a while. She doesn't have many friends and her family won't support her, so you offer her a spot on your floor. It's only temporary. And if you needed the help, she would do it for you.

But she doesn't have a job yet, so providing food is on you. Add **+\$50** to your food budget so you can both eat.

Recalculate your expenses and subtract them from your salary. Can you afford to pay for her food? How long are you willing to do that? And will you have the nerve to cut her off if it goes on longer than one month?

Shopping Spree

You were bored and lonely over the weekend, so you went to the mall.

Before you knew it, you had spent \$100 on new things. These are things you wanted and felt like you deserved at the time. But in hindsight, you're starting to feel guilty.

Add **+\$100** to your expenses for the month.

Recalculate your expenses and subtract them from your income. Are you willing to cut money from other parts of your budget in order to keep all the new things you bought?

Mental Illness

Your doctor just told you that you have depression, and possibly bi-polar disorder. You don't fully understand what either of those things means.

The doctor has referred you to a community mental health clinic to talk with a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist writes you two prescriptions that she says will help you feel better.

The pharmacist tells you that only a portion of these medications are covered by OHIP. You must pay \$80 to fill the prescriptions each month. Add **+\$80** to your monthly budget.

Recalculate your monthly expenses and subtract it from your salary. Do you have enough to pay for these prescriptions? What are the consequences if you don't get it filled each month? Are you willing to take that risk?

You can print as many copies of the Chance cards as you wish. It's even ok if groups get the same card twice – sometimes we end up in the same circumstances more than once.

Street Survivor Budget Sheet

INCOME	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4
Salary	\$240			
OW	\$599			
Extra/Unexpected				
Total	\$839			

EXPENSES				
Rent	\$525			
Food	\$100			
Phone	\$40			
Laundry	\$15			
Personal Hygiene	\$20			
Clothes	\$30			
Fun	\$40			
Transportation	\$0			
Extra/Unexpected	\$0			
Total	\$770			

Leftover*	\$69			
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**Carry this amount forward to next month in the "Extra" row of next month's Income column*

You work 25 hours a month at the student minimum wage of \$9.60/hour.

Ontario Works gives you \$599 a month (reflects taxes).

You are in school for 7 hours a day, five days a week and you study an hour a day, including weekends.

You volunteer one hour a week for your mandatory volunteer hours.

Shelter Challenge

This activity will take **a minimum of 30 minutes** and will require at least **two facilitators** for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

Supplies:

Tarps	Cardboard boxes
Twine/rope	Duct tape
Blankets	Scarves
Sticks/rods	Etc.

Instructions:

Prior to the event, ask your student leadership team and your colleagues for help collecting various “shelter building” materials – you can probably find most of these things around the school or your garage. Be creative! Really anything can go into this pile. Everyone should have access to duct tape – have them all share a roll if necessary.

Pile all the supplies in one spot and break the group up into teams of 2-4. Each team picks one person to be the “picker” and when the facilitator says “GO!” the picker from each team grabs as many supplies from the pile as possible. Their team members may shout directions to them but not reach into the pile to help them.

After 30 seconds, the facilitator yells “STOP!” Each team may then take their supplies to the spot where they want to build their shelter. The shelter spot can be anywhere within eyesight of the resource pile. They should think strategically about the spot they pick – they get points for utilizing natural resources in their shelter.

They have 20 minutes to build the perfect shelter. Each shelter must:

- Be able to withstand wind
- Offer protection from the elements (no holes/gaps for rain/snow to come in)
- Be able to fit at least one teammate fully inside the shelter
- Take advantage of the natural surroundings in some way (ie, walls for warmth, soft grass for sleeping, etc.)

After 20 minutes, the facilitators yell “STOP!” and they judge the best shelter. They award points based on the following:

- 1-3 points for wind resistance
- 1-3 points for protection from the elements
- 1-3 points for body capacity
- 1-3 points for using natural surroundings
- Bonus point for more than one team member fitting inside
- Bonus point for decoration/comfort/personal touch

Perfect score: 14 points

(Note: if you are rotating groups through the stations, each team should break down their shelters before they move on to the next station, and the facilitators should recreate the resource pile before the next group arrives.)

Street Skills

This activity will take a minimum of 60 minutes and will require at least three facilitators for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

If you are using the small group format, refer to the sample schedule for suggestion of how to break up this activity into two parts.

Supplies:

Table and three chairs

Space for performances

Sound equipment for accompanying mp3 players (if possible/necessary)

Instructions for activity:

When kids are on the street, they must rely on their own skills, talents and abilities to survive. And no matter how resourceful or skilled they are, most of them are still completely at the mercy of the people passing them by on the sidewalk. Whether they eat that day or not often isn't up to them, but up to the mood, personality and preconceived notions of the people who might help them. This activity is to let your participants get their creative juices flowing, while putting themselves in the shoes of kids who have their very survival at stake.

To build the element of competition into this activity, create a reward to compete for; we suggest that winners get to eat dinner first. Or perhaps winners get a better meal than the rest of the participants. Find a way to demonstrate that there are stakes involved so that kids really feel the desire to win.

Students are divided into teams of 5-6 and they use their skills and talents to develop a 5-6 minute routine to perform. They all get 30 minutes to develop their routine and there will be at least 30 minutes for performances (or more, depending on the number of groups performing).

The routine should be focused in some way on the idea of begging and needing to get the attention of passersby (the judges). There are a number of creative ways to do this: a dance routine, a song, even a skit or sketch. The tone of the routine can be serious, emotional, inspirational, even comedic. Whatever it is, it needs to be eye-catching and attention-grabbing.

Students may use whatever they have with them to help with this routine, including iPods, laptops, etc. They cannot borrow resources or supplies from anyone outside of their team, however.

When it's time to perform, all the Sleep Out participants gather and a "panel of judges" (facilitators) watch each group routine. The judges' rank 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and those groups get the agreed-upon reward.

Instructions for "Judges"

This is a special role for facilitators that will rely on their ability to play a character. If you want to enlist fellow teachers to help you with this part, feel free.

Imagine the typical prototype of American Idol or America's Got Talent judges.

Street Skills cont'd

There's the "Simon": unkind, unsympathetic, wonders why street kids can't just get a job.

There's the "Paula": kind and sympathetic, but worries that giving our money on the street is the same as feeding an addiction or dependence on drugs.

Then there's the "Randy": Cool, hip, nice and assumes that if kids are on the street, it's because they want to be. He doesn't want to judge them unfairly and thinks they must be pretty satisfied with their lives.

Each of these personalities should be apparent to the audience and the team performing. Before the performances, have the judges introduce themselves in character. After each performance, each judge gets to make comments, and these comments should be reflective of their attitudes towards street kids.

For instance, the "Simon" could say: "I thought that was rubbish. I don't know what you think is so special about your performance or why you deserve any kind of special treatment. Life is hard for everyone. Why should I award you dinner first?"

"Paula" would say something like: "You know, I thought it was great and it touched me. But I'm not totally sure it's the right thing to do, considering how many other hungry kids there are out there. Maybe I should just buy you a coffee rather than send you to dinner."

And "Randy" would say: "That was great! Everything was well done. Who am I to judge you, really? Even if it was bad, I might not tell you. You make your own choices and you probably think you did great. Just keep doing what you do."

After all the groups perform, the judges confer and then award the top three groups. Those groups get to eat dinner first (or the agreed-upon reward).

The judges should make the point that if people think the awards are unfair, that's because street kids don't get many choices or a chance to voice their own opinions. They are often subject to the pre-formed opinion of the person they are asking for help from. It's very unfair.

Words of Encouragement

This activity will take **a minimum of 30 minutes** and will require at least **two facilitators** for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

Supplies:

Paper/note cards
Pens
Art Supplies

Instructions:

The kids at Covenant House are the very peers of the kids participating in your Sleep Out. Some of your participants may have friends or family members in difficult situations like the ones we see in our shelter. It's so important to reach out a hand and let these kids know that someone cares about them and wants them to succeed.

We invite your participants to write letters to the kids at Covenant House. When you send these letters back to us with the waivers, donation forms and cheques, we will share them with the youth in the house.

Please encourage your participants to be empathetic of our youth's circumstances. It will be apparent to your group by now that homelessness can happen to anyone – not just the "unlucky" kids, or the kids "from the wrong side of the tracks." So the letters can exemplify encouragement and a "cheering them on" attitude. Kids at Covenant House are working very hard to become independent and turn their lives around – let's congratulate them on their efforts!

Here is a sample letter:

Dear Friend at Covenant House,

My classmates and I are spending a night outside of our homes to get a small taste of what homeless kids go through each and every night. It could never compare to what some homeless kids really go through, but it is one small way for me to raise awareness for what thousands of kids go through each night in Canada.

I wanted to take this opportunity to say congratulations on your hard work at Covenant House so far, and to wish you good luck in the future! I hope you achieve all your goals and dreams. My whole class is rooting for your success!

*Sincerely,
[Student Name]*

Soapbox Video

This activity will take **a minimum of 30 minutes** and will require at least **two facilitators** for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

Supplies:

Video camera (or a phone)
List of homelessness statistics

Instructions:

Create a video that features participants explaining in one statement why their sleeping out.

Each statement starts with "I'm sleeping out because," or "I'm sleeping out so that," and then completes with a statistic or a personal reason that compelled the participant to take action.

For instance:

"I'm sleeping out so that other kids don't have to."

"I'm sleeping out because street kids are 11 times more likely to die than I am, and I think that's unfair."

"I'm sleeping out so that my family members will see how committed I am to helping homeless youth."

"I'm sleeping out because the street is no place for kids."

Assign one facilitator as the camera operator and one facilitator to be the director. Have them decide ahead of time what they want the tone of the video to be: Serious? Inspiring? Fun? Creative? Do they want to include props, like a megaphone or a platform? Or maybe everyone could make a small poster of their reason to Sleep Out, for visual effect?

When it's time to start this activity, the facilitators will explain the tone and feel of the video and what is required of each participant, and then give the participants 5-10 minutes to prepare their statement.

Each participant gets a chance to share their reasons for sleeping out. You can create a list of statistics from our website for them to reference in case they draw a blank coming up with their own

After the Sleep Out, post the video on our Facebook page for our whole community to see!

This will be easier to do if you're using the Small Group Format, so you won't have as many kids waiting to be filmed. If you're using the Large Group Format, you may want to have a few different cameras and operators filming at the same time.

Town Hall Meeting

This activity will take **a minimum of 30 minutes** and will require at least **two facilitators** for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

This activity will require some research and preparation by the participants ahead of time.

Ask students to pick one of the following community members and then research youth homelessness and the surrounding issues as it relates to that particular community member.

- Housed-youth
- Homeless youth
- Parent
- Police officer
- Teacher
- Social worker
- City council member
- Shelter fundraiser

At the town hall, one facilitator will be the Mayor and one will be the Moderator. The Mayor starts off discussion by summarizing the homeless youth problem in Toronto (statistics found on our website). Then they open discussion to the community by inviting the various community members to share their experiences, such as:

- How and when they interact with homeless youth
- How they try to help
- The challenges that homeless kids face
- The challenges that housed-kids face that might lead to homelessness

Each participant can get insight into how their chosen community member might feel about youth homelessness by doing some basic internet research. It's ok if some community members are not represented. The Mayor or Moderator can bring up the points that might be missing from the discussion if, say, no one has chosen to represent a shelter fundraiser.

The goal of this activity is to shed light on many different perspectives on youth homelessness. Homelessness is a community-wide problem that will require a community-wide solution. This exercise may help your participants see a point-of-view they've never before considered and inspire them to take action on it.

Round-Table Discussion

This activity will take **a minimum of 30 minutes** and will require at least **two facilitators** for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

Supplies:

Space for a large group or several small groups to sit and discuss
Pens
Paper/journals for reflection

Instructions:

Round-table discussions are intended to foster open, honest and in-depth conversation around some of the themes and issues your students will be experiencing during their Sleep Out. Although you may schedule this activity whenever you wish, we recommend scheduling it after the students have participated in several activities that may have brought up questions or ideas for them. This is an ideal time to discuss them.

You may choose to have your entire group discuss these questions altogether. Or you may choose to break your participants into smaller groups.

Because some of these themes and issues can be triggering or sensitive, it may be wise to place an adult supervisor with each group to help guide the discussion and intervene if necessary.

Here are some questions you can ask your group. Feel free to come up with your own as well!

1. How everyone is feeling. Are you tired? Hungry? Do you wish you could go home?
2. Was it hard to raise money and meet your goal? Why or why not?
3. Did people seem eager to sponsor you, or hesitant? Why do you think they felt that way?
4. What were some of the things you said to convince people to donate to Covenant House?
5. What are some of the factors of youth homelessness? Do you see any of those factors around our school or your neighborhoods? How does that make you feel?
6. Although the activities we've done here today have been fun and interesting, what would you think about having to do them in real life? Would you really be able to budget for independence? Or beg for food or money? Find a safe place to sleep where you wouldn't freeze and no one would harass you? Do you think you could take care of yourself if you ended up alone on the street? Why or why not?
7. What do you think would be the hardest thing about being a homeless teenager?
8. What would you say to someone who is thinking about running away from home?
9. If there was one thing you could do for a homeless kid in Toronto, what would it be? Why?
10. How can you continue to help these kids after our Sleep Out? Will you? Why or why not?

Movie

Supplies:

Tech equipment (screen, projector or TV, speakers, DVD player or computer)

DVD rental

Space to gather participants to watch

A film can be a great way to open discussion on the topic of homelessness. It's also a great way to settle kids down before lights out!

We've researched some films that focus on or include the theme of homelessness that you can show at your Sleep Out. While not all of these relate directly to youth homelessness, or youth homelessness in Canada specifically, the overall theme is consistent.

Please note that Covenant House has not personally viewed each of these films and cannot take responsibility for any inappropriate or disturbing content. We have tried to find films that fall within appropriate rating categories for students in grades 6-12.

- Pay It Forward (PG-13) (2000)
- No Direction Home (G) (2004), CBC Documentary
- Oliver Twist (PG-13) (2005), (Not Rated) (1948), (TV Movie) (1997)
- Samaritan: The Mitch Snyder Story (TV Movie) (1986)
- Stone Pillow (TV Movie) (1985)
- The Blind Side (PG-13) (2009)
- The Children of Times Square (TV Movie) (1986)
- The Christmas Choir (TV Movie) (2008)
- The Pursuit of Happyness (PG-13) (2006)
- The Soloist (PG-13) (2009)
- August Rush (PG) (2007)
- White Oleander (PG-13) (2006)
- Innocente (Not Rated) (2011)
- God Bless the Child (TV Movie) (1988)
- Homeless in America (Not Rated) (2004)
- Homeless to Harvard: The Liz Murray Story (TV Movie) (2003)

Time Capsule

This activity will take **a minimum of 30 minutes** and will require at least **two facilitators** for smaller groups, possibly more for larger groups (as per your discretion).

Supplies:

- Pens
- Pencils
- Paper
- Art supplies
- Lock box or glass jar

Instructions:

We hope that your group makes Sleep Out for Street Kids an annual event. A Time Capsule is a great way to capture some of the excitement and momentum of your Sleep Out and carry it into next year's event.

Have participants write down some reflections on their experiences in the Sleep Out to future participants. They can share anything: if it was hard, or easier than expected, fun, or perhaps unsettling to learn what homeless kids are going through. They can share a goal for helping homeless kids after their Sleep Out or words of encouragement to the future participants.

At the end of your Sleep Out, either before Lights Out or before the participants leave the following morning, close up your time capsule and keep it safe for next year's event.

When you plan your next Sleep Out, hide the Time Capsule somewhere in the facility just before your event and create a Scavenger Hunt that will lead your participants to find it. They get to read the messages left behind from the previous event and then add their own.

Continue the tradition!