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## In the Middle: Homelessness, a societal problem

By ABBAS HAKIM - Barker Middle School Sep 24, 2019



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For people who live in busy cities, it's easy to become numb to the homelessness problem around us. We have come to accept the fact that a certain amount of homelessness is not avoidable. Most people understand that homelessness is related to mental health or addiction problems. Though, thinking that homelessness is an individual problem is the wrong way to address the issue. It's really a societal problem.

It is important to understand that homelessness is a complex problem. You don't choose homelessness; instead, homelessness is a result of a social system that fails to support you when you are at risk. Homelessness can be connected to changes in the economy, the housing market and shifts in policies that involve poverty. (Did you know that one child born every 33 seconds is born into poverty?) Poverty is a result of many factors, not just a single cause.

To stop homelessness in America, we must strengthen our ability to prevent it. To reduce the risk of a housing crisis, communities must address the wide range of policies contributing to the availability of safe and affordable housing.

You also can decrease the risk of becoming homeless by engaging with transitioning systems. Often families join multiple public systems, such as health and behavioral health care, child welfare, and the juvenile and criminal justice systems. These systems can work together to stop problems from escalating and resulting in homelessness.

As the rate of poverty grows, people need to prepare themselves to prevent homelessness. Many nations aren't giving it enough attention. In 2013, the Canadian government put \$119 million toward ending homelessness. Solving housing stability is the first step toward ending homelessness. Studies of the first projects across Canada showed huge steps leading to ending homelessness. Homelessness is a worldwide problem that can be stopped if we focus on it more and make it a more known issue.

Abbas Hakim is a student at Barker Middle School. In the Middle is a regular column produced by MCAS middle school students.