

A Teachable Moment

What are your beliefs and values and the values you want to see in your children? Teaching our children values and understanding of complex social ideas is not a one-time lesson or a single conversation – rather it's a lifelong journey we take with our children. What your children need is guidance from you on how to think about the issue. *A Teachable Moment* is a tool to help you begin some conversations about “hot button” topics and give you some ideas of how to respond to your children when questions come up. Parent Diversity Support Team- PDST



Tips to start a conversation while collecting Items for *Survive the Streets*



Meridian is promoting a drive to collect gear that will help people who are living on the streets stay warm and protected. Second to fifth graders will attend a play at the Seattle Children's Theatre about children and poverty. With this program we hope to inspire students and adults to learn more about homelessness and poverty and to take action, while helping children develop empathy and social responsibility.

Here are three main messages that we invite you to explore with your children:

- **Understand the differences between needs and wants.**
 - What does every person *need* to live?
 - What is the difference between a *need* and a *want*?
 - Do people who are poor and homeless have different needs and wants than us?
- **We shouldn't judge or stereotype people who are homeless or in poverty.** Consider **biases and stereotypes** about the homeless and poor including: *They are poor through their own fault; They are not as good at parenting; They don't try or don't work hard enough; They are poor because they spend their money on drugs and alcohol; They are unsupportive of education.*
- **We can do something about it.** We can support with **charity** which helps people's immediate needs, but we also have the responsibility to **be advocates** by helping to change unfair treatment or unfair laws. Before we can advocate for ourselves and others, we need to research and study to make informed decisions.

Points to Consider:

- ❖ The US government defines poor as less than **\$23,050** income for a family of 4. Currently, over 15% or 1 in 6 Americans live below the poverty level. **What could you afford, if your family had to make do with this much income?** http://coverageforall.org/pdf/FHCE_FedPovertyLevel.pdf
- ❖ There are children who are homeless too: "It's hard to believe that families with children represent nearly half of the homeless people in Washington state. These are the invisible faces of homelessness." <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/topics/Documents/family-homelessness-strategy.pdf> **Where are the children who are homeless in Seattle? Where are they in other countries?**

Resources:

- Books for children: *The Can Man* by Laura E. Williams (Picture book). *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts. *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting. *I Can Hear the Sun: A Modern Myth* by Patricia Polacco. *The Double Life of Zoe Flynn* by Janet Lee Carey. *Helping in the Community* by Victoria Parker.
- Hunger and Poverty in America. 60 minutes- for adults. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cR3jQOgs9gc&feature=related>
- Documentary movie: *Happy* <http://www.thehappymovie.com/> (among other topics, it explores compassion)