



## **HOMELESSNESS**

**EPYMN Track Leader:** Vinnie Carafano, King's Kids El Paso

**Ministry/Organizational Partner(s):** King's Kids El Paso

**Track Participation:** At least 10, no more than 30 (1 adult for every 8 students is required)

## **TRACK DESCRIPTION**

### **What is the issue?**

Since Interstate 10 runs through El Paso, a large number of transient people crossing the United States come through our city. On any given day, 1500-2000 homeless people can be found in and around El Paso! Many stay in shelters but large numbers are on the streets. Substance abuse, mental illness and hunger are common.

The fastest growing population of homeless people in the US is families! Picture this common scenario: a dad loses his job. The family can't pay bills on the mom's income, so soon they are evicted from their apartment. They try living with relatives, but friction and overcrowding lead to their being asked to leave. They may live in their car until they can't make payments and it is repossessed. At this point, if shelters are unavailable, the family is on the street. Kids drop out of school, and suffering affects each one of them.

### **What's being done about it?**

El Paso has shelters designed for various subgroups of the homeless population, including families, men, women, children, the elderly, abused and mentally ill, but the Body of Christ can do much more to help.

### **What will they do during IYW?**

The Training time will be led by Vinnie Carafano, assisted by local leaders who work with homelessness regularly. You'll learn to understand how life is for a homeless person, how they got there, how to talk to a homeless person about his or her story, ask questions, pray effectively, and encourage them to look to the Lord for help.

The Outreach time will give you an opportunity to put your training into action in various places throughout the city. We will take van-sized groups to local shelters, the downtown plaza, homeless settlements in the desert and other locations. We will give each homeless person we encounter a gift bag filled with things they need: hand sanitizer, chapstick, a toothbrush and especially, a clean pair of socks. Our goal will be to engage each person in a conversation, hear their story and pray with each one. Every person will receive a New Testament in English or Spanish and Gospel literature.