

About Us

The Hope Bag Project is a non-profit, non-denominational charity created in November 2003 as a service project for the National Catholic Youth Conference in Houston, Texas. Our main program is a unique homeless outreach called Project Hope Bags. This program targets the "cardboard sign" carrying homeless who frequent suburban roadways and panhandle for a living. Many of them live twenty miles or more from the closest shelter. Commuters regularly encounter them at busy stoplights or intersections, but no one seems to know how best to help. Project Hope Bags teaches people how to help the homeless by giving them **food, hope and love** in the form of a Hope Bag.

What is a Hope Bag? A Hope Bag is a bag containing a meal of non-perishable pop-top cans of meat, fruit and vegetables, plastic ware, water, maps to local shelters, a short caring handwritten note, and a pre-stamped prayer request postcard that can be mailed back to the church. The meals are given to drivers to carry in their cars. When they encounter a panhandler, they can give them the Hope Bag.

Project Hope Bags is a great service project! Everyone gets involved, it's cheap and simple! Your youth group, church, school or other organization can join the movement and provide useful material and spiritual support to the homeless. And the good news is: **ITS FREE!** (No fee, no charge, no cost, non-profit!) We will provide your group with all the empty bags, advice and educational materials you will ever need! Mother Teresa had a saying that reads: "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one!". Our saying is: "Lets get a hundred people to feed one each!" **Join us** and our **110 partners** in sharing God's love with the homeless!

Contact us! If you would like to join or need more information, email us at www.hopebags.com.

Goals of Project Hope Bags:

1. To reach out to the homeless with love and material support.
2. To educate the public about the homeless and involve them directly in their aid.
3. To provide a "low cost", non-denominational service project for youth groups or an affordable alternative to soups kitchens for churches or other organizations.

TEN WAYS TO HELP THE HOMELESS:

1. Let the Holy Spirit lead you.

"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name – He will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you." John 14:26

2. Show them respect.

The courtesy and respect you share can give someone the hope and strength they need to lift themselves out of a bad situation.

3. Recognize that the homeless are not all the same.

The homeless come from all kinds of situations, from battered wives to unemployed men, from alcoholics and drug addicts to the mentally ill and from con artists to scared runaway teens that are on the street for the first time. And let's not forget the children, elderly and veterans. Each is unique, but all are deserving of your love and help.

4. Learn the facts about them and educate others.

Learn about the homeless and their problems. Understand who they are and how to help. Help to dispel the myths about homelessness and educate others about the facts. Most homeless people are not drunks, drug abusers, or former mental patients! Most are able and/or willing to work.

5. Don't forget to care and be generous

Your money, talents and time can transform people's lives. Give to your local food bank, volunteer at the area shelters; donate clothes, toys, blankets and books. Pray, care, love and teach. Become part of the solution to homelessness and not part of the problem. Above all, give hope!

6. Avoid giving cash to individuals.

Cash won't solve the problem. It can be used to buy drugs or alcohol or it can enable someone to ignore the root causes of their homelessness. It is more helpful to give cash to local shelters or support agencies. Instead, give food, love, respect, help, prayer, blankets, bus tokens, or food certificates.

7. Encourage the homeless to get help.

Long term help is available. Steer homeless people toward a local rescue mission where there is food, shelter, and other help.

8. Pray for them and share God's love always.

God loves every homeless person, no matter how hardened and hopeless they may be – and he asks us to love them too. He can heal what we cannot and your prayer can be part of the process.

9. Take precautions for your own safety.

In general, the homeless are among the least threatening groups in our society. But some living on the streets can be criminals or fugitives. Stay in areas where other people can see you and don't take unnecessary chances.

10. Become an advocate for the homeless.

Make sure that your state and local governments are aware of and address the needs of the homeless in your area. Encourage local businesses, churches and individuals to get involved in the fight against homelessness.

Project Hope Bags

A nationwide homeless outreach program



What do you do when you meet a homeless man asking for food?

- A. Pretend not to see him.
- B. Lock the car door and roll up the windows!
- C. Give him some money.
- D. Tell him to get a job!
- E. None of the above.

(Answer inside)

Hope Bags

