

Top 6 Myths about Homelessness in Walnut Creek

1. “There are hundreds of people experiencing homelessness in Walnut Creek.”

At the last *Coordinated Outreach, Referral & Engagement (CORE)* count in January 2018, there were 42 people experiencing homelessness who slept in Walnut Creek. Today there are approximately 40-60 people at any given time.

2. “People asking for money on the streets are just lazy – why don’t they get a job?”

People experiencing homelessness spend every moment struggling to find their next meal, shower, and shelter. Most face overwhelming barriers to employment, including no internet access, no transportation to interviews and job fairs, and no access to a shower and clean clothing. Nationally, 25 percent of people experiencing homelessness *are* employed, and their wages cannot meet housing prices (Urban Institute).

3. “Homelessness is a result of drugs and alcohol.”

Drug and alcohol use are often the result of homelessness, not the cause. Only 20 percent of those who are homeless report it as the cause (streetsteam.org). Individuals experiencing homelessness in Walnut Creek said job loss and divorce/separation as the two biggest causes of their homelessness (CORE, 2018).

4. “If Walnut Creek provides more services, more homeless people will come here.”

Of those people counted in Walnut Creek in August 2018, 14% grew up in Walnut Creek, 45% grew up in Contra Costa County, and 77% grew up in the Bay Area. Most people said they slept in Walnut Creek because they had family/friends/or grew up here.

5. “The best way to help someone is to give money.”

Giving people money is a personal choice, and it’s also a temporary fix. Instead, consider giving an address to a homeless shelter, something tangible they can use for personal comfort (e.g., a pair of socks, a toothbrush and toothpaste), or an encouraging smile, note, or conversation. The best way to help? Donate or volunteer your time to an organization that serves people experiencing homelessness or works to solve the issue long-term.

6. “Homelessness would never happen to me or someone I care about.”

Homelessness does not discriminate: it can happen to you, a member of your family, a friend, a neighbor. We are all vulnerable to life’s circumstances: a lost job, a natural or manmade disaster, a recession, rising house prices...or a mental or physical illness, disease, or disability—these are a few of many situations that can cause homelessness. We can make a choice: to look away or support those in times of need.

Join with us to help end to homelessness in Walnut Creek.

The Walnut Creek Homeless Education Committee, a committee of the Walnut Creek Homeless Task Force, aims to raise awareness and partnership opportunities for businesses and residents to reduce homelessness in our city. Want to learn more? Contact Lisa Andrews, chair of the Walnut Creek Homeless Education Committee at: lisalandrews@sbcglobal.net.