

Why Can't The Homeless Get A Job?

The Huffington Post, by James Baxley, Freelance Writer, Shelter Animal Advocate, Homeless Advocate, November 9, 2016, 04:32 am ET

See the woman taking your order at McDonalds or the man delivering your pizza? They are homeless. There is a misnomer that the homeless don't work. The two people I mentioned at the beginning of this post who are homeless, it's not because they're lazy. It's because wages are low and housing prices are forever rising that working a low wage job just doesn't cut it anymore; a person needs two jobs and a roommate to live decently. Many college students are homeless. They are using the school as a place to sleep and using the gym to shower and shave, that's what I did for awhile when I was homeless.

When a person lives on the street normally they have no access to showers. Most homeless people have no money for a haircut much less to wash their clothes. How long do you think it would take a person to develop really bad hygiene? Not long. You can't live your whole life washing in public restrooms. I got away with it (on and off) for nearly two years. Speaking about restrooms and homelessness, there were times when I slept in public toilets. I think I was sleeping in public toilets intermittently for nearly six months (and not the same one all the time).

"Bleak, dark, and piercing cold, it was a night for the well-housed and fed to draw round the bright fire, and thank God they were at home; and for the homeless starving wretch to lay him down and die. Many hunger-worn outcasts close their eyes in our bare streets at such times, who, let their crimes have been what they may, can hardly open them in a more bitter world."

— Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

I actually worked for two months before my boss found out I was homeless. Him and the staff belittled me and made life difficult for me until I quit. I didn't make a lot of money, just enough to sleep in a flophouse on the south side of Atlanta for a few days out of the week; I didn't get this job until I had been homeless for over a year and this didn't last long. It's hard to explain the difficulties associated with surviving on the streets as a homeless person if you haven't been there.