

## BECOMING INTENTIONAL FOR THE HOMELESS

Following are words from an actual homeless person:

“When I was homeless, I did not beg. (I stole, dealt with charities, sometimes even worked. Yes, you can be homeless with a full-time job. I’ve worked 60 hours a week and been homeless. And I mean sleeping in a car or a tent homeless, not on somebody’s couch homeless, though that’s an under-counted form of homelessness. I asked for food once or twice, but I didn’t look like a beggar.) I kept myself clean. I looked like anyone else. That person you pass in the store, on the bus, someone who looks just like anyone else, they could be homeless. The sales clerk who helps you for minimum wage. They could have lost their apartment because you can’t pay rent on that salary... It is true some are homeless due to mental illness or addiction and sincerely cannot take care of themselves...”

When considering items to gift an unknown homeless person without first asking them their needs, bear in mind the following:

“- soap is not that difficult to come by if you are so inclined to have/use it. Many public bathrooms have it. Homeless shelters will give you a bar of it. If you have \$10 or so for a truck stop shower, soap is provided. Running water is a lot more difficult.

...they may already have a toothbrush and toothpaste, and if they don’t it’s unlikely they have any interest in using them... If everyone gave homeless people one of these in a pack, they’d have more toothbrushes than they did teeth. Same with deodorant-one stick lasts a long time, and they give them to you in shelters...

food is nice! But keep in mind that not everyone can eat stuff you give them. Dietary restrictions like diabetes and Crohn’s unfortunately don’t go away when you become homeless... Also, some (though not all) homeless people have access to food already through food stamps, soup kitchens, charities, etc. A granola bar is nice, but they likely have other problems. If they need food, they will usually have a sign asking for food, or ask for it verbally! Otherwise, food might not be a problem for them.”

What is useful in a comfort pack:

Use a backpack so there is something in which items can be carried.

### SURVIVAL

- First aid kit
- Heat pack
- Water bottle with built-in filter

### FOOD

- Protein Powder Packets
- Nuts

### TOILETRIES

- Multi-purpose wipes
- Blistek (Chapstick)

Useful Depending upon Locality:

- Fistful of gift certificates: bus transportation, pharmacy, truck stop shower, clothing store