

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE:
real-life tricks
to help
homeless kids graduate

Jessica Sutherland
Homeless to Higher Ed

FIRST: A tale of unsolicited advice, tobacco, and Toblerone™



NEXT: Who Am I?



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NEXT: Who Am I?



JESSICA SUTHERLAND

Homeless for 9+ of first 17 years

35 'homes' I remember

- motel kid
- shelters
- doubling up
- car

Civil Guardianship/Foster at 17
Unattended, Homeless College
Student

FINALLY: Why am I here?

IT'S ALL THIS KID'S FAULT



May 2012



Sept 2013

Ummmm...

I guess I'll start a **scholarship** fund
for homeless college kids.



Homeless **TO HIGHER ED**

— SEE THE POTENTIAL. BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY. —



WAIT FOR IT.....

Money didn't solve
all of his problems.

There were other gaps.
There were other barriers...

A Period of Self-Examination

K-12

strong academic foundation
suburban
goal oriented peers
supportive educators
engaged community

UNDERGRAD

NCAA and scholarship
oversight and resources
dorm regimen
athletic routine
goal oriented peers

A Period of Self-Examination

K-12

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UNDERGRAD

NCAA and scholarship
oversight and resources
dorm regimen
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goal oriented peers

**no adult oversight
uneducated peers
lack of structure
medical emergency**

**LIFE GOT IN THE WAY
but eventually,
I learned how to live**

A Period of Self-Examination

K-12

strong academic foundation
suburban
goal oriented peers
supportive educators
engaged community

UNDERGRAD

NCAA and scholarship
oversight and resources
dorm regimen
athletic routine
goal oriented peers

DROPOUT

supportive employers
encouragement
opportunity
you can do/be more

GRAD SCHOOL

financial support
healthcare
career mentoring
goal-oriented peers
exposure to affluence

CORRECTION:

I guess I'll start a **mentorship** program
for homeless college kids.



Homeless **TO HIGHER ED**

— SEE THE POTENTIAL. BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY. —



TODAY:

I'm not a parent, but I have 4 kids in college.



August 2015

What H2H Provides

Financial Support

Supplies and Necessities

Break Housing & Travel

Care Packages

Intense Mentoring

Shepherd To Resources

Lifeskills

No Flinch Factor

Peer Support: They've Been There

Cool Adult: I've Been There

Unconditional LOVE

YEAR 3: 100% Retention/SAP

Common Experiences & Traits

Culture of **conscription**
(Just enough **entitlement**)

Distrust and fear of authority

Bad examples

Susceptible to influence

No safety net

Family as a burden

History of trauma

Shame

Excuses

Skewed Confidence

Feel Different & Powerless

Fierce independence

Strong self-reliance

Sweetheart

Bright, if not exceptional

Resilient (**ugh**)

Mature

EXHAUSTED

SCARED

Not every student is the same.

Common Mindsets

I DON'T BELONG HERE
I CAN'T DO THIS
GOOD THINGS DON'T HAPPEN TO ME
I CANNOT EVER MAKE MISTAKES
I'LL NEVER STOP MAKING MISTAKES
I DO NOT DESERVE HELP
OTHER PEOPLE HAVE IT WORSE
I AM A BURDEN
I DON'T WANT TO BE LIKE MY PARENTS
ASKING FOR HELP MEANS I'M WEAK

Common Knowledge Gaps

Healthcare

(body and mind)

Sexual Education

(health, consent, safer sex, birth control)

Nutrition

(shopping and cooking)

Money & Credit

(identity theft)

Professional

(resumes, networking)

Academic

(syllabi breakdowns, self-direction)

Self-Advocacy

(seeking help, saying no)

BEYOND FOOD AND CASH

Love Won't Leave

(be consistent)

Speak Their Language

(friendly approach vs. parental)

You Make The Call

(offer guidance, not orders)

Just a Taste

(exposure to the good life)

You Are Not Alone

(peer-to-peer camaraderie)

Always A Space At The Table

(no flunking out of this program)

YOU MATTER

YES YOU CAN

YOU ARE NEVER A BURDEN

It's hard enough to
ask for help.

How can they ask if they don't
know the help is available?

TAKE A HARD LOOK AT YOUR MARKETING & OUTREACH.
Let your students help you do better.

Engage and Empower your students:
they can help you build the program
they want and need.

They can clarify what works and doesn't,
and help you prioritize services.

My kids are building
Homeless to Higher Ed **WITH** me.
They can't wait to **give back!**

Always remember the stigma.

Brand events and resources in a way that makes it less about labels and more about getting what you need.

Homeless **TO HIGHER ED**

H₂H

What About That Toblerone?™



Questions? Comments?

Please keep in touch!

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