Wonder why he wakes up in the middle of the night and screams? Look where he’s waking up.

Nine-year-old Jimmy isn’t any different than 300,000 other American kids.
They’re living in cars, in churches, on skid row, in shelters, in motels, and in state parks.

Until an accident last year, Jimmy’s dad, Hank, worked as an auto mechanic. Since 1978, Hank has worn an artificial leg. No longer able to lift heavy objects, he lost his job.

Within a month, they lost their house. Jimmy has plenty of company. One in six U.S. children lives below the poverty line—including those fortunate enough to have a roof over their heads.

America has more shelters for animals than for people.

How have we ended up with as many homeless children today as we had back in the Great Depression of the 1930s?

Over the past 25 years, the supply of affordable housing has lagged behind wages and jobs. According to the Institute for Children & Poverty, 75 percent of homeless parents are out of work.

With an annual income that averages $8,000, they’re also out of luck.

Even worse, the big shortage of safe emergency shelters leaves more of the working poor with no alternative but to sleep and live in public places. Including scores of runaways and abandoned kids, known as “unaccompanied youth.”

No wonder homeless kids attend an average of three different schools per year.

Nearly half of them suffer from anxiety, depression, or withdrawal.

Like all homeless people, children are real people, too—intelligent, with the potential to be useful members of society if we can help them find a way out of their predicament.

First, we must shelter them from harm.

“Half of all homeless mothers and children are fleeing domestic violence.”

— The New York Times

Today’s homeless children face the grim prospect of growing up in a nation where violent, often fatal, attacks against the homeless are rising at an alarming rate.

The number of deaths between 1999 and 2006 resulting from such acts was more than twice those of all other catego-
ized hate crimes combined.

Homeless victims have been denied the kind of retribution and protection of other hate crime victims. Laws that violate basic civil rights of homeless people justify violence toward them.

Ironically, the vast majority of these crimes are committed by teens and kids as young as 10 years old. In fact, an over-
whelmed majority of the accused and convicted are under 25.

Learning by example from our society, young people do not identify with the homeless. They commit hate crimes for the thrill of it, for the fun of it, or simply out of boredom.

The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) is fighting to change that.

“The homeless are often treated like ghosts. We look right through them.”

— Lisa Stanley, activist & author

Over the past three years, the NCH Civil Rights Organizing Project has won significant victories. Most notable is the “Bum Videos” triumph.

Especially popular with young people, these four exploitive videos, which aired on YouTube, depicted degrading “fights” staged with homeless men.

In response, NCH mobilized its grass-roots base to write and call major retailers including Target, Best Buy, Borders, Virgin Megastore and FYE Entertainment.

Within three months, all had agreed to withdraw the videos from their stores. “CBS 60 Minutes” covered the story on national television.

By addressing this sickening trend with justice and civil rights, we can help discourage America from continuing to ostracize our homeless citizens.

Our yearly report, “Hate, Violence, and new sentencing and police training laws passed in Maine and California.

It has also influenced the introduction of civil rights legislation for the homeless in other states and Congress.

You can download or order the report at www.nationalhomeless.org.

Regularly updated, our site contains information on NCH activities as well as links to sites dealing with homelessness across the country.

We can help you be involved and stay informed. And during this critical presidential election year, we need your help more than ever.

Please become a member of NCH and join us in bringing America home.

Consider making a financial contribu-
tion to support our efforts, too. It can make an important difference in where a child wakes up.

Don’t kids like Jimmy deserve a better future than “Bum Fight” videos?

We depend on the kindness of strangers.