What is A Bed for Every Child?

A Bed for Every Child is an initiative created by the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless in 2011. The Coalition’s HomeLink campaign partners with public schools to assist at-risk families of school-aged children to help them avoid becoming homeless. Through this program, HomeLink learned that many children were coming to school exhausted and the teachers did not understand why. It was later revealed that many of these students were sleeping on the floor or being squished into beds with their siblings. Because of this, children were not getting a good night’s sleep and it was seriously hindering their academic abilities. Through A Bed for Every Child, the Coalition began providing a new mattress, box spring, frame and bedding to kids who do not have beds of their own. Our goal is to distribute 1,500 beds this year.

Research has shown that sleep is one of the most important things that our bodies need to perform and focus throughout the day. However for the thousands of children living in poverty without a bed in Massachusetts, getting a good night’s sleep is just not an option. Many of the students’ families have experienced bed bug infestations, a growing epidemic in urban areas, forcing them to throw out their beds. For other young children, after they have outgrown their cribs their parents are financially unable to buy them a larger bed. Without a bed of their own, these kids are put at a serious disadvantage and cannot perform up to their full potential in school. Studies have shown that one of the best ways to break the cycle of poverty is through education and the completion of high school. As well, inadequate sleep when combined with other stress factors, like poverty, can cause higher levels of behavioral problems and put these children at even more of a disadvantage. We need to give school-aged children as many tools as possible to complete and succeed in their education. One of these tools is a bed.

Through A Bed for Every Child, the Coalition will be distributing as many beds as possible to those children in need. A Bed for Every Child initiative has already provided beds to over a thousand children. Sadly, the need for beds is at least five times that. With your help, we can reach as many children as possible. By raising money to support A Bed for Every Child, you will be helping low-income children receive beds of their own and put them one step closer to ending the cycle of poverty. For more information check out our website, www.mahomeless.org, call 781-595-7570 x22 or email sarah@mahomeless.org.

A Bed for Every Child is an initiative by the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Contact us at 781.595.7570 or online at www.mahomeless.org
What is Wear Red for a Bed Day?

Wear Red for a Bed Day is part of the campaign for A Bed for Every Child initiative. This event involves making at least a $1 donation to A Bed for Every Child and wearing red to school on a specific day. Wear Red for a Bed Day aims to raise awareness about the importance of a good night’s sleep and the rising number of children who are currently sleeping without beds. Through A Bed for Every Child, children in need will receive a brand new twin mattress, box spring and linens. Wear Red for a Bed Day is a great way for your school to get involved in helping provide the tools necessary to aid children in breaking the cycle of poverty.

Hosting your own Wear Red for a Bed Day will bring attention to the fact that thousands of children all over Massachusetts are in need of beds. With your help, we can provide beds to as many school-aged kids as possible and try to help give all of them a good night’s sleep. Schools in the North Shore area and Boston have already been participating in Wear Red for a Bed Day as well as businesses and places of faith. It is our goal to expand this program to your school and your community. With your help and support, this is possible.

The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless aims to distribute 1,500 beds this year. With your help, we can reach our goal! You and your school’s help will give these children one of the most important tools to their academic success, a bed. We are so thrilled that you are interested in hosting your own Wear Red for a Bed Day! If you have any questions, please contact the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless at 781-595-7570 x22 or email sarah@mahomeless.org. Your support and dedication to helping our community is greatly appreciated!
What are the effects of this issue?

Sleep is one of the most important activities we do to boost the quality of all aspects of our lives. However for the thousands of children living in poverty in Massachusetts who are sleeping without a bed, getting the proper amount of sleep is just not an option. Without enough sleep, these school-aged children experiencing poverty are put at a serious disadvantage and are unable to learn at their full potential. By giving them the ability to get a good night’s sleep they will be one step closer to completing their education and breaking the cycle of poverty.

Here are some facts about the importance of sleep as well as information about the effects of poverty on children and their education.

- 1 in every 7 children in Massachusetts is living in poverty, and 45% of children in America are living in low-income families

- Every 9 seconds during the school year, a public high school student drops out of school

- Children under age 12 need at least 10 hours of sleep a night

- Sleep deprivation can lead to obesity, hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases

- Children suffering from sleep deprivation tend to be more hyperactive and experience ADHD-like symptoms

- Education has been shown to be the best way to break the cycle of poverty. Getting a good night’s sleep is necessary for a child to perform well at school and give them the tools to succeed!
How to create your own Wear Red for a Bed Day

Step 1: Read about the A Bed for Every Child initiative by the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless and about past Wear Red for a Bed Day events so you can be ready to start planning your own event.

Step 2: Contact a teacher or school administrator and ask for their support to help plan a Wear Red for a Bed Day.

Step 3: Pick a date to host your event. For example, National Sleep Week, March 2-March 9, is a great time to raise awareness about the importance of sleep!

Step 4: Decide on a donation amount to wear red, most schools choose a $1 per person or more.

Step 5: Set a goal for how much money you would like to raise. $250 provides a child in need with a brand new twin mattress, box spring and linens. Your goal could be aiming to support a specific number of children.

Step 5: Start raising awareness and advertising your Wear Red for a Bed Day! This can be done through putting up flyers around the hallways or posting it on social media. You can also get teachers and students involved by creating teams and having the teams compete to raise the most money.

Step 6: The day before your Wear Red for a Bed Day consider making an announcement at your school to remind everyone to wear red and bring donations the next day.

Step 7: Wear red and support A Bed for Every Child! You can wear a red shirt, red skirt, red dress, red shoes, red bows, anything red at all.

Step 8: Consider planning activities on your Wear Red for a Bed Day to remind students and faculty how important a good night’s sleep is and what their bed means to them.

Step 9: Collect donations all throughout the day and reach your goal of helping children suffering from poverty receive brand new beds of their own!

Step 10: Please send your donations to:
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
ATTN: Robyn Frost
15 Bubier Street
Lynn, MA 01901

Thank you in advance for your donations and support!
Why it all matters

Over the past two years, A Bed for Every Child has provided over 2,000 children in need with brand new beds! It is hard to imagine what nights would be like sleeping without a bed but for many children it is a harsh reality. But who are these kids? The Coalition has found that unfortunately many low-income families in our communities have children without beds of their own. Here are some of their stories.

Today with the growing epidemic of bed bugs, more and more families’ lives are being turned upside down. One of these families is Jenna and her mom. In February, their nightmare began when they learned that their apartment had bed bugs. Their landlord forced them to throw away their beds, which they did with the hope of ridding their home of the bed bugs. For the next several months, Jenna and her mom slept on the floor. Even though Jenna’s mom works, she was still unable to afford new beds and also continue to make sure all other household expenses were met. One day Jenna’s school sent home a flyer about A Bed for Every Child; it was then that her mom reached out for help to receive a new bed for Jenna. On the morning that Jenna’s mom was to pick up the bed, she said that her daughter could hardly contain her excitement as she went to school knowing she would have a bed to sleep on that night. With tears in her eyes, Jenna’s mom thanked everyone who made it possible for her little girl to get a good night’s sleep.

This past school year, 7-year-old Miguel from Lynn experienced a similar situation to Jenna. Shortly after returning from school vacation, the once energetic second grader was now exhausted and not acting like himself. His teacher noticed and soon learned that Miguel had been sleeping on the floor. Miguel’s home also experienced an infestation of bed bugs and had to get rid of their mattresses. Without the financial resources to purchase new beds, Miguel’s parents were forced to have their children sleep on the floor of their bedroom. Miguel’s school partners with A Bed for Every Child and his teacher was able to make a referral for beds. Tonight, Miguel and his brother sleep comfortably and enjoy their new bunk bed. Miguel has claimed the top bunk as his own!

With your help we can make sure that more kids like Jenna and Miguel receive brand new beds of their own!
Success from previous Wear Red for a Bed Days!

The Marblehead Veterans Middle School was one of the first schools to participate in Wear Red for a Bed Day and it was a great success! Guidance counselor Jennifer Votour said, “Students who participate in Cornerstones, our leadership group at Marblehead Veterans Middle School, were excited to support A Bed for Every Child. Students educated their peers and involved the larger student body, really working together as a community to make a difference. Our students were eager to donate and really show their school spirit, sporting red clothing on Wear Red for a Bed Day.”

We know your school’s Wear Red for a Bed Day will have the same success!
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Robyn Frost
Email: robyn@mahomeless.org
Phone: 781-595-7570 x12

PAINTING THE TOWN OF (ENTER TOWN NAME) RED
The (Enter School Name) Supports A Bed for Every Child Initiative by Wearing Red for a Bed Day

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has proclaimed that insufficient sleep is a public health epidemic and thousands of children living in poverty in Massachusetts are victims. The students of (enter school name) will be raising money to help those children by wearing red on (enter date). (Enter school name) will be participating in Wear Red for a Bed Day that involves donating at least $1.00 to support A Bed for Every Child, an initiative of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. All of the money raised will go towards providing children, who are experiencing poverty, beds of their own.

Teachers in urban areas began noticing that many of their students were showing up to school exhausted. The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless then learned that this was because they do not have beds to sleep on at home. Children are sleeping on the floors of their parents’ room and are being squished onto couches with their siblings simply because a bed is unaffordable. Scientifically, sleep is a necessity for school-aged children to learn and function in school; without a good night’s sleep they are put at a serious disadvantage. Through A Bed for Every Child, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless provides mattresses, box springs and bedding to school-aged children who are currently sleeping without their own bed. Students donating on Wear Red for a Bed Day will be directly aiding the children in need.

Research has shown that inadequate sleep can cause misbehavior and the inability to focus and learn. To break the cycle of poverty, children must be given all of the tools possible to succeed in their education. One of these is a bed.

“We are so excited that students from (name of school) have joined us in raising awareness and funds for kids in need of beds. Through the simple act of wearing red on one day, it will have a huge impact on the ability of A Bed for Every Child to distribute beds to kids without one of their own,” explains Robyn Frost, Executive Director of the Coalition.

Getting a good night’s sleep will make the difference for many children experiencing poverty and help them reach their full potential. Thanks to (enter school name), impoverished children’s dreams of getting their own bed is quickly becoming a reality.

The Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless has 30 years of successes assisting low-income families and individuals to have access to cost-effective resources and services that can support them to live in safe, affordable homes that provide them with an improved quality of life and opportunities to thrive in the future. A Bed for Every Child, started in 2011, is one of our programmatic efforts that reflect our continued commitment to improving the lives of low-income families and individuals.

# # #
Wear Red for a Bed Day T-Shirt Order Form

School Order

School____________________________________________________

School Address________________________________________________

________________________________________________

Contact Person________________________________________________

Telephone Number_____________________________________________

Email Address________________________________________________

Quantity

Children Sizes

Small      ______

Medium  ______

Large      ______

Adult Sizes

Small      ______

Medium  ______

Large      ______

Total:   ______ X $15 each = ______