

Rockford aims to end youth homelessness

Ending Youth Homelessness

Posted: Wed 4:49 PM, Mar 15, 2017 |

Updated: Wed 5:51 PM, Mar 15, 2017

ROCKFORD (WIFR) -- It's never easy to see someone living on the streets, struggling to find food or shelter, but it's even harder when it's a child.



The main reason kids say they're living on the streets or bouncing around between friends' homes is because they were kicked out of their own house.

"It can be a scary place when you're alone, you have nobody that will help you," Tony Frazier said.

After six years of living on the streets Frazier is proud to call his apartment home. At 16 years old his grandma died and had no place to go. Moving to Rockford when he was 20, things didn't get better until he found the Rockford Rescue Mission.

"I thank God for it, for God putting people in my life to help me get on my feet by showing me these resources that can help," he said.

21 youth, ages 16 to 24, were identified by the City of Rockford last month, but the city believes that number is much higher. The problem is finding them.

"They can be homeless multiple times and go back to family and then be kicked out again or be asked to leave, they can stay with friends and be asked to leave," Jennifer Jaeger, with the City of Rockford Human Services Department, said.

The city says 28 percent of homeless youth reported being abused by someone they lived with. Most are homeless because of domestic violence or a new adult in the house.

"In general kids have stayed in places they've been placed a really long time and some have gone onto college which is great," Jaeger explained.

A wall of awards and certificates is Tony's pride and joy. He's gotten his GED, gone through Youthbuild, and found a job. Now he's always looking forward without forgetting his past.

"Cling to people who want to see you make it and who really believe in you," he said, hoping to bring inspiration to other teens living on the streets of Rockford.