

FAQs about new socks for the homeless.



Did you know that socks can be more important than food?

According to Kiwi, a homeless person, "...socks can be more important than bringing people food, because food is not hard to get but it seems to be harder and harder to get socks..."

What do you do with you clothes when they wear out or go out of style?

You probably donate them to a good cause except for your socks. Your socks are probably worn so they get thrown out. So a homeless person going to a distribution place will usually get many items, except for new socks.

What's it like for a homeless person without new socks?

According to William, another homeless person, "...those (old) socks just start getting like sand paper, you know, when they start dying up and cutting into the back of your heels ... it's very demeaning ... you feel uncomfortable ... a pair of socks can make the biggest difference in the world."

Or the homeless man in Philly who steps into a cold puddle and get his feet soaked. With only one pair of socks he wears them 24/7. When he can't stand the pain he goes to an ER where the doctor has to use a scalpel to remove the socks from his infected feet. He was fortunate the infection did not advance to gangrene or he may have lost his toes or more.

What's the danger to the homeless without socks?

In addition to the above hallux abductovalgus (bunions), hammertoes, pedal extostosis, various boney prominences, calluses and corns are caused or irritated by friction. These conditions can make it painful to walk.

Many homeless also suffer from polyneuropathy, a condition where they lose nerve function and cannot feel irritations on their feet. The skin on their feet may break down and form an ulcer, which usually become infected and can cause cellulitis (skin infection), deadly sepsis (blood poisoning) or deep bone infection. In lower extremities bone infections are cured by amputation. New socks decrease friction between the shoe and the foot and can help prevent or minimize the impact of these painful conditions.

What sort of impact can new socks have on the homeless population?

New socks can also help improve the well-being and outlook of the homeless. For example, the daughter of a homeless single mom gets ridiculed at school because her socks are tattered. The child feels like an outcast and doesn't want to go back to school. Or the homeless man who asks for a pair of business socks so he can go on a job interview. He felt if he didn't have decent socks he'd be embarrassed to go to the interview.

Now the new socks we provide will probably not make the school girl smarter, or guarantee the man a job, but they certainly helped her go back to school and helped the gentleman go to the interview.

Although we have not yet done a survey to quantify this item there has to be a reduction of visits to emergency rooms and street clinics (for the conditions mentioned above) for the homeless who get regular donations of new socks. And since many homeless are not insured the general population winds up underwriting the cost of their visits and treatments.

And what is The Joy of Sox®?

The Joy of Sox is a Philadelphia-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, EIN 27-1686705, founded in 2010, with the mission of providing joy to the homeless by giving them new socks. We have distributed over 134,325 pairs of new socks to the homeless of the Philadelphia region, 18 other states plus D.C., and three countries.

How can you help?

In order to sustain our positive impact we need: 1) continuing funding from donations, grants, and corporate sponsorships; 2) a continuing supply of new socks from sock drives held at schools, churches and civic groups; 3) a source(s) to purchase (or manufacture) cost-effective healthy socks for homeless feet; 4) engaged board and advisory committee members; 5) your prayers. Thanks!!

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