



## HOMELESSNESS - A PERSONAL

LOOK



**Lesson Overview:** *This lesson is designed for teen and preteen 4-H members.* This activity involves meeting with homeless veterans who use shelter services and collecting their stories via digital photography.

A digital mini-movie is created based on a real person's experiences, usually focusing on a single important event in that person's life. This lesson gives members an opportunity to learn about homelessness, develop digital literacy, enhance communication skills and empowers them to use their creativity while working with and honoring men and women who have served our country. There is a large population of homeless veterans across the nation, many who would greatly benefit from sharing their stories with our young respectful members. This is an intergenerational project of mutual benefit.

**Objective:** Members learn about homelessness.  
Members learn communication skills.  
Members learn how to create a digital movie.  
Members learn the value of personal history.  
Members help others to feel valued.

A few statistics:

- \* 2005 data estimated that 194,254 homeless people out of 744,313 on any given night were veterans.
- \* In 2007 veterans made up one in four homeless people in the United States, though they were only 11% of the general adult population.

**Materials/Resources:** Digital camera, projector, music source, computer  
There are numerous websites that provide production details, including one on our website, <http://projects.4-hcurriculum.org/curriculum/filmmaking/>. You may also find <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Mini-Movie> helpful.

**Procedure:** Leader contacts the Veteran Services Agency in their area, explains the project, and asks if there are veterans who would be interested in sharing their personal stories. Leader arranges for members to meet with interested veterans to explain the project and to discuss ideas. The Veterans should be asked if they could focus on a particular important event in their life and told that a digital "mini-movie" will be created. The story may or may not be centered on their current life situation. Members meet with interested veterans and create a mini-movie, incorporating the veterans' voices, selected images, set it to music and add sound effects, if desired, to create interesting life stories of the veterans. This can be as low-key or as high-tech as the members want. *Try not to get so caught up in the movie creation that the members lose the importance of the personal contact and stories of the veterans. This can be just a taped oral history session!*

Members should follow-up with the veterans to be sure that the individuals are comfortable with the result. [Note: A permission/release form must be signed by the veteran(s) and kept by the club or member with the film.] Share the movie with a wider audience, such as at community events. Some areas of the country

have sent digital movies to the Library of Congress, saving many stories from veterans of WWII and Korea to share with future generations.