

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
RESOLUTION

CARE FOR THE HOMELESS

1988

Whereas the Jewish tradition is founded on principles of Tzedeka (Justice) and Gemilut Hasadim (Deeds of Kindness); and

Whereas the plight of the homeless has become an increasingly painful reality in our society which requires programmatic and collective responses from governmental, religious, and civic circles; and that certain current corporate and governmental policies contribute to homelessness; and

Whereas psychological and sociological studies indicate that homelessness is the result of many factors including family breakup, inadequate job skills and education, emotional, physical and mental disabilities; and

Whereas our welfare systems ought to place the agenda of the homeless at the center of their concern with appropriate legislation that works to alleviate and eliminate these problems; and

Whereas we see at the national level, and often at local levels, efforts to reduce programs destined to ameliorate the condition of the disadvantaged, the poor and the otherwise underprivileged and disabled; and

Whereas the Reconstructionist movement and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association are committed to the creation of a society structured along the religious principles of economic justice, equality for all, and dignity of human life, which are also enshrined in the foundations of our democratic heritage.

Therefore let it be resolved that the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association:

Calls upon the highest levels of our government, as well as upon local authorities and agencies, to give utmost attention and consideration to the plight of the homeless and the disenfranchised who live in the fringes of our society by means of appropriate legislation and the appropriation of financial, human, and structural resources; and

Calls upon the boards of directors or corporations to take into account the impact of their decisions on their employees and the surrounding community and to make every possible effort to ensure that corporate decisions do not result in an increase in homelessness; and

Calls upon congregations and havurot, as well as all affiliates of the Reconstructionist movement, to act upon the legacy of Tikkum Olam (World Repair) central to our religious tradition, by developing new and supporting existing programs designed to assist the homeless through shelters, food kitchens, and other forms of direct assistance; by helping to create supportive services to educate and employ individuals; by building new and rehabilitative housing; and by joining efforts with interfaith, civic and other communal institutions in these activities; and

Calls upon congregations, havurot, and all Reconstructionist affiliates to consider ways of utilizing individual and congregational resources (financial, volunteer, food surpluses from private and communal functions, etc.) To help provide for and assist the needs of the poor and the homeless.