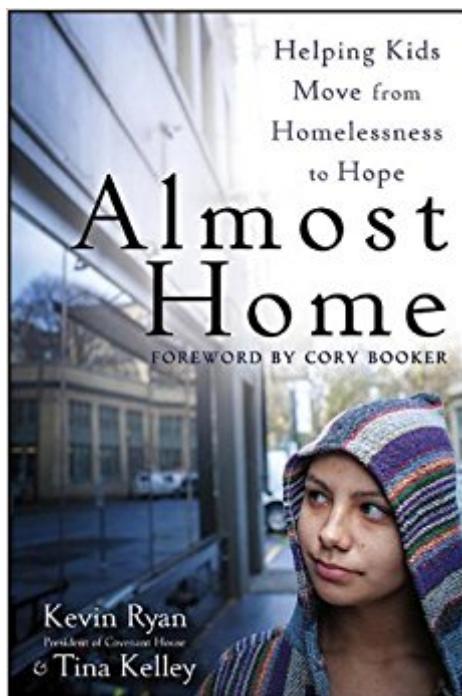


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# Almost Home: Helping Kids Move From Homelessness To Hope



## Synopsis

Inside the lives of homeless teens--moving stories of pain and hope from Covenant House Almost Home tells the stories of six remarkable young people from across the United States and Canada as they confront life alone on the streets. Each eventually finds his or her way to Covenant House, the largest charity serving homeless and runaway youth in North America. From the son of a crack addict who fights his own descent into drug addiction to a teen mother reaching for a new life, their stories veer between devastating and inspiring as they each struggle to find a place called home. Includes a foreword by Newark Mayor Cory Booker. Shares the personal stories of six homeless youths grappling with issues such as drug addiction, family violence, prostitution, rejection based on sexual orientation, teen parenthood, and aging out of foster care into a future with limited skills and no support system. Gives voice to the estimated 1.6 million young people in the United States and Canada who run away or are kicked out of their homes each year. Includes striking photographs, stories of firsthand experiences, mentoring and working with homeless and troubled youth, and practical suggestions on how to get involved. Discusses the root causes of homelessness among young people, and policy recommendations to address them. Provides action steps readers can take to fight youth homelessness and assist individual homeless young people. Written by Kevin Ryan, president of Covenant House, and Pulitzer Prize winner and former New York Times writer Tina Kelley. Inviting us to get to know homeless teens as more than an accumulation of statistics and societal issues, this book gives a human face to a huge but largely invisible problem and offers practical insights into how to prevent homelessness and help homeless youth move to a hopeful future. For instance, one kid in the book goes on to become a college football player and counselor to at-risk adolescents and another becomes a state kickboxing champion. All the stories inspire us with victories of the human spirit, large and small. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each book will help support kids who benefit from Covenant House's shelter and outreach services.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

\* With narrative precision and journalistic detail, the heartbreakingly tragic trajectory from abandonment and abuse to teen homelessness is laid bare in this book by Covenant House president Ryan and staff member Kelley, a former New York Times reporter. Telling the story of six young people who came to a Covenant House, the nationwide network of faith-based homes for homeless and runaway youth, Ryan and Kelley uncover their dire circumstances as well as efforts by Covenant House staff, and the kids themselves, to get off the streets. In addition, the authors highlight such issues as human trafficking, the shortcomings of the foster care system, and the financial cost of not caring for homeless youth, as well as providing suggestions and resources for mentoring, helping teen parents, and supporting LGBTQ youth. The compassionately told stories of survival are almost miraculous: a young man who had been abandoned and abused by his adoptive parents proudly returns to Covenant House to cook and serve a gourmet meal; another, bearing physical scars, walks the halls as an at-risk coordinator for a high school; and in the epilogue, we learn that a young woman who had survived drug addiction and prostitution has been accepted to college to study juvenile justice. (Publishers Weekly, October 2012)

"Almost Home is that rare and special book that inspires us to make a difference." —Cory Booker, mayor of Newark, New Jersey Almost Home tells the remarkable true stories of six young people as they struggle to find home, stopping along the way at Covenant House, the largest charity serving homeless, trafficked, and runaway youth in the Americas. This book offers a glimpse into the lives of the 1.6 million young people in North America who run away or are kicked out of their homes each year, grappling with issues such as family violence, prostitution, teen parenthood, rejection based on sexual orientation, and aging out of foster care without a family. Full of hope, compassion, and practical suggestions on how to fight youth homelessness, Almost Home shows us how to help young people attain the bright futures they deserve. "With narrative precision and journalistic detail, the heartbreakingly tragic trajectory from abandonment and abuse to teen homelessness is laid bare in this book. . . . The compassionately told stories of survival are almost

miraculous." •Publishers Weekly "The trick of engaging readers on public policy matters is to tell human stories. Suddenly, the person we dismiss, fear, or even judge is alive before us and utterly familiar, and we learn, as we do in this powerful and inspirational book, the true meaning of courage, grace, and hope." •Steve Lopez, New York Times bestselling author of *The Soloist* "The moving stories here offer a sense of promise, a belief that with guidance, empathy, and some semblance of home even the most wounded teens can thrive." •Alex Kotlowitz, bestselling author of *There Are No Children Here* "Almost Home accomplishes something very rare in a book about the homeless •it is both descriptive and prescriptive. A vital read for anyone who cares about the future of our society." •Dale Maharidge, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *And Their Children After Them*

A very revealing book about Covenant House which is the only shelter for homeless teens in NYC and other cities throughout the world. In my opinion, this non-profit organization does a heroic job of rescuing teens who have lived through some of the most tragic circumstances imaginable in their short lives. The staff at Covenant House never gives up on them even when they cannot believe in their own self worth. I have long been a donor to CH and now have a deeper understanding of the overwhelming problems their staff faces in trying to rescue the "throw-away" kids whom no one else cares about. After reading this book, you will come away with a deeper sense of compassion and hopefully a desire to help these kids. The book also gives some very practical suggestions that anyone with even a minimum of time can contribute.

This book offers a series of short stories, each a chronicle of the challenges, pitfalls and triumphs of homeless kids: why they run, where they go, mistakes they make, and how they can persevere. This book gives a glimpse into the lives of kids who are runaways or throw away, and makes their stories very relatable and real. Kevin Ryan is a leader in the fight to protect Americas neglected Kids and his stories are compelling. The book is a quick read, a page turner and not at all dark given the subject matter, I recommend it .

Let's end homelessness forever - every kid deserves a safe place to sleep. 40% of homeless youth are Gay - they deserve a safe place to sleep

Kevin Ryan and Tina Kelley have put faces to the crisis of teenage homelessness. I wanted to know what had happened to these kids, what their back stories were, and what helped them to turn things

around. The answer is Covenant House and its cadre of skilled and compassionate staff and volunteers. The authors take the reader through the day-to-day persistence that turns homelessness into hope. This is a compelling read that was hard to put down.

I haven't read the entirety but like the honest accounts of teens who must face the reality of homelessness. They're people just like you & me, who despite tremendous obstacles, can teach us about perseverance & the hope to be included/ make something of their lives. Their plea is essentially, "Don't write us off...We really do want to be somebody!"

A great read for caregivers of foster children . This book lays out the plight of the homeless in our world today. Much information is provided with resources for those in a homeless situation

The book is very moving in the work that Covenant House does with the teenager homeless in this country. I was surprised to read the story of two of the teenagers are from Anchorage, Alaska where I live. It is nice to read a positive story of the many teenagers on the street.

If you are interested in authentic research on homeless youth in America, this is the read. The terrific combo of research and real life is riveting. I have everything I need to take the next step to help homeless youth. Thank you Kevin and Tina. Well done.

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