



Socks can be more important than food...

Stories from the Streets

Moving stories about homelessness and socks

www.thejoyofsox.org/mission/stories-from-the-streets/

You can also *listen* to the some of the stories by clicking the links on the webpage.

Kiwi - "Hello, my name is Kiwi, and you don't realize it, **but sometimes 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 all the time. Without socks you get sores on your heel, between your toes and on your ankles that can actually go up your legs. I once got a leg infection because the socks weren't protecting my toes, and ankles, and yeah. The damage can go all the way up to your back, I'm tellin' ya."

Transcribed from the CBC radio show "Sunday Edition." The audio documentary producer, Frank Faulk, interviewed Tom Costello Jr prior to the show for his insight about the homeless and the need for new socks.

Lauren - "My name is Lauren, and I am the community outreach worker for a nonprofit organization that does poverty relief locally and internationally. I have been working here for about a year and a half now, and it was probably a couple of months after I first started when I met a client who could literally barely walk because he had athlete's foot so bad and he was almost hobbling towards the vehicle and I realized once I looked down that **he had t-shirts wrapped around his feet that were sticking out of his shoes**. I asked him why he had t-shirts wrapped around his feet and he said that nobody in the city, no drop-ins, no churches, **no outreach had socks right now available**. And he couldn't make it to his meals in the morning, he couldn't make it to lunches or dinners, and the only people he could receive food from were mobile, like street outreach like me. **It was horrible to see someone not able to eat properly because they didn't have socks**, you would never put two and two together like that."

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Daniel - "For most people who live at home, for them to be like "oh I can't afford to get a clean pair of socks on my feet a dry pair of socks on my feet," the thought of that is almost absurd to them. So for the people out on the streets, like a pair of socks is a big thing. **It can make your day it can change your whole day. It can be the thing that puts a smile on your face**. I've actually had problems with my feet: I've had trench foot three to four times over the last few years, and the worst was I actually lost part of the webbing in between my big toe, like maybe two or three millimeters came off in between one of my toes, and I couldn't even walk on that foot I was walking around it was horrific. **And I mean like, you think that trench foot and**

stuff is just stuff from the war movies and its not. It's something that affects people every day."

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William - "My name is William. The shelter system, my personal feelings, is a shelter but they actually kick you out during the day, so all day you're wandering the streets, killing time, just wasting time waiting to get back in at 5 o'clock, so, and again, you're walking around all day because you don't have money to eat, so how are you supposed to commute, we walk everywhere, right? Especially in the winter when you're wandering the streets and you only have one pair of shoes, one pair of pants – just whatever is on your back. You get soaking wet, and then the slush comes onto you when the cars come by, or you slip and fall, **like those socks just start getting like sand paper, you know, when they start drying up a little bit, and they start cutting into the back of your heels.** At the end of the day, you're cold, your feet are becoming pruned, so all around **it's just very demeaning.** Even when you're just walking around, **you feel uncomfortable, you look around at everyone else, and their feet are warm and dry, and you could just wish that, you know. Even like the subtlest things, like a pair of socks can make the biggest difference in the world."**

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Has - "My name is Has and **I had that happen to me about three times so far, and basically the bottom of your feet rot until the point where your skin actually starts to die.** We walk probably about 50 kilometers a day on average, just around the city looking for stuff, scrounging through stuff, going to meals, making it back to your bed every night. It's a long distance every day on your feet and your feet are the one thing you have always got to take care of."

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Ruth - "My name is Ruth, and I am the coordinator of the health center for street youth. Youth come to us all the time when they are living on the street and they say **"do you have any socks," and we have to say to them "you know, we've run out of socks" because that's not just something that people think that people on the streets need** as much as they would need a blanket, or a coat, or mittens and a hat, perhaps. And we see blisters, terrible blisters, because people are barefoot in their shoes, and they don't have that second skin which protects them while they're walking."

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