

HOW TO HELP A PANHANDLER

a step-by-step guide
to helping homeless people you encounter on the street.

Its happened to us all. You pass by a man or woman holding a cardboard sign and wonder - Do I ignore her? Do I give him money? I want to help, but how?

STEP 1

Treat them with dignity. Make eye contact. Smile. And, in a safe place, take the time to speak to them. Through brief, civil conversation, you can help homeless individuals combat the loneliness, depression and isolation many of them face.

STEP 2

Direct them to a shelter. The Mission has service information cards that list all of our free services (meals, clothing, showers, medical and dental clinics) and time schedules. Pick up a supply of the service cards at 1300 North First Street Yakima, WA 98901; package them with a granola bar and a bus pass; and you'll be ready to offer real help to the next homeless person you meet.

It might be helpful to ask ourselves some questions before giving money to a panhandler:

- Will this help move them out of the situation they are in?
- Will this solve any drug or alcohol abuse problems they might be facing?
- Will this train them for jobs, provide needed counseling or offer life skills?
- Will this help them face and overcome obstacles that have defeated them in the past?
Or, will this continue to enable a lifestyle that is destroying them?

PLEASE DO NOT . . .

1

Hand out money.
Well-intended gifts are often converted to drugs or alcohol.

2

Give rides to strangers.
It is best to provide a bus pass and/or directions to a nearby shelter.

We encourage you to work..
by saying "NO" to panhandlers
and "YES" to supporting
life-changing programs in our Valley.

