

## EChO Shelter Book Club List

# *Homelessness*

# *In Our Mountain Community*

### ***Are you in a Book Club?***

Are you interested in learning more about the issue of housing and homelessness? **EChO** has created a list of excellent books to choose from, fiction, memoir and non-fiction. As we start our 7<sup>th</sup> Season for the Shelter, we encourage all book clubs to choose one, discuss in your book club, take a tour of our local Shelter and consider signing up as a volunteer. If you do not have a book club - we can connect you. For more information please contact Shelter Manager Tim Clancy at [tim@evergreenchristianoutreach.org](mailto:tim@evergreenchristianoutreach.org).

Please support your local bookstore, **Hearthfire Books**, as they will have many of these titles available in the store. Other options are the Jefferson County Library or amazon.

Homelessness does exist in our community, in the mountains and the foothills.

- Over six winters we have provided Shelter to more than 125 different people.
- Evenly split between men and women - ranging in age from 8 to 75.
- People that used to have housing in Evergreen, Conifer, Bailey, Kittridge, Morrison, Idaho Springs, Georgetown, Genesee, Golden and elsewhere, but lost it through events that can happen to any of us - job loss, divorce, health issues, addiction, car accidents, traumatic brain injury and more.

### **Non-Fiction**

#### **Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American**

Matthew Desmond

Princeton sociologist and MacArthur “Genius” Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they each struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Hailed as “wrenching and revelatory” (The Nation), “vivid and unsettling” (New York Review of Books), **Evicted** transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible.

### **So You Want to End Homelessness**

Andrew Henning

In 2010, Andrew Henning threw everything he owned in the trunk of his car and drove across the country to the San Francisco Bay Area to join the movement to end homelessness. What started out as a year of service with AmeriCorps VISTA has turned into a lifetime of working to end one of our nation's most pressing moral crises.

### **No House to Call My Home: Love, Family, and Other Transgressions**

Ryan Berg

Immerses readers in the gritty, dangerous, and shockingly underreported world of homeless LGBTQ teens in New York. As a caseworker in a group home for disowned LGBTQ teenagers, Berg witnessed the struggles, fears, and ambitions of these disconnected youth as they resisted the pull of the street, tottering between destruction and survival.

### **Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century**

Jessica Bruder

From the beet fields of North Dakota to the National Forest campgrounds of California to Amazon's CamperForce program in Texas, employers have discovered a new, low-cost labor pool, made up largely of transient older Americans. Finding that Social Security comes up short, often underwater on mortgages, these invisible casualties of the Great Recession have taken to the road by the tens of thousands in late-model RVs, travel trailers, and vans, forming a growing community of nomads: migrant laborers who call themselves "workampers."

### **Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America**

Jonathan Kozol

As one of America's foremost education scholars, Jonathan Kozol (known for *Death at an Early Age* and *Savage Inequalities*) also recognizes the challenges that homelessness brings to bear on American families. This 1988 title remains sadly relevant thirty-five years later. Pulling from his months he spent interacting with homeless men, women, and children, Kozol paints a stark portrait of life on the streets.

### **Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women**

Elliot Liebow

Through this searing study of women in homeless shelters, Elliott Liebow disabuses us of the myth that the homeless are hopeless, lazy and disinterested in altering their condition. *Tell Them Who I Am* places the reader squarely in the shoes of the inhabitants of a Washington, D.C. homeless shelter for women.

## **Homeless at Harvard: Finding Faith and Friendship on the Streets of Harvard Square**

John Christopher Frame

Harvard Square is not only the business district around Harvard University, it's also a gathering place for some of the city's homeless. This is not a systematic treatment of strategies for alleviating homelessness. Instead, it is a narrative with firsthand accounts from the author and some of the homeless people he befriends, meant to humanize the marginalized *'other'* and introduce the reader to how homeless people live. Mirroring the author's own perspective shift, the book leads the reader to recognize the struggles of homeless people, as well as their humanity, community, and their distinct desire for forming relationships. The book is touching, and well worth the read, if only to provide a more informed view of a group that is frequently misunderstood.

## **Memoir**

### **From the Ashes: My Story of Being Indigenous, Homeless, and Finding My Way**

Jesse Thistle

A powerful life story about how trauma, family and history can shape a person. Jesse has been brave enough to share his journey through early hardships to unpredictable success. Once a homeless drug addict and now a university professor, we have a lot to learn from his story.

### **Another Bullshit Night in Suck City: A Memoir**

Nick Flynn

Nick Flynn met his father when he was working as a caseworker in a homeless shelter in Boston. As a teenager he'd received letters from this stranger-father, a self-proclaimed poet and con man doing time in federal prison for bank robbery.

**Another Bullshit Night in Suck City** tells the story of the trajectory that led Nick and his father onto the streets, into that shelter, and finally to each other.

## **Fiction**

### **Ironweed**

William J. Kennedy

In this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, the third in Kennedy's Albany cycle, Francis Phelan, ex-ballplayer, part-time gravedigger, and full-time bum with the gift of gab, has hit bottom. Years earlier he'd left Albany after he dropped his infant son accidentally, and the boy died. Now, in 1938, Francis is back in town, roaming the old familiar streets with his hobo pal, Helen, trying to make peace with the ghosts of the past and present.

### **My Dreams Out in the Street**

Kim Addonizio

Rita Jackson is a young woman on the skids, spending her time in shelters and on the .com-drunk streets of late 1990s San Francisco. She's a young woman haunted by the murder of her mother when she was thirteen, and a young bride haunted by the disappearance of her husband, Jimmy, who split after a nasty argument more than a year earlier. Together Jimmy and Rita were slipping into drugs and hard times. Rita is filled with feelings of guilt and failure, and the hope that she will one day find Jimmy. She doesn't know that Jimmy is still in the city, still in love with her, waiting tables in an expensive restaurant while trying to get a foothold in the straight life.

### **Runaway** (Young Adult)

by Wendelin Van Draanen

This diary of a runaway girl and her search for a home celebrates hope, resilience, and happy endings. Holly has run away before, but this time she actually gets away - and what at first felt like an escape soon becomes a daily struggle for survival. She is smart and resourceful, and she manages to make it across the country on her own. But how long can this go on? It's getting harder to avoid the truth - Holly is now homeless.

### **Roam** (Young Adult)

C. H. Armstrong

Seventeen-year-old Abby Lunde and her family are living on the streets. They had a normal life back in Omaha but, thanks to her mother's awful mistake, they had to leave behind what little they had for a new start in Rochester.

### **Ragged Company**

Richard Wagamese

Four chronically homeless people seek refuge in a warm movie theater when a severe Arctic Front descends on the city. During what is supposed to be a one-time event, this temporary refuge transfixes them. They fall in love with this new world, and once the weather clears, continue their trips to the cinema. A found cigarette package (contents: some unsmoked cigarettes, three \$20 bills, and a lottery ticket) changes the fortune of this struggling set. The ragged company discovers they have won \$13.5 million, but none of them can claim the money for lack of proper identification. Enlisting the help of another stranger, their lives, and fortunes, become forever changed.