



OUR VIEW

Our view: Conversation, action on poverty must continue

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They are retired or disabled or both, subsisting on a few hundred dollars a month in Social Security benefits. They are the people we see wandering the streets of downtown Auburn with no particular place to go and no place to sleep. They are financially strapped after years of battling substance abuse or mental health issues. They are the children of parents who struggle every month to pay for food, housing, clothing and medications.

"Wealth of Hardship," our series of stories, photographs, in-depth interviews and up-to-date statistics, this week has been telling the stories of people in Cayuga County living in poverty. What we discovered along the way is that no two stories are alike. The circumstances that brought people to this point in their lives are many. The good news is that the social services available to help them are many, too, although they're not necessarily an effective solution.

It is our hope that by delving deeper into the many issues surrounding poverty that we have dispelled some of the stereotypes about people who struggle financially, educated people about the resources available to help those in need, and inspired people to be more compassionate toward their neighbors.

We are grateful for the cooperation of area human services professionals and volunteers who work directly with the homeless, the hungry and those of the fringes of making a living for themselves, for educating us about the issues related to poverty and for introducing us to some very brave people who agreed to share their personal struggles with us — and thereby with you.

Fifty years after President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a "war on poverty," the war hasn't been won. But much like the struggles for women's rights and civil rights, things have improved over the years. Poverty will always be with us to some extent, but by learning its causes, recognizing its symptoms, and tailoring outreach to be as effective as it can be, we will be better able to serve and to understand our neighbors and friends who live with the struggle of poverty every day. And by doing that, our entire community will be lifted.

To further the discussion, we'd like to hear what you think. Beginning at noon Friday we'll be hosting an interactive discussion at [auburnpub.com](#) on the many aspects of poverty with experts in the field. Please join us.