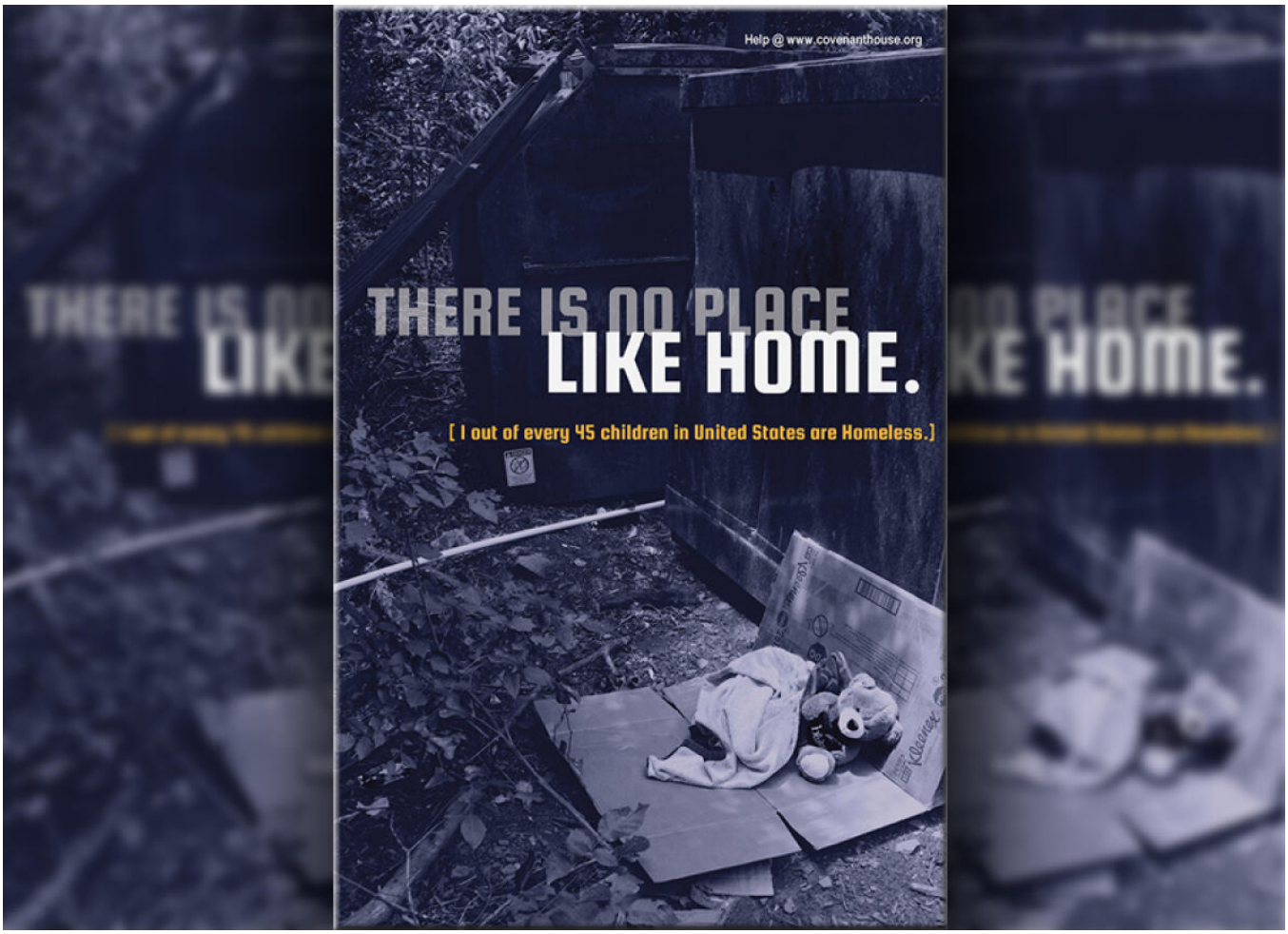

LPD Releases Stats On Local Homeless Population

Editor , Thomas Lark

LINCOLNTON––It's a statewide, national and global problem that hits home in Lincoln County as well.

It's the problem of homelessness, and it's very real. According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, North Carolina's increase in unsheltered people without any home outpaced the decrease in sheltered homeless people in 2022 (the most up-to-date such statistics available). The HUD adds that nearly 10,000 people statewide were homeless in '22, with more than a third of them unsheltered, placing North Carolina in the number-15 spot for homelessness across the 50 states.

On Tuesday in a Lincolnton Police Department report, Chief Brian Greene, a member of the City of Lincolnton Homeless Committee, shared last month's stats for Lincolnton's homeless population. These numbers are germane to homeless and vagrancy issues in the downtown area and other sections within the city. Greene informed that there were seven incident reports involving homeless people and five charges related to them.

In one instance, LPD officers responded to a report of a homeless person found in bushes near the Lincolnton Wendy's fast-food restaurant. The person was unconscious, due to an evident drug overdose. The officers administered Narcan (or Naloxone; a drug commonly used for the emergency treatment of known or suspected opioid overdoses). This treatment revived the person, who was then transported to a local hospital.

In another case, LPD officers responded to a call in connection with suspected trespassing in the 1000 block of

Catawba Street. Two homeless people were arrested for misdemeanor breaking or entering. In addition, one of them had an outstanding warrant.

Elsewhere, whilst on a downtown patrol, officers discovered a homeless person behind a business in the 200 Block of East Main Street. The person was charged with trespassing and banned from the property. But the property's owner later declined to press charges.

Also according to the LPD report, "a homeless female reported a sexual assault near the Hesed House of Hope (Lincolnton's homeless shelter). After an investigation, there is insufficient evidence to file any criminal charges."

Other incidents include property damage, public urination and damage to unoccupied vehicles.

Officers of the Lincolnton Police Department continue their nightly foot-patrol efforts downtown, as well as regular checks on local walking trails multiple times a day, in order to help ensure public safety.