The population of homeless youth in the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) has reached a catastrophic level, with 3,500+ homeless students. Overwhelming research shows that unsheltered students are at a greater risk of falling behind academically, and in turn more likely to drop out of school. In addition to being susceptible to educational setbacks, they often face a myriad of social and health problems such as drug and alcohol addiction, unemployment, teen pregnancy, depression, and involvement with the criminal justice system. “Unsheltered” means living in a car, park, campground, street, or abandoned building. When unsheltered students age out of the foster care system or opt out of the child welfare system altogether, they are left with limited public and private resources. These remaining services are often only available for restricted hours of the day, leaving many without a place to go after 8:00pm.

In the fall of 2017 Dallas Independent School District (DISD) trustees voted to donate the shuttered Fannie C. Harris Elementary School campus in Fair Park to be converted into a 35-bed shelter – Fannie C. Harris Youth Center. In collaboration with DISD and local organizations, After8toEducate (“After8”) is the first all-encompassing program to support the most vulnerable population of unsheltered high school youth in Dallas. After8 brings together community resources to reduce the number of unsheltered young adults and foster self-sufficiency. It offers an umbrella solution to allow unsheltered high school students to develop academically, emotionally, and socially to ultimately live healthy and productive lives. After8 provides a three-pillar program that addresses the unsheltered youth that are currently enrolled in DISD high schools and support immediate needs of other homeless young adults age 14-21.

Fannie C. Harris Youth Center will house both a Drop-In Center and Residential Services. The Drop-In Center will begin serving homeless youth ages 14-21 with immediate support services. These services will include access to showers, laundry facilities, meals, and clothing. The Drop-In Center will also offer social services reconnecting youth to education and providing housing stabilization support, employment resources and access to healthcare. The residential services component will serve unsheltered Dallas ISD high school students with emergency shelter and transitional living services. Both the Drop-In Center and Residential Services will operate 24/7 by spring 2019.

Here is the link to the charitable organization “After8toEducate” and the related video respectively.

http://after8toeducate.com/

https://youtu.be/j9NrzyNh3wQ