

Why Homelessness is Unfortunate

We were driving along Nimitz Highway under the H-1 overpass, when I saw a sickly homeless man and it got me thinking about homeless people. I wondered how they became homeless and is there something we can do to help the less fortunate. Homelessness affects everyone because anyone can become homeless at any time when times are hard. It is the Christian thing to do to help homeless people because all people are worthy of having their basic life needs met. It's like Clarence T. C. Ching's belief in ren, loving all people regardless of whom they are. We all know someone affected because we see them everywhere we go. It is especially troublesome now because people are losing their jobs and their only means to an income due to the covid-19 pandemic situation. There are different ways that people can become homeless, they are not all bad people like we think. Some of them have just made bad decisions and if we help them I think it would be good for the community. Hawaii is doing wonderful things to help the homeless but there are additional suggestions that I would make to further our efforts. If we don't rise to the occasion, then the problem will be much worse in 50 years. I believe that through the following three paragraphs we can help the homeless ease their struggles to assist them in meeting their basic needs.

Homelessness is a complex problem that occurs when someone cannot afford a place to live. In Hawaii according to Zillow the median cost of a home is \$648,194 while according to ZipRecruiter.com the average salary is only \$33,000 to \$94,000 a year, so you can see why it is very hard to be able to afford a house especially during covid times when people are losing their jobs. In addition to Hawaii's residents having low salaries, some other causes of homelessness are excessive drug use, mental illness, and debt from unexpected expenses. Homeless people are

not necessarily criminals, drug addicts, or poor managers of their finances. Some homeless people just fall on bad financial times, but try to keep a positive attitude and attempt to get back on their feet. Some of them are not fortunate enough to have family or friends to help them; therefore, we as a community need to step up and help them.

Matthew Doherty, the former executive director of the U.S Interagency Council on homelessness said, "If you only help two people out of twenty, it doesn't mean you don't have the right solution. It means you don't have enough of the right solution." I believe in what he said and that we already have a bunch of solutions, just not enough of it. I think that I can help with my solutions, like starting a non-profit organization that is a homeless shelter. The homeless shelter would also go out and find homeless people and give them food, like a food truck soup kitchen. We could also do fundraisers to buy medical equipment and other supplies to help the homeless and put them in shelters. An example of a fundraiser would be a car wash or have a bake sale. In the bake sale everyone would bring a dish and we could reserve a public area. We could also put up flyers for the bake sale and all the other fundraisers. I believe that if we could get enough volunteers just doing it in their free time we could make a difference in Hawaii.

According to The Partners in Care's annual surveys, homelessness was steadily increasing between 2010 and 2016. In 2017 however it saw a statewide 9% drop, in part due to the outer islands making the paperwork process easier to get into homeless shelters. Even though they made the process easier, they did not fix the whole problem, it was just a quick fix. In 2020 it started to increase again, it may be because of covid. In 2010 through 2016 it was slightly increasing every year until the quick fix, I think regardless of covid, homelessness will continue

on the historic trend of about 1-3% increase per year. Which, if that is the case, that would mean that in 50 years homelessness would go up 65% from current figures.

In conclusion, if we don't do something now homelessness will be a far greater problem in the future based on current statistics. Hawaii's economy will continue to have a high cost of living therefore there will always be a portion of the community that struggles to afford a home. We as a community can help by making the process easier to get into homeless shelters or affordable housing. We also need to support our local non profit organizations through money or volunteering. People have found themselves homeless due to different reasons, there are solutions to solve the problem, and if we do nothing, in 50 years our community may find itself in a bad situation. If we want to make a better impact on our future, we need to focus on the problems of today.