

## **A Place for Many**

"We have come dangerously close to accepting the homeless situation as a problem that we just can't solve." Those are just a few wise words spoken by Linda Lingle, a former governor of Hawaii. Her point is right, and there are many problems with our homeless situation. For one, there seems to be few shelters, or at least, ones that are productive in supplying the homeless with a home. You can see many homeless people at public parks, beaches, and other various areas of the islands. In turn, it affects tourism, as tourists don't like coming to many of these public places when there are homeless people around. Hawaii relies greatly on tourism, especially around the Waikiki area and North Shore. Similarly, homelessness is not pleasing to look at. When you see someone on the streets, it causes you to feel sadness and grief. But although many feel and express their best wishes for these people, little do anything to make a positive impact on their lives. Some may be in their cars, having a temporary thought process for the well-being of these people, but then forget it as they drive off. Homelessness is a large problem here in Hawaii, that will grow and become worse if we don't start changing things today.

The homeless will not go away. My first suggestion is to encourage a volunteer program at the various homeless shelters around the island. To make it a situation where many would like to volunteer, encourage the government to get involved by offering incentives. Once you put in 10-20 hours of volunteer time, then you can receive a great family benefit--a Costco gift card of \$250.00.

Besides housing, we also need to offer an educational system for homeless people in our shelters. My second solution is to have businesses pay teachers to volunteer at these temporary homes, as well as their own employees. If you were to ask teachers around the

island to volunteer, many wouldn't feel as if there was much of an incentive. But if businesses are able to offer teachers an incentive to go and teach basic skills for daily life, such as reading, writing, and math operations, many would sign up. The best thing, though, is that businesses would profit, because they could get their name advertised throughout Hawaii; and more specifically, word of mouth, as well as advertise themselves for working with the community.

As previously stated, businesses should also pay their own employees to do work with shelters separately, as most importantly, homeless people need to have job skills to continue a life of prosper. As the Chinese proverb goes, "You give a poor man a fish and you feed him for a day. You teach him to fish, and you give him an occupation, that will feed him for a lifetime." This would once again benefit both the homeless people, who would now have these vital skills and can begin working, as well as the companies, who sometimes have a hard time finding people to work in certain occupations. With these two solutions, the shelters can be kept in good condition, the homeless can start a new life, and families, teachers, and businesses all have a great incentive to positively impact the community.

Undoubtedly, homelessness is a very big issue here in our islands, that will snowball into a grave situation if we make no effort to fix it today. Homelessness is definitely growing, because there are few shelters that seem to be making a large difference. It also affects tourism, and is not pleasing to look at. These downsides are commonly overlooked by many average people who can make a difference, and that's just bringing the blade closer to our neck. So, I believe we should have a volunteer benefit system, which would be gains both for the quality of the shelters and for families or individuals looking to change our world as we know it. In a similar way, I believe that a steady education system for the homeless is necessary and will significantly impact their lives for good. Education encompasses both basic skills like reading,

and job skills, which is a key ingredient in the recipe for successful life.

As a final point, Clarence T.C. Ching was a leader, and someone who really made a difference in our islands. Consequently, I feel touched by his creativity and generosity, which had no limits. We all understand that no place can be perfect. But I hope to be inspire many more to follow in his footsteps, to make our world the best place it can be.