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Introduction:

How does solving homelessness have a trickle down affect on a community?

Homelessness has been an issue for quite some time now. According to data obtained by the United States, homelessness once again rose for the fourth year in a row. This is a big time problem. As we can see it is nothing new, yet there has not been much advancement in the fight against homeless. A lot of policies and wrong way of handling and treating those who are homeless have contributed to the issue persistence. It should go without saying that as a great and powerful nation, no one should be living in the streets. We have come far as a country, making many developments in society and wealth, yet we somehow dropped the ball in making sure everyone has basic humane rights like housing.

I am interested in the subject of homelessness because I have been personally involved with the issues of homelessness. My father having worked in social services his whole life have had close encounters with homeless people and trying to get the services they need. He always taught me from an small age that people should not be out in the streets, and that they are regular people just like you and me. We should never think or treat them differently. While most parents might teach their children to stay away from homeless people if they are seen, my parents

especially my father taught me to be mind and if it is within your power to help, do it. Now that I am all grown up and more able, I am more than ever interested in figuring out ways to help with what I can do.

In the research to see how can solving homelessness have a trickle-down affect on a community I am sure to find a bunch of data. I am sure that I will find a lot of articles about how a majority of homeless population are mentally ill and have substance abuse. That is usually the case, I learned that from my father. I also predict I will see many articles that will go against each other, where there are people saying how homelessness is not a real issue people are just lazy. My main prediction, my hypothesis is in researching the information about homelessness I will see how homelessness is not just one simple problem, but one that encompasses many different aspects of the community and how by trying to solve homelessness will positively impact communities.

Citation 1: Fessler, Pam. "HUD: Growth of Homelessness during 2020 Was 'Devastating,' Even before the Pandemic." NPR, NPR, 18 Mar. 2021, www.npr.org/2021/03/18/978244891/hud-growth-of-homelessness-during-2020-was-devastating-even-before-the-pandemic.

Summary:

In the piece by Pam Fessler it talks about the ever rising problem of homelessness. Basing it roughly on Department of Housing and Urban Development data, we are told the population for homeless individuals is on the rise. The article mentions how for the fourth year in a row homeless rate rose. It also talked about the proportion of those who are homeless are minorities. It also mentions how homeless children are also increasing which is alarming. The main point of the article is to show with all these numbers going up in the homeless population,

it is sure to go up on paper more in the next tally. That is because all the data used were data before the Corona Virus. There is sure to be an increase in those homeless since it is known many people have lost their homes because the inability to work from business closures. The article closes out with the COVID relief bill that should help with those who were affected by it.

Reflection:

This article helps bring up a very strong point when thinking about homelessness. That once we start looking at the most up to date numbers, there is without a doubt a big influx to occur. It points out how as we can clearly see numbers are consistently going up, they are going to probably jump exponentially once the new analysis begins because all the up-to-date data was pre-COVID. So, if you thought it was an issue before it is going to get a lot worse. With bringing up COVID and homelessness, the article does a nice job of making one think about how much is the responsibility of the government to help those who are not housed. A lot of people probably never thought they be homeless before COVID, and now they are. This might be a good time to aggressively take action to create change since now more people would be for it after experiencing it themselves.

Quotation:

“Some individuals have been worried about contracting COVID-19 staying inside, and many shelters have been forced to limit bed space to meet health and safety protocols (Fessler, Pam. “HUD: Growth of Homelessness during 2020 Was 'Devastating,' Even before the Pandemic.”)”

Citation 2: “Homelessness: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO ...)” *Youtube*, Last Week Tonight , www.youtube.com/watch?v=liptMbjF3EE.

Summary:

John Oliver gives a satirical news segment about homelessness. He makes it a bit funny giving the news about homelessness, but is serious when it comes to the real concerns about homelessness. He uses Austin, Texas as sort of a mirror to look into the issues homelessness. How people tend to demonize homeless people and people are not looking at these individuals as regular human beings. John talks about how under Regan presidency, a lot of programs were cut which was used to help aide the homeless population. He also shows some arguments of how people try to argue away the issues of homelessness, saying it is about substance abuse and mental health not housing affordability. He goes into how there are many ways people can find themselves all of a sudden without the option of affordable housing. John explains how most of the issues people complain about are sparked do to the policies the city/town government have in place. A lot of these policies are not giving those who are homeless human treatment. They are treating them as pretty much second class citizens. They are even trying to increase laws that are criminalizing those homeless, throwing them in jail for sleeping in an area, or even in their cars. John talks about the issues about homeless shelters. Talking about how there are not enough beds for all those people who are homeless. Even if they go to a homeless shelter it does not solve the problem. He shows an example of a reporter who interviewed a homeless woman who went to the shelter, who said it is dangerous and it is better to just stay out in the street. You are not treated any better, with having curfews and getting kicked out early. She was then interviewed by the same reporter years later and she is still homeless. The shelter is a gap stop, not solving and creating a sustainable housing. He ends the segment talking about how the way to lower it is to provide homes.

Reflection:

I agree with what John Oliver is discussing. He makes a lot of jokes involving the topic but does not downplay at all the severity of homelessness. He shows how people are mistakenly demonizing homelessness. How the problem is not an individual problem of those homeless they are not choosing to be homeless. The problem is one created by society, and how laws are made and economy set up. In all I agree with John about in the end to end homelessness you have to give houses to them, which is a bit of a simplified answer but nonetheless true.

Quote:

“It does not take much for someone to find themselves without stable housing (John Oliver Last Week Tonight)”

Citation 3: “Why Are so Many People Homeless?” *Coalition For The Homeless*,
www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/why-are-so-many-people-homeless/.

Summary:

In this article, it shows a brief history of homelessness, based on New York City. It shows how homelessness in New York City really started to become a problem starting around the 1970. With the introduction of new tax laws, policies started to create the homeless problem as we know it. Starting with the cutting of single room occupancy or SRO, that kicked off the problem. It created less housing that was available for those who were in a lower economic status. With the increase in housing and economic troubles, that led to the raise in homelessness. Then we go on to how the in roughly the 1980s roughly with the new mayor Koch, programs were created to help fight against homelessness. Those programs aimed to give assistance to get people sustainable housing. The Dinkins and Guliani keep up these programs which proved to lower homelessness, but, Guliani started reverse some work. He started a war on homelessness

and tried to arrest those who would sleep in the street. The article continues to go on about the other future mayors up to the current one and also talks about the governor and how he responded with homelessness.

Reflection:

I like the kind of information the article provides. It gives a nice little history lesson of homelessness. This is a great way to dive into the subject and see information you may or may not have known. I think the best information was about when it roughly started in New York City. It directly correlates the changes in policies in the City to the rise of homelessness. It also shows what each mayor has done to combat homelessness, which gives a good framework of what worked and what does not work. We do not want to repeat history of something that did not work.

Quotation:

“The widening affordable housing gap results from structural changes in New York City’s housing markets and economy. Simply put, rents increased at a much faster rate than other consumer prices, while the incomes of the poorest New York City households actually declined in real terms (www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/why-are-so-many-people-homeless/.)

Conclusion:

What I have found in my conclusion is that homelessness is a problem that encompasses many aspects of a community. It is not something that can be solved in a one tier approach. It has to be hit in a multi angel approach. With solving it that way you are able to solve a lot of issues a community is having. For example, solving homelessness will help with affordable housing, and wage gaps, since to really effectively solve the homeless problem we need more affordable

houses and wages need to go up and not stay stagnate to help that. It can not be just creating affordable housing, but also pay people what is fair and owed to them.

What surprised me the most was the way in New York City the history of the homeless crisis started. I thought it was something that started very recently. Maybe about ten to fifteen years that has been growing and is really hitting a apex right now. I did not realize it went back to all the way to the 1970s with those SRO not being provided anymore. I was not shocked about the information about how those in mental facilities were thrown out after the controversial treatment of them. All that information really pushed me harder into wanting to learn about homelessness, to not let the past happen again.

The most important thing learned in this research is that homelessness is not a choice. If you are an individual who thinks those who are homeless are just lazy people who do not want to work, you have to re-examine the situation. I think COVID will bring a lot of people to rethinking since it shows that anything can happen and you can be homeless yourself. Another thing is, policies are what drives the numbers of homelessness up or down. We saw there was a small period in time when it decreased, but then changes in policies changed that and not trying to rectify those changes is what is keeping the numbers going up.

Those who needs to know bout this information are those who believe that homelessness is a choice. They need to see that it is not a personal choice to be homeless. They need to see there are more contributing factors at play. If you sit down and look at it you will see that it all betters the community, not just an homeless individual. A lot of people fall into the trap of not wanting to help because they think since they work others should work too it is only fair.

