

## Poverty Haunts Youth

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The fact that Idaho has such a high youth poverty rate isn't surprising to most people in that age group. Many factors can be attributed to the high poverty rate. One clear factor is the high rate of married teenager in Idaho. These teenagers have all of the expenses that an older, married couple does; but they don't have the wages that older couples do. These teenagers are mainly high school students. As high school students, they can only work part-time and most part-time jobs have low wages. Working part-time does not enable these teenage couples to be able the poverty line. These students are then faced with the decision of working part-time and staying in school or working full-time and quitting school. This decision will lead to poverty either way. If they drop out of school, they will always have a minimum wage job, and if they stay at part-time they will not have enough income. This is a circle effect that sucks students into poverty and leaves them little to no chance of leaving that circle.

One thing that can be done to reduce the high poverty rate is to encourage youth to get a higher education. Education is the only way to get a decent paying job. It will be very difficult to help those already in poverty. Some things that the community can do to help are to hold classes or lectures after or during school and have professionals from colleges or higher paying jobs come speak to students. These professionals can help the students by teaching them everyday job skills as well as better ways to study.

As a follow through, it would be beneficial if there was a place that students could go for free to get help with filling out their college documents. Many students don't apply for college because they don't know where to begin and often times the application papers are confusing as well are the financial aid papers. If students had a program that

would help them to see college in their futures, more students would go to college and get a higher education. As a whole, this program would help Idaho students become more educated and college prepared. The more educated students there are the less pregnant teenagers and teenage married couples there will be thus less youth poverty. Regarding the importance of education, Jean Jacques Rousseau once said, "Plants are shaped by cultivation and men by education. We are born weak, we need strength: we are born totally unprovided, we need aid; we are born stupid, we need judgement. Everything we do not have at our birth and which we need when we are grown is given us by education." (Philosophy of English)

As a student in the 18-24 age group, I do not plan or consider myself to be in poverty. To ensure that I will not be in poverty for life, I will risk going to college and going into debt for a short time while I get my education. To me, education is the only way to ensure a high paying job that I will enjoy in my future. Going to college isn't cheap, and I know that I don't have all the resources I will need to complete my college education, but I am willing to risk going into poverty while I am a full-time student. As a full-time student, I will only be able to work part-time, and therefore, I will be spending more money than I will bring in, but this would only occur until I graduated. After I graduated college, I could find a higher paying job and pay off my debt and raise myself out of poverty. With a college education, I will be able to avoid poverty for the rest of my life.

**Bibliography**

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