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Second Hour Honors English

Mr. Scott

17 March 2005

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### Poverty in Idaho

When asked if Idaho has a high poverty level when compared to states such as California and New York, most people would say no. A report by Idaho Kids Count based on US Census Bureau data has pointed out that Idaho actually has the highest rate of poverty in the nation when looking at ages 18-24. Poverty causes many problems in peoples lives if not handled as soon as possible. People can lose jobs, not afford food, lose their homes, and much more. Poverty can happen because of a few reasons; in Idaho, two stick out, teen pregnancy and migrant workers. However, Idaho's economy could not exist without migrant workers, but their low expectations in education leads to low incomes. Teen pregnancy also takes away from the education that 18-24 years olds need to start good careers. One could say that Idaho has a high poverty level because of migrant workers and teen pregnancy.

Two main factors contribute to the high poverty rate for young adults ages 18-24, teen pregnancy, and the high amount of migrant workers. Migrant workers are important to our economy, yet they do not give themselves a chance at a higher income career. Many migrant workers will drop out of high school to start working because their parents either need the money or believe that it is the only way to live. Many migrant worker families will have their children continue in the same line of work as they are in, whether

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it is a farm hand, lumber yard worker, or anything else. Some of those families would rather have their kids start low-income jobs instead of a higher education.

Teen pregnancy is a huge problem in Idaho and contributes greatly to the high poverty rate. When a girl becomes pregnant during high school, she usually drops out, and if the boyfriend decides to stay with her and find a job, he cannot find a good job because of his lack of education. Therefore, when this couple reaches the ages of 18-24, they are supporting a family and they do not have high paying jobs. Even if the mother is working and they are bringing in two incomes, they have to pay day care and many other things for the child, leaving them with little extra money, if any.

As a senior approaching the age group with a high poverty level, I plan to get a higher education so I can obtain a higher income job. I graduate in May of 2005 and plan on working hard this summer to obtain the money I need for school. I am going to attend Albertson College of Idaho, where I have received a full tuition scholarship, easing the burden of college finances. Therefore, I will not have to go into thousands of dollars of debt for pursuing a higher education. The money I earn from my summer job will carry throughout the year for me and then I will continue to work during the next summer, and maybe even find a part time job at college.

My community probably has a problem with poverty because we have many migrant workers in the area and there is not a big push for them to pursue higher educations. I think the best thing for my community to put in place would be a boys' and girls' club for after school. For those kids that are not really involved in school but still need help with homework or just need help in general. There are many kids in this area,

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who go home after school without a parent there, and I think a boys' and girls' club would help immensely, because it would encourage the pursuit of higher education.

Poverty in Idaho is becoming a huge problem, and I think the best way to solve it is while teens are in high school. Teenagers know that they want money, but they do not know the best way to get it. A stronger push for higher education would help greatly for migrant workers and teens that become pregnant. My plans for higher education will help keep me out of poverty, because education brings in more money. Community programs can be a big help to those teens that don't have a place to go after school, and I think that it would greatly improve the attitudes of many teenagers and even help lower the crime rate. I believe that these problems can be fixed, but for now, Idaho has a high poverty level because of migrant workers and teen pregnancy.