

Rec'd 4-1-18  
Not Considered

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# Poverty

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Poverty is a familiar word, yet what exactly does it mean? It is safe to say that no one woke up in the morning and set out to become a person of poverty to the best of their ability. Poverty is a word that encompasses a lot; at its simplest it indicates severe financial lack. Poverty is the condition of being poor, meaning not being able to have a lot of nice things or money to buy a lot of things. Poor people experience a shortage, deficiency, or lack. Poverty is basically people living in what we hate to call the "ghetto". Many people in our communities are suffering from poverty. I see poverty as a good and bad thing with a lot of effects. I remember when I experienced a quality of living comparable to poverty. I lived with my mom and my little brothers in an area where poverty was taking over. I remember seeing people on the streets begging for jobs and money so that they could support their family. It took my family a long time to recover from poverty. It taught my family a lot of lessons in money management. I guess you could say poverty is like a virus. It starts in one area and spreads viciously throughout areas all over Idaho. The only thing that can stop it is hope. You might think: how could a four letter word help the world? It's true if we as people, had hope we would probably live better lives.

Poverty starts with parents and then spreads to children. Parents have nothing to offer to their children, so the children see and everything the parents do and are influenced by what they see. Kids who grow up in poverty have a higher risk for committing crimes when experiencing poverty than those who are not. It's simple: kids grow up in negative environments, begin to think of negative as normal, and then

perpetuate the environment by doing the same things they were exposed to. There is a system of cause and effect I have discovered. Kids get into trouble because they have nothing to do because the community has nothing to offer, and if it does, it costs money that the person can not afford. When they get caught, they have to go to court and pay fines for the crimes that they committed. The kids have no money to pay the fines and cannot get a job because of where they live. Since poverty has taken over, kids drop out of school and lose their education. They go back out and do it again, but their behaviors worsen, like dealing drugs and stealing. It's like a cycle that continues until the community just gives up on the person and they're locked up for a very long time. I am not trying to blame why people get locked up on poverty; I am saying it had a part in it.

I think a workable solution for this problem would be creating more community-based programs. There needs to be a lot of programs provided for people other than Health and Welfare and other national services. The programs need to start with the children. I see it all starts with the children because they live in a negative environment that they continue when they grow up. There is no one to set the positive example. Some people feel that the poor intentionally behave in ways that perpetuate their poverty. There should be programs for adults, but I don't see it would work as well if the kids didn't get involved. The program that I am in right now has helped me to define my values and beliefs. I am here because I committed crimes and got caught. It has basically given me a second chance at life. The program is called Positive Peer Culture. It is located in St. Anthony, Idaho. I have learned a lot about myself that I thought I already knew. I am not advising anyone to lock up kids before poverty affects their lives. What I am saying is

that there needs to be programs to keep kids out of trouble. For example, where I live: there is a YMCA that includes a lot of people and helps to keep them interested in something that they may like. I see that this solution has helped my neighborhood a lot. Kids who did drugs and committed crimes are now realizing that they can do something positive instead of committing those crimes. Some of them are going to college on scholarships for sports they thought they could never do.

Some of the effects of poverty are sad, such as: malnutrition or starvation, crime and violence, mental illness and drug dependence, infectious diseases, and exposure to the elements. The starvation that comes with poverty is sad and it makes you think about what you have. I see there are enough solutions for starvation because they have a lot of soup kitchens, which supply food for the poor who are experiencing poverty. It could be improved, though. The crime and violence due to poverty has increased. Kids have nothing, so they try to obtain something or do something and then they end up in trouble with the law. I remember I was in detention, I would see kids come in and out like it was a hotel. There were people backed up in that place to the point they were just kicking people out of the facility for more room. The solution I have for that is twice as many programs; if there is something to do for the kids then there is a lesser risk for them to get in trouble, because being involved in something they like distracts the kids. A lot of the programs have caused people to depend on what they have to offer. A lot of the programs that the U.S. Government supplies for people have worked in helping people get through poverty, but a lot of the time they haven't been successful due to overpopulation and eligibility. People are either ineligible for or unaware of the programs in the community.

There is a lot of mental illness and drug dependence that is partly due to poverty. Families depend on drugs to get by and it damages their life as well as the child's. When you grow up in poverty, you have a higher risk to being exposed to infectious disease because you are exposed to the elements. The solution I have for that is for people to cooperate to get rid of poverty. It takes a lot of time and a lot of help to get the job done. A way to get rid of most of the poverty in your neighborhood is to get all the families involved to make this place a better place to live.

I have lived through poverty. It has taught me a lot of things and got me to realize what it can do. I was placed in a program. Many of the people in the program that I am in have gone through way worse stuff than I have and they have helped me discover that I am only one person, but I can make changes in my life. I believe poverty will continue until someone takes a stand. It takes everyone; the community and the state must collaborate to stop poverty. Not one single person or organization can do it alone. Until everyone works together as one, poverty it will not stop and it will spread like a virus around Idaho. It will start in one area and after a period of time it will expand to other cities and states and decrease the quality of life for everyone. Every person needs to realize that if we let it continue, we, as people, will end up not caring for one another. The place that we all live now will wear away into ruin.

Idaho is only one of fifty states, and America only one of many nations, but if one area is suffering, it affects other states and countries that depend on that area. We have to

stop it early before it becomes worse. Poverty is a virus that will spread and become more severe as we sit and wait to fight it. We should not gamble our future. Consider the consequences. Everything we have will be lost and everyone will live in a state of poverty. We must stop it before it is too late. We have what it takes to get rid of poverty. We need to take pride in ourselves for what we have accomplished and utilize what we know to make life better for every person.