

HUM - 300 Podcast Script

Changing Your Perspective - A Look at Hawai'i's Homeless Population

INTRO

- Introduction to the speakers.
 - Introduce yourself with your name, your occupation, as well as where you reside. Possibly fit in your experience on the islands?
 - My name is (First Name), Member of Fo Da People, UH-West Humanities 300, Fall 2021 Class.
- Introduction to the topic.
 - “So, for our podcast, we’ve decided to tackle the ever-present issue of how the homeless population in our oh-so bountiful land of Hawaii, is constantly shafted in regards to the public eye, as well as public opinion. A lot of our community members are very receptive to the needs of our people, but we aim to further the general public’s understanding of why people may become homeless, as well as the plethora of factors that make the topic of homelessness a rather complicated one to undertake. There is discussion on ways to help the people, which is always appreciated, but public opinion still lends itself to being negative, as well as being in the dark as to what causes the people to go homeless, leading any significant discourse to a dead end.”
 - “When discussing those who suffer from homelessness, there are a plethora of factors that may lead to this circumstance. This is a growing epidemic in the United States, disproportionately affecting Hawaii. We can discuss causation to no end, but the fact is nothing significant is being done to solve the problem. There is perfervid discourse between if it’s even worth it to help or not. A homeless person is a person nonetheless. To enact change, it must start with community solidarity.
 - “We wanted to create this podcast to talk about the negative connotations associated with homelessness. We must examine, question and reflect on our biases that could be limiting our growth as a whole.”
 - “We hope to steer this discussion onto the right course by examining the negative opinions that seem to stigmatize these victims, reasonings behind it, as well as look at what the underlying causes of homelessness are— such as the inadequate wage to cost of living ratio.”

BODY

- Contact Zone.

- “One thing that’s stuck out to us as we’ve gone through the lifetime of this project, is how to navigate the contact zone that we find ourselves in. Being the founder of the term, Mary Louise Pratt once described that a contact zone, “refer(s) to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.” A contact zone in this case being constrained to our local islands, we have to view the asymmetrical relationships that we have in regards to the lands, our history, and our government.
- “Keep in mind that when it comes to the people who are unfortunately homeless, they are experiencing a contact zone of multiple different elements. The failures of the government to make an affordable cost of living, the conditions that we live in, the history of our people being robbed of land— all of these things ripple and make themselves home in the contact zone for not only the general populace, but the homeless population as well.”
- Negative connotations about the homeless.
 - “What do you think about when you see a homeless person or family? Do you wonder how they get into that situation? Do you have preconceived ideas about them.”
 - “There’s this idea that seems to permeate the ideological thinking of many, and it’s that the homeless people— or even struggling people, are in control of what causes them to go into this disadvantaged state. People are led to believe that all the homeless are lazy people, drunkards, or even drug addicts that deserve no leniency or help from the state. Regardless of whether or not it rings true for some, these alienating thought processes do nothing but to further tarnish the reputation of the people that are failed not by their own merit, but by the circumstances that they’re forced into.”
 - Consider taking things from this source:
https://uhawaii-woahu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UHA_WAII_WOAHU/bjneq4/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_2387259834
 - And this one:
<http://libproxy.westohu.hawaii.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip.uid&db=cmh&AN=135794730&site=chc-live>
 - “There can be many negative preconceived notions about the homeless population that we learned from a young age. When you’re younger, homelessness is taught as a personal failure and a moral wrong. Everyone

who is homeless is there for a reason. We were taught that many homeless people were lazy because obviously everyone has a choice to work, and they choose this. We are also taught that many of them are substance abusers, which again for many believe is a choice, and being homeless is a consequence of this choice. Homelessness was used as a threat to keep people working as hard as they do.”

- [Transition/Closing]: “Take a moment to empathize with the problems that the homeless may have to encounter once they’re homeless. What are some things that may be preventing them from maintaining a job? Do they have a secure location that they can leave all their belongings during a shift? Do they have proper uniform attire? Do they have access to personal hygiene products or facilities? All things of which, I know I never had to think twice about.”
- [INTERMISSION]
 - “Something that one of our group members had talked about was like, how people and their families react to homeless people. Typically it feels like people who haven’t seemed to struggle with living conditions or otherwise have never been put into a situation where they’re forced to live paycheck to paycheck, appear to have less empathy. A personal anecdote that makes it seem that people who’ve been in a struggling situation is from one of our group members, who’s observed that their parents are a lot more receptive to the needs of those who are struggling. Though, it’s not a mandatory requirement to understand— kindness shouldn’t have to bloom from the likes of pain.
- Statistics.
 - [Transition]: Even looking at this from a statistical point of view. We are all apart of the same community, we are all the same numbers. (I wanted to add a transition of the fact were going to be talking about statistics and how these numbers affect everyone. We all pay taxes, everything is the same price for everyone, etc.)
 - “We’ve learned that a majority of homeless people lack health insurance, as well as any sort of medical care entirely due to their status and situation. Those who do end up going into the hospital due to emergency situations are often billed thousands of dollars of which they cannot pay, and would be forced into further debt. This issue impacts Hawaii specifically, and more severely, as the cost of living is considered outrageous even by those who are housed and managing to get by.”

- Source:

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4046466/>

- “One reason is the high cost of living vs. the low minimum wage of \$10.10 an hour. The challenges of the high cost of living is not unique to Hawaii. Many people all over the world are challenged by the cost of living and everyday expenses. However, in Hawaii there are so many people who are forced to live “uncomfortably” while at the same time raise a family. According to Colman Andrew’s Democrat & Chronicle article, “Hawaii may be the happiest state, but it also has the highest food prices,” the price of groceries in Hawaii is 24.4 percent higher than the national average.”
- Colman Andrew also highlights how the high cost of electricity in Hawaii impacts grocery prices. Electricity in Hawaii is far more expensive than any other state, with even just a kilowatt hour of power costing twice what it does in Alaska. Alaska being the next most expensive state for electricity, and is more than three times the national average. Andrew says that experts believe that lower energy prices would lead to lower grocery prices presumably because producers and merchants would be able to lower their own expenses and pass the savings along.”
- Questionnaire.
 - “We’ve taken to surveying our peers as to what their personal perspectives on the local homeless population is. We’ve asked them the following questions;
 - What do you think about the homeless population in Hawai’i?
 - What do you think are the biggest factors causing homelessness?
 - Have you ever been in a position where you may become homeless?
 - What is something you wish people would understand about the homeless population?
 - “To a total of 6 responses. We’ve found that all of our responders had answered empathetically to the homelessness issues, one of them saying that ‘many of these people need the help for not only housing, but need a stable job to get needed necessities.’ However, something to note is that when asked about the biggest factors that cause homelessness, there seems to be varied opinions on it. One believes that the root of it comes from rich white people buying up the lands of Hawai’i, another mentioning the price of living and drug problems, which also relates to our idea of the public closely correlating the idea of homelessness with drug abuse.”

- Another student also wanted to emphasize the idea that: “...It’s so easy for one mistake to pile up, not even just a mistake, even accidents, most people can be just one major accident away from things disrupting their whole lives...”
- Privilege is not just about the advantages you are given, it is about the obstacles you never have to face. If we never face these obstacles, it doesn’t mean they’re not there, listen and empathize with those who are voicing their issues and concerns. You just might learn something you never even knew.

ENDING

- Community Outreach Programs / Ways To Help
- “Although it’s rather hard to make a large-scale change at once in order to help our community, we believe that taking the small good deeds at a time will eventually help to not only destigmatize the homeless, but to hopefully give much needed relief to those in need. There’s help out there that can be accessed by the homeless population that are reaching out to them specifically, and will hopefully spread either through word of mouth, or having our program reach out to a larger audience.”
 - <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/outreach-programs/>
 - “Contains an infographic that has multiple addresses and contact information that deals with sheltering and caring for unsheltered individuals and families.”
 - <https://ihshawaii.org/>
 - “Oldest human services agency that was created in Hawaii that’s centered around preventing homelessness and breaking the cycle of it.”
 - Valoha Giving Movement
 - “FB page where people can ask for items or donate.”