

Reflection Paper: The Homeless Waianae Community of Hawaii

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Abstract

The purpose of this reflection paper is to understand the sub-culture of the Homeless Waianae Community (HWC) of Hawaii, located on Farrington freeway in the west part of the island of Oahu in Hawaii. The research is to interview members from this special community to find an effective way to help them in the future without increasing their numbers.

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Introduction

Purpose

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Location

The homeless Waianae community is located on Farrington freeway in the west part of the island of Oahu. A few miles from the HWC there are small villages with million dollar properties including Ihilani holiday resort & health spa within Ko Olina and the Makaha holiday resort & golf club.

The sub-culture of the HWC

The HWC, the single largest homeless encampment in the United States, has 300 people most of them are native Hawaiians. The research considers HWC a Hawaii sub-culture because they are Hawaiian in atypical conditions. The Waianae coastline offers a beautiful tropical placing with lovely beaches, but the HWC lives in tents with a dangerous environment of drugs, alcohol, substandard education, and high unemployment rate or low-wage jobs.

Methodology

Purpose

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Population

There are up 300 people in the HWC, and about 90% of them are native Hawaiian. These tents are shared by families with many children and their pets.

Interviews

The research instrument to collect data was brief interviews that should take only 5 to 10 minutes. The researcher accompanied by his daughter Kellen Chevalier stayed on August 25th, 2013 (Sunday) at HWC during the day. The interviews were completely anonymous, and all participants from the HWC were 21 years old or more. All information collected from the participants were used exclusively for the purpose of this study.

Discussion

The HWC is surrounded by convenience stores , liquor shops as well as fast food companies along the Farrington freeway. Some people there have jobs, but don't earn money enough to afford rent in Hawaii whose available housing has been insufficient in decades.

Drugs and alcohol

An unhappy remarks upon HWC is the high rate of criminality as a result of alcohol and illicit drugs as methamphetamine (ice) and marijuana. In fact, some interviewers admitted that being homeless, hopelessness to improve the quality of their lives is a short cut to surrender to the alcohol and drugs destruction. In particular, one interviewer prefers to live under influence to forget the pain and reality of his family. The hard living conditions of HWC is primary caused by unemployment or low income followed by using drugs and alcohol as a deadly solution. Some participants explained that the local violence and drug and alcohol abuse came from young people from others areas of Hawaii.

Education

There are an Elementary, Middle and High schools near the HWC. The parents reported that their children go by foot to the school. The education in Waianae area is consider the worst in Hawaii. One family admitted they force their children to work some hours to help the parents income. A mother of four children told them to say to their classmates that the HWC is like a big camping place.

Unemployment and HWC basic necessities

The unemployment and low-waves jobs are the biggest unsolved problem in the community. There are two faucets in the HWC to provide clean water, and some entities and local people

who help provide and deliver food to camp residents. Adult members from the community has received from \$300 to \$400 from the government for their basic necessities.

Shelters in Waianae district

The Leeward Coast Homeless Shelter (Pai'olu Kaiaulu Shelter) providing housing and transitional programs for approximately 275 people. This homeless shelter has the capacity to house up to 300 persons and is divided into a 19,000-square-foot family shelter, and an 10,500-square-foot individual and couples shelter. Some HWC members prefer to live in the "tent city" instead of the shelter because they don't accept the shelter rules. The more frequent unaccepted rules among the HWC are necessity of working daily some hours in the shelter, strict daily schedule, limited permanency, and mandatory drug test. Some HWC members explained that the shelter programs are temporary, and you can stay there up to six months. Other work members from the HWC explained that the shelter working program overlaps their normal hours of their jobs. One father who lived in the shelter explained that living in a shelter is similar to being in a prison. Personally, I have helped some low-income communities in Brazil, and I am really impressed with the shelter structure and organization, and the shelter rules are minimal to sustain a appropriate living conditions.

Government Plan

The Hawaii government has been wondering if homeless can in some way disturb the tourism in the Hawaiian islands. The last attempt to solve this problem, the governor of Hawaii announced his plan to buy the state's homeless one-way tickets to the continental U.S. Some

members of the HWC explained that “We are Hawaiians, and we have 'the right' to be here even without a house..”

Why is the HWC so different?

The HWC is different because it is located in the western most part of the island of Oahu on the Leeward facet very close to breath-taking million dollar properties. The tents owners from HWC receive \$400 per month from the government, and they don't need to pay rent or mortgage, electricity and water bills, and other propriety expenses. They have the option to stay in a beautiful organized shelter for six months. Also, they receive some food from philanthropic entities and good citizens, and a mobile health unit comes by three times per week.

Conclusion

The researcher started a volunteer tutoring program outside of my Brazilian school, using near-by educational institutions. With this service I was teaching/tutoring math and physics at the secondary and college levels for students who could not afford the cost of tutoring at my regular facility. I used a system whereby the students would bring non-perishable food (rice, beans, etc.) as payment that would be later distributed by me, in the slums of Sao Paulo.

I provided these *Lectures for Food* every Tuesday and Thursday evening. This activity attracted the attention of the Rede Globo, the most prestigious and highly regarded TV Station/News gathering Agency/Production Company in Brazil. This showed me that the slums in Brazil are children who are under seven year old, can stay days without food. The health system and security that attend the slums are deficient and without a modern infrastructure. There are not shelters and sometimes clean water. The researcher is completely impressed with the solidarity the government gives to the homeless and their children. If the government improves even more the homeless conditions, living in HWC would be an endless free vacation in paradise.