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Housing Inequality and Community Engagement

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Housing Inequality and Community Engagement

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Abstract

This project analyzes the best ways to address housing inequality through the lens of community engagement. I volunteered at a non-profit that focuses on preventing and reducing homelessness. I volunteered in order to understand how community engagement can help in the fight against housing inequality. This experience helped me understand how community engagement can help reduce and prevent homelessness through supporting the homeless community with low prices for clothing and free healthy food which in the long term, reduces housing inequality.

Course Connection

During the course, we learned about the role of the citizen and what is particularly required to be a citizen in society. I would argue that the role of a citizen includes your civic responsibility to your neighbors and community. This civic responsibility includes volunteering in order to better and support your community. Working at Hope Helps has given me a better idea of my role as a citizen. It has made me realize how crucial volunteers are to everyday operations for charity organizations. As a citizen, I believe it is my responsibility to support the organizations that are working hard to support my community.

Community Impact

The entire houseless community is impacted by the work done at Hope Helps. Categorized as an 501c3 organization (charity org.) the people at Hope Helps are committed to prompting change and helping the homeless population in Oviedo. The thrift store offers clothes at 25% of their original price and the food pantry gives food to people in need completely free of charge. Almost all of their donations go towards buying food for the pantry. The thrift store allows people below the poverty line to buy themselves whatever clothes they may need, if it's for a job interview or a wedding, the thrift store is there to allow everyone a chance to have appropriate clothing. Furthermore, the pantry allows families and individuals to eat. According to FeedingAmerica, "More than 44 million people in the US face hunger." Hope Helps's pantry allows people to feed themselves and their families rather than starve.

Reflection

By working with Hope Helps Inc., I've learned how vital hands-on community work can be in the fight to help reduce homelessness. Most of the people effected by homelessness. According to calpsych.org, an estimated 20-40% of homeless people are mentally ill. These are people who have been failed by our systems that should have helped them function in society. Helping these people in real life provided me with a unique experience. Assisting the homeless with even little things and offering them small kindnesses are very appreciated. These are people who have been abandoned by society and my experience volunteering this semester has made me realize how horribly we have failed them. Hope Helps is amazing organization but there should be millions just like it to help try to solve this epidemic. Everyone can be affected by housing inequality and homelessness, and it is our civic responsibility to help our fellow man.

Civic Responsibility

The active participation in this charity organization allowed me to better understand why civic responsibility is so important. Volunteering at Hope Helps allows them to operate more efficiently and gets more clothes and food to people in need. My desire to volunteer here was rooted in my commitment to my civic responsibility. Volunteering at Hope Helps was an active way to help my community. The work I have completed with Hope Helps has motivated me to continue fulfilling my civic responsibility.

References

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