

Persuasive Speech

Source: student in 1545

Topic - Homelessness; General purpose - to persuade. Specific purpose - to persuade the audience to take action to help the homeless.

[A personal action speech, NOT a policy speech!]

I. Attention Step (INTRO)

- A. Whose responsibility is it to take care of the homeless? (pause)
 - 1. Is it yours? (pause) Is it mine? (pause)
 - a. No, it's those people out there who run food banks and organizations right? (pause) They will deal with all those needy people out there?
 - b. Well, you couldn't be more wrong!
 - 2. The fight to end homelessness is up to all of us.
- B. By listening to me today, not only will you have a better understanding of homelessness, but you will also be more informed on how you can contribute to the fight to end homelessness.
- C. My neighbor, Bill Sharley, is the director of a rescue shelter and food bank called City Rescue Mission, or City Mission for short.
 - 1. A food bank is an organization where food is donated and made available to those in need. (Lester, 2001)
 - a. City Mission feeds about 6,000 people every month.
 - i. 3,000 of those people receive groceries.
 - ii. The other 3,000 clients receive hot meals that are prepared and served 7 days a week (Baker).
 - b. As long as I can remember, I have spent my free time and breaks volunteering at City Mission Resource Center.
 - i. My volunteer time would be spent: bagging donuts, vegetables, rice, beans, diapers etc.
 - ii. I would also: fold clothing and help pass out the food and supplies to the needy people who came for help.
 - c. By growing up with an environment like this, I learned at a young age not to be afraid of people in need and I found that, like my neighbor, I had a love

- for helping others in need.
 2. Along with my personal experience and an interview with my neighbor, I did much research on the subject of homelessness in books, articles and the Internet.
- D. Today I will be talking with you about homelessness in Mahoning County and how it affects our city.

[The following preview of method is useful only if the audience already is friendly toward hearing about homelessness and toward being asked to do something about it.]

1. First I will explain the A-B-C's of homelessness.
2. Then I will share with you the many solutions that can aid in the fight to end homelessness.
3. I will ask you to visualize what it would be like to be homeless yourself.
4. To conclude, I will be asking you to take action on this issue by offering a kind donation.

II. Need Step (BODY PART I)

- A. On any given night over 750,000 Americans are homeless! (Kougl, 2005).
- B. I would like to tell you a story, (pause) a story about Steve Cooper.
1. 15 years ago, Steve was the pastor of a church here, downtown.
 - a. However, some pretty bad situations arose within the church and after years of being taken advantage of, Steve was asked to “resign” from the church.
 - i. Steve took this so called “resignation” as a failure and fell into depression.
 - ii. His struggle with depression put Steve in the hospital twice, once for 8 months and another time for 6 months.
 - b. Since then, Steve’s chronic illness has made it very difficult for him to keep a job.
 - i. For the past 15 years, Steve has gotten by with odd jobs here and there.

- iii. So, for these 1,100 family members (pause) there are enough beds for 435 of them, barely 40%. (Lester,2001)
 - 3. At any given time, there are about 400 homeless youth residing in Mahoning county.
 - a. However, because it is so easy for youth to blend in with other youth, it is certain that the actual number is much greater.
 - b. There are also about 500 to 900 runaways on the streets every night.
 - c. Only 110 beds are set-aside for homeless youth on their own. (Koegel, 2001).
 - i. So, for those 900 to 1,300 youth on the streets a night here in Mahoning County, only 12% or so of them will have a warm, safe bed to sleep in.
 - ii. If this was a class filled with homeless youth, only 3 of us would have a bed (pause) and the rest of us would be on the streets.
 - 4. As you can see, the needs of the homeless in Mahoning County and all over the nation are not being met.
- D. We are all in college now, but did you ever think about what you would do (pause) if you didn't make it, or if you lost your job?
 - 1. It may seem unlikely, but do you really think that those people out there on the streets said, "When I grow up, I want to be a homeless person."
 - 2. What about our children, (pause) what if they run away one day?
 - a. Where will they go and how will they eat?
 - b. This may also seem unlikely, but it happens everyday!
 - 3. Wouldn't you like to know that you or your children would be taken care of, that we would all have a place to go if we were ever in need like that?

Now that the problem of homelessness in Mahoning County has been highlighted, I would like to introduce some solutions that can change in these lives.

III. Solution Step (BODY PART II)

- A. By getting involved with the many organizations whose focus is the homelessness of Mahoning County, you can aid in the fight to end homelessness and hunger.

[A policy case would advocate a policy change, such as (1) YSU becomes a partner of the Mahoning Food Bank and directs its charitable efforts to that cause, or (2) YSU declares September 1 to be “Everyone Has a Home” day, or (3) YSU buys a vacant city building, rehabilitates it and operates a homeless shelter. Note that these would be official actions of the university, not actions of individual students or faculty or staff.]

- B. “Getting involved” can mean a variety of things and you can choose a way that best fits your schedule and financial situation.

[Normally it’s unwise to offer a smorgasbord of options because it deflates the force of any one.]

- 1. For those of you that have time to spare, which I know is hard in college, you can volunteer your time at a food bank or a soup kitchen like City Mission and bag food or pass out hot meals.
 - 2. If you don’t have the time to volunteer you can always donate money, food or clothing to any of these non-profit organizations that depend greatly on donations.
 - 3. However, if you have neither time or money, you can directly contact our mayor’s office and explain your concern for the poor in the county.
- C. Logically, if an organization has more volunteers and money, then they will be able to help more needy people.
 - 1. With more volunteers, organizations will be able to bag and pass out more food, they will be able to hold more programs and fundraisers, and, as a result, be able to reach more people.
 - 2. Money is the basic key that allows food banks to run; however it doesn’t take much for food banks to buy food.
 - a. With a \$10 donation, City Mission can buy 80 lbs. of

food. That's \$0.14 per lb., from the Second Harvest Food Bank, located on the city's west side. (Baker, Interview).

- i. However most of the food from the Second Harvest Food Bank is free because it is donated from the USDA.
 - ii. The USDA is an organization that puts food in circulation specifically for food banks.
 - iii. When averaged out, City Mission, and other food banks, spend about \$0.04 a lb.
 - iv. Now that \$10 can actually buy 250 lbs. of food.
- b. Organizations can also use the money to buy bigger buildings that will allow them to accommodate more people.
- i. With more space, more beds can be set up and utilized.
 - ii. If a building is bigger, then the organization will be able to make more programs available to the public.
- D. City Mission Resource Center, my neighbor's food bank, was recently able, with the help of donations and government aid, to move out of the 3,800 square foot building and into a new 12,000 square foot building.
1. With this huge expansion, City Mission is now able to offer a Welfare - To - Work adoption program, training clients how to get a job and keep it.
 2. City Mission now has twice the space for food, clothing and furniture storage.
 3. City Mission was able to build a kitchen with all the devices needed to prepare hot meals, instead of preparing the food somewhere else and then transporting it.
 4. City Mission has also been able to build a shower unit for its clients to use.
 5. The huge increase in space has allowed City Mission to utilize all these programs simultaneously, so they can serve hot meals, bag groceries, hold job training and have a board meeting... all at the same time. (Baker, Interview).

- E. I know that many people have objections to helping the homeless.
1. If I give a homeless person money, they are just going to blow it on alcohol or drugs.
 - a. Actually, it's true... national statistics show that 35 to 40 percent of homeless people probably abuse alcohol and or drugs. (Regional)
 - b. However, by giving to an organization that will more than likely not pass out vodka and coke to their clients, the person's choice is cut off and you can be sure the money is going towards the right things.
 2. "They could get off the streets if they really tried. I'm not going to help support their laziness. "
 - a. However, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the majority of homeless are in that position because of "a lack of affordable housing, incomes that are too low to pay for basic living expenses, and a lack of services to help people overcome personal challenges."
 - b. Especially in Mahoning County, housing is still expensive, and even though work wages and benefits have increased, they have not been able to keep up with the increase of living expenses over the last few decades.
 - c. Even if the homeless in Mahoning County had a job and a place to live, those 35 to 40% that are suffering from alcohol and substance abuse would still need to overcome these personal challenges.
 3. By giving them free food and shelter, we are telling the needy that its okay to be homeless and that the county will support them.
 - a. This fact is also true on some situations and some homeless people can actually make a lot of money by pan- handling.
 - i. Again, donate to organizations, not to individual people, so that you know your money is being used towards the right programs and goods.
 - ii. Almost all food banks ensure that the food is

equally distributed by having a maximum time that an individual person may come and get groceries per month.

- b. There are many organizations out there, such as Harvest for the Hungry, Goodwill Industries, and St. Vincent De Paul Village, that rehabilitate and equip the needy to go back into the work force.
- c. According to the National Alliance to End Homeless, “people remain homeless an average of 5 months” before they are able to get back on their own.

IV. Visualization Step (CONCLUSION PART I)

- A. You may not have much to lose by being on this end of the equation, but put yourself on the other end.
- B. You are walking down the street, carrying all of your treasures (pause) on your back, or in the cart you are pushing.
 - 1. You are unsure of where you will sleep tonight. Actually, you don't even know when you will get your next meal.
 - 2. Then you remember that it has been cold enough at night for them to open the shelter, and the food bank is having a hot meal at 5.
- C. Funny, huh? (pause) Now, even though you can carry everything you own, you have a lot more to lose.

V. Action Step (CONCLUSION PART II)

- A. Today we have talked about the problems that arise when homelessness is not dealt with, the many solutions that can solve these problems and how you can personally donate your time and money to the needy of Mahoning County.
- B. I'm going to pass around this envelope and I'm asking for donations for the Second Harvest Food Bank's Holiday Food Drive.
- C. As I stated before, thanks to my neighbor, I have been involved with the feeding of the homeless since I was about 5.
 - 1. My summer, Christmas, and Spring breaks have been filled with many hours passing out groceries and hot meals to the needy.

2. To be honest, every time I volunteer I get more back from the clients than I could ever give to them.
- D. By remembering what I have told you today, maybe you will have a different outlook the next time you see that man sleeping along the Mahoning River, or the next time you see that woman walking down Market Street with her shopping cart of cans.
1. Remember that you can make a difference, even if it's in the life of just one needy soul. That's one person less than yesterday.

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