SPEECH #2 – PERSUASIVE SPEECH

Name: JOHN WILLIAMS

Title: Homelessness in America

Specific Purpose: To discuss an overview of homelessness and solutions to end the problem.

Thesis Statement: I will discuss 1) the circumstances that lead to homelessness, 2) the way in which homelessness has the ability to touch all races and ethnicities, and 3) ways in which you can work to end homelessness.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Hook: “What we have found in this country, and maybe we're more aware of it now, is one problem that we've had, even in the best of times, is the people who are sleeping on the grates, the homeless.” The proceeding quote concerning the never ending societal problem of homelessness was from the 40th President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. Homelessness is an epidemic in our society, and contrary to popular belief, being homeless does not equate with one being crazy. In fact, most people who are forced to leave their homes and live on a street are just like you and me, yet they have hit extremely difficult times and are relegated to living on the streets as a last resort to their problem.

B. Rapport: I am sure that many of you have seen a homeless person on the street before. They sat their begging you for your spare change, or some food to keep them from starving that night. Most of you were probably like me, you decided that giving the person a few dollars was enough to keep your conscience clean, and help them get through the next day. For a long time I thought that I was fulfilling my obligation to society by completing this act of generosity. However, I am here today to challenge each of you to no longer take the easy way out when you see a homeless person. I am asking each of you to consider doing more. Instead of giving them food or money, help them. Because when you think they are looking for a hand out, they are truly looking for a hand up.

C. Credibility: Good Afternoon, my name is John Williams and I have been a member of various social justice groups for the past seven years. I am currently the community service coordinator for the RHA. Prior to my first true interaction with the homeless I really had no interest in their struggles. For a long time I had it in my mind that it was a choice and that if they did not want to be homeless, then they did not have to be. However, when I was given my first opportunity to work at a shelter when I was in eighth grade, it had a monumental impact on my life, and working with the homeless has become a great passion of mine since that time.

D. Bridge: Today I will speak about 1) the circumstances that lead to homelessness, 2) the way in which homelessness has the ability to touch all races and ethnicities, and 3) ways in which you can work to end homelessness.
II. BODY

A. Circumstances that Lead to Homelessness
   1. Working at Minimum Wage
      (Todd, Ernest P. *Homelessness: Is Society Looking the Other Way*)
      i. Results of minimum wage
   2. Collision of Events
      (Glasser, Irene. *Braving the Street.*)
      (Logical Appeal)
   3. Children of Homeless Families
      (Ropers, Richard H. *The Invisible Homeless: a New Urban Ecology.*)
      (Emotional Appeal)
      i. Effects of homeless life on the children
      (Hopper, Kim. *Reckoning with Homelessness*)
      (Emotional Appeal)

Transition Statement: Being homeless is a situation that is not a choice of people, rather something that arises out of a collision of several issues at one time. It is an epidemic that affects all spectrums of society.

B. How Homelessness Touches all of Society
   1. Demographic breakdown
      (Hombs, Mary E. *American Homelessness.*)
      (Logical Appeal)
   2. Homeless Veterans
      i. Number of who veterans who spend nights on the street
      (Momeni, Jamshid A. *Homelessness in the United States.*)
      (Emotional Appeal)

Transition Statement: Homelessness is a disease that knows no societal bounds; it can affect any race, sex, or nationality at any time. Nonetheless, there are ways that we can all work to change the plague, and end homelessness.

C. Ways in Which Society can Work to end Homelessness
   1. Volunteer
      i. Value
      (Desjarlais, Robert R. *Shelter Blues.*)
      (Logical Appeal)
   2. Speak Up
   3. Education on the Topic
   4. Give
   5. Believe in the Cause
      (Nunez, Ralph. *The New Poverty.*)
      (Emotional Appeal)
III. CONCLUSION

I will begin my closing with a quote from Dennis Kucinich on how America needs to begin to address the many problems we have domestically, before we solve the world’s problems. “We have weapons of mass destruction we have to address here at home. Poverty is a weapon of mass destruction. Homelessness is a weapon of mass destruction. Unemployment is a weapon of mass destruction.”

Since the beginning of time there has always been a problem of homelessness in our society. The plague of homelessness stretches across all racial, ethnic, and societal boundaries, and has the ability to touch anyone’s life at any time. With over 32 million people who live in poverty in the United States, the problem of homelessness only has the capacity to get worse, unless we put a stop to this collective plague.

As I stand with each of you, I encourage you to go out and make a difference not only in the SMC community, but in the community in which you live. Homelessness is not only a problem for the people who are forced to sleep on the streets each night, but for each person in society. As you go to sleep tonight in your beds all across campus, I urge you to think about what it would be like to sleep on a cold metal bench, without any blankets or pillows, being susceptible to the ill wills of any passer by. Although it may seem unlikely today, you too could be homeless one day. So the next time you see a homeless person out on the street, no longer choose not to ignore them; rather give them the hand-up that they are truly desire.
IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY


**Appeals in Order**

**Logical Appeal** - “Some common issues that contribute to persons becoming homeless include: lack of education, lack of affordable housing, lack of employable job skills, addictions, and mental illness. Yet, it is a collision of several of these issues simultaneously which eventually leads to a person’s homelessness.”

Glasser, Irene. *Braving the Street.*

**Emotional Appeal** - “More than a million children will experience homelessness this year. Indeed, one in ten poor children in our country will experience homelessness and the risk is higher the younger the child.”


**Emotional Appeal** - “One long-term effect of homelessness on children may be the loss of hopes and dreams, the studies have found. Some children could not even imagine having their own home and family one day. A 12-year-old boy said that when he grows up, "I'll do nothing, just sit around, if I have a place to sit around at, if I'm not dead."


**Logical Appeal** - “The racial breakdown of the sample of homeless people in ten states in 2001 was: White 48%, Hispanic 26%, African-American 21%, American Indian 3%, “other” 2% and Asian 1%.”

Hombs, Mary E. *American Homelessness.*

**Emotional Appeal** – “the VA estimates that in 1989 nearly 200,000 veterans were homeless on any given night. And nearly 400,000 experience homelessness over the course of a year. One out of every three homeless men who is sleeping in a doorway, alley or box in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served this country.”

Momeni, Jamshid A. *Homelessness in the United States.*

**Logical Appeal** - “Some of the most important people in America are volunteer leaders. Volunteers reach out with their individual talents, skills and interests to help organizations and communities meet needs, solve problems and assist others.”

Desjarlais, Robert R. *Shelter Blues.*

**Emotional Appeal** - “Anatole France once said, to accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe. This is the key to ending homelessness, belief.”