**Child Hunger/Poverty In America**

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Child hunger is something that is unacceptable and can be prevented. Hunger is a feeling of discomfort or weakness caused by a lack of food. Hunger can lead to malnutrition. Lack of food in children can result in problems like headaches and obesity. Child Hunger and nutrition are important especially for children because nutrition is essential so that they can healthily grow. Poverty is not having enough material possessions or income for a person's needs. “Today, America is described to have the highest level of the poverty rate among other industrialized countries.” (Garcia, 2011). Poverty affects women and people of color. African Americans have the highest poverty rate of any ethnic group in America. Poverty relates to homelessness and health problems. Poverty leads people to have ill health, which ill-health can put people at risk of becoming poor. People living in poverty cannot provide nutritious food. The parents of the children don't have enough money so they can escape poverty. them escape poverty and hunger to feed their families. This means their children will become malnourish. “Malnutrition is the condition when your child does not receive essential nutrients, minerals and calories which help in the development of vital organs in adequate quantities. Nutrients are important for your child to lead a disease-free and healthy life. Lack of sufficient nutrition can lead to several disorders, both physical and behavioural. Malnutrition and hunger are not the same, although the two might be associated. Hunger is felt when the stomach is empty, whereas malnutrition is the lack of sufficient nutrients. Malnourished kids can be prone to deficiencies which result in stunted growth and chronic sickness.” Poverty is the main cause because people living in poverty cannot afford healthy food for themselves and their families. This makes them weak, unstable, and less able to earn the money that would help

Poverty has been a consistent problem throughout US history. There will always be people who are homeless and hungry, despite income, unemployment, or overall prosperity level. There are different ways poverty can be identified, absolute, relative, situational, situational, generational, rural, and urban are different types of poverty. Absolute poverty is when the basic needs of life are not met because the household income is below a certain level. In absolute poverty, even if the country is growing economically, it does not affect people living below the poverty line. People living in absolute poverty, still find it impossible to find food, shelter, education, and healthcare. Lack of agriculture plays a major part because many growing nations lack food production triggering failure in their economies, such as enough roads, warehouses, and irrigation. Poverty and hunger exist in a vicious cycle. Families trapped in the cycle of poverty usually can’t afford nutritious food, leading to undernourishment. In turn, undernourishment makes it difficult for people to earn more money so that they can afford healthy food. Families living in poverty might also sell off their livestock or tools to supplement their income. Some sort of grant to help parents in need to be able to put the right types of food on the table.

“Today, there are an estimated17 million children struggling with hunger in America – 6 million more than before the pandemic. And 2.7 million more families are going hungry**.”** (Child hunger in America 2022). Another reason that children are struggling with hunger in America, is due too food stamps are harder and harder for parents to get. If they work any sort of job, they will not qualify for them**.** “States around the country are attempting to make it harder for needy families to access federal food-assistance programs. Republican lawmakers inOhio, Arizona, Arkansas, Missouri, Montana and others have proposed more restrictive policies to qualify for food assistance, cutting off benefits to those who have saved a little money or who drive a halfway decent car, or adding paperwork requirements to document tiny changes in income and efforts to find work. The moves come even asmore than 20 million adults reported their households sometimes or often did not have enough to eat in the week ending June 7, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Federal food assistance for low-income Americans was expanded during the pandemic, with broad bipartisan support for removing barriers to programs such as SNAP (food stamps), WIC (for mothers and young children) and the benefit-card program that took the place of free and reduced-price school meals when schools were not in session.”( Reiley2021). A single parent with one child cannot make over $1,200 a month. If that is all they make then they cannot pay for their bills or rent. Therefore, if they make exactly a dollar over that amount of money then they will not qualify and will be denied food stamps, which means another child will go hungry. To fix this problem, those in charge need to strengthen SNAP benefits permanently by basing monthly allotments on the Low-Cost Food Plan rather than the Thrifty Food Plan currently used and increasing the minimum benefit level. Many several systems provide free breakfast and lunch for students while they attend school, except what happens to do the summer months? “Some area school systems in America have started making it where you can pick up food every day for breakfast and lunch to help with the children who otherwise would not have eaten that day. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provided meals to 4.7 million children each day across more than 37,000 sites in July of 2020, the month when the program’s operations typically peak. Overall, throughout the fiscal year (FY) 2020, the SFSP served about 1.3 billion meals and snacks at a cost of $4.1 billion to USDA. The number of meals served through SFSP and expenditures on the program were 8.9 and 8.7 times greater than in FY 2019, respectively. These increases can be attributed to rising food needs during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and USDA’s response to meet those needs, which included waivers expanding the scope and coverage of SFSP. The program expanded rapidly in the early months of the pandemic, serving about 564.4 million meals from March through May 2020. Comparatively, only 1.2 million meals were served over the same period in 2019.” (Summer Food Service Program 2021).

           “The number of hungry people in the world may have decreased, but in the United States, childhood hunger has reached a crisis level. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 49 million people in the country are food insecure, and 16 million are children. Currently, 21.7 million American children receive free or reduced-price lunch during the school year, but during summer months, fewer than 4 million are fed through summer food programs by the USDA, proving summer to be the hungriest time of the year for some American children. Charitable organizations across the country are working to fill the gap, but they need your help. Here are some organizations you can support to be part of the movement to end childhood hunger in the United States.No Kid Hungry (Share Our Strength).This campaign aims to end childhood hunger in America by connecting children in need with nutritious food and teaching families how to cook healthy budget-friendly meals. Great Nations Eat Inspired by the documentary "A Place At The Table," this movement is working to end child hunger in America by connecting children to nutrition programs like school breakfast and summer meals. Feeding America -- This nonprofit is a nationwide network of food banks that feeds more that 46 million people through pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and many other community-based agencies across the United States.” (Lee-Johnson, 2015). Food banks can distribute food and groceries through food programs that benefit families. Specifically, they pay more attention to those at risk of hunger. A lot of people benefit from these programs. It's also the best way to ensure that food is shared equally. Apart from providing food, food bank volunteers may also be able to help you deal with managing debt. Food banks recommend agents that can help you deal with your problems. They might also connect you with people who offer loans and allow you to repay them in a given period. Local agencies collaborate with food banks to offer additional assistance with food. These agencies usually give a food voucher that you can show at a food bank to get help. The issue with these types of groups is that not all the money offered goes to making sure that children are nourished with food. A fraction of the cash goes to paying the individuals who work for the business. This is a problem because it lessens how people want to give back. A means to go around this would be to contribute the donation to local businesses like food pantries or soup kitchens. These kinds of places are used to make sure that the people are fed. The workers are there on a volunteer basis, so people don’t have to worry about where the money is going.

           While Americans are proud to think that their country provides for all citizens to live a good life, there are some Americans in parts of the country living in poverty. Yes, due to economic growth there have been more jobs and higher wages but that has still not eliminated poverty. Families headed by some single mothers are likely to poverty. Even families with income above the poverty level still go hungry because they use their money on bills, clothing, and medical and don’t have enough for food. “Poverty effects a child’s brain by development, learning and academic performance, which starts early and is seen in infancy. Studies show that children that suffer from poverty perform the worse across cognitive measures. Cognitive development examines the way people think, social development shows how people interact in social situations with others; and emotional development which studies people emotions. Key mechanism shows children expose to poverty is chronic stressors such as noise, loud background noise, household chaos and conflict among family members. Social development affects children of poverty by developing both emotional and behavioral problems like impulsiveness, disobedience, and difficulty getting along with peers. Poverty makes it difficult for children to cope in stressful environments” (Richards, 2018).

 As a result, poverty remains an issue that needs to be addressed in America as a way of achieving the American Dream. Addressing poverty is one way the government can achieve social goals. “Poverty requires an action plan. Until a plan is enforced, poverty will still be on a rise. The best way to end poverty is through education. Education is a start to end poverty. Being born into family that lack education can continue the cycle” (Campaner, 2017). Education gives hope. If you educate both the young and old, parents would be put in a better position to get out of poverty. Education opens opportunities, which allow parents to provide and also strengthen relationships between parents and children. Employment is a way to end poverty as well. Developing companies that offer long-term jobs in the communities. Planned employment programs funded by the government can provide growth in jobs. Making the government accountable for their actions, by how the government chooses how to spend taxpayer money and their revenue. Redistribution of wealth will be an imperative step by taxing the rich more and the poor less.

           Children go hungry every single day. Lack of nutrition can cause children to not perform well in school. Eating breakfast can help students perform well in school by giving them energy and helping them focus. With breakfast, kids are healthier and happier. Kids who eat breakfast have been shown to attend more days of school and achieve higher scores on math tests. Kids that come to school hungry have problems in school. They have a lack of energy, poor academic performance, and an inability to concentrate. They can’t focus on their schoolwork or interact with their teachers and classmates. Kids that don't eat enough can result in low academic achievement. There should be no reason that a child goes hungry. Society should step up and help the needy and the less privileged. It’s up to everyone to help with this problem whether it be the local government or the state agencies that aid. No children should go hungry ever. It is something that can be prevented. It will take some work from local people in the community along with government officials. Children are the future of our society.

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