



How Age Attributes to Homelessness

By Emerson Johnston

Age is one of the many topics most people fail to talk about. Children lie about it in order to gain respect, adults neglect to talk about for fear of being thought of as old, and most, if not all. People think that age contributes to the idea of intelligence. As such, one might come to the misconstrued notion that children know less, and therefore do more immature things, based solely on their age. This idea is not only harmful to children of young ages but detrimental to those living in the homeless communities.

While the connection between these two ideas or topics seems quite minuscule, it's the implicit connection we must address. It is often that people assess someone's living situation with their age and believe that their living conditions are a product of their generation. According to a study conducted by Oxford University, "Ageist prejudice can involve the expression of derogatory attitudes, which may then lead to use of discriminatory behavior." Where older or younger contestants were rejected in the belief that they were poor performers, this could well be the result of stereotyping. Older people were also voted for at the stage in the game where it made sense to target the best performers. This preconceived notion of the "inexperienced child" has translated onto our views of the homeless and poverty stricken communities.

It is not new to think that the more experienced person often is the first one to find a job, however, new studies suggest that this idea of hiring the more experienced person is leaving many newcomers without work. It turns out that one in five millennial's lives in poverty,

according to a recent report released by the US Census Bureau. This is due to a multitude of reasons, some of which include notions of prejudice as mentioned above, the increasing unemployment rates among their generation, and the increase of student loans.

It's imperative that we look to the unemployment rates to see where most of this ageism and prejudice is found. According to that same guardian study, 65% of young adults are currently employed, down from 69% in 1980. This is because, while the overall unemployment rate might be decreasing, the individual, generation unemployment rates aren't. While the baby boomer generation seems to be obtaining 57% of all new jobs, the new, less experienced millennial generation is left to wonder why people neglect the abilities of their generation.

It's time to look past the prejudices that come with age and hire people through their abilities alone. It is only then when we can finally begin to implement change in the homeless communities.