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Poverty Sim Reflection

Watching and reading the information contained within this Poverty Sim made me feel somewhat guilty of the life that I live. Maybe I should feel guilty. Driving around the city on a normal afternoon allows each of us to see on many occasions that help is needed to combat poverty but many of us turn a blind eye to what we see. In many respects, we tell ourselves that if we don't see it then it is not happening, or we tell ourselves that this would never happen to us and our children. I happen to be one of the individuals that tells myself that this would not happen to me because I would work. This sim opened my eyes to the harsh reality that this could happen to me. I had a pretty good idea of how the ACE's affect families and childhood outcomes, but I did not have many of these things happen to me. I guess I am lucky that I only had two of the ACES's in my life. Just the impact of those two had negative outcomes for me. I overcame them but they still impacted how my adulthood was shaped.

My son just returned from a vacation in Columbia on Sunday. It is not a coincidence that we were talking about the poverty rate there and how thankful the people are that receive assistance from someone or how a little bit of cash can make a difference in their life. He told me of one instance where a child asked him for some gum so he could sell each piece for money. Of course, my son bought the child some gum but as he was walking out of the store, he handed the child approximately 50,000 pesos. The child looked up in the sky and began to cry and thanked my son as this was an amount of money that would feed this child for a week or two. In my conversation with my son afterwards, I told him that most individuals here live a life of excess where we buy things that we do not need with out a second thought. We look past the problems we have here especially if we are not the ones dealing with poverty or hunger.

As I watched the videos I began to cry because I never looked at poverty or homelessness from the perspective of the children involved. These children are innocent and have no way to combat the situation that they are in. Many try to do things that make money so they can help but these children should not be responsible for feeding their families. There are programs to help those that are in these homeless or poverty situations, but they offer a temporary fix to a long-term solution. It upsets me that anyone has to go hungry or without a roof over their head but especially the children. I ask myself how I can make a difference because I can't help everyone or should that even be my responsibility. It upsets me that as tax paying citizens, the money that is collected is spent helping other countries, but we do not help the adults and children in this country. We live in the greatest country in the world, and we need to do a better job of eliminating poverty and homelessness in our society. We need to recognize that our priorities are out of whack and overhaul a system that is corrupt. It should not be so hard for these families to qualify for assistance. We need to better utilize the resources for assistance but how is it determined who gets help.

As I stated previously, many of us are not worried because poverty is not visible unless you really go looking for it. As individuals we need to do a better job of recognizing the need for help especially with our children. These kids need not worry about how or when they will eat or where they will sleep. They should only have to worry about being a kid. I know that as I move forward in my adult life, I will be more cognizant of the children and try to make a better effort to help, not necessarily with money, but my time and other resources to help get rid of poverty and homelessness.

There are many things that I learned by performing this sim. I understand that I am privileged, so much with money but with luck. Circumstances occur each day that can turn a positive outcome into a negative one. I was able to overcome a few ACE's in my life but many are trapped with no way out. I learned a lot about myself and how I want to move forward by being more active and more aware of

poverty and homelessness around my community. I learned that I as a person need not be so judgmental and be an active investigator into finding ways to help those in our community that need to be better served. One act of kindness will not make the problem go away. Active awareness of the problems around us and commitment to eradication of poverty need to be major topics of discussion starting with me. I hope to be a better person from this point on by taking a more active approach in finding ways to deal with these issues. As a nurse I hope to better equip myself with more knowledge and understanding to help those that need our help because these issues will not disappear or go away just because I turn the corner and head for home. In fact we all should realize that each of us is one major life changing moment from being in these same positions.