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ENG102
March 22, 2021

Scripted Interview: A Discussion of Equity

Christi Christner (The Interviewer): Hello everyone, and thank you for joining another episode of Christi's Corner Podcast. Tonight we will be discussing the different options people aging out of the foster system have available to them in terms of secondary education/funding. We have three individuals who are advocating for mental and financial assistance these individuals need joining us today. We have Willard Becker, and editor at Foster Focus magazine who has created a platform for various organizations and individuals to directly inform foster children of available assistance. We also have Dr. Dawanna Jones a humanities professor at Colombia University who spent most of her childhood in the foster system. She is well known in the academic world for her peer reviewed articles, contributions to research, and books. Finally, we have Cynthia Crider who is a New York social worker.

Christi: Thank you all for joining me today. As you know we are going to be discussing secondary education options for those in the foster system. A sad reality for those in the system is the mental trauma that often goes undealt with leaving young people ill equipped to deal with big decisions such as college. First, let's establish everyone's thoughts towards college. **Do you believe secondary education is mandatory for someone to have a good life?**

Dr. Jones: Thank you for having us Christi. I believe that a college degree is something today's world requires for those hoping to be hired. Are there flaws within these institutions in terms of finances and availability? Yes, but this does not negate the need for higher education. Your education is something no one can take from you.

Becker: Well said, Dr. Jones. I do believe that college is necessary for some, but believe we should inform our youth of trade school or apprenticeship opportunities that are available. The reality of student debt is debilitating, and overwhelming for most. If there are other certificate options available that are more in line with someone's interest why go into debt?

Crider: Yes, the idea of college has definitely shifted for most, but as a social worker I see a need for further investment for mental health support which would be a domino effect towards a better society.

Christi: Thank you for sharing your perspective on a multi-faceted matter. Now that we have established everyone's opinions on the idea of college, let me ask you a more focused question on the subject. **Based on your research/personal experience what is one of the main things preventing people from receiving a secondary education?**

Crider: I'll answer this one first, if you guys don't mind. Without going into detail, most of the young adults I work with have spent most of their life unsupported. There are few people who have invested in their lives, causing them to become self sufficient and good at fixing issues on a short term level. When it comes to long term solutions, these young individuals have no mental or financial support impeding their ability to grow into society's idea of contributing members of society.

Becker: I would have to agree. The lack of intentional investment is a critical component to this troubling issue.

Dr. Jones: I believe this is a result of broken institutions that have pushed marginalized people groups to the side for centuries upon centuries. If we are going to try to fix a problem, it require policy change.

Christi: Very interesting everyone. **Dr. Jones, are there specific policies you believe could be adapted to create a more equitable education system?**

[THE INTERVIEW CONTINUES WITH SOURCES RESPONDING TO THIS AND, ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, IN SIMILAR FORMAT/STYLE AS ABOVE. THEN CHRISTI CONCLUDES THE CONVERSATION. SEE BELOW.]

Christi: Well, thank you for listening in today my trusted audience. While today's subject matter was a bit heavy, I thank each of our experts for taking time for their invaluable information. There is much work to be done, and many lives to invest in, but as Benjamin Franklin once said, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." It is time for each of us to become involved.

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