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Lahaina Restoration Foundation Scholarship Application Essay

Although it is inhabited by many loyal residents it can be argued that the future of Lahaina is for the most part dependent on income from visitors to Hawaii. Regardless that nothing can stop Hawaii from being the popular tourist destination that it is, with the economy in shambles we can already feel the effects on Lahaina's businesses. More focus will be brought on the income of the businesses, and less on their contribution to maintaining the traditions of West Maui. Since many historical sites are located on prime business real estate, for the future of the culture of Lahaina we must work harder than ever to keep it from being overrun by the industrialization of our town.

With the recent decline of visiting tourists one can expect the historical sites to get a lot less traffic. Although the residents of Lahaina know much about the history, they aren't consistently visiting these sites such as the Pioneer Inn or the Old Lahaina Prison. The seemingly decreased interest due to reduced amount of visitors to these sites could cause challenges in keeping them open, and may potentially lead to their closure for businesses that could bring in more money from residents. Currently the biggest problem the culture of Lahaina faces today is not a lack of interest, but a flaw in the ability to compete with other businesses taking advantage of the ideal locations in West Maui.

To avoid this downfall in the future, the Lahaina Restoration Foundation and any other groups dedicated to the preservation of Lahaina's culture must work harder than ever to keep these historical sites available for the youth of tomorrow. By keeping the community involved this impending possibility could be completely avoided. While brainstorming for solutions I reminded myself of one of my most vivid memories from my days at King Kamehameha III; the field trip our class took to the Old Courthouse next to the Banyan Tree. To this day I can recall the awe and curiosity I felt inside the building and the ideas about Lahaina's past that I was able to take away from it. If programs like this could be kept alive, even increased, the concern of the residents of Lahaina could be sparked to take a more active role in preserving these places that have lasted on West Maui for so long. The overall idea is that more attention needs to be brought to the cultural foundations of Lahaina's history. Although residents are already aware of many of the things these places and museums have to offer, we must show them that there is more they can learn and discover about the history of West Maui. Hopefully this will ignite a newfound interest that can ensure the safety of Lahaina's historical sites well into the future.