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Almost 38 percent of Radford City's population is under the poverty rate, but despite the alarming statistic Mayor David Horton maintains an optimistic view.

Mayor Horton has been a member of Radford's community for many years, and now as the Mayor, he aims to invest in the future of his community. Mayor Horton seeks to evolve the city by maximizing Radford's assets. Mayor Horton plans to focus on things that can be improved, to provide a better quality of life for his community.

"We work on that safety net, through the programming that we have available, so people don't fall through the cracks. We deal with food and security as much as possible through a variety of different programs. We work for job retraining. We work for a number of issues to try to help lift people up, but then we also work to improve the economy, so those that are working can advance even further." He noted this at a press conference held at Radford University during Dr. Twange Kasoma's specialized journalism course, on Feb. 4, 2019. Students questioned Mayor Horton regarding statistics retrieved from Census Reporter.

Census Reporter states that the city of Radford's poverty rate is double the rate of the state of Virginia and nearly double the rate of the neighboring towns. When questioned about this epidemic, Mayor Horton expressed his awareness and concern for the challenges his community currently faces.

According to Mayor Horton, the student population affects the city's poverty rate. Census Reporter states that over 30 percent of Radford's population is comprised of the ages 21-29. Mayor Horton says that the poverty rate is challenging to accurately measure due to the large percentage of students that reside in the city.

This resulting in more people officially falling below the poverty rate even though they may not actually be in poverty. "[...] There are plenty of people who are, and we are working to get more resources through programs like new river valley community services, through other outreach

pieces. Again, some of the programs include bobcat backpacks which helps with food security for our school-aged children.”



Photo Credit: (Brian Angus | The Tartan)

Mayor Horton presented the idea that if one person in a community is affected financially, it tends to affect others in the community. “The first people affected are those that are right on the front line. People stop eating out as soon as money gets a little bit tight. So, the people that are waiters, and waitresses, and cooks, and busboys get hit first and then that has a ripple effect,” said Mayor Horton.

Although faced with these challenges, Mayor Horton strives to fulfill the needs of the members of his community. Mayor Horton states, “We work on that safety net, through the programming that we have available, so people don’t fall through the cracks. We deal with food and security as much as possible through a variety of different programs. We work for job retraining. We work for a number of issues to try to help lift people up, but then we also work to improve the economy, so those that are working can advance even further.”

It is not uncommon for a community to face challenges; however, Mayor Horton refuses to let the challenges hinder the evolution and improvement of Radford. He aims to make Radford an attractive place, hoping that it will draw those who have resources and opportunities to start businesses in the city.

This creating more opportunities for jobs, which may help tackle some of the challenges his community currently faces today.

Photo Credit: (David Horton - Mayor of Radford Virginia Facebook page - Featured image of Mayor Horton supporting The Polar Plunge sponsored by the Radford City Police Department to benefit the Special Olympics)