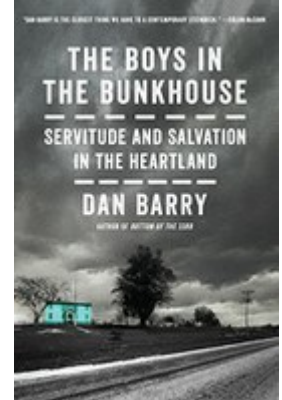


Discussion Questions for "The Boys in the Bunkhouse"

The following questions can be used to facilitate group discussions on the 2018 All Iowa Reads selection, *The Boys in the Bunkhouse* by Dan Barry.



1. How did the braceros program relate to Henry's Turkey Service?
2. Early on, the program at Henry's Turkey service won awards for providing employment to the men. What happened to make this situation deteriorate?
3. How did the high number of previously institutionalized adults (after 1965) contribute to what happened?
4. Who should be responsible for protecting people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations? Who was ultimately to blame?
5. The people of Atalissa said they did not know how bad things were at the bunkhouse. Does this exonerate them from the blame for what happened? How did the people of the town view the "Boys"?
6. In 1979, two Des Moines Register journalists wrote of the appalling conditions in which the men lived and worked. These articles were ignored. What changed between those articles in the 1970s and the story that broke in the Des Moines Register in 2009?
7. Who were the real heroes in this story?
8. Why did some people in this story claim to care for and still abuse the "Boys"?
9. Can you think of other situations where abusive treatment of vulnerable people regularly occurs? What can be done to prevent this from happening?
10. Could the *Boys in the Bunkhouse* have had a different ending?
11. How would a program like Henry's Turkey Service work today?
12. Should disabled adults have to work? Should disabled adults be given the opportunity to work? Why or why not?
13. Should developmentally disabled adults get to make decisions for themselves? Should this be limited at all?

Additional Resources

- *Mother Jones*, (4-29-2013) "Timeline: Deinstitutionalization and Its Consequences" <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/04/timeline-mental-health-america/#>
- *Various* (2017) 2017 One Book, One Sioux Country Panel discussion on "*The Boys in the Bunkhouse*" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOucwGOsLZM>
- *New York Times Documentaries* (2014) "The Men of Atalissa" <https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000002757071/the-men-of-atalissa.html>
- *New York Times* (2014) "*The 'Boys' in the Bunkhouse*" <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/03/09/us/the-boys-in-the-bunkhouse.html>