

Good Afternoon,

My name is Ruth Rivera and I am part of the Start program through The Connection, which is funded by the Homeless Youth Line Item. Before I start, I just wanted to say thank you for allowing me to speak today.

Before I was part of the START program, I was homeless due to not having family or having a place to stay. I was living in my car and feeling hopeless. Safety was a big issue for me, as I was afraid of being alone. I was able to get into a shelter in Hartford where I stayed until my case manager and I found an apartment that I love.

Since I became part of the START program, I have had nothing but good experiences. I no longer feel like I am alone. I feel welcomed and I am grateful for the help I have received. Working with my Case Manager, helped me change my life and I am becoming a more responsible woman. I am currently working and living in my own apartment. I am not sure what tomorrow looks like, but I am excited to be part of it.

Once again, thank you for your time.