

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Laville, and honorable members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Orlando Moore, I am a 59 year old man who resides in Bridgeport CT. Married to my beautiful wife Christine and together we've raised 3 wonderful children Brysen, Tiara, and Shakirah. 2 lovely grandchildren Jordan and Payton who I absolutely adore. Currently I am a home owner and a law abiding citizen here in the state of Connecticut.

It hasn't always been like that though, there was a time not long ago when I was struggling, folding under the weight of pain, misery, and suffering. Always believing that I was better than that, believing that I could triumph over the darkness that ruled my small world. Not wanting to be totally consumed by all the negativity in my life, I reached out for help. Prayed wholeheartedly for the courage to take the first step. I WAS A BUM!!! Heroin and cocaine had me in the grips, and alone there was no way of escape. I could spend quite some time talking about my drug use and abuse and it would be just like the thousands of stories you've already heard. So I would like to share my short time on the blessings I've received after my battle.

And that started with my introduction to CCAR. After losing everything we owned in a fire in New Jersey, my wife and I stumbled into the Bridgeport Center just window shopping one day. We noticed the computer lab and started to visit just to get on-line. After a few knee surgeries and finding myself addicted to pain medication, which led to street drugs again, I started attending NA meetings held at the very same center in the evenings. So I decided to attend the noon day all recovery meetings. Shortly after my wife and I became a volunteers. Today I choose not to evacuate the turf that has allowed me to be a vehicle for change, not only in my life but in the life of countless others that visit the center daily and reach out to me for resources. Nobody wants to rob a bag lady because she has nothing of value to take. Even in the depths of my addiction I knew that there was something deep down inside of me that could bless others and CCAR has helped me to bring that out. Every Thursday morning I run a music therapy group, March 9th I'll be attending Recovery Coach Academy, and will be attending Gateway Community College to become a licensed Drug and Alcohol Counselor in the near future.

I support the DMHAS Budget and hope that it may be increased so that CT can benefit from more Recovery Community Centers.

Thank you for listening, and knowing that the war is not over yet. There is still a long way to go. The monkey may be off my back but the circus is still in town.

Sincerely,

Orlando Moore