

February 18, 2021

Hello members of the Appropriation Committee, my name is Salicia Weaver-Fisher, and I am part of The Connection Start Program which is funded through the Homeless Youth Line Item.

I grew up in foster care until I was adopted at the age of 8. I was labeled as a troubled teen, and once I turned 18, I was on my own. I was staying with a family member off and on, but it did not work out. I slept in a park until I was able to secure shelter through The Connection. I was homeless for a few months before entering The Connection shelter, and at the same time I found out I was pregnant.

When I entered the shelter, which only serves young people like myself and is funded through this Homeless Youth Line Item, the staff was amazing as they helped me look for employment, connected me with WIC and SNAP benefits. After being in the shelter for a short time, I was connected to the Start housing program, which provides me with time-limited housing assistance where I rent my own apartment and work towards affording it on my own. I was always included in all meetings between shelter staff and my housing case manager. I appreciated being involved in creating my plan. The Connection not only provided me with a place to stay for several months but was sensitive to me being very sick during my pregnancy. The day I signed my lease, I was admitted into the hospital. My Start housing case manager went out of her way to get my keys for my new apartment.

Since I have been involved with the Start program, I have given birth to a beautiful baby boy and have a safe place to stay. My apartment is something that I can call my own. I am currently registered to start taking college courses. The Connection made such an impact on my life in such short time. I am greatly appreciative and very grateful for the amazing staff.

My successes have only been made possible because of your continued investment in this homeless youth line item. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Salicia Weaver-Fisher, Hartford