



Advocacy and Action
for Connecticut's
Mental Health

**Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2021
DMHAS BUDGET HEARING
H.B. No. 6439 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING
APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.
Michael Wimbish**

Good evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Michael Wimbish and I am a registered voter in Manchester.

I am here to testify regarding H.B. No. 6439 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

I am writing this testimony to ask you to continue funding Non-Profit organizations Like Intercommunity and their Common Ground Social Club. This past year has been incredibly challenging while also rewarding for me. During the Covid-19 pandemic I was increasingly isolated and alone. I lived in a small studio apartment that felt like a box. However, because of my involvement with Case Management services at Intercommunity, a one-bedroom subsidized apartment became available and I was able to move into this bigger apartment that was much more affordable. I would not have been able to accomplish this on my own.

The pandemic also caused in-person interactions and therapy to stop. But I was able to survive and even thrive because of the ability of Intercommunity to provide Telehealth Therapy, and also, daily Telehealth zoom groups, such as, meditation, music therapy, art, culture, healthy living and cooking. These groups were a life saver and helped me keep connected to my friends and the rest of the world.

That hasn't always been the case for me. I didn't speak for the first five years of my life. My mother brought me to Newington Children's Hospital, and they referred her to the Institute of Living. I was with a group of other children and they helped me learn how to speak to be prepared for kindergarten at Head Start. I was able to attend regular kindergarten because of their help. My first diagnosis was ADHD and Learning Disabilities.

I had both individual and group therapies at the IOL. I attended there from 1965 to 1990. Twenty years later, I went to CHR and InterCommunity for continued therapy and to become more social with advice from my therapist.

My first job was through the Easter Seals job program in food services. After that, I worked at Stop & Shop in 1993. In 1999, I worked as a mail clerk. I was reassessed and diagnosed in 1998, and I learned that I also had autism.

I have been going to InterCommunity and Common Ground Learning Center almost daily for the past two and a half years and I have learned with the help of my therapist, case managers, and staff at Common Ground, how to learn to meet new people, begin to be active in groups, go on events and trips in the community. If Common Ground - InterCommunity didn't exist, I would be homeless or in fear of losing my home. I would not have been able to go through the process of finding a new home on my own. The InterCommunity staff helped me to commit to my goals and take the challenge to move forward with them. Previously I completed the Essentials and Leadership trainings with the KTP organization and I am currently taking Recovery Support Specialist (RSS) Training so that I could find and use my voice in my community more effectively. I am grateful for the trainings as I move another step closer to a purposeful full life.

I would not have been able to accomplish these things on my own, so once again I ask you to not only not cut funding for these programs, but to increase it! So other people like me can have the same opportunities I've had.

Thank You for listening to my testimony today.

Sincerely,

Michael Wimbish