

Ashley Walton

I would like to thank you for the opportunity of giving this testimony to support the work of the Supportive Housing for Families Program from The Connection.

I started with The Connection at Mother's Retreat, a residential program, after my daughter Sophia (now 4) was removed from my care. Mother's Retreat helped me work on my sobriety, independence, and coping skills. I was pregnant with my son, Chaynece, (now 1) at that time and was going to be homeless following my stay at Mother's Retreat. I entered the Supportive Housing for Families program on October 16, 2019. Before being admitted to Supportive Housing, I was staying in a hospital room where my son was being treated for a severe medical condition following his birth. I was homeless, scared, and newly sober. Within thirty days of working with my SHF Case Manager, Danielle, I moved into a two-bedroom apartment on November 15, 2019. Moving into my own apartment allowed me to have a safe place to bring my miracle baby boy, who survived, home from the hospital. I was able to focus on the health and well-being of my medically complex son without worrying where we would sleep each night. Having a place to call my own allowed me to focus on my sobriety, my mental health needs, and having my daughter Sophia come back to live with me, which joyfully happened. My DCF case closed following the reunification with my daughter and I am happy to report I have not had DCF involvement since being reunified.

SHF provided me with help to pay my rent, furniture for my apartment, household items, clothing, and items for my children. SHF helped me create a budget, reapply for cash assistance and helped me complete a RAP application. I have made huge strides in my life with the assistance and support of SHF and none of this would have happened without the program. I would not have a permanent housing subsidy and I would not have been allowed to stay at home to take care of the medical needs of my son. I have been able to keep my apartment with the help of the budgeting and life skills I gained during my time in the program. I have long-term goals of becoming a CNA and furthering my education once the virus subsides.

My life and the lives of my son and daughter have completely changed for the better because I was given a second chance through Supportive Housing for Families. Thank you for your continued support of this much needed program.