

Good afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Kenneth Alexander and I am a person in recovery. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, I am originally from Albany, New York and have been residing in CT since 1998. In September of 1998 by the Grace of God I ended up at Union Station in Hartford it was very late at night, I had little money and no where to go. The security guard there gave me some numbers to local shelters, but they were all full. I sat down on a bench, the security guard told me I had to move on in the next five minutes, I had no idea what to do or where to go. At this very moment of despair a man approached me and said you look lost. I was lost both literally and spiritually. He ended up being the first of many angels that have presented themselves to me. He gave me the number to the Open Hearth Shelter in Hartford and they had a bed, he proceeded to walk me to the front door, where I began my recovery in CT.

Through the Open Hearth program I was accepted into the Salvation Army Adult Rehab program, after completing the program I had a job and my own apartment, but I no longer had the support of living with others in recovery who were trying to rebuild their lives. I was isolated this ended up being a part of my relapse, after this happened I was able to get into the Clark House, a recovery house in Hartford with the support of the Basic Needs program.

This opportunity to live in a recovery house at one of the most vulnerable times in my life is indescribable- I met people there who had recovery, who had walked in my shoes and were getting their lives back I HAD HOPE, they took me to meetings, helped with food, and supported me early in recovery. This is what it means when we say a therapeutic environment. Peers helping peers. This was my home, it was more than a recovery house

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my experience with recovery houses, I would not be here today if they had not been there to help me save my life. I am celebrating 8 months clean and sober today and I am looking forward to my recovery journey. Thanks to the programs available to me I will be starting the DART program at Manchester Community College in August 2007.