

## Testimony before the State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee

Public Hearing, December 9, 2009

### SAGA

For the record my name is Miguel Zayas and I'm here to talk about how SAGA helped me and how it help those who really needed it. Hello Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee. I am here to speak about SAGA in hopes that it will continue to be made available to new people. In 2005 I wasn't working and no one was hiring me for reasons unknown. I was living at the Y.M.C.A. and I couldn't afford my rent. At the same time, my mental health was decompensating and I needed to seek help from the state entitlement system. I was able to get almost everything I needed right away. I recognize SAGA is not an entitlement but it is worth having. The one thing I was able to get was SAGA. SAGA allowed me to make a difference in someone's life. I became a member at Primetime House and they changed my life. I love to get involved in the community. I've become an advocate and I'm making a difference in my own life.

You can say that I'm happy now. It's because of SAGA that I was able to pay all of my old bills before I got into an apartment. It wasn't easy for me at the time because I had to wait until I got the call from the Housing Authority. I finally found a place I can call home. I'm now living at the Torrington Towers and I have been living there for two years. I never thought that so little cash can help you in so many ways. I wanted to thank those who helped me get SAGA. I was so close to living on the street and no one should be on the street. I know times are hard, but everyone deserves a second chance and by cutting SAGA people won't get the opportunity I had. My life has changed and I'm a better man for it. I still have plenty of bills to pay and I'm paying them. I'm now starting my life over and a little bit wiser. If you see someone down and out and are in need of help, don't you think that they deserve the same attention? I appreciate the opportunity to speak here.