

**Testimony Before The  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**H.B. No. 6830 AAC The Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2013**

**March 4, 2011**

I am here today to speak to you of my struggles, strengths, hopes, and to share with you the help that I have had from the program and how they have helped change me and my children's life. Please bear with me if I get a little emotional.

About 1 ½ years ago my children were taken away from me due to homelessness. I had been struggling for many years trying to keep a home over our heads. Finally about 6 months later I had established a home and furnishings and on Christmas Eve of 2009 our home was condemned. The children were supposed to return in January of 2010 but due to my homelessness once again the date was withdrawn... so again I struggled, found another place, and started over. Then that house too was condemned.

I moved again into the house where I now have resided for the past six months. When I moved into this place I had little furniture and wasn't able to pay the full amount of the security deposit but was making payments little by little. I was accepted into the Supportive Housing for Families program and they helped me with my security deposit but at the time of entering the program my husband had gotten laid off from my job and we were behind in rent so they picked up our back rent. It was a fresh start.

They connect me with outside resources, and bring me food from their pantry if I'm in need. They've had oil delivered when I had no hot water or heat and had gone three days in the middle of our first winter storm without.

In order for my children to return home to me I needed to get beds, dressers, and tables, and Supportive Housing made that possible through one of their services. They've helped me with many things. I thank my lord and savior for putting these wonderful people in my life because due to the help of them my kids are finally home with me after a year and a half in foster care.

I have been in recovery for 10 years and love my children with all of my heart and would do anything for them. I have fought with my all to prove to the Department of Children and Families and whoever else I have to that I am worthy of being a mother to my beautiful children.

I truly don't believe that without the help of the Supportive Housing Program that I would be where I am today, nor would my children have returned home when they did. With SHF supporting me I was able to focus my energies on others issues in my life. For example I was able to work to appeal for Social Security and was recently approved for disability benefits, thus securing a permanent source of income to sustain my family.

I want to go to college to get a degree to do x-rays and ultrasounds. I'd also love to get a job or volunteer to work with animals, as this is my ultimate passion.

I am truly grateful for all of my blessings, specifically for what Supportive Housing has done for me and my children. They have made it possible for us to be a family again.

Respectfully,

Mistie Cote Santos