

### Written Testimony for Virginia Ann Nunez

I am now 21 years old, working full time, and successfully living in my own apartment with the aid of The Connection young adult program.

But just a year ago, when I was 20 years old I was homeless and living in a motel room just outside of Hartford. I had just come out of foster care at age 19 after I graduated high school. I wasn't eligible for continued services through the state since I wasn't in school anymore. This is where my struggles started. I had to get a job right away after graduating high school so that I could start to support myself. I was working 2 jobs right before I became homeless, but that wasn't enough to cover the rent and all the other living expenses so I was evicted from the apartment I was living in. Without a place to live and with an eviction now on my record, I had to stay in a motel room just to keep a roof over my head. Without a place to live, not knowing if I'd be able to cover the cost of the motel room each and every night, I became very depressed and anxious. I started using marijuana just to try and cope with what was going on and how I was feeling. I was in a dark place and felt that I had lost everything.

I didn't know where to turn for help and it wasn't easy to find any resources out there. There didn't seem to be anything for kids in my situation. Everywhere I went, people just told me to go to the shelter, but this didn't seem safe to me. I was eventually able to reconnect with a former social worker of mine at The Connection who helped me out when I was in foster care. She connected me to a program another The Connection has that works with former foster youth that are experiencing homelessness. I've been with them for a year now and with their help, I've got my own apartment that I can afford and have been working full time for a while now.

I believe that this new funding for homeless youth can provide services that would be helpful to youth that were in the position that I was in just a year ago. Right now because I was eligible for The Connection's program I have a roof over my head, food in my stomach, and more responsibility. But there are so many more kids out there, struggling to find a place to live and not able to find any resources that can help.

From and Signed by: Virginia Ann Nunez

Date: 02/11/14