March 5, 2019

Dear Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Good Afternoon, my name is Debra Struzinski. I am speaking on behalf of The Connection’s Supportive Housing for Families program.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your long-standing commitment of continued funding for the families that this program serves.

You just heard from a handful of our clients who shared their stories of how the program has positively impacted their lives, especially the lives of their children.

Over the past 20 years, we have had the privilege to serve thousands of families. Through the provision of intensive case management and subsidized housing, thousands of children have been preserved or reunified home with their families.

In 2012, the Department of Children and Families was awarded a competitive grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Building on our strong history of demonstrated evidence of favorable outcomes this project allowed us to conduct a randomized control trial, comparing child welfare-involved families who received services in the Supportive Housing for Families program to “business as usual” with DCF.

Strikingly, over a 2-year period of follow-up, 91% of the children in the SHF program were successfully preserved with their families (i.e., not removed and placed in foster care), compared to only 60% of the children in the control condition that were preserved. Looking at children who were already in foster care, 30% of those in the SHF condition were reunified with their families, versus only 9% of the children in the control condition.

This study gives undeniable credibility to the effectiveness of this model as a child welfare intervention that keeps families together in a cost-effective manner.

Once again, thank you. It is only through your on-going commitment and dedication that we are able to provide families with the support and resources that they need in order to improve their lives and the lives of their children.

Respectfully,

Debra Struzinski