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IHC PUBLIC HEARING-TESTIMONY
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I immigrated to the United States in 1972 to reunite with my son and extended family. I raised my son in Maryland and later lived with my mother until she passed away. Then, my sister asked me to move to Georgia with her. I moved, but, I was unhappy and missed Maryland. My sister got sick of that, and, she said I should move back to Maryland to be with my son.

My son arranged for a hotel for me and my nephew came to pick me up. But, the nephew decided he needed the room more than me. It was a holiday weekend, there were no more rooms, and I went a night shelter—and that was the start of how I became homeless.

I did get back home to Maryland and had to be hospitalized for an illness that I had stopped taking my medications for. The hospital put me back on my medication and I was sent to Safe Haven until I was referred to Seneca Heights Apartments.

In my opinion, it was specifically the program at Seneca Heights and the community that came with it that has allowed me the best opportunity to rebuild my life. I moved into an independent living apartment. This made me feel normal again and my confidence in myself came back. Key to my recovery has been the setting—it is independent living where I have a regular lease, but, it also comes with a full-service, onsite program with activities to help engage and positively motivate. At Seneca I have never felt less than because all my neighbors came from homelessness and have serious conditions and challenges too. My apartment came with my own full-time case manager to help and support me every step of the way. And, these services are all offered in the place where I live. With this structure, in this type of housing program, I was able to get back to be the responsible adult, mother, and community member I was, and, again, am.

It has been since 2009 that I have lived at Seneca. Today I am fully in charge of my life and my activities. I have grown so much. More in the beginning I involved myself in the program activities, but, now my life is full, and I am a part of the local community too. I have served on the tenant council at Seneca for 8 years. I have worked a part-time job for over 5 years now. I recently, graduated with my A.A. degree in Applied Science in Mental Health. And, last month I became a United States citizen.

Lastly, I want you to know that the staff of MCCH are very qualified, respectful, and efficient. I don't know where I would be without this single site, wrap around type of housing placement with all the assistance that it provides and the community that is built in to it. We need, I needed, this type of housing setting to be all that I am today.