

Testimony of Tomasa Poz
Montgomery County Interagency Commission on Homelessness
Public Hearing
Tuesday, April 23, 2019
3 PM
Rockville Memorial Library
21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20850

Good afternoon ICH Commissioners. My name is Tomasa Poz, I am 19 years old and I currently live in Rockville, MD. I am a client of The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) in their FutureBound Transitional Housing program. English is not my native language but I came here with my social worker Katherine, who can help me with translation if you have any questions.

Before I came to NCCF, I was living in a car that belonged to a friend. I was not able to live with my family because I could not afford to pay rent to my mother, and my aunt's home was unsafe. I was failing at school because I had to work construction several days a week in order to afford food. My attendance at school was very bad. My ESOL Counselor at John F. Kennedy High School referred me to NCCF.

I especially like the Life Skills support that I receive through NCCF. Because I am still learning English and Montgomery County is difficult to navigate, I am thankful for the assistance that I received with the bus routes. My life skills training is crucial to help me prepare to live on my own. I also appreciate the employment support services. I intern two nights a week in the NCCF kitchen.

I am appearing before you tonight to represent a population of homeless people that many people may not be familiar with – homeless youth. NCCF's program provides me with a place to live and support services to help me prepare to live on my own. Without these services I would be at risk of returning to homelessness. I would not be passing all my classes or going to school and working as I do now.

I wanted to speak to you tonight because my story may be compelling, but it is not unique. There are young people in my school right now that do not have housing. I know people right now that are in a similar situation to me and it is important to me that you know this information and see that this population exists in Montgomery County. I would like to you to consider homeless youth as you make your funding decisions and make sure money is set aside to help other people who find themselves without a place to live. Thank you again for hearing my testimony.