

CIS Testimony 02/22/2019

Hi, my name is Tiffany Williams and I am a single mother of three children. My family has had a number of struggles and challenges. My children have been out of my care and in the custody of DCF. I have accessed Lund's residential treatment program two times. I have struggled with addiction. I have used the programs like reach up, food stamps, and vermont works for women. I am a stereotypical single mother with mental health and substance abuse issues.

I have hit rock bottom and been homeless without my children and a habit. But in the last three years I have come so far. I have graduated high school through New Horizons education program. I am enrolled and attending college. I have an apartment. I have custody of my three children.

My support system has made this possible. I do not have a big family. I have no parents. What I do have is a support system of professionals. I need every single one. They all play a different role in supporting me.

CIS-Shelly, I nominated her for the lifetime achievement award and she will be presented with this in April. Shelly has been a part of my life in the role as family educator since I left Lund's residential treatment in 2016. CIS has made a major difference in my life, my daughter Sha'Asia's life, and my two older boys. Shay struggled with regulating her behavior and separating from me. My home visitor referred me to the Howard center for PCIT. Parent child interaction therapy. I was sceptical, nervous and a bit timid. My CIS worker eased my mind. She would help by transporting me to and from the appointments. Helping me with the supplies needed to do "special time". In the program I learned how to be more attuned to Shay. I learned a specific way to use time out. To issue direct commands. In short the program changed the entire way that I talked to my daughter and disciplined her. Learning this transformed our relationship and her behavior. The referrals have helped me get in contact with Vt Family Network for advocacy relating to my older children and their IEPs. She comes to my home when I need her. She is a constant presence in my life, even just a check in or call can make a difference. With the CIS program my daughter has benefited in ways that were not available to my older sons. With the help that she has received, she will not have the complexity of problems that my older son has.

If you cut the funding to this program, I believe that you will just end up paying more in the end. This program helps the children while they are younger. This a proven prevention program that mitigates the effects of early childhood trauma. I'm asking that in your funding decisions you ensure that any extra funding that you have goes into the CIS funding. I've seen this work with my daughter, and I've also lived through not having this program for my son. The differences are astronomical, and I live with the consequences of not having the early intervention with my son.

