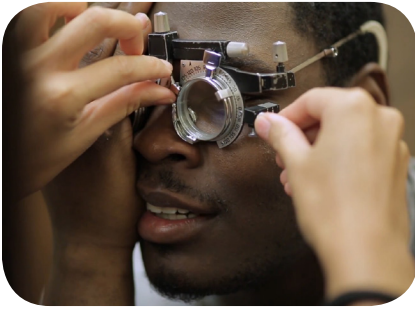


CHILD SIGHT



I LIVE IN TRINITY'S PLACE. ANYBODY CAN BE ABLE TO COME THERE THAT'S LGBTQ. I DO NOT HAVE MY OWN ROOM. I SHARE A BIG QUEUE SPACE. WE HAVE TO WAKE UP AT 6:30 BUT WE DO HAVE TO LEAVE BY 8 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

EVERY MORNING. I CARE FOR MY GRANDMOTHER. SHE HAS DEMENTIA. WE HAVE COFFEE AND BREAKFAST TOGETHER. I LIVE IN NEWARK. NEW JERSEY. I'M STILL THERE. I'M STILL LIVING IN THE SAME HOUSE THAT I GREW UP IN. I'M USUALLY UP AND OUT OF THE BED BY 5:30.

MY NAME IS TONYA DANIELS. I'M THE PROGRAM MANAGER FOR HELEN KELLER INTERNATIONAL'S CHILD SIGHT PROGRAM HERE IN NEW YORK. WE TARGET CHILDREN OR STUDENTS THAT LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL. WE ARE ON TARGET TO SCREEN A LITTLE OVER 30,000 STUDENTS THIS YEAR.

I STARTED PROVIDING SERVICES TO THE HOMELESS YOUTH A LITTLE OVER THREE YEARS AGO. WE STARTED THE SERVICES AT THE COVENANT HOUSE AND MOVED ON TO THE ALI FORNEY CENTER AS WELL AS WOMEN IN NEED. 75 PERCENT OF THE YOUTH WE SEE IN THE HOMELESS SHELTERS END UP NEEDING EYEGASSES. SOME OF THEM HAVEN'T HAD GLASSES EVER AND THEN THERE'S SOME THAT HAVEN'T HAD GLASSES IN YEARS.

MY NAME IS CHEYENNE BARSIO. I GREW UP IN THE QUEENS. I WAS LIVABLE TWO MONTHS AND I WILL GO AND SEE MY DAD FROM TIME TO TIME. I GOT ABUSED BY MY MOTHER'S BOYFRIEND AND I WENT TO FOSTER CARE. THEY MOVED ME FAR AWAY FROM MY FAMILY SO THAT THIS WAY MY MOM WOULDN'T TRY AND FOLLOW. I HEARD ABOUT HELEN KELLER FROM ALI FORNEY CENTER. IT FELT LIKE I CAN BE ABLE TO BREATHE AGAIN.

WHEN CHEYENNE RECEIVED HER GLASSES TODAY, SHE ACTUALLY JUMPED UP AND DOWN AND IT MADE ME FEEL GOOD. I HAD A WARM FEELING INSIDE TO KNOW THAT I WAS A PART OF HER HAPPINESS. I THINK IT'S A STEREOTYPE THAT ANYBODY JUST ASSUMED HOMELESS MEANS ON THE STREET, LITERALLY, BUT HOMELESS COULD MEAN A WHOLE SLEW OF THINGS. THEY HAVE EXTRAORDINARY TALENTS, WELL-SPOKEN BUT JUST HAVE BEEN THROUGH DIFFICULT ISSUES OR SITUATIONS IN THEIR LIVES. DOESN'T MEAN THEY CAN'T GO ON AND BE SUCCESSFUL.

THIS IS WHERE CHILD SIGHT COMES IN, TO HELP WITH THAT. JUST A SIMPLE PAIR OF GLASSES, IT CAN CHANGE SOMEONE'S WORLD. I HAVE HAD THIS DREAM FROM WHEN I WAS SEVEN THAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO COOK AND OWN MY OWN BUSINESS. IT IS MY HOPE THAT CHILD SIGHT COULD EXPAND. I CANNOT IMAGINE MYSELF ANYWHERE ELSE OTHER THAN HKI IT SAYS A LOT FOR THE AGENCY AND MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE THAT I WORK WITH AND WHAT I DO ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS.