

“Moving or Movin”

A story of one of our Detroit students who graduated.

This was performed by Jessica “Decky” Alexander at the 2018 Telling Tales.

I miss my mom. She died. I was 14. And after that, I had to move. A lot.

I made some mistakes, but I try to do better for myself and my son now. People are constantly telling me all the things I did wrong. No one thought I would make it. My grandma told me I wouldn't graduate.

I miss my mom. I stayed with family but I didn't like their rules and I ran away for a boy. You know, like some teenagers do. I was wrong, but I don't think I should have been treated how I was, and left. I don't think they should have called the police on me, but they were worried about me.. I guess... I walked to get there, they found me. There was a nice woman who let me stay at her house, but they found me still.

I stayed with other family members. There was a man at their house who raped me.

I ran away from another family member because she hit me with an extension cord. Not the wire part, but the plug part. I don't like the way she is. She doesn't know how to talk to people. I can't talk to her about things. She likes to be louder than everyone else. I don't like the way she runs her house. I miss my mom, I need someone to talk to about things. I need my mom.

I lived with friends. I didn't like staying there. There were too many people in and out of the house. I thought they were friends. I don't know why they treated me like that. When I went back to the house all of my stuff was gone. They stole all of my stuff, my clothes, my phone, everything. I don't like they way they lived. I don't think you should treat people like that.

I like things a particular way. I don't like how some people don't take care of their homes. You are suppose to put things where they belong, sweep mop and clean. I don't like a lot of mess.

I wasn't sure how many schools I had been to, so I wrote it down. Some schools I went to more than once. I think I went to 7 different schools. It was so hard moving all the time that sometimes I lost motivation and stopped going. I moved a total of 17 times after my mom died.

I finally moved into a shelter while trying to graduate. I needed to have my own space. I don't want people treating me badly and I like things a particular way. I knew how I was going to run my home. It would be clean and I would teach my son the things I wanted. I was able to get my own housing while I was there.

The shelter enrolled me into Covenant House Academy, because I was older than 18 and needed to catch up on my credits. I got sad at school sometimes and felt lonely. Sometimes people who I thought were friends didn't treat me well. When I felt like that I would talk to the school resource coordinator. She introduced me to Ms. Kristina from Student Advocacy Center and told me she thought it would be helpful for me to work with her. It was nice to have Ms. Kristina there to talk to and keep me focused on my goals. We were always talking about what I had got done in class from week to week. I would tell her “my science is at 82% completion!” and she would be excited for me. It was encouraging. Ms. Kristina made me feel like she believed in me, and that helped me believe in myself.

It's nice having Ms. Kristina to talk to. I miss my mom. Ms. Kristina checked in on me everyday she was in the school. She called and text me too. Sometimes she'd help me look for somewhere to stay or help me with my housing paperwork. She remembers when we went to the doctors together and I found out I was pregnant. I wish I had had my mom there.

I finished all my classwork. I was going to graduate. After everything. (pause)

Ms. Kristina and I went out to eat to celebrate. We had been talking about going out to eat together for a while. I like seafood. We went to Fishbones downtown Detroit. There crab legs were so big. They were bigger than I thought they were going to be. It's too bad the waterfall in the building wasn't working. I had never been there before, but I bet that waterfall looked cool when it was working.

I wasn't going to go to my graduation. I had a real bad week and didn't have a way there. Ms. Kristina came and got me. I was nervous to walk across the stage. I didn't want to do it.

Ms. Kristina made me. I'm glad I did.

No one thought I was going to make it. But I did.