

Written Testimony – FINAL

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I see many high school drop outs walk through Nine Star's door. They're trying to do what I've done- complete their high school education and attempt to move on to bigger and better things. What I mean by that is they want to get a better paying job and/ or further their education.

There are many barriers that youth have to endure while they're finishing school. One major barrier is peer pressure. Youth are easily distracted by their peers. Youth are also going through puberty which causes a lot of confusion and then youth have a lot of built up emotions, because of their confusion. Youth make bad choices because of these pressures and distractions. These barriers ultimately affect youth's education.

I know, because I've experienced this. As soon as I got into middle school, I started to experience peer pressure. My friends were way more important than my education. I also had a lot of built up anger; because of the way my life was going. I let this anger out through the bad choices that I made.

I made it to high school on time and had an even more difficult time. I truly didn't care about the world around me and I allowed the barriers in my life to affect me to a point where I couldn't focus on my education. I gave up. Six days before tenth grade ended I decided to drop out of school. Most of my teachers felt it was necessary for me to sit in the principal's office for the entire class period because of how disruptive I was. I told my mom exactly what was going on and she supported my decision.

The two years that followed I got into a correspondence school that I did fairly well in. The school got shut down due to funding reasons, so I had to find another correspondence school. I did. It was an online school, but that didn't work for me either. I told my mother that I wanted to get my GED and move on to college. Once again, she supported my decision. I just wanted to finish my high school education so that I could move on to college and make something of myself. In 2005, I finished all of my GED tests within a month and a half and received my diploma that December. For me, it was one of the greatest achievements in my life. Now it was time to move on to college.

I started taking classes at the University of Anchorage in September 2006, and finished my first semester of my freshman year. I started classes in my second semester, and within a month's time withdrew from classes, because of life situations that took an emotional toll on me. My nephew passed away January 3rd, 2007 and after his death I was depressed. On March 14th 2007 I found out that I was pregnant. I stayed of school, because I didn't want to go through ANY more hardships. I was also put on financial suspension.

In January of 2008 I started going to an online school, the University of Phoenix. I was doing extremely well with my classes, however, in May of 2008 I found out I was pregnant again and started doing poorly in classes. Eventually I got dropped from one of the classes and failed two others. After the classes ended and I received my grades and the school told me that I could not attend the college again until I dealt with my financial suspension.

I paid UAA the money that was due to them, and in the process of paying University of Phoenix. I'm also working on getting back into UAA. It's my goal to stay in college and work on my degrees that I want to obtain so that I can better mine and my family's situation.

The barriers that I will have while I'm going to school include finding childcare for the time that I am in school, and being able to keep focused so that I can do really well in my classes. I want to become successful in life and that means having a college education and being able to offer the world more than what the next person can and that's knowledge and wisdom that I hold because of my personal life experiences and college education.