

JUST WORDS

The Stories of Working People In Our Community

Episode 1: Lucille Robinson

Welcome to JUST WORDS. The stories of working people in our community.

Dope. My daughter is on dope, and do you know I didn't know what to look for? I didn't know how a person looked on dope! The worker told me what she looked like. The little boy fell out the window. The worker called me asked me if I would take him, so I took him.

Lucille Robinson is a grandmother...like 12000 other grandparents in the city of Baltimore she is raising her grandchildren because of death, divorce, drug addiction or incarceration. For a time she had foster parent status and lost it because of a leaky roof in a home she didn't even own.

I was married in Columbia, nice home. I was married and depended on him to take care of us, and he didn't do it. We came to Baltimore city, had a fire, and the marriage broke up. They always say a woman without a mate is poor, and I became poor real quick. But then there is a foster grandparent grant. As taking my grandchildren, took months before I received anything...And when the house I lived in over Chelsea Terrace that needed the roof fixed, they cut money off...when they cut money off I went downhill like someone pushed me on sled... I had to go thru welfare, we had a fire, kids had no blankets, no sheets, and believe me the welfare do not help you with these things. Over there when I finally get on my feet again, they snatched the money. Nobody could have never told me in Columbia that I would be in the state that I am right now...I'm sorry, I'm sorry, but when I think about how I done come down at my age...nobody could have ever told me at my age I would be without a mate, financially broke. I keep saying it isn't just me alone, when you go on welfare you see lots of young people but when I see old people coming in, my age, I say, my god, look at us coming in here begging for help. Baltimore city has no pity on grandparents. You hear me; I think almost you could point. When I lost my home I said to myself, lord, I even called a shelter because I felt like I was to the point I was going in a shelter, because I didn't know what else to do. I had been to everyplace and no place could I afford. Give \$700 a month you can't rent no place. Here I am finally, everything I make goes into this place. I send \$725 a month away, my whole social security, it's gone. So...but. We still, we're surviving, we really are, we're really surviving...don't ask me how, I just don't know...God, I wish I could stop crying. I don't know how we are making it. I just know my children and grandchildren are surviving this day, and we're going to beat it.

Music: Nina Simone, *When I was in my Prime*

Nina Simone, *Plain Gold Ring*

Produced by Jessica Phillips. Hosted by Marc Steiner.

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