

JUST WORDS

The Stories of Working People In Our Community

Episode 27: Keonya

Welcome to Just Words—the stories of working people in our community.

What you're hearing is the sounds of students and family arriving at Calverton Middle School for the 8th grade graduation.

There were many mothers in the crowd, but one of those women was especially happy to be there.

How do I feel? Elated! Overwhelmed. How do you feel Jerome? About Keonya graduating? Fine? That's all? {laughs}

That's Sheila Christian-Cannon. She's as proud as a mother of an honor student would be at this moment, but there is more than the happiness of a child done well. There is a relief and joy at seeing a daughter, who less than two months ago was fighting for her life at Shock Trauma, now walk across the stage. Her daughter Keonya was caught in a crossfire, shot in the abdomen while walking in her west Baltimore neighborhood. The past two months haven't been easy for Sheila, Keonya, or her father, Bobby.

It's been a task dealing with what has happened to Keonya and to know it is still not even at the halfway mark because they say they don't even know how long it will take until she is even halfway normal. She can't hardly, sleep at night and still can't eat anything and it's been a task to deal with this.

Sheilah is feeling the stress of the situation as well.

I stay frustrated a lot because I don't just have Keonya, I have other little ones. Ten year old, 5 year old, and then my other kids that's calling me around the clock because I am a family oriented mother. It's frustrating. My home business is still on hold and my husband isn't working. Main thing we are trying to do is relocate with some help. We would like to go to Baltimore County but we can't afford it because the homes are outrageous. What I've looked at in accordance to what I have liked to have is, the closet place and most inexpensive is near York or Dallastown PA. So it will be totally different for me and my family because we will be nowhere near where we grew up. My family is not there so it will be totally different for us. I will not have anybody to run to in the middle of the night, but in reference to what we are looking for, it is the only place we can go. Like I said the homes is running 300 to 400 thousand dollars. I can't do that.

Sheilah and her family will have to move an hour away to be able to find a home large enough for the kids, the parents, and grandparents in a safe neighborhood with a decent school that they can afford. And Baltimore will lose another law-abiding, loving family, the kind of people the city needs to keep any hope of turning the tide of violence and failure around.

Music: Asheru, *Soul*

Produced by Jessica Phillips. Hosted by Marc Steiner.

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