

Testimony before the Joint Committee on Education

By

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Dear Chairwoman and Chairman, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kimber Linnell and I want to thank you very much for this opportunity to talk about my experience with Communities In Schools and my great site coordinator Cassie Myers.

I am a caregiver to my mom and younger brother who both have medical issues. When my mom is too ill I will take her place in meetings like the IEP (Individualized Education Plan Meetings (IEP)s for my three younger brothers.

I am also a senior in high school. Cassie Myers from Communities In Schools has been so helpful to me, particularly for my future plans.

Communities In Schools has helped me and encouraged me to become college ready. No one else had ever offered to help me get started . I was referred by my art teacher who knew I could use the help.

The Communities in School Site Coordinator at Ottawa High School, Cassie Myers took me to Neosho Community College to meet with the dean about the classes they offer for my career. We discussed the classes needed to become a mortician and which would be the better test to take the Compass or the ACT.

Cassie will be taking me back to take the Compass test sometime in February.

My mom who was absolutely clueless about the financial aid forms was relieved when Cassie offered to help me fill it out.

She also introduced me to an e-mentor who has been helpful in how to pursue my career and helping to get my name out to mortuaries so I will be able to job shadow and get a job after graduation.

Communities in School has given my family vouchers for shoes which helped my mom because she no longer had to scrounge for money for our new shoes. They are also helping us find a home to rent that we can afford.

I was able to experience the first Senior Day on the Job for Ottawa High School that Communities In schools organized. Though I did not learn much about mortuary science I was able to see the many different opportunities in the community. I have seen that even if I do not want a career in building trucks they do have job opportunities that are available for those just starting out.

There were also internships like at American Eagle that we are able to apply for.

The best part was learning of a scholarship that the Ransom Memorial Hospital offers to college students in a medical field study.

Many of the students have said that the day was an eye opener to all the possibilities there are if one field of work does not work out.

These are just a few ways that Cassie Myers and Communities In Schools has improved life for me and my school. I urge you to find ways to put more people like Cassie in more schools to help more kids like me.

Thank you for your time.

Kimber Linnell