

**Moving from Humiliation and Exclusion to Participation:
Ending Poverty in All its Forms**

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Sometimes, I feel humiliated because I have in my heart what I want to do with my kids, but I can't because of my situation right now. I don't have the funds to have fun with my kids, the sort of things that you realize how important it was when you get older. This summer, we couldn't do any family activity because we didn't have the money, and when we did have the money, we had bills and everything to pay for. As parents, we feel self-humiliated.

Because we live in a shelter, we feel like our daughter is labeled, like she's not as important as the regular kids. Destinie had a lot of troubles last year. She needed more help. A lot of people in shelters have moved around a lot so the kids have to keep on adjusting to the different schools and new environment. So sometimes it may take more time for a child to adjust and I don't think that the schools realize that. Destinie said that when she asks for help the teacher wouldn't sit and help her. We tried to help her as much as we could at home, the help that she needed in school she wasn't getting. That's why we decide to switch Destinie's school so she can get the right education.

It really hurts me to know that in Kindergarten, people still look down on kids. I realize that when I was in school, I had problems, because sometimes I was acting up, like the other kids were acting up but also because all the teachers did was to pass me. I am 27 years old and I can't read and write on my grade level. I always got passed by, so I had to drop out. School is supposed to be a learning space for everybody, but because I live in a shelter, or because you're homeless or because you're poor you can't get the same education as any other person? Just take the time, and, not rush through it, not try to pass it by. We are smart people and could be even smarter people! And, that's for everybody! That's what I believe. And it's so important because, if we don't go to school, we are more than likely going to jail.

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As adults, we keep being humiliated. I used to work in a day care. I think everybody loved me. There was one boy who had autism. He wouldn't speak to anybody, he would just shake his head to say yes or no. I was there for two weeks, and he would have full conversations with me. Then, one day, they told me I was not interacting with the kids and they fired me. They never gave me a real explanation.

Being in poverty, it's struggling all the time. You have no choice. You may be able to keep a roof over your head but not be able to pay for the transportation you need to go to work.

I hope my daughter is going to do better. I'm going to try. And, then the next person won't say wow I'm stuck here, so I just do the best I can.

I am also going to make an effort. I'm going to go back to school. I am gonna try to do everything I can. I want to build a center, a building where different people come together. In the center, I want to have kids, pregnant moms, fathers, I want to help everybody, through schooling, trades, martial arts... I've been down on myself, for a while, thinking, I can't do this, but like the more of these shelters I'm going to, the more everybody drives me. I want to do something more. I don't want money. I want to give kids a different view of life.

To end poverty our strength is our hope! Even when we get locked up, they can't take away our freedom, our rights, our spirit, what we believe inside of us. I believe that around the world, France, Italy, the Middle East, down South, if we all could just put away our differences and join together... United we stand, divided we fall! The change will have to happen.