

## A Better Life

At 16 years old, Debbie was homeless and hooked on illegal drugs. She grew up with an abusive father and had been in and out of foster care placement - and then found herself on the streets. Debbie did whatever she had to do to survive.

Before she was 20, she had children and faced even greater struggles than before. As a result of Debbie's substance use and lack of stable housing, the removal of her children from her care became a real possibility.

When she was accepted into the San Francisco Families Moving Forward (FMF) initiative, Debbie's life revolved around keeping her children with her and out of foster care homes. She did not want them to experience the same trauma she was forced to live through while growing up.

Debbie's FMF case-manager helped her identify housing options, complete applications, and guided her through the process of finding a home and the resources to cover major costs.

Once she found an affordable apartment, Debbie also gained access to services to address her substance use. Because of the extensive supportive housing network surrounding her and her family, she entered an intense treatment program and has been clean now for several months.



Currently, Debbie is preparing to finish her AA degree at the community college where she has studied to be a medical assistant while interning at a local doctor's office. Her ultimate goal is to become a registered nurse.

Debbie is so grateful to FMF for helping her through her struggles. Seeing her kids every day, together in their own home, keeps her going and motivates her to reach even higher.

"I want my kids to have stability and a place to call home," says Debbie. "I want them to go to school close to where they live, not to move around all the time, never knowing what to expect. It's all about giving them the life I never had as a child."