

YouthBuild Testimony

Hello Chair Champion, Co- Chair Mohamed and committee members.

My name is Hser Pwe, I was born in Burma. I was grew up in a Thailand refugee camp. I lived there with my family for 12 years. We had to move there because of the civil war and Burmese soldier were trying to kill us and take our land. This the reason we had to flee our village and move to the Thailand refugee camp. When we lived in refugee I felt like we lived in prison because cannot go outside of camp, there were very few opportunities in camp.

In 2012 I moved to the United States. I did not know anything about America and I did not speak and English. I went to LEAP High School for a year but it was very difficult for me. I did not speak English and it was hard for me to understand what teacher said. After a year I was unable to attend school there because I'm over 21 years old.

Luckily for me I found the YouthBuild program in GAP school. I then realized I could have a high school diploma and learn construction skills, I finally felt like I had an opportunity and a future. In YouthBuild I learned a lot of English and started to communicate with others, but I really learned to love construction work. My wife, brother and cousin also graduated from the Youthbuild program at GAP School.

I graduated in 2014, the staff helped me find as job in floor covering and I joined the union. I still work there now, it has been a great 8 years for me. I found a career I love and I make over \$44/hr. and I have worked my way up to being a foreman. I'm so thankful for this program and all the staff who have helped me. Thank you so much to the YouthBuild program for giving me this big opportunity! Because of this program I can speak English, support my wife and children and I have even became a U.S. citizen. Without YouthBuild I do not know where I would be today.

Hser Pwe

Youthbuild graduate 2014