

Hi, my name is Farhat Dean. First of all, I am very honored to be here to talk about FIRN. I came to the United States in 2000 and have lived in Howard County ever since. I was in an abusive situation and was alone in this country with no help. Ms. Judy Templeton, supervisor at Family and Children Services, helped to rescue me and to bring me to FIRN.

I was very terrified because I was alone and new in this country and I didn't know anyone. However, I met the most wonderful staff members at FIRN: Kristin, Bonny Knight, Laura Pfeifer, Alexis, Walter, and Pedro. FIRN has the most wonderful staff who welcomes everybody regardless of race or nationality! FIRN felt like home and I trusted the staff enough to talk about myself and my situation. I had two minor children and life was very hard with no job and no place to live. FIRN helped me tremendously to better myself. Kristin and Laura helped me get into an interpreter training. Laura also helped me to find interpreting jobs so I could earn some money to take care of my kids.

Being a single mom with two minor kids was not easy so FIRN helped me to file papers for my citizenship. They helped me file a fee waiver because I could not afford the immigration fee. Because of them, I'm a very proud citizen of the USA. Next, they helped me to sponsor my parents so they could help take care of my kids while I'm working to support my family. By the grace of God and the assistance from FIRN, my parents came to the United States to help me to raise my family. I took an early childhood teacher training and worked in a private school as a teacher to take care of my parents and my children.

It has been almost six years since my parents became permanent residents and they are in the process of getting their citizenship. Jesmin helped me to fill out the applications and fee waiver as I cannot pay the fee. My family and I are thankful to FIRN and the donor agencies who have helped me to fulfill my dreams, as well as thousands of other families through this amazing organization. I really respect and love every single staff member. They are like angels working at FIRN and they welcome and help all the people in need of assistance.

Thank you once again for giving me an opportunity to talk in favor of FIRN. Thank you so much.