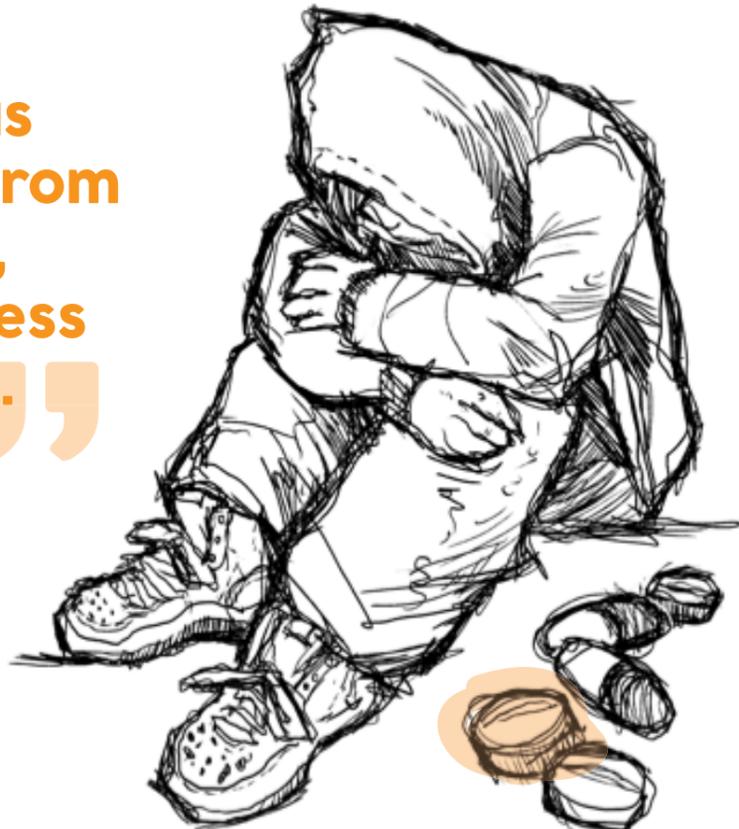


I am Henry

“When I was removed from my family, I felt helpless and alone.”



When I was 14 years old, I lived in Brooklyn with my mom and my siblings. Mom worked long shift jobs to take care of our family and I helped care for my two brothers and sister. Older neighborhood boys lured me into being a lookout while they sold drugs because I wanted the money to help my mom pay bills and feed the family. I wanted a pair of new sneakers for basketball tryouts, too. The guys trusted me and started to let me sell a little bit. **I got caught and arrested.**

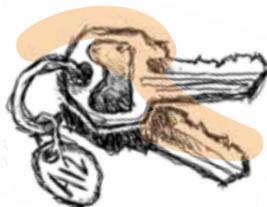


I was removed from my home and taken to a campus in Westchester, where I lived in a cottage with 14 other boys. I really missed my family and I worried about them all the time. I felt helpless and alone. I started a new school, but they put me in all the wrong classes, so I fell behind. I didn't trust the staff, the rules were strict, and I tried therapy for the first time. **I was matched with a mentor named Matt through Connections.** He was really cool, and he got me. We started seeing each other a few times a month which felt good to have someone I could trust and talk to.

When I went back home to Brooklyn, it was hard to stay away from my old friends in the neighborhood and I got caught up again, so mom kicked me out. I had to go live in a place in Staten Island and I hated it. **I continued to see Matt a few times a month.** We got good food and talked about life. He showed me where he worked and helped me think about jobs I might like. **He was the only adult who really knew me anymore and the only one who wasn't paid to care about me.**

“Matt has always been there to let me know I'm worth something and I'm not alone.”

I'm 18 now and I live in supportive housing in my own apartment. There are counselors and other residents, but it's more independent. I got a job at a restaurant and

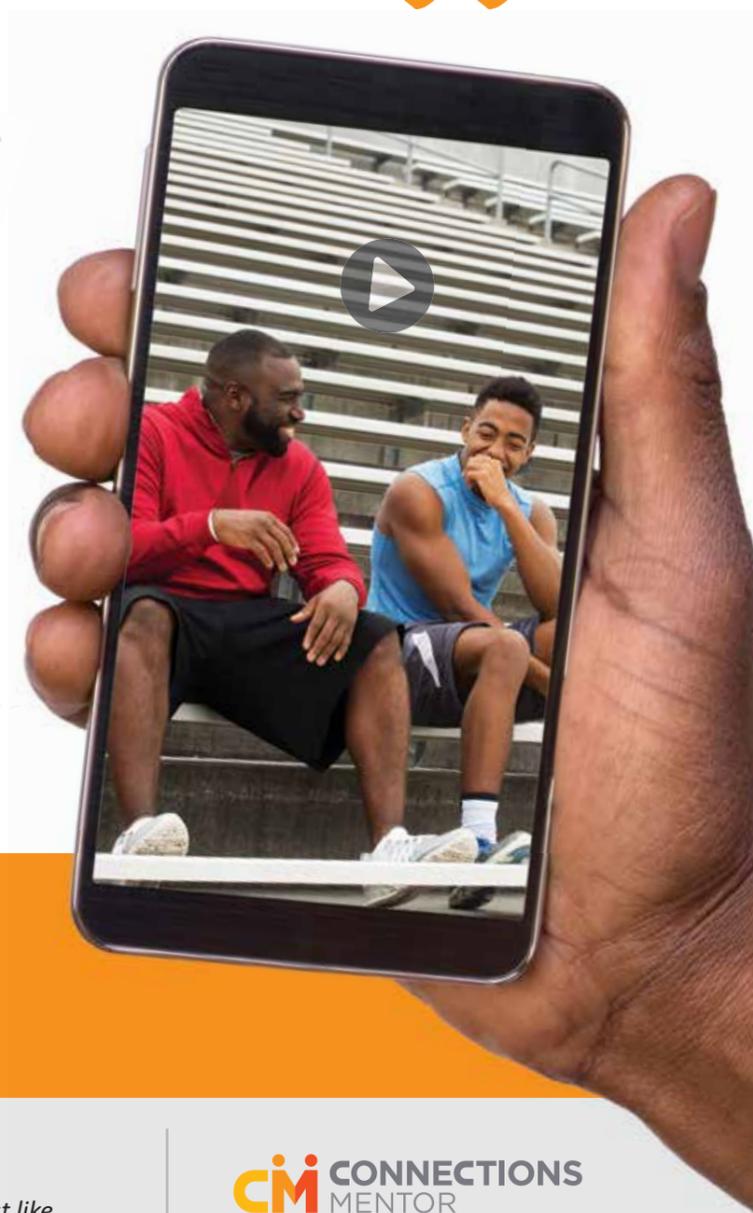


Matt helped me open my first bank account. He taught me how to go grocery shopping and helped me learn about health insurance and other adult stuff. We see each other less now, but our relationship is

stronger than ever. Nobody has known me as long as Matt has, and I know he really cares about me and is there to talk when I need him. I really care about him, too.



LEARN MORE
connectionsmentor.org



Henry's mentor Matt, like many Connections mentors, has been there through multiple placements, schools, and boroughs. Growing up is a little easier when you're not alone and you have a trusted adult alongside you.

Mentor Henry

There are hundreds of young people just like Henry throughout the NYC area who want an adult connection. Join us to help make a difference in someone's life.

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