

**Good afternoon members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Audrey Giltner, I am 16 years old and I am from Clackamas County.**

**Growing up I didn't have the easiest childhood. I played softball and basketball ever since I was old enough to and it helped me destress a lot. My father has never been a big part of my life. I have had a step dad since I was 3 years old. He was an alcoholic, and has always been very verbally abusive and yelled a lot. As I got older I had anger problems and I judged everyone before I got to know them; especially girls and adults.**

**My 8th grade year was when things really went downhill. I quit playing basketball and thought that I was unstoppable. I was going to do whatever I wanted no matter what. I started doing things that were harming myself and my community. In January of 2012 the best thing that could have happened to me finally happened. I was arrested and taken in. A couple weeks later I met my court counselor. I was at high risk and for a few months she let it slide by to give me a chance. I later was put on probation for further reasoning. I was signed up for Girls Circle and for my community service hours, a group called Ice. The first day of girls circle I considered myself better than everyone else. Towards the end, that was not the case. I was still headed down a bad path, but with a different perspective of life. With all the amazing activities we did in**

girls circle and the difference between each individual, I learned to not judge people before you know them. We didn't all become close friends but we all accepted each other and enjoyed our time in group. We always had fun together and through that we were learning how to have fun in a positive way and I believe that that is very important for each individual to have in their life. The first day of Ice group I was looking forward to meeting everyone and getting to know everybody because I knew that it would be a good experience if I went into it with a positive attitude. The community service wasn't fun but for the first time in a long time, I felt good about myself. I made so many good, positive memories while attending these groups. All these groups are amazing because through groups like these, we all made friends while doing positive things for our communities instead of negative. These groups are very important because without them, I would never get the opportunity to experience and talk with kids going through the same stuff I was going through and I wouldn't have a lot of the skills that I have now.

Today I stand here healthier than ever. I've been clean and sober for over a year, my relationships with girls, peers, and my community is strong. I continue playing softball and have started basketball again this year. I average an A-B in school and have many goals that I plan to achieve in my future. Clackamas County's juvenile youth groups have made a huge impact on my life and

**taught me so many things that I am so grateful for. Without these experiences I don't know where I would be in life right now and I dont want to know. Clackamas County needs to continue all of its skills groups and programs to give kids the same opportunities i had and allow them to change their lives around and have a better future just like me.**