

Name: Sahrah Song
Gender: Female
Date of Birth: October 12, 1988 (35 years old)
Address: 80 Bishopp Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20905
Email: sunsong60@gmail.com
Phone: 301-802-5405
Diagnosis: Blind, Non-Verbal, Severe Intellectual Disability
Service: DDA Self-Directed Services (SDS)

Background & Challenges Before SDS (Traditional Services):

For **13 years**, Sahrah was trapped in a **neglectful system that failed to meet her basic needs**:

- **Blind and non-verbal**, she was unable to advocate for herself, and her discomfort was ignored.
- **Left sitting in the same chair all day**, with **limited restroom access**, leading to **visible distress and accidents**.
- **Unexplained injuries**: Came home with **bruised and bleeding knees**, with **no accountability from staff**.
- **Lack of supervision on field trips**: Forced to **eat meals early** to avoid disruptions and was **left unsupervised in food courts** while staff shopped.
- **Family's barriers to advocacy**: As **first-generation immigrants with limited English proficiency**, her family **feared retaliation** from the system if they demanded better care.

Improvements After SDS (Personalized 1:1 Support):

Through **Self-Directed Services (SDS)**, Sahrah's life has transformed:

- **Emotional and behavioral stability**:
 - **Fewer distress episodes, improved engagement**, and a **higher quality of life**.
 - Can now **participate in sensory-friendly activities** without discomfort.
- **Health and mobility improvements**:
 - Transitioned from **liquid-only meals to eating solid foods**, greatly improving her **nutrition and physical strength**.
 - **More physically active**, engaging in **sensory-based movement** that keeps her engaged and reduces frustration.
- **Joy and engagement**:
 - Now **sings, moves, and expresses happiness** more frequently.
 - Enjoys **listening to music, sensory-based activities, and spending time with her family**.
- **Safety and dignity restored**:

- With **1:1 personalized care**, her **needs are finally met**, ensuring **she is treated with respect, patience, and proper supervision**.

For the first time in **over a decade**, **Sahrah is thriving**, and her family has **peace of mind knowing she is safe and supported**.

Why SDS Matters:

- **Provides critical, individualized care that prioritizes Sahrah's unique needs as a blind and non-verbal individual.**
- **Ensures safety, dignity, and engagement, addressing the failures of traditional programs.**
- **Prevents neglect, restores quality of life, and promotes emotional and physical well-being.**

Call to Action:

Governor Wes Moore's proposed budget cuts to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) put individuals like Sahrah at risk. Reduced funding would:

- **Jeopardize her care hours, threatening her stability and progress.**
- **Undo the incredible improvements she has made in behavior, nutrition, and sensory engagement.**
- **Force families into unsuitable, ineffective programs that have already failed them before.**

I urge you to **protect and prioritize SDS funding within HCBS programs**. Without it, **families like ours will face unnecessary hardship, and Sahrah's well-being will be jeopardized**. **Please ensure that individuals like Sahrah continue to thrive through the support of SDS.**