

#WINSDay

Imagine there is a knock on the door and when you opened it, there stood Tampa Police Department and your landlord saying you have till 6 p.m. to be out of this residence.

On Friday January, 18, Ms. Mareno was awakened by the City of Tampa Police and her Landlord with eviction papers. She only had 4 days to be out of her residence. Ms. Mareno has 3 school age children. The same time she was issued the eviction papers, her son Maleek was participating in our SUSU event. Maleek did not have a worry in the world so we thought. With this heavy weight on his heart and being separated from his mother and his two younger siblings for a month, this high school senior had more than graduating on his mind.

Today, Wednesday, January 23, at 4:30 p.m. Ms. Mareno called my cell asking for help to purchase Maleek his graduation cap and gown. I started to explain to her that I did not know of any agencies that has funding for her request. I told her to try the social worker at Middleton High School. She then said, "Ms. Lafe what about a hotel or housing? I said wait, why are you asking me all these question, whats wrong and be honest? She told me as her voiced cracked how she was evicted and to add to that crisis, she and her boyfriend got into a hug fight. Her only need was for a bath and a good night sleep. She applied for emergency housing but that placed her only on a waiting list.

Ms. Mareno proceeded to say she will sleep in her car till she gets housing. I contacted Gwen Myers and explained the situation and asked her to please contact someone in her circle to assist this parent and her children. By the grace of God and the act of a Servant Leader, Ms. Mareno was issued a voucher for a hotel stay for 3 days and will be enrolling in the CDC Workforce Development and Building Strong Families Program. There is much work to be done and it starts with CDC of Tampa.

A HUGE Thank You to Gwen Myers and Lafe Thomas for being those Servant Leaders.