

## JUST WORDS

### The Stories of Working People In Our Community

#### Episode 22: Keonya

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Welcome to Just Words—the stories of working people in our community.

I'm Marc Steiner.

**This is the hospital room of Keonya Christian-Cannon, a 14 year old honor roll student at Calverton Middle School.**

Keonya was coming home from school, and something she does is, she comes in, she gets out at 3, her younger brother gets out at 3:30..she comes in, good afternoon, takes her books puts them on the bed...goes back out and back to the same school to pick up her brother. This day she never made it because she was interrupted by gunfire.

**That's her mother, Sheila Christian-Canon. Her daughter was caught in the crossfire of a fight between possible gang members. The neighborhood rumor is that a 12 year old boy pulled the trigger. Keonya's at shock trauma. She won't be leaving for awhile.**

According to what the doctors say to us on a daily basis, everything is long term. It is going to be months. We don't know if she will be here months. We do know the tubes that she has will be there for quite sometime. As far as eating, she won't be eating for a good while.

**The bullet ripped through Keonya's abdomen, damaging her liver, bowels, and kidneys—doctors had to remove her gallbladder—her pancreas is leaking. She is constant pain—physical and emotional.**

I don't feel too good because I can't see all my friends and finish school.

**The entire family is feeling the trauma of what happened to Keonya and the worry over what comes next.**

I mean it does wear you out to stay in this hospital, night and day, not knowing what her condition going to be. My daughter often tells me how afraid she is. One thing we were doing is try to move out of the neighborhood and she was one of the ones who didn't want me to move. But she told us the second day she could talk that she never wants to go back there. Now what am I do as a mother to get it from the neighborhood. I can't just literally take her up and move her. We will do what we could but what am I supposed to do with my child to relocate her and make things possible? That's what parents are supposed to do, to make things possible for our children...and now I am caught up in a position where I cannot do that.

**Keonya's father was granted an emergency two week leave from his job but will soon have to return...her mother has stopped working. With a long hospital stay certain, money is a problem. There are two younger children in the family, and they need to be cared for as well. This whole family has stepped into a nightmare—and for what—battles over gang turf? Because a 12 year old boy thought so little of life that he could do something like this? Whatever the reason, the guns were in the street...**

The bullets don't have any names on them. It's all random, but it shouldn't be. guns just in the air, anyone could be outside, anybody, older person, younger person, anybody. So where are we, caught in catch 22 again, my child injured, their child may go away, may not go away. I tell you, circumstances today...

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Produced by Jessica Phillips. Hosted by Marc Steiner.

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