

# Change the Narrative Fellowship Program

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## Kate's Story

My son was born into a world of trauma, but he has no idea. Like any good Mother I try to shield and protect him as best I can. I protected us both during my pregnancy when my partner is abusive to us, jeopardizing both our lives. I left that relationship with my son and some serious PTSD. I was barely existing, I relied on my own Mother, a non-profit and the State to help me bridge this difficult time.

The first time I used my WIC benefits I once again had to protect my child. At home, I had prepared as best I could. I wrote a list of the approved items based upon the tri-folded brochure they gave me at the office, but I had no idea what I was doing. Still nervous, I drove to my local grocery store practicing my breathing the entire time. Smell the roses- inhale- Blow out the candles-exhale.

I was wearing my newborn son, grasping that brochure so tightly, hiding it from the other shoppers out of shame. I prepared best I could at home, but there is no preparation for hate. At the checkout, the giant of a man behind me saw my brochure and yelled "You're Welcome" right in my face. My hands instinctively went up to protect my son, dropping that brochure and the carefully written list onto the ground. My mind went blank, and the cashier just kept scanning. I stood there, the man continuing to speak AT me, calling me lazy, and asking what number this kid was. I fumbled for my bags and after exiting the store took a breath like I had just surfaced from underwater. I drove to the back of the store, parked and sobbed. I thought of all the things I wanted to explain to that man, expose my scars, defend

my honor, instead I once again felt like a victim. I thought of the milk and cheese in my trunk and quickly went home to my Mothers. I am embarrassed to say I never used my WIC benefits again, my shame, my fear, my anxiety, my TRAUMA prevented it. I physically shook each time I returned to that store. Each time looking for that giant with a prepared speech in my mind. I wanted to tell him what I have survived. I wanted to tell him that people struggling aren't lazy. In the years that have passed those kinds of aggressions from people have only gotten louder.

The Narrative that low income families and programs are responsible for the middle class, and other fox news talking points are reiterated with the same ease as that giant who hurled ignorance at a women carrying her child. That man lacked something I think a lot of people are lacking, EMPATHY.

He saw a woman mooching off the system, someone getting something he isn't. I realize, no matter how well written my speech would be, it's going to take a lot more than that, to change this false narrative.

Learn more about the Change the Narrative Fellowship program [here](#).