

MY LIFE! MY HOOD!

**By: Erika Steward
Truth Institute for Leadership and Service**

My name is Erika Ann Steward, I was born August 10th, 1990 to Shelia Ann Floyd and Edward Ross Steward. I have one sister named Shantel Whidbee. My childhood was rough. My mother was sick from the time I was a born with Lupus, diabetes and IBS. My father was a drunk and molested me until was 4 and 5. My mother remarried and everything was good. Until a few months when he started physically and sexually abusing my sister and I. Then when I was 9, I went to school and told my teacher what was going on at home. She called these workers and they asked me a lot questions. They told me that I would have to stay in a shelter for a couple of days. I had to go to court and tell the judge what happen. The judge found my parents unfit and placed me in foster care. I was in many homes before I got placed with this lady named Ruby Hamilton. I lived with her until she adopted me. I have an adopted sister and two foster sisters.

I'm currently living on 28th Center. It's a lot of drama where I live but summer time is the worst. This summer I got put on probation because a girl in my community and me got into a fight. She came to my house after I had avoided her. During the fight I picked up a brick and began to hit her. The police were called and I wouldn't stop hitting her. They handcuffed me and took me to jail. I spent a month and a half in detention. Now I feel like I can't step foot in my community nor have contact with the girl. It has

affected me and the community. Sometimes I feel like I can't live in my neighborhood with having drama. That's sad!