

Dear Youth,

First, I want to say you are not alone.

Sometimes in life, when we face big challenges, we become filled with doubt, and we think we have no one to count on but ourselves. However, there are people who care about you even if you don't believe it to be true.

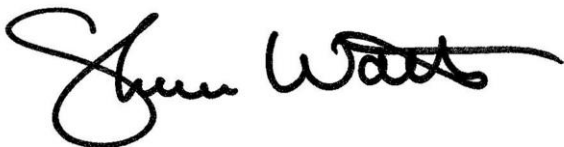
Aging out of the foster care system can be one of those challenges, but I want you to know that there is always someone for you to contact. You may reach out to a teacher, your transition worker, your caseworker, and those who you call family whether it is close friends, foster parents, biological family, or community members.

There will be times when you will need to advocate for yourself - not only while in foster care, but in your life outside of foster care, as well. Sometimes we think we know what it is best or right, and we might sometimes be wrong. However, don't let your voice be unheard. Always share your opinion so others can also better understand you and your needs and feelings. By sharing your opinion you could be changing the system for not only yourself, but also those who are in care after you.

You are a strong person who can make it through anything. When you want something - go for it!

I hope you find *Practical Pathways* to be a great resource for you throughout your transition to your amazing future.

Best and Success!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Watts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shannon Watts