

Hi, my name is Veronica Scott, and I am focused on ending the generational cycle of poverty in Detroit. My family has been a part of Detroit for a long time... though I was born in Orange County, I was raised in Detroit because that's where my family immigrated from Poland, to Detroit for that kind of American Dream of working in an auto factory and being able to afford a home and a whole new life for their family.

My parents, who struggled with addiction and employment and now we're getting evicted, or having to move. Growing up in that situation of poverty, that contrast was really interesting and really... I think made me who I am.

So my sense of community really comes from my grandparents initially, because my grandmother converted to Judaism to marry my grandfather and that community around them was such a powerful part of my upbringing. My grandparents and their friends are all like doctors and lawyers and have these beautiful lives... and for me, growing up in that contrast of, you know, sleeping on the floor or couch with everything that I own, could fit in a backpack. Seeing that kind of world was inspiring, but also knowing that there is a different type of life out there. There's a life outside of anger and worry and pain and fear. That was the thing that I kind of held on to. And they would meet every morning at the same coffee shop after biking, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. for 30, 40 years - and as this same group of people. And that was the family that they had kind of selected. And it was the people that they spent every day with. And that was a very strong sense of family and place that you could you could create that family if you didn't have it. You could find it in others and most people don't know that that's a possibility.

With *Empowerment Plan*, I aimed to create something I wish my own family had had.

Seeing hundreds of people go through *Empowerment Plan* here in Detroit and scaling this

into other communities, but also having this entity not be Veronica Scott's class project anymore. But *The Empowerment Plan*, who each individual here has their own story and their own experience of this and having those individuals own it and grow it to the next level is really exciting for me. It'll be interesting over the next few years, how I become less and less important to this organization. And I think that, will be a true sign for me of this being a success.