FROM HOMELESS TO HARVARD

“In 6th grade, I lived in a van. I’d seen my mum use drugs and my step daddy (stay) at me.”

Kenneth says all the ugliness he’s seen has made him more determined to be someone.

“I know I’m better than Skid Row, I know that I can accomplish something.”

At 17, Kenneth is on a journey that many of his friends know nothing about, a dream to go to Harvard.

“Quick feet” x3

He is a starting running back on the Barcity team at Ellen Burstyn Highschool.

“American history, 1930’s.”

He’s an honor student who’s been named best overall academic student. Kenneth is also student body president, and, no surprise, one of the popular kids. But at the end of the day when all his classmates go home, Kenneth and his 14-year-old sister Stephany start their journey to Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles to the Union Rescue Mission.

Here are quite a few families who live in shelters, who are homeless right now. What would you want people to understand about the struggles of their children?

“Well, there are struggles, especially, obviously, financially, right. I would love having a house and my own room.”

From Skid Row, Kenneth says he is determined to go to Harvard when he graduates. His dream is to become a doctor. But no matter how far he’s gone academically, Kenneth has a huge financial challenge. If he’s accepted, Harvard costs $50.000 a year.

“Do you really think that you can go there, and and b) could you afford to go there?”

“Honestly, no, I can’t afford it, but I know there is financial aid available; I know that I’m worthy of certain scholarships so I’m not gonna let that stop me.”

Kenneth’s only hope is financial aid, student loans or scholarships. He realizes it will be a long road ahead to get to his dream.

Thelma Luciedes, CNN, Los Angeles.