

## **My Experience in Foster Care**

My life was rough growing up. I had an alcoholic father and a manic depressive mother. I had to grow up at a young age and never really got to be a kid. So when I was 15 I started skipping school with my friends, or so I thought they were at the time, but I haven't talked to any of them since high school. So were they really my friends? No. I had gotten into the wrong crowd and made a lot of bad choices.

Then my parents had to go to court because I was missing so much school. They decided it would be best if I were to go to a foster home. When the day came I didn't want to go. I just really didn't want to leave home and be away from my parents. That is the day my whole life changed. I met my foster parents, Ed and Cathy. I didn't know what to think at first. I moved from a house where I could come and go as I pleased and do whatever I wanted to a house where everything was very structured and there were a lot of rules. "What is that?" I said to myself, because I had never had structure or rules in my life.

In school I had only been doing what I had to, to get by and pass. I never really applied myself to my school work. That is until I had someone to keep me on track and make sure I was doing it. I started doing my school work every day and tried really hard to do well. I don't remember how many nights I sat at the kitchen table from the time I got home from school until I had to go to bed, just so I could do well in school. I started to enjoy my school work and worked hard to get good grades. The end of the first semester came and I couldn't believe it, I had gone from all F's to B's and C's. I was so proud of myself. I knew if I worked harder at it I could make the honor roll the next semester. I never thought I could do it, but I did! That next semester I made the honor roll. This is something that would have never happened at home. It was because I was in a structured environment and I had people around me who cared. What helped most was having someone who made me believe in myself, who helped me to believe that I could do anything as long as I put my mind to it. Someone I could talk to when I was having a bad day, someone to put a smile on my face when I was sad, someone to point me in the right direction if I was going in the wrong direction.

I am so happy that there are families that open their hearts and homes to children in need, who are willing to offer a place for children to feel safe and cared for. I give my thanks to all foster parents for making the choice to make a difference in the life of a child.