

I don’t remember exactly what I packed the day I left home, but I remember feeling scared and confused when the police came to our house. My parents struggled with drug use, and many times I was left alone to take care of myself. When neighbors noticed something wasn’t right, they called the authorities. That day, I went into foster care believing I would be back home soon. I never imagined the journey ahead would last more than nine years.

MY NAME IS MICHAEL, AND THIS IS

MY STORY...



YEARS OF
UNCERTAINTY

I was 4 years old when I was put in the first foster home. Over the next nine years, I moved from one place to another. Foster homes. Residential Treatment Centers. Hospitals. By the time I was a teenager, I had lived in 21 different placements. Every move meant new people, new rules, and starting all over again. After so many changes, it was hard to believe anything in my life would ever last.

MEETING
MY CASA

I was 13 when I met my CASA Volunteer, Lisa. She told me she had been appointed by a judge to make sure my voice was heard and my best interests were being taken care of. After nine years in foster care and countless moves, I had learned not to expect much from other people. I wasn't sure anyone could make a difference in my life, but Lisa promised she would be there for me.

SOMEONE WHO KEPT

SHOWING UP

Unlike so many people who had come and gone over the years, my CASA Volunteer stayed. She looked beyond what other people saw. When I struggled or made mistakes, she didn't just ask what happened, she wanted to know why. She listened. She cared about what I wanted for my future. Most importantly, she kept showing up even when things were difficult. For the first time in a long time, I felt like I had someone in my corner.



FINDING

FAMILY

While searching for family connections, my CASA Volunteer found my father's obituary. That discovery opened the door to family connections I never knew existed. Lisa reached out to relatives, made phone calls, and helped reconnect me with family members who lived nearby. Because she never stopped asking questions, I was able to get to know my grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even reconnect with my mother. For the first time in years, I felt connected to something bigger than myself. I finally felt like I belonged.

A FUTURE BUILT ON **CONNECTION**

Even after I moved in with family, my CASA Volunteer continued helping us navigate challenges at school and connect with resources. She brought people together, encouraged my family to advocate for me, and helped build a support system that will last for the rest of my life. Today, I have something I didn't think was possible. I have people who know me, care about me, and will be there for me. I have my family.

A PLACE TO CALL **HOME**

It wasn't long before I knew that I wanted to live with my grandmother. My CASA Volunteer took the time needed to truly know her, and understand what mattered most to me. She advocated for me in court and worked alongside the professionals involved in my case to help make permanency possible. After nine years in foster care and 21 placements, I finally moved in with my grandmother. I finally went home.



SINGLE STORY OF MANY

Michael's story is remarkable, but sadly, the challenges he faced are not unique. Last year, nearly 700 children in our community entered foster care after experiencing abuse, neglect, or maltreatment. Like Michael, many have endured severe neglect, separation from family, and uncertainty about what the future holds. Fortunately, there is hope. For this community problem, there is a community solution. It's CASA. Michael's CASA Volunteer never gave up on helping him find the family connections and stability he deserved. With CASA's support, she located relatives he didn't know existed, strengthened family relationships, and advocated for the permanent home he had always wanted and needed. After years of uncertainty, Michael finally found a place to belong.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

What can you do to be part of this community solution? Give today to ensure kids like Michael have someone like Lisa speaking up for their best interest.

"For nine years, Michael was searching for a place to belong. CASA gave me the tools to uncover family connections, keep asking questions, and advocate for exactly what he needed. Finding relatives he never knew existed changed everything. Watching him finally find a place where he belonged reminded me why this work matters."

– Lisa, CASA Volunteer

Give a child the gift of a CASA Volunteer.

DONATE TODAY.

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