

As a young child, I was naive to the world which existed around me and the hardships which came along with it. My biggest concern growing up was how many times I could get a rock to skip across the creek and how many frogs I could catch by the end of a summer's day. Until the time I was 12 years-old, my family home was the home to over dozens of foster children. At the time, I did not fully understand why these children were in our care; I was just happy to have someone to skip rocks and catch frogs with. Everytime one of my new friends would leave, I would ask where they were going. If it was a happy ending, they would go to a new, permanent home where they would be adopted by a loving family. Other times we would come to find out they would be forced to go back to their biological parents who did not provide a happy or healthy living environment. This fact never sat right with me then, and to this day it still does not.

As I began to grow up, I became less naive and more aware as to why children would be forced to live in unhappy homes. As a result, I replaced the sadness I felt in my heart with motivation to become an advocate for the friends I shared my home with throughout my whole childhood. This irreplaceable experience in my life drives my passion to become a lawyer and fight for the rights of foster children and children alike. I am eternally grateful to my parents for showing me the many different walks of life someone can take and how they can differ from mine. It made me aware that not all children know what it is like to grow up in a safe, loving environment. It means the world to me that I had the opportunity to share what this experience is like with children who did not know this kind of comfort.

As a way to show my gratitude, I am pursuing a legal education focused on providing me with all of the necessary tools to provide a safe haven for these children. If I could have one

dream, it would be to make sure every child I come across ends up in a loving home like the one I grew up in, where they feel safe and happy. In order to accomplish this dream of mine, it is necessary to set important goals for myself while in law school. Amongst these goals, I will strive to develop a clear understanding of the law in order to be a champion for underprivileged children. I also want to develop a network of legal professionals who share similar aspirations to mine so we could work together to achieve shared accomplishments. Once I have completed the necessary requirements to become a practicing attorney, my goal is to join a firm where I can pursue my legal interests and achieve my life long goals.

With only a few weeks before I begin law school, it is overwhelming how close I am to reaching the final step to achieving my goal. It is because I turned my sadness into motivation that I am able to say I have come this far. As I look back on the children who ended up in an unhappy and unsafe living environment, it fuels the flames of my passion. I could only imagine where those children would have ended up if they had someone so passionate fighting for them. It is with the greatest honor that I will be on the fighting end for these children in hopes to show them what a loving home feels like.

It has been over a decade since we had our last foster child in our care, and to this day I continue to keep in touch with several of my old friends. Some I have grown so close to that we think of each other as siblings, and some continue to come over for the holidays. Everyone of these important people in my life have been an integral part of my support system along the way on this journey of mine. And it is for these reasons that I will continue to persist.