



Idaho KinCare Project 2014

My Family. My Story.

Expressions of Children raised by relatives or other significant adults



Hand in hand we walk along,
My hand in yours, so big and strong...

Tristn, Age 14





My Family. My Story.

My Family. My Story. Art Contest 2014

Organized by the **Idaho KinCare Project**, a joint Project between the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and AmeriCorps VISTA members.

This booklet can also be found online at
www.211.idaho.gov





My Family. My Story.

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Our best hope is for parents to love and care for their children and to raise them in a happy, healthy home. However, family crisis sometimes requires children to be placed with relatives or other meaningful adults in their lives. This type of custody arrangement is commonly referred to as 'KinCare.'

In Idaho, over 29,264 children under the age of 18 live in households headed by grandparents or other relatives. Roughly 10,000 of these children are being raised without their parents present.

The My Family. My Story. Art Contest's purpose is twofold: to recognize the contributions of KinCare providers and to provide the children who participate an opportunity to feel connected with other children in similar situations.

The following poems, essays, and drawings are the expressions of children who were placed in difficult circumstances and yet have the resiliency to share their experiences with others.

These are their families and their stories.

The Idaho KinCare Project, 2014



For more information about KinCare in Idaho. Visit: www.211.idaho.gov and follow the KinCare tabs.



My Family. My Story.

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My Family. My Story.

Winning Contest Entry Ages up to 9

Cassidy, Age 9

Foster Care Three Times

First, I was at my daddy's house and there were some things that weren't so fun. We were never home but when we were home he would sleep llllllooooootttttsssss! I would worry a lot about if the bills would be paid. Even though things got bad sometimes I Love my daddy lots.

When I went into foster care it was scary because my I got picked up by people that I did not know. The idea of knowing I was leaving my dad scared me a bunch. It also scared me not knowing where I was going.

I was with my first foster family for three weeks and did not like it there. I did not like the way they treated me. Then I went to another foster family for one night and I did not like it there either.

Then I came to Aunt Casey and Uncle Brent's house and I've been here for six months. I like it here because they are nice and like to play with kids. I have a lot of friends here and the people are much nicer at the new school I am going to.

Winning Contest Entry
Ages up to 9

Jazlynn, Age 7



Winning Contest Entry Ages 10-14

Katherine, Age 10

I love my family!

It is nice to live with my grandma. She takes me to lots of places. Like the park and the zoo, and the fancy restaurants. She is the sweetest person I have ever loved. If I were with someone else instead of Pat I wouldn't like it one bit because it wouldn't be the same. If I were with Pat I would be the happiest child ever. I love my mom so much that I never want to leave my sweet Pat ever never again. She is my good luck charm.





My Family. My Story.

Winning Contest Entry Ages 10-14

Tristn, Age 14

LOVE

Hand in hand we walk along
My hand in yours, so big and strong.
You always tell me I will never be alone.
That, this will always be my home.
There's so much LOVE in our hearts;
I know nothing can tear us apart.
Yes, we've come a long way, you and I.
Our days are filled with hugs and kisses.
And a few tears too.
But, I smile at the end of each day.
I know you will always be
There to start my day.
Love you grandma and grandpa





My Family. My Story.

Winning Contest Entry Ages 15-18

Eric, Age 16

To let you know why me and my sister went to live with my Grandma and Grandpa Brown was primarily due to my mother having some psychological problems. My father considered uprooting us completely by moving us to my aunt's house in Downers Grove, Illinois, but my grandparents convinced my father that it would be better for us to come live with them instead. Only my sister had to change schools. I was able to go to the same junior high as the year before. I just had to ride a different bus, but my grandpa has been the one to get me up every school morning, and he makes me fried eggs for breakfast. My grandparents are strict when it comes to taking our medicines both morning and night, and they make sure that we are in bed by 9pm on school nights. I would like to share a poem I wrote describing my family as if we were a book.

My Family Book

My Family is a book.
My dad is the cover
He protects and keeps us together,
My grandpa is the Table of Contents
Telling you where to go and what to do,
My sister is the pages
Can be nine, but can give you a nasty paper-cut,
My mom is the glossary
Telling what some things mean or do,
My grandma is the index
Organizing and orderly,
I'm the text
A record of things and trying to help,
We try to help and protect each other
And we are strong because of it,
And at times, weak too,
But we survive
And become stronger because of our
Love for each other.



My Family . My Story .

Winning Contest Entry Ages 15-18

Lisa, Age 17

"No Place Like Home"

Lisa

You've tried to mend the last missing piece together, the last one that you've got, but one after another it just won't stay.

All the seams are unraveling & breaking. You're freaking out & breaking down, just don't know what to do.

But the minute, that one, perfect person loves you enough to take you in, to show you that life isn't bad....

To show you that you're special & unique & different, unlike the rest of the world.

To show you that you can be in a better place than what you've been in.

You can keep telling yourself "there's no place like home", BUT there will always be one....

No matter how many times you feel alone, you will NEVER be alone! Someone will always have you - to cherish you, to love you.

There's not a day that goes by that I don't want to thank you for all the great memories & love you've shared, with me.

For me, I've found it; I've found a place, like home.



My Family. My Story.

Special Mention Entry

Brenda, Age 45

Hi my name is Brenda, I am 45 years old and I have cerebral palsy, osteoporosis, and diabetes type one. This is my story. About 7 years ago I came to live with Marilyn because my mom witch I loved very much passed away with cancer. This was kind of scary for me I had to move out of Washington to Idaho. But Marilyn understood and found a handicap club. I met lots of people, I go to dances, they even have a prom every year it's great. We go swimming, dinners, lots of things. I am very grateful for all of this. I love my new home we have nice time. Marilyn keeps her great-granddaughter she is 11 years and she is like a little sister we play barbies fix my hair. Her name is Shailey. I love it here, I have a nice family to live with and that is what my mom wanted that's what I am very grateful for mom special friend.



My Family. My Story.

Distinguished contest Entries

Ariel, Age 12

Hi my name is Ariel
And right now I'm living with
My grandma and grandpa.
And this has really changed my life.
And here is my story.

When I was 1 ½ and my
brother was 6 months my mom
went to jail so my grandma and
grandpa got custody of us. When
my mom got out she had my
brother then when she got out
she had my sister and my other
brother. We had my sister
for a while but my brother stayed
with his dad. But my dad wouldn't
take me because he died when I
was two.

If my grandma and grandpa
Didn't take us we would all be
Split up into foster homes and
We all don't want that. And
That is my story why if I
Didn't live with my grandma
And grandpa it would be terrible.



My Family. My Story.

Briana, Age 14

My Family. My Story.

Drugs and alcohol ruin it all
You're doing good and then you
Fall.

That's how it all started,
In an out of jail mom and dad
Are in hell.

Grandma and Grandpa
Doing it all, years and years
And they still stand tall,
Mom broke into a house
Dad shot someone in
The chest. Nobody will
Know the rest.

Doing good, doing bad
One min you're happy, then
You're sad. Kids getting
Locked up just like their parents
When are we gonna realize
Grandma is embarrassed
We need to do good
And get good grades, so that
way we can succeed one day.

My family, my story.
That's my life.
Please don't make me have to
Tell you twice.

Daniel, Age 7



I am Daniel. I am 7. This is my family tree. I live with my grandpa and grandma and my brother and sister.
We have fun and we are happy.

Estavan, Age 10





My Family. My Story.

Frankie, Age 17

Ever since I was eleven months old I have lived with my aunt Marchelle and my uncle Ernie, for the past seventeen years, they have provided me with everything I have needed along with most of my wants. They have never given up on me & have helped me do my best to succeed.

They have given me many opportunities to be who I wanna be, & have supported all my healthy decisions. I don't know what I would do without them in my life & I couldn't see my life any other way. I can't thank them enough for knowing I caring for me & my future. They have given me a happy & positive environment to live in with lots laughs & love.

I wouldn't be where I am without their sacrifices, & without their unconditional love f& support. I thank them for helping me become who I am, & helping me grow. I don't want my live any other way, because the way it is now is perfect. I couldn't thank my aunt and uncle enough for guiding me in the right direction & giving me love every day.



My Family. My Story.

Hunter, Age 14

A New Hope

It's what I longed for,

It's what I searched for,

It's what I dreamed about,

It's what I didn't have...

Until now, when I can say

It's what I own,

And it's mine alone.



My Family. My Story.

Jasmine, Age 12

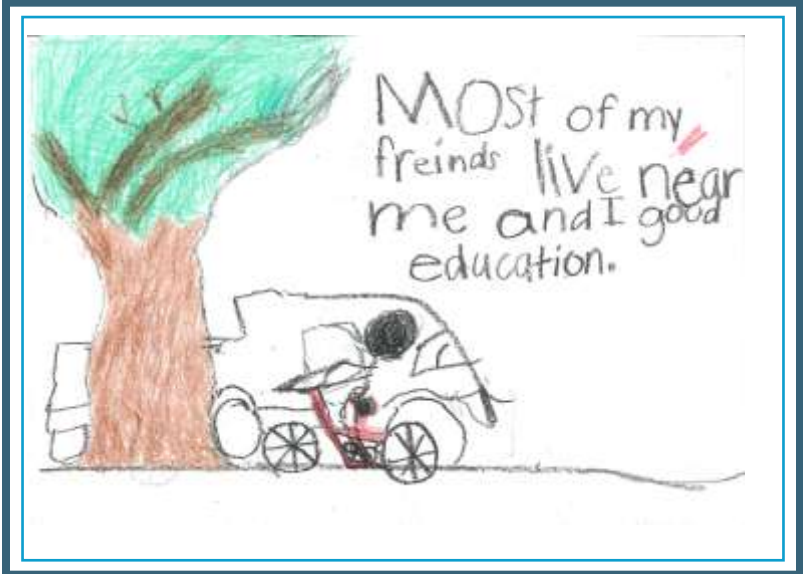
I am Jasmine. My life was very hard and that changed when my Nana and Grandpa came to get us. If it wasn't for them I would be a failing student in a strange foster home with nothing.

I have things that I like. I use to not like reading. Now I love it because Nana taught me how important it was to read. Spring Break I read three book series. Each series had five books with 200-500 pages per book.

I have things that make me comfy – like clean clothes, good food and great school. The food is so “off the charts” good. The school I go to is fun and easy to make friends. Everyone is different so we have more things to talk about and do. I've learned to ride a bike which is amazing to me and makes me feel like a “normal” kid.

This family is great because even though we each like different things we can enjoy lots of things, Grandpa and Nana makes sure that we try and experience different things so we have a good foundation to make good choices. I'm so very grateful that I live with them.

Jason, Age 9



Juan Xavier, Age 6





My Family. My Story.

Luis Alejandro, Age 16

The craziest thing in the world to me, by far, is watching how fast time goes by. It has been almost seven years since me and my siblings were separated due to my mother's careless, irresponsible decisions. I spend almost half of those years hating her and thinking that she had ruined my life, but over time I came to the realization that I alone control my future, nobody else. Still, I would not be half the man that I've become without my grandmother, who completely put her life on hold to take me in and raise me. She has taught me responsibility, discipline, and most importantly, love. She's given me the love that I only dreamed about as a kid. Even though that is the only thing I've ever needed, she's given me so much more. I have achieved so much while living here. I'm a recognized musician, my passion is art, I love to write, and I'm a stated champion athlete in many different sports. I'm almost a senior in high school and I plan on attending the University of Idaho as soon as I graduate. However, as I said before, time is a funny thing and a lot can happen in a year. Until I'm ready to get out and be on my own, I'm beyond grateful for being surrounded by people who love me and I can never thank them enough for finally giving me what I've always wanted, a home.



My Family. My Story.

Madysen, Age 11

Grandparents,

You're my way to understanding life here while God is in Heaven. You're my strength when I am weak; you're my comfort when I am crying. Most of all, you're the power in me that keeps me loving and caring. You've always been there, my times of sorrow and pain get sent far away when I see your faces. You tell Satan to leave me when I'm unable to speak.

My life has been changed these past few years because of your great love for me!

With love, Madysen

Living with my Grandparents means more than anything to me. When my Grandparents got legal guardianship, I felt safe. Not only do I get to live with them, but it also means no one can take me away, ever! My Grandparents have provided me with all my needs and some of my wants. If anyone would try to take me away, I would be sad for a really long time. Many kids who live with their Grandparents sometimes don't realize how much they are loved. If you're one of us, life can be hard because you don't have your parents, but also remember you have grandparents who love you!

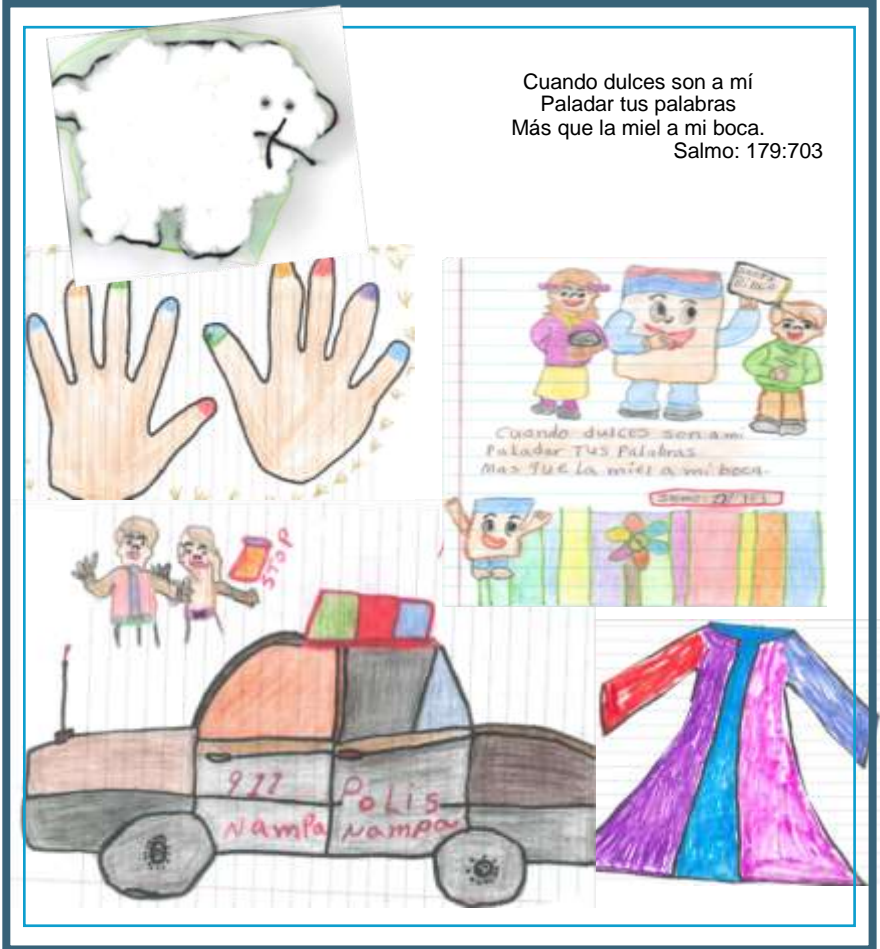


My Family. My Story.

Mersadies Marie, Age 11

Well this is what happens in the first place, my real dad is in prison and my mom is in jail and my step dad just got out of prison. When I was with my mom I was really depressed not very happy and excited. So my grandpa and grandma wanted me to have a good life grow up be a good guy not a bad guy. So yeah I had to leave my friends back at home but at least I have other ones. I really miss my mom and I really want to go back with her but I think I'll have a better time here with my grandma and grandpa. It's been pretty good with them I finally have my own room and don't have to share with me brother!!! I sometimes have my ups and downs with my grandma and also get in trouble but they still love me and that's kind of a good thing because without them I would be alone ☹... this summer we are going over the whole USA all the way to New York in a van. It will be pretty fun I will see family I haven't even met yet I will be amazing! I'm going to Oklahoma and Texas hopefully there's NO tornados. Well I don't know I would do without them but you know what I love them and they love me and that's all what matters!!!

Nubia, Age 10





My Family. My Story.

Ryan Lee, Age 15

My Family My Story

My name is Ryan and I am 15 years old. Living with my grandparents has made a positive influence on my Life. It has also impacted my Out Look on Life.

When I came to Live with my grandparents they started teaching me about Love and about work ethic. they have also thought me how to do things and how to use certain equipment.

My grandparents allow me to Learn and take opportunities. They have opened my perspective on jobs. They have also let me enjoy the opportunity to go to bible study and church. My grandparents have also taught me that it is always a good thing to have a career to fall back on just in case something does not go right.

I am blessed and thankful to have the grandparents that I have. They have taught me that you don't need computers or electronics all you need is a good family and outdoor activities to have fun. Even though they get hard on me sometimes I realize that it is for the better.

My grandparents always tell me that if they didn't Love me they wouldn't punish me. I have learned that you don't always have to have a straight face but that you can also smile and have fun.



My Family. My Story.

Skylar, Age 12

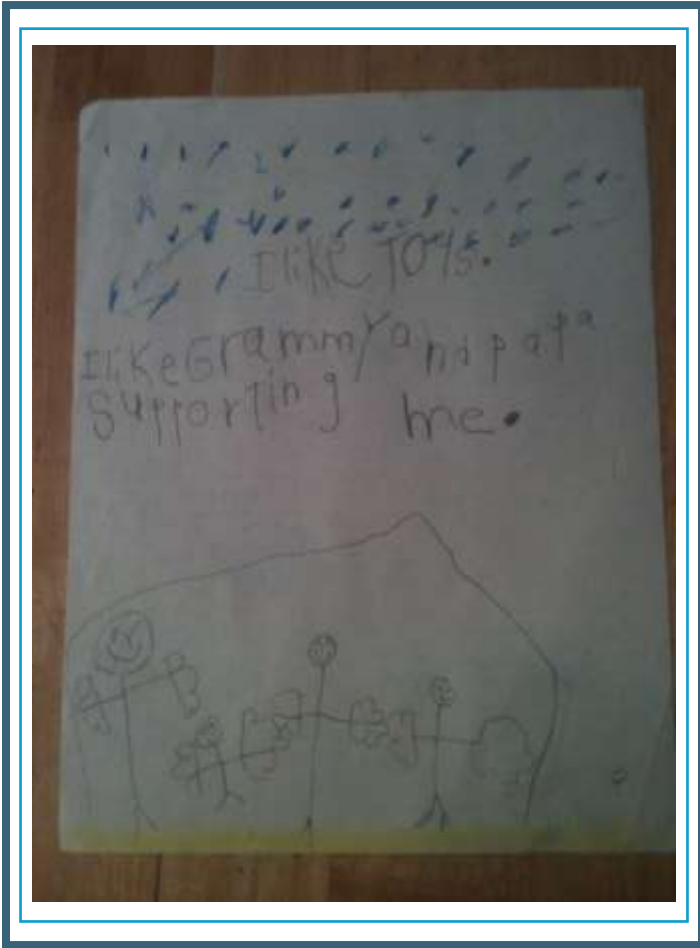
Living with My Grandma

I have been living with my grandma for so long that I just started calling her mom. I have never really had a mom or dad and my grandma has always been there for me. Even though we disagree on a lot of things and i get in trouble sometimes, I still love her and I think that she is the coolest person ever even if she doesn't think so.

My grandma takes really good care of me even when we don't have a whole bunch of money. I don't live without anything and I can thank my grandma for that, I can thank my grandma for every good thing that happens in my life. I'm a pretty athletic person and my grandma supports me in every sport i play sometimes she even bakes for the team.

I think that I am the luckiest person on earth and the only reason why I think that is because of my grandma, she is so much fun to be around and she can be hilarious most of the time. Living with my grandma is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

Sterling, Age 6



A picture of: Papa, Sterling, Grammy, and Joshua in the big tent, happy, camping.



My Family. My Story.

Tayler, Age 9

Love living with my grandma

I love living with my grandma and grandpa because they give us all the things that we need. They pay for all of our school fees. They give us food every night and morning. Before I lived with my mom and I would of gone to foster care but then my grandma and grandpa came and took us way so we wouldn't end up in foster care. I know they wanted the best for us I wouldn't want to live with anybody else than them. I live with my grandparents because my dad messed up.

He's been in prison for 4 years and my mom lives with a bad person.



My Family. My Story.

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Especial Mention Entry

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My Family. My Story.

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My Family. My Story.

Thank you to our wonderful sponsors! Without the generous contributions of our sponsors, the My Family. My Story. Art Contest would not have been possible.

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My Family . My Story .

A larger version of the Idaho KinCare Project logo, featuring a green line-art illustration of two hands clasped together. The text "Idaho KinCare Project" is written in blue, bold, sans-serif font, positioned to the left of the hands.

**Idaho
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