“Then / Now”
-David, Age 17
Winning Contest Entry
Ages 15-18
My Family. My Story. Art Contest
2012

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
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 23,000 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, 2012

For more information about KinCare in Idaho. Visit: www.211.idaho.gov and follow the KinCare tabs.
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Winning Contest Entry
Ages up to 9

Tristin, Age 6

I love Grandma and Grandpa
Tristin, Grandpa, Grandma
Madysen K. Age 9

It started with Mother and I, we had to keep moving so it was hard for her to take care of me. In January 2010, Grandpa flew to Washington, DC to get me. Daddy calls me everyday, I don’t talk to Mommy as often. They send me cards and presents and that helps me remember them.

I love living with my Grandparents. Grandma cooks good food, teaches me how to cook and other things. We even made donuts! She cuddles me every morning before school and we read together at night. Grandpa bought my first 2-wheeler bike, taught me how to ride, and then we rode bikes together. He got an old computer and fixed it so it worked for me.

It’s not hard to live with your Grandparents, just think of them as your parents. On Friday nights Grandma makes a special snack to eat while we play games.

We planted a garden, I’ve never had one before. I can hardly wait to eat the things we planted.

My Grandparents and I love each other very much so we think of fun things to do together. Don’t be upset, you’re living with people who love you very much!
Angela, Age 12

When I was a little girl I didn’t understand why my sister and I lived with our Grandparents. But know that I am older I understand that my mother could not care for us. So we went to live with them. If they had not we could’ve ended up in foster care, split up or worse. If we would had been split up we could have never know or remembered each other.

They have sacrificed all they have to keep a strong foundation for our family. We may seem like we don’t care, but deep down in our soul we thank God everyday that we have caring Grandparents who have provided for us. In return we strive to do our best through hard work and determination.

Some days I disobey them, but in the end I feel guilty because I realize that they get upset for our own good and to protect us. I know that they love me and my sister, and we love them. We are very grateful and happy to have them in our lives. Because we know one day all the hard work and sacrifices they have made will pay off.

This is my family….my story.
Kimberly, Age 10

My Life with Grandma

Life with Grandma is Great. She feeds me. She Teaches me to know what to Do went I get older. I will return Back a Thank you for her. Some Day I will Do a real BiG Thank you I’m saying. If It was not for her I would Be living with a stranger.
David, Age 17
Winning Contest Entry
Ages 15-18

Mariah, Age 16

Jen
You’re my stability, my rock
I know you may be in shock
But you help me be a better person all in all
And lift me up when I stumble and fall
I look to you for courage,
Even though I may look discouraged
You always know what and when and when to do
You help me through and through
I wouldn’t be where I am without your care
I know that you will always be there
You’re tough and strong
And you insist you’re never wrong!
We laugh and we cry,
But always seem to get by
Your amazing family is mine now too
And I greatly love all of them and you
Sometimes I know I may take you for granted,
But you’re more than just an aunt and
I have no idea what I’d do if you were gone
What I’m trying to say is, to me, you’ll always be my mom.
Tristn, Age 12

My grandparents teach me the important things in life, I love them very much!

Reading, Camping, Hugging, Giving

My grandparents teach me the important things in life, I love them very much!
Stephanie, Age 13

My name is Stephanie, I am 13, and live with my grandparents, my dad and mom have never been really stable in my life, but lucky enough for me I have amazing grandparents. My dad went to jail when I was 9 and my mom went to jail when I was 11, both for drugs. My grandparents have taught me that drugs are bad and they could ruin my life if I ever got into them. Even though I have never do drugs and living with them has helped me relies that drugs are really bad. People think it’s cool that even though my parents have gone down the wrong road and that I’m on the right one, I just smile and say, “Yep, and there's no turning back.”
Anthony, Age 7

I love sleeping with My papa cause He tells me a stories and nana and papa got Me a dog Me and papa play monster I help nana do laundry
I like living with nana and papa because they treat me like I’m special and they always take me and my brother camping and we ride forewhillers a lot and last summer they got me two boxers for my birthday there names were Poncho and Sophie. I love them very much and nana and papa even let me drive the forewhiller sometimes and my nana and papa got me a Nintendo D.S. and they bought me some games they were called Barbie and the fashion pups and super Mario bros. When my nana went in the hospital she said I was a good help to her I love my nana and papa the End.
Hailey, Age 9

Nintendo D.S. Game

Super Mario bros

Barbie and the fashion pups

My dogs

Sophie

Poncho

My Nintendo D. S. Games

The forest

Nintendo D.S.
Grama I Love you and I’m greatful to have you as a grama. I am greatful to have grampa and I love living with you and grampa and Sheila. I love every body in the house including my whole family. Even if they don’t live with me but it dosint mater if they live with me or not because I love my whole Family. I care about my whole family. They care about me too.
Araceli, Age 8

I like it here because it's funer and I could learn to listen better.
Marielena, Age 10

I’m Marielena I live comfortable with My Grandparents. They treat me with respect. I feel more comfortable with My Grandma and Grandpa.
Jose, Age 10

--- My life my story!

I have an amazing family that will help me out threw out anything and I really appreciate it. They really change my life so much because then without them I wouldn’t be the person I am today. For example I wasn’t to be in the NBA and there going to help me out so I can live my dreams. My family and I have the most amazing adventures ever because when my cousin Rosy came from Chicago I taught her how to fish and now she knows witch is great. I also caught a fish and now I keep it as a pet. Also when my brothers and sister come and visit I always play with them and when my sister cries I give her the baby bottle or I carry her if she isn’t hungry. When my brother falls and gets hurt I go and see what’s wrong and I help him out because I’m his big brother. I will always take care of him and I will always look after him that’s what big brothers are for. My family is such some great people because they always help out other people too not just me!
Alexus, Age 6

Happy Grandma, Grandpa, Alex, buddy, cuddles
Patrick, Age 7

I lik to mow. Clean my room

I’m Patrick, I live with my grandma because she is nice, she helps me with my homework, lets me ride my bike to the dirt jumps. I just like living with my Grandma.
Shawn, Age 5

As told to Grandma-

I have toys. My Uncle Tj gave me some of his toys. I Love Uncle Tj-he is my buddy.- He likes me. He goes to college at the Vandel’s place.

I go to school. I play T-Ball. I am a clover bud in 4-H. I raise chickens. Stacey and Boy are my dogs. The cats live in the shop. Grandpa & Grandma have lots of pigs big bit ones, med. Ones and babies. I have my own big horse. Sometime I visit my Mom- she is giving
Nuviia, Age 10

My name is Nuviia I like my grama cause she ben for me all the time not like my mom.
My name is Alondra. I like my grama cause she’s not mean and don’t make us clean or cook.
My name is Yuleima.
I love my Grama b’couse she’s always been there for me, when I cried for my mom I would turn around and see her and I know she will always be there for me. I’ll love her forever.

I love My Grama b’couse she’s always been there for me, when I cryed for my mom I would turnaround and see her and I know she will always be there for me I’ll love her 4 eveR.
Kinsey, Age 11

Love
Valeria, Age 11

Without my mom and dad
living with my aunt,
sometimes makes me
lonely and sad,
treats me right
day and night
but just kind a
still feels like a dog bite,
makes me feel nervous and scared with her,
when I sleep at night
with her blanket,
gets me happy because it feels, like fur,
she gives me rides
I still need my mom and dad
by my both sides,
makes me feel good to learn new things
about her,
she asks to stay a little more,
I say sure.
Sierra, Age 16

Life has its up and downs,
Whether they last long,
Or just for a short time.

People come and go
Through out your life,
Some will leave footprints,
Some you won't remember.

People who have lived a rough life
are stronger than the ones
who have it “Perfect.”

The ones you love
will love you back,
whether they are gone,
or right next to you.

Family is the one
Thing that should never
Leave your side.
Ryan, Age 13

I am glad living with my grandparent’s. Because I am more loved, I get 3 meals a day, I have good cloth, I get to go out side and play. I get to enjoy beautiful animals such as deer and elk and I enjoy feeding them. I also get to go more places like 4H, boat races, and car races. I also get to see more family. I like Living here because I don’t have to stay in an apartment most of the time. My grandparent’s love me, care for me and support me more than my mom did. I also get to do more outside. I can go hunting, fishing, and go four wheeling. And I can go sit on the lawn and look at the moon and the stars. I never knew they were so beautiful. I also like the schools better and I’m on the honor roll. I am also in greater shape than I was. And most of all I feel closer to god he is my personal savior no matter what.
Casey, Age 14

Every one has hardships,  
it’s a part of life,  
but I’m just glad I have loved ones,  
to help me through my strife  
Through the goods, and the bads,  
which never seem to end,  
through the trends and each fad,  
puts my wounds on the mend.  
With KinCare I get new life!  
with it, I am free,  
they cut away, like a knife,  
all the things that hinder me.  
So thanks to all that help,  
I truly am thankful,  
you always help the welp,  
that sew life so dull.

Thanks KinCare

Casey
Isabel, Age 5
Samirah, Age 11

Living on the Safe side
Trintin, Age 8

My Bedroom
at my Mom’s (Grandma’s)

My guinnea pig

Nuke 1:00 25 call sterak

Yeah I am so cool I got my 10 nuke in a row

Gold fish
Me and My Grandma

I have been with my Nana since I was 2 yrs. Old. She has taught me right from wrong I have lots of fun with my Nana. She makes sure I don’t do without of what I need. Plus I’m very spoiled. She sends me to school and takes very good care of me. I don’t know what I do without her. She’s all I ever had and I love her very much. Thank Jesus for grandma’s who care and loves me so much.
Destiny, Age 14

Hi my name is destiny. I am 14 years old. I have 4 younger sisters. 2 of them live with me and my grandma and grandpa. My mom got in a car accident on April 2008. My youngest sister was 6 months old. Living with my grandma and grandpa has changed my life. I have been going to church staying in school and having a lot of fun.

I don’t get to see my other 2 sisters. They are 7 and 4. Jessica is 4. She doesn’t know who her mother is or her grandma and grandpa. It took a long time to let her know that I was her older sister. My sisters and I enjoy living with our grandparents.
I am 13 years old and my name is Cheyanne

From birth to death, from tears to laughter, from sadness to happiness, your always by my side, when I just want to be normal ready to help; ready to encourage, you seem to know at heart how I need someone by my side.

From darkness to light from blank paper to ideas your always there to help, your always by my side.

Love
You know what love means, and you share your wisdom you share your love when I need someone there, love is what’s real cause we love each other

This is about my grandma She saved my Life.
D’Laynee, Age 10

I live with my grandparents and here’s what I like about that:

1. My grandma is a great cook.
2. My grandpa takes me golfing.
3. They love me. I am in dance. I love my grandparents they help me a lot. If I didn’t have them I don’t know what I would do.
Paula, Age 13

You picked me up when I was on the streets.
Gave me hugs when I was getting frowns.
Made me feel loved when I felt down.
Filled my belly when there was no need.
Like a second mom. I was your second daughter.
In your house It felt like home.
For in which I still have the keys
There is much kindness in your heart
I know it will just bring you closer to your dreams
While helping fuel my own
I thank you Kim
For being there for me <3
Adrianna, Age 12

Grandma puts food in my mouth and a roof over my head, and cloths on my body. She takes care of me she protects me and most of all she would help me through the tough times. She took care of me when I was a sick baby and my brothers to. She took care of me when my grandpa was sick, she ways about me all the time. She goes without some things so we can get shoes and cloths she is one of the most caring people in the world. When I grow up I would want to be just like her. My grandma has taught me how to work hard and get a good education. So I can be a successful person. This is why I love her & respect her.
Nana is there for me I love her dearly she makes me feel positive no doubt about that. I love her so much that I would do anything for her she is the angel nana that no one has ever seen so is my papa and never more no one no not one can hurt my nana no more papa I love both of them no one can take that away.
Robbie, Age 9

My Story

I love living with my grandparents, because they love me. I have my own room fixed up with things I like. We travel also, when we can.

I love my mom also but she works and also has a 2 yr. old girl, that’s my half sister. I spend time with her also and get to spend the night sometimes, I like living with my grandparents, and yet seeing and staying with my mom also.

I got a very good school, my Grandparents take me to… there is no bullying at all and I get good grades in 3rd grade. My ISAT scores were grade level and also advanced in some. I don’t know yet.

We have lots of fun along with learning. The teachers and principal are really neat people. My dad isn’t with us right now, because he made some wrong decisions. I know my Grandparets are teaching me to make good choices like friends and things I do because you have to account for your actions, I want to ve in the army when I get big. When I am in high school, I can go in to the R.O.T.C.

I am happy because I am loved. I do a lot of fun things I hav a lot of friends, I play fair, and I am nice.
Anthony G.  Age 5

Jhoanny, sister, granma, me, Angel
Angel, Age 9

Me, grama, sister, Brother, Brother
Johanny, Age 7

My brother, my grandmom, me
Erik, Age 8

Erik, Bety, Olga, Gilbert, Aaron, Mathew, Specially thank you for taking care of me.
Alija, Age 7

My, Eli, Grampa, Tristan, grama, Silla, momo, loddo
Super Jaime, Super Lucia

THANKS!

For always taking care of us. We are eternally grateful.
Thank you for cleaning my room, you save the planet by taking out the trash.
Thank you for cleaning house.
Kodian, Age 17

I have been shown the path to the world of Light, never raising arms for something trivial or for a needless cause.

Always taking the path in the middle ready to save those who threaten to fall and of those that are threatened to be consumed.

Always working in and amongst the Shadow’s never to be seen.

“I will keep balance in this world and strive to protect and to guide”

The same for which has been done for me.
Katherine, Age 8

Pat, Love you!
Colter, Age 14
Tanisha, Age 18

Right Path

All children are like seeds

Once watered, natured and guided to the right path.

That seeds would take many forms, shapes, and colors

That How I Feel about my family.

Wrong Path

But when neglected that seed could shrivel, and want what all the seeds are getting
Brock, Age 8

I like living with papa and grandma because I always have a home to go to and papa and grandma will never go away and leave me.
Nicholas, Age 5
My life living with my grandma is very fun. We get to do a lot of things like swim, ice skate, Roller skate and more. We are from Wyoming. We are going to go there this summer. It is going to be fun. We get to see the devil tower, some friends, and go to Yellowstone. We are also going to put some flowers on my dad's grave. We lost him in April. We miss him a lot. He loved to take us camping, four wheeling, and shoting. He was a very awesome dad.
I have a life with no mom and no dad. I live with my grandma. It’s not the worst place ever but it isn’t perfect. My dad wasn’t the best, but he did perfect me. I have strait As’, I have a roof over my head, I go to a welthy school, I have lots of clothes, and I have food to eat. I got to go shooting, camping, fishing, scrap hauling, and travel to lots of places with my dad and family. Since he passed away I haven’t got to go to stuff like that for a long time. I have been to my friends more than staying home but my grandma has been trying to keep me home more. I think she is trying to hard. She is a little ove pertective I get hat but that’s why I love her so much. I get to see a new way of life in a good way. I like my life the way it was but I should be happy for what I have. My grandma is the best at caring for me. She helps me with homework, laundry, and making food. I love her a lot. She in joys talking to me a lot.
When you think of a family, you think of the perfect picture. A mom, a dad, two kids. Not every family is perfect they always have a story to tell. My family. My story is very simple. Have you ever had that one person you can talk to, always count on being there for you? I did he was my Uncle Eddie. To me in my eyes I think of him as an Angel, because every Angel is not perfect. An Angel might fall but always, always will be sent home. Cancer took over his body and sent him back home. My Grandma took it really hard, seeing her baby leave at such a young age. He was 42 at the time! He will never see his kids growing up and get married. He will never see them have a life of their own. Now tell me, what age do you think a person should die? 42 is way to young. I am only 14 but I know that he hasn’t even seen life yet. Now this story may sound heart-breaking, and terribly sad. My family. My story is to show that every family can be strong. My Family can laugh because we have known sadness. My Uncle Eddie told my grandma he would give up his life to save a kid who has cancer. Now does that man sound bad? If people say we live hell on Earth, there must be a Heaven! Because if there wasn’t where would My Uncle Eddie be?

Uncle is the onley Dad I New So that why I call hem Uncle Daddy
Breana

My Life Is Mine

Being a teenager in foster care is very difficult. My life changed when I couldn’t live at my grandparent’s house any longer. I became a ward of the state and was placed in foster care. On May 6' of 2011, I was introduced to my foster parents Chuck and JoAnn. They took me in and became an important part of my life because they influenced me in ways my family couldn’t. Teenagers are very lucky if they end up in a home where parents love them for who they are, are honest with them, and demonstrate mutual trust.

Thankfully, I was one of the lucky teenagers that was placed in a very supporting home. My new family was really good about taking me in without hesitation and loved me for who I was. They understood what I had been through, believed in me and knew how to work with the problems I had. I was going through a hard time in my life and was not the most cooperative teenager to live with, but they persevered and did not give up on me. The most important thing for me was that they loved me for who I was and not for who they wanted me to be.

Chuck and JoAnn, have shown me how to trust other people. When they say something, they follow through with whatever they said. Chuck and JoAnn make sure that they don’t lie to me and show me how to communicate with them and other people. Some parents don’t teach their children right for wrong; my foster parents have taught me values I will need to
have in life. I’m very proud that I was placed in a home where the family teaches me life lessons I will need to learn.

I have always been afraid of police officers from the age of eleven when my dad was arrested in California. I was treated unfairly by police officers. After that my trust in uniformed police officers was broken. In my foster home I have been around Sam, a policeman that has helped me get over my distrust of uniformed officers. My foster family has encouraged me to trust them as well as other authority figures.

I am thankful now that I live in a home where love is shown. This helps me trust others and myself. My life has changed dramatically now that I feel loved and respected as a person. I feel very lucky indeed. Thank you Chuck and JoAnn for all that you have done for me!
At night, the star shines so bright. At day the sun gleams away. No matter day or night, or how it shines so bright, there is nothing to compare to how bright my family shines.

My sisters are full of flames, so bright and dancing away. My grandpa is a candle that flickers in the wind. My grandma is like the sun, shining so brave and bright. My uncle is a match, a little fierce flame. And I am like a star, gleaming in the galaxy.

So there is nothing so shiny and bright, not even the moon glowing in the night, or a forest on fir, nor a gleam through a window, not even a flashlight can shine so bright.

Because when we stand together, side by side, hand in hand, we can accomplish anything, no matter how big and bright.

So we stand, no matter what we are, we will always love each other. But if we split apart, we will then fall, a very long way, through sharp rocks and spikes, for when we hit the ground, we will still be the brightest bunch.

No matter how big, we will still pull through.
Madysen, Age 7

Madysen, Grama
Breanna M. Age 11

Being Proactive
Don’t be reactive be proactive
It will make you’re insides attractive
You want to have a big strong heart
So being proactive is a good way to start
Don’t be lazy and stay inside
Be active and go outside
So don’t you see being
Proactive is the good way to be
Alison helped me get good Grads in school. That made me realiz that she’s a good gardeon and she’s loveaball to. I like this house beacuse she took us when we needed her. She helped us eny time we needed help and she took realley good care of us when we needed to be taken care of. She is alwas nice to us 3 kids and the best she get’s us toy’s most of the time. She let’s us call are MOM eny time we wanted. We think of her like she’s are stepmom beacaus she’s a big part of are life. And shes the best step mom I ever had and kool, awsome, kool, sweet, and good. shes the gratest step mom. She’s kool with a K. If she was kool with a c which she’s not beacaus it mean’s constipated overrated out of stile looser shes defently not constipated overraded out of stile looser shes kool with a K not C. She’s the best, koolest, smartes, she are step mom.
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