Idaho KinCare Project 2011

My Family. My Story.

Expressions of children raised by relatives or other significant adults

"It means a lot, knowing I will always have someone to rely on."

-Kimberley, Age 15

My Family. My Story. Art Contest
2011

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.

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. Over 7,000 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, 2011

For more information about kincare in Idaho, visit www.211.idaho.gov and follow the kincare tabs.

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Please note: All entries were printed as received.

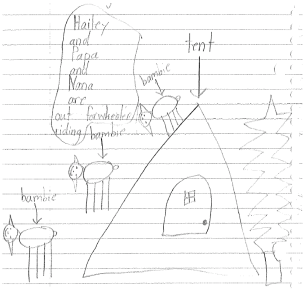
Winning Contest Entry
Ages 5-8

Hailey, Age 8

I like living with nana and papa because they take us for walks because I'm specail and cause they love me. But they are a huge fan of Suviver because they watch Suvier every Sunday night. Also they bought a boxer it's name is Poncho and it loves me and I love Poncho. The end.

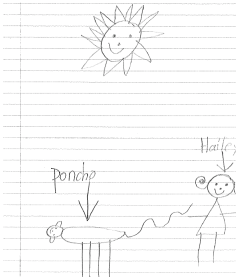
And Papa takes us for forewheeler rides and he takes us swimming and we take Poncho for walks one time we took Poncho for a walk to the park and he was so happy to get off of his leash he took off running so fast that I fell cause he tripped me. The end.

And we go camping and we sleep in a tent and I woke up and there were 3 deer one was a boy 2 were a girl. The end.

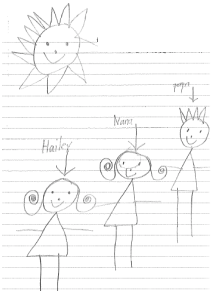


Hailey and Papa and Nana are out forwheel riding

Bambie, Bambie, Bambie, Tent



Poncho Hailey



Hailey Nana Papa

Winning Contest Entry
Ages 5-8

Mary, Age 7

Me and my Nana are making a cake.

Mary

Nana

Winning Contest Entry
Ages 9-12

Cassidy, Age 12

When a House Becomes a Home

When I was born my mother took care of me but she left me and my brother with my grandparents. We live in the house that we've always lived in we and we mostly have everyday lives, accept for living with our grandparents which is still cool. We aren't home schooled we go to regular school and we have regular friends. We ride the bus home and back most of the time and we still see our mother with our two little sisters Eternity and Faith. We take many trips to fun places like in California we went to Disneyland, SeaWorld, and the Sandiego zoo.

There are the ups and downs but that's all right we are still a family and we love each other. Our family can be weird like I like to play Football with my brother and we fight a whole lot, but underneath all the fighting we still love each other. We have animals; we all pretty much have one, just like other families.

On March 9th, 2010, my grandparents adopted both me and my brother. Now we not only have a family, but we have a home.

Winning Contest Entry
Ages 9-12

Samirah, Age 10

When you take me under your wing…I'll always know I'll be safe in your nest!

This is a picurte about how my grandma always takes care of me! I love her so much!

Winning Contest Entry
Ages 13-18

Kelvilynn, Age 15

My Family has been through so much during my life. In fact we have fought and fought for what's best to keep our family alive and together. We have had so many struggles through out the years.

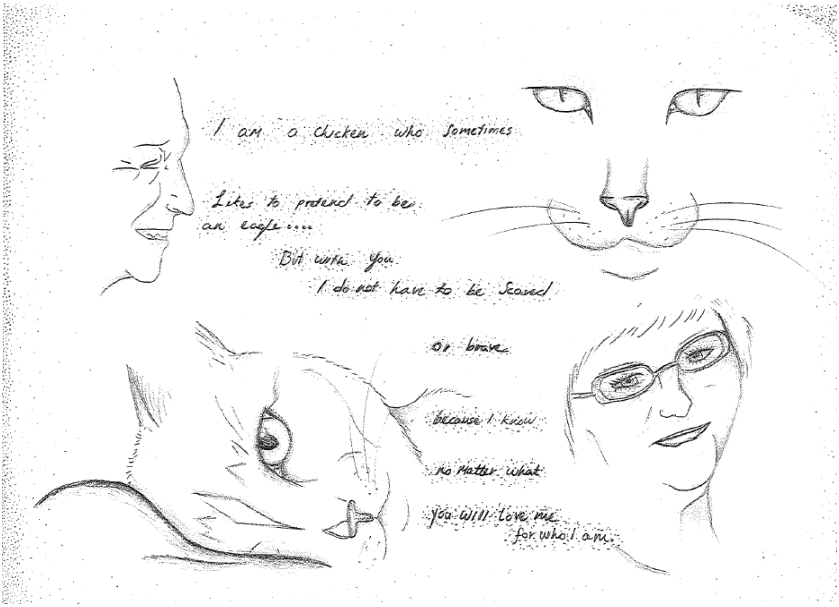
As for me, I can see that my grandparents, whom I've lived with for almost four years, have been through a lot. They have sacrificed all they have just to keep a strong foundation for our family. We, at times, may seem like we don't care about what they have done for us, but deep down in our soul, we thank God everyday that we have great grandparents who have provided for us. In return, we strive to do our best, through hard work and determination. We put a smile on our face because we know one day all the hard work and sacrifice we made will someday pay off.

There have been days when I have cried myself to sleep and thought about what would have happened if I never appreciated what they have done for me. The best way to describe my family is by one simple word… giving. Our motto is: family comes first, and that's what we live by. We support each and every one of us in the family. My grandparents and my guardian have been such a positive influence in my life by simply taking care of me due to my parents not being able to be with me. They also put a smile on my face and hopeful feeling in my heart. 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. The things they tell us are for future reference and for us to know right from wrong, and I thank them for that.

I will someday repay them and give thanks for being such wonderful grandparents. My family is something no one can replace and it's my greatest blessing. I love my family for what they have done for me and for what I have become because of them. This is my family…my story.

Winning Contest Entry
Ages 13-18

Shaela, Age 16



I am a chicken who sometimes likes to pretend to be an eagle…
But with you I do not have to be scared or brave
Because I know no matter what you will love me for who I am

I drew a picture of my family consisting of our two cats, Zeus (top right) and Nellee Belle (bottom left). My grandpa (top left) and my grandma (bottom right).

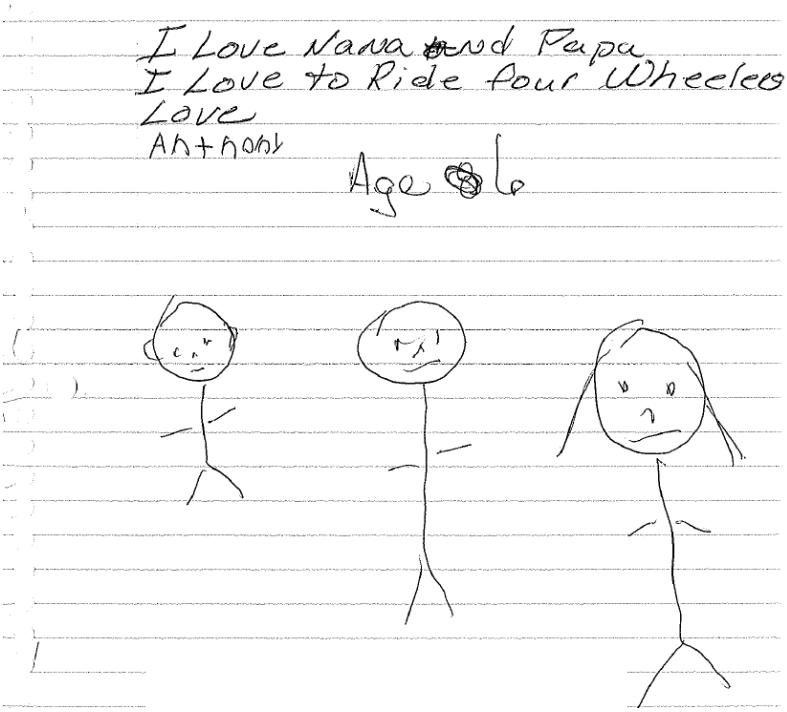
Distinguished Contest Entries
Ages 5-18

Isabel, Age 5

I love Gramma, we are here, here's us with the sun!

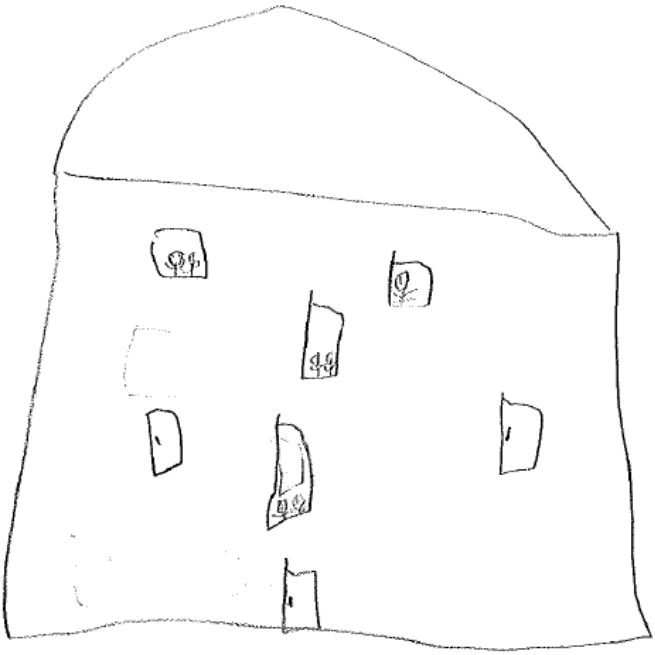
Lillian, Age 5

Anthony, Age 6



I love Nana and Papa. I love to ride four wheelers. Love Anthony.

Henry, Age 6



Aden, Age 7

We are a happy family.

Grandma, Grandpa, Lucy, Curtis, Me, Lily

Autumn, Age 7

I am Happy and Safe

I was five years old when my Granny K drove from Idaho to Minnesota to rescue me. I will be 8 in July. My Granny K has helped me to be a better person. She has taught me what is right and wrong. She has taught me to read, write, and how to trust. I have learned respect from her. She helps me study for my spelling tests. I get 105% on almost every one. Grann K teaches me a lot of things she knows so I can be smarter. We go to a lot of different places and I am always learning new things from her. I feel happy and safe now. My heart is good and full with love. My Granny K is the best Grandma in the world! She rescued me from being sad and scarred. I am not scarred any more. I am happy! I love my Granny K and want to live with her forever!

Kyle, Age 7

It is raining and my Grandmother is with my Grandmother's friend.
Love, Kyle.

Macaylee, Age 7

I love living with my grandma and grandpa because they give me a home and a family.

My Loveing Family

Macaylee, Brayden, Destiny, Keira, Grandma, Grandpa

Ella, Age 8

Grandpa and Grandma keep me safe.

Jasper, Age 8

My grandma helped me in school get from Fs to As and Bs. She helped me with my homework. She helped me whith everything she can. She teches me a lot of stuff. I was sad when my parents gave me away. Now I am happy and she makes me smile. We also love fishing.

Driahnna, Age 9

Living with Grandma

Hi, my name is Driahnna. I am nine years old and I am a lucky girl!

My grandma changed my world from bad to good for me. I went to live with my grandma when I was a baby because my Mom does a lot of bad things. My Grandma does a lot of good things for my sister Dajsha and me. These are some things she does for me. She gets things I like cute clothes, toys, nail polish, hair stuff, crafts and pets. She helps me when I need help. She is there when I need her. She buys food and makes meals for me and my sister. She stands up for us! She takes care of us and teaches me new things like cooking. She takes us on picnics. She gives us food. She keeps my sister and me away from creepy people. She loves me and my sister and cares about us. I saved the two best things for last: She is kind and cares about all people (especially us) and she gives us the important things we need.

Me and my sister love her for all the things she does for us!

Helen, Age 9

My Godmother

My godmother is what a real grandmother is, because she cooks the same food for you. Sometimes even a special little food just for me. It is sometimes with dessert, sometimes not. It depends on how I'm feeling, not her.

Another reason why she is a cool godmother is because she gives me birthday presents just like normal grandmothers would. She gives me dresses, clothes, sometimes even snacks. She is fantastic, especially on my birthday.

Also, my godmother is fun because she takes me to really, really fun Jacuzzis. I sometimes start yelling, "Ahh! It is so hot in this place." And she starts laughing, and says, "It's okay." So now I know, Jacuzzis are fun.

The fourth reason why I think she's awesome is because of her smiles☺. Her smiles are the most beautiful ones I've ever (in my life!!!) seen.

Now you know that living with a godmother isn't that bad. It is actually cool. Next time you go to your godmother's house, think of my story, it might help (a bit).

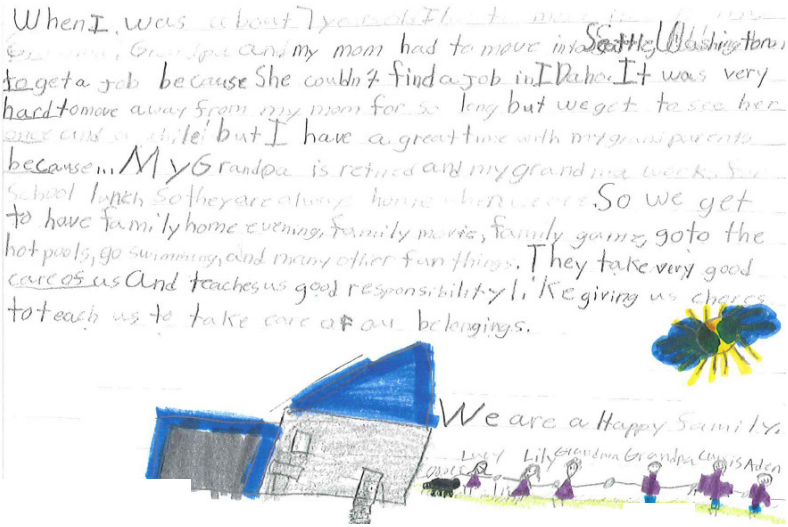
The End!!

Kimberly, Age 9

Spending Quality with me

Me and my Garndma watching a moive.

Lucy, Age 9

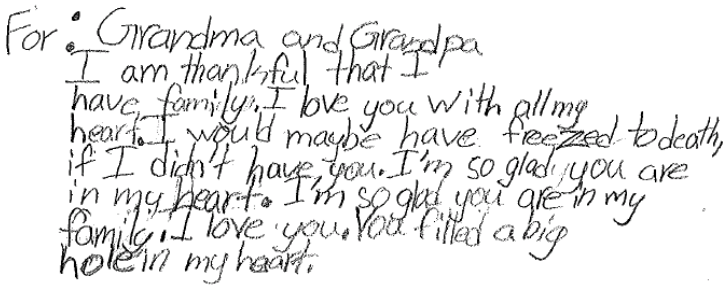


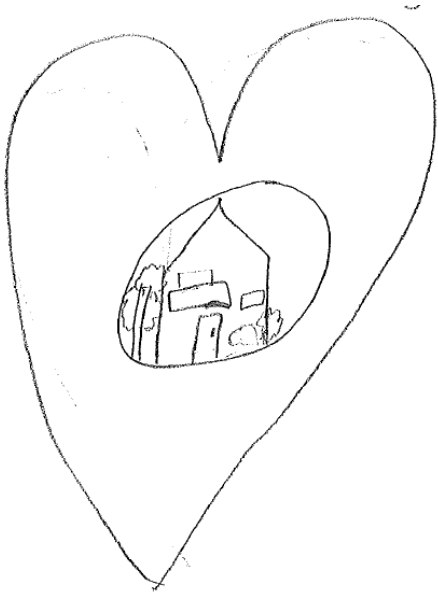
When I was about 7 years old I had to move in with my Grandma & Grandpa and my mom had to move into Seattle, Washington, to get a job because She couldn't find a job in Idaho. It was very hard to move away from my mom for so long but we get to see her once and a while but I have a great time with my grandparents because…My grandpa is retired and my grandma works for school lunch so they are always home when we are. So we get to have family home evening, family movie, family game, go to the hot pools, go swimming and many other fun things. They take very good care of us and teaches us good responsibility like giving us chores to teach us to take care of our belongings.

We are a Happy Family

Cooper, Lucy, Lily, Grandma, Grandpa, Curtis, Aden

Emilee, Age 10


For: Grandma and Grandpa
I am thankful that I
have family. I love you with all my
heart. I would maybe have freezed to death,
if I didn't have you. I'm so glad you are
in my heart. I'm so glad you are in my
family. I love you. You filled a big
hole in my heart.



For: Grandma and Grandpa
I am thankful that I have family. I love you with all my heart. I would maybe have freezed to death, if I didn't have you. I'm so glad you are in my heart. I'm so glad you are in my family. I love you. You filled a big hole in my heart.

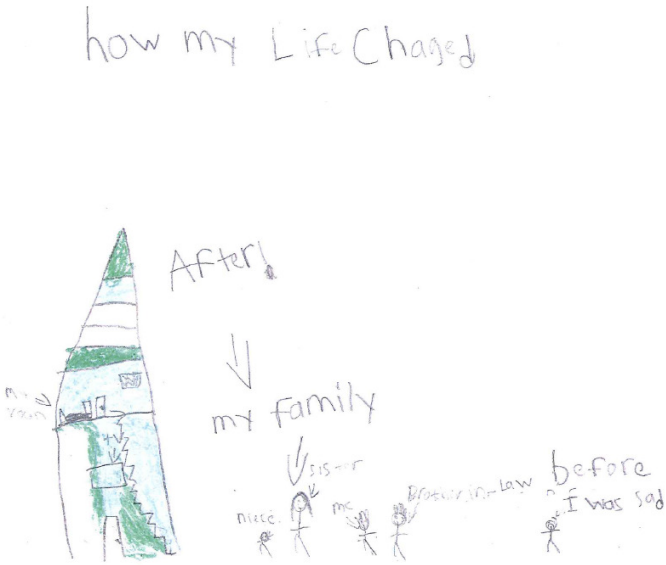
Nelly, Age 10

Memories Aunt and Grandma

1. When I was little, my grandma always used to rock me to sleep.
2. My grandma taught me how to pray by myself

3. My grandma kisses me to sleep well.
4. I love being potty trained although sometimes I fall in the toilet.
5. My grandma taught me to read Spanish and English, I kind of struggled.
6. My Aunt Lymaris helps me with homework.
7. My grandma watches when I eat, sometimes I don't eat at all
8. My 8th b-day was the best
9. My aunt loves me!

Gabe, Age 10



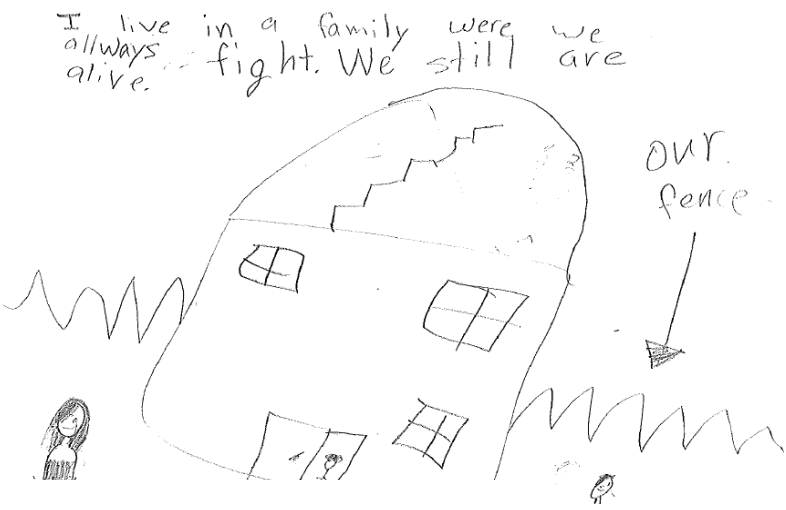
How my life chaged

My room

After→my family → niece, sister, me, brother-in-law

Before I was sad

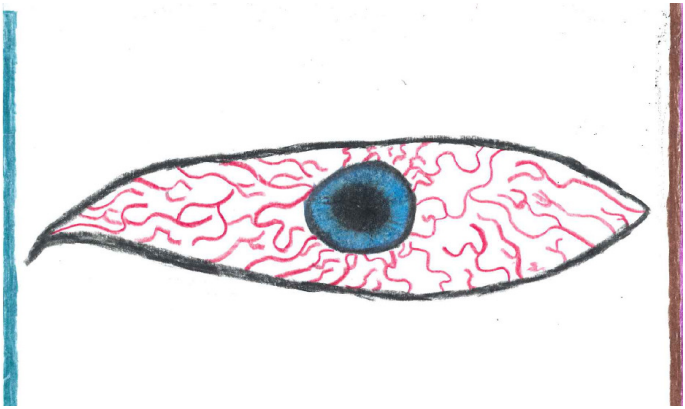
Tristan, Age 10



I live in a family were we allways fight. We still are alive.

Our fence.

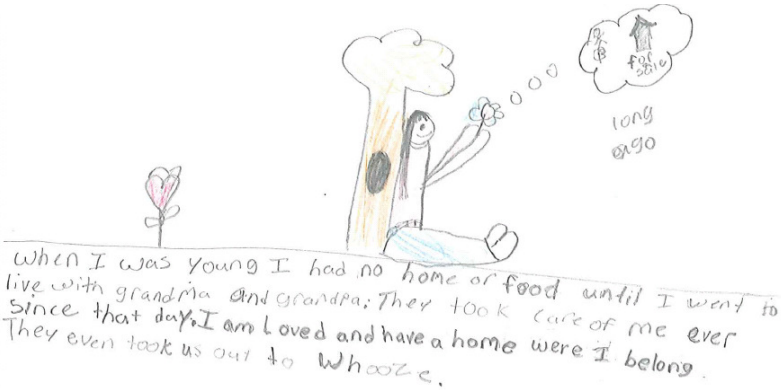
Corbin, Age 11



Jordan, Age 11

Because we are living with our grandparents & not our parent me & my sibling don't hear as much fighting.

Kialey, Age 11



Long ago (for sale)

When I was young I had no home or food until I went to live with grandma and grandpa. They took care of me ever since that day. I am loved and have a home were I belong. They even took us out to Whooze.

Tristn, Age 11

Because I live with my grandparents, I know what love is.

Grandma & Grandpa are raising me as their own son. My parents didn't have time or patience to take care of me and raise me. My grandparents have given me love, understanding, and a gift of generosity that I wouldn't have gotten from either mom or dad. They make sure all my needs are met both physically and emotionally. When I get sick, they take me to a doctor. On Sunday, we go to church and I get to learn how good it is to help others and that God is there to love and care for all of us.

My mom loves me, and visits when she can, but she knows it is best for me to be with Grandma & Grandpa. My dad lives a long ways away but we talk on the phone often. He says he is glad Grandma & Grandpa are raising me so well.

I'd hate to think what my life might be like if Grandma & Grandpa didn't want me. I'd probably have to live with a lot of strangers and that could be dangerous.

I love my Grandma & Grandpa for taking such good care of me.

Xavier, Age 11

Living with my Grandparents is the best thing that happened to me because I can go to school at Hemingway and my grandparents and my teachers at school have really helped me a lot I can read now! When I started Hemingway I could not read well at all.

Adreanna, Age 12

Awesome Grandparents

My grandparents are the best. Living w/ my grandparents is the best thing that's ever happened to me.

When I'm at Webster Elementary just sitting there reading in the back of my head I'm thinking what they have done for me. They put a roof over my head. They put food on the table, and much more to come.

My grandma is the sweetest thing in the world. She's raised me like her own. We used to get into fights until she got out of the hospital, but ever since then I've been so nice to her.

My grandpa is awesome. He joined me up for Karate. He pays the monthly bill, so I can stay in Karate. He even gives me 7 dollars a week. The last thing I want to say is my grandpa takes me up to Troy. It is always so much fun.

I wouldn't want to be anywhere else than Lewiston, IDAHO w/ my grandparents.

LEWISTON ROCKS

So do my grandparents. It will always be blue skies with my grandparents.

Cheyenne, Age 12

L.i.f.e C.h.a.n.g.e

When I was young I was clueless.
When I was young I had no manners.
Her love and patience made a impact life
Her love is so wonderful, as wonderful wonder, ros
Her patience is as patient as a patient sloth.
Her protection is as protective as a mother lion.
Her comfort feels as good as puppy's fur.
Her faith is as powerful as the sun's rays.
We are both learning new things together.
Her amazingness is as amazing as the sun.
We exceed everything together.
We encourage each other more and m
Her Hollyness is as holly as an angel.
She teaches me my independence.
Her greatness is as great as a flower.
No one is better than my grandma.

My Story of Me and Grandma

If my grandma would not have came into my life I would not be here today. I would be in heaven right now if she had not came into my life. She has went through a lot of paper work to get legal gardienship of me. She knew that if she would not have came into my life I would have lived a bad life. She knew my real mom did not know how to take care of a child. She did not just have a daughter but also my half brother. My mom would not feed us right. Me and my half brother ate trash and we ate on top of the table and not in a chair. My mom would make me and my half brother watch bad things on the computer. When I was a baby my mom would put me in my crib and lock the door. Then I would rip up my mattress and eat it. I was born with ADHD and other diagnosis's. When I was three my grandma got full custudy of me. So then we had to sleep with locked doors, locked windows and no lights on. I was scared of the dark because of what my mom did to me. Then when I was six years old me and my grandma moved to Wisconsin. But the state knew where we moved to even my mom. When we moved to Wisconsin we lived with my Uncle Leon for two years. Then when I was eight years old me and my

grandma moved out of my Uncle Leon's house and moved into a little farm house that was very small. But just big enough for both of us. It wasn't the best place to live. But it was a roof over our head. We lived there for about two years. When I was ten we moved to Idaho. We moved to Idaho because my Aunt Connie thought it would be best for all of us. So that we would have family we never knew. We moved in with my Aunt Connie and Uncle Carl and my cousin Alex. When we moved to Idaho I was ten years old. Now I am twelve. I go to councling with a councler names Jeff. I have a PSR named HEIDI. I live across the street from my Aunt Connie. My Uncle Carl has cancer. And my cousin Alex is now twenty years old. My grandma has struck with me for twelve years old. MY GRANDMA IS THE WORLD.

Hailie, Age 12

One Big Happy Family!

Me, my brother, my sister, my mom (grandparent), dad

LeeAnn, Age 12

My Family

I don't remember much about my first three years. I was born in Yakima, Washington, my mom was 15 when she got pregnant with me, and my dad was 19. He had no job, and was in jail most of the time because of drugs. I know that my mom loved me very much because I was always on her hip.

We (my mom and I) went to Portland to live with my great grandmother. My mom got he G.E.D. there and went to work at Winco, but soon discovered Meth, and couldn't take care of me anymore.

It took two years for my great grandma to adopt me, and become my mom. She works really hard to give me the best education, morals, structure, and values that she can.

I go to a private school on partial scholarship, and get straight A's. I take taekwondoe, am in Leadership, and I have a black belt. My mom cares about where I am, my grades, and also my responsibilities. I tell her everyday how much I appreciate her, and that she is a gift from God.

My name is LeeAnn, I am 12 and my mom is 72.

This is My Story!

Amour, Age 13

In 2004 I was a girl that was living in an orphanage, because of the Gatumba Massacre where my mom and 2 sisters were killed.

My dad couldn't be found, so my Uncle decided to take me & my only sister left, to America with him & his family. He too had lost his wife and one child and he was injured, he was in pain and walked with crutches. In May of 2007 he headed for America with 10 children without knowing what lay ahead.

When we got to America it was surprising, in a good way. Even though it was hard to get used to everything that was new, that was the beginning of a better life. If it wasn't for my Uncle bringing me here I would still be worrying if I was going to have enough to eat or drink and where I am going to sleep. My Uncle has made life easier for me and my sister.

If it weren't for my Uncle bringing me here I wouldn't know that I could sing, play sports, be a good helper and much more. He is my idol. My life would be miserable, but he took the courage and the responsibility to take care of two more kids, while he had 8 already. He always takes us to 2 churches every weekend & that is where I met two women who are like mothers to me and my sister.

He is a good uncle/dad/person. I call him my dad, because he is like a dad to me.

Colter, Age 13

Roses are Red, Violets are Blue
My family is the best, how about you!

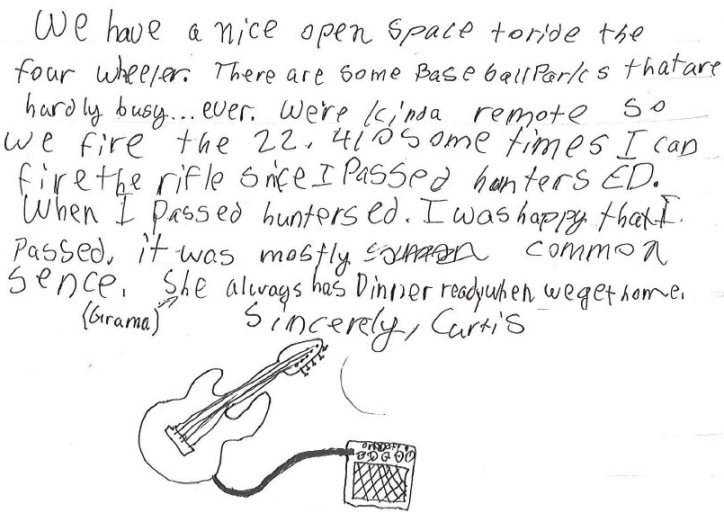
Grandpa, Grandma, Tanisha, me, Kialey

Courtney, Age 13

My Story

I live with my grandma Linda. Ever sence I have lived with her I am a happy girl. I was able to get a new horse and her name is Hershey. We have had Music our first horse ever sence we moved to live with my grandma. I have learned how to be respectful, honest, and helpful. I am proud of what she does for us to be able to go places, hang out with firends, and to all of our appointments. She works hard and is amazing at what she does for everone. I have no idea what I would do without her. She works hard and yet she is able to drive me, my brother, and sister around to all of our appointments. She is just something that I never want to let go of. Sometimes I do get mad at her, but that's cause I'm a teenager and I get mad if I don't get my way.

Curtis, Age 13


We have a nice open Space to ride the four wheeler. There are some Base ball Parks that are hardly busy...ever. We're kinda remote so we fire the 22. 410 some times I can fire the rifle since I Passed hunters ED. When I passed hunters ed. I was happy that I Passed, it was mostly common sence. She always has Dinner ready when we get home. (Grama)
Sincerely, Curtis

We have a nice open space to ride the four wheeler. There are some baseball parks that are hardly busy…ever. We're kinda remote so we fire the 22. Sometimes I can fire the rifle since I passed hunter's ED. When I passed hunter's ed, I was happy that I passed, it was mostly common sence. She (Grama) always has dinner ready when we get home. Sincerely, Curtis

Linda, Age 13

Mis Sueños, Globos de Colores

Mis abuelos el día que nací armaron una fiesta de colores en mi casa, yo los vi subirse en esos colores, y desde allí me invitaron a vivir con ellos hasta hoy. A medida que fui creciendo, no dejaron de invitarme a otros lugares donde viví experiencias lindas que jamás olvidaré.

La última fue hace un año. Nos montamos en un globo tan grande como el mismo mundo y desde allí soñé que era una estrellita de colores que alumbraba a todos los niños estaban alegres, yo también. Les dije a mis abuelitos Luz marina y Chevick, que quería que ellos también soñaran conmigo en las alturas. Entonces descendimos a la velocidad de la luz., mientras ellos con globitos de colores en sus manos nos recibían. La puerta del globo granda se abrió, y empezamos a viajar donde había otro mundo fantástico donde uno elegía el sueno que quería en la tierra. Entonces elegimos se ángeles con alas grandes, para llevar alegría a los niños que no tienen padres, tíos ni abuelitos como los nuestros.

Hoy de nuevo estoy empacando las maletas para mi largo viaje con mis abuelitos; nos quieres acompañar?

Linda, Age 13 (translated)

My Dreams, Balloons of Colors

My grandparents put together a party of colors in my house the day I was born, I saw them climb up into those colors, and since then I was invited to live with them until today. While I was getting older, they did not stop inviting me to other places where I lived beautiful experiences that I will never forget.

The latest was a year ago. We got in a balloon as big as the world itself and from there I dreamed I was a colored star that shone on all children, the children were happy, and me too. I told my grandparents Luz Maria and Chevick, that I wanted them to dream with me up on the heights. Then we descended at the speed of light, while they were welcoming us with color balloons in their hands. The door of the big balloon opened, and we began to travel where there was another fantastic world where you chose the dream you wanted in Earth. Then we chose to be angels with big wings, to bring joy to children without fathers, uncles or grandparents like ours.

Today I'm packing my bags again for a long trip with my grandparents. Do you want to come too?

Kirstena, Age 13

Living with my Grandparents

Living with my grandparents is the most wonderful experience. If I would have stayed in California with my mom and dad, I would most likely be in a foster-home. Even if my grandparents don't wear costumes with capes, I consider them my heroes. They rescued me. No matter how tired, hurt, scared, mad, or sad, they never drag me into their problems. They make sure I am always smiling and happy. The only time tears come from my eyes because of them, is because they made me laugh too hard. I love my grandparents so much and I enjoy living with them.

Grandpa, Grandma, Me

Elijah, Age 14

My Rescuers Home

A roof over my head
Clothes on my back
This makes up for what I lack
Food on the table
Games to play
This has helped me on my way
Money for this
Help with that
A loving pat
How water for a shower
Salts for a bath
Willing to help with math
A bed to sleep in
Help with my room
They keep me from my doom
My life improved
If they didn't come to the rescue
My time might just be due
Thanks to them I can write this poem
I can sleep in a bed go to school with clean clothes
I like the fact I can hold them close

Whittney, Age 14

There we sat Awaiting the judge.
No breaks in The awkward silence.

Squeak. The large door Swings open revealing him.
The black robe hung Past his long legs.

My thighs doing nothing but Trembling. Flashes of the horrible Memories flutter in and out Of my mind, as if I am Drowning by my own unforgettable thoughts.
Praying nothing will go wrong.

I clenched my shirt with Sweaty palms until finally,
The papers are signed. Taking one thousand pounds Off my shoulders.

Walking through the miracle doors
I was in a different world.

One that was magnificent.
One that was filled with dreams.
One that was great.

Not an abusive one,
The best one.

Adoption is the best part of my life.

Miracle Life

I was afraid to go to sleep at night. I was frightened to wake up in the morning. “The abuse needs to stop,” I shouted with rage.

I got pushed down the stairs. I got hit with wooden spoons…in the face. My parents never listened to me or believed anything I said. They never loved me as their own child.

I always ran to the only person I had…my big brother…Sam. I always went to sleep crying with him right by my side, because of the deep down pain I felt.

Fake smile, never real because I wasn't happy.

Until the most important day of my life. June 19, 2009, father's day, when my grandma Trudy and aunt Tory declared, "your moving in with me and Bill for the summer."

The sound of loud barking rumbled as I walked in. the slight scent of pineapples candles glowed through out my new home. All the colorful palm trees surrounding me as I entered my room, realizing, I have a lot of decorating to do.

The next thing I knew the summer had turned into the beginning of the school year. I started going to West Junior High knowing no one.

"Could you please help me?" I asked Amanda, a total stranger. She helped me get my locker open, and we exchanged schedules, "we have a few classes together," Amanda remarks. So we walked to English side by side.

At first I felt like a little midget who didn't belong. Amanda right next to me towered over me by more than seven inches.

Her hair swished back and forth, her eyes glistened in the light, a tall, skinny and super pretty young lady stood before me as if we had been best friends for a really long time. Each day passed one hour at a time. As the days passed by Amanda and I became better friends.

To this day Amanda and I are still great friends, and I proudly still live with my aunt, uncle, and my brother Sam. I am more thankful for my new family and friends more than anything.

Through out the seventh and eighth grade I have met some amazing people. Elora, short but cute and super spunky. Tara, the blondy, with luscious sea blue eyes, super pretty, strong willed, made with tons of energy, and I swear she is going to be the next Dr. Phil. Devin, funny and supports me the whole way.

Two of the most important people in my life are my Grandma Trudy and my Papa Wayne. They took my brother and I out of a horrible situations and let us live with them when we had nowhere else to go.

I think about my past everyday because I realize its all over, now I have a place I can actually call home, and the reminder that I will never have to worry about getting hit ever again.

Kimberley, Age 15

Living with other people besides my parents has been positive for me because I've always had somebody to look up to. And they've always been there for me through everything. Basically just giving me a hand to hold. It means a lot, knowing I will always have someone to rely on.

Nicole, Age 15

When I was eight years old, I was taken away from my parents. My grandparents were in town and took my older brother, younger sister, and I to a hotel. They told us that we were moving to California. Being taken away from my parents at such a young age opened my eyes. No matter how much I fought with my grandparents, they made my life a million times better! My grandparents had taught me to be whom and what I want to be. They taught me to trust in God with all I have. I found that losing my parents was difficult, but my grandma was there to comfort me through the hard times. My grandma has made me want to grow up and be the best mother I can be, so I can show her what a wonderful job she did in raising her grandchildren to be wonderful people. No matter how bad things were, my grandmother taught me to stick by the side of the ones you love, and never let go. Always comfort those in need, and never turn away; always smile and laugh. Stay strong, fight your fight, and don't let your enemy win!

Sierra, Age 15

Now and Then

When my life was dark and gray,
My Aunt and uncle saved the day.
I used to cry myself to sleep every night,
Now I no longer try to fight.

I am happy where I am,
Because I have a life now not then.
I no longer fake my smile
Because I have a life worth while.

I used to be scared for my life,
Now I know someday I will be a wife.
Now that I know I got my life back,
I will never try to fight that.

I never thought I would have parents again,
Until my aunt and uncle took me in.
They make me laugh, they make me smile,
Now I can live a life worth while.

I am where I never thought I would be,
I can now forever see.
I am happier now, not like then,
I never want to live that life again.

Skiblu, Age 15

I Love You!!!

Your love will always be priceless to me,
Because of the people you are
You’re the kind of grandparents people can look up to
But yet you’re strong, and gentle
Yet open, direct but understanding. . .
So every day, especially,
I want to let you know
How much I love you
And all that you guys are to me.

Jesse, Age 16

Grandma is delightful and Unique in every way. She is sure to put a smile on your face, and brings my heart delight.

But loving me with the promise that she'll stay right by my side.

Who comforts and protects me, no matter what happens.

Who fills my life with a million happy Things.

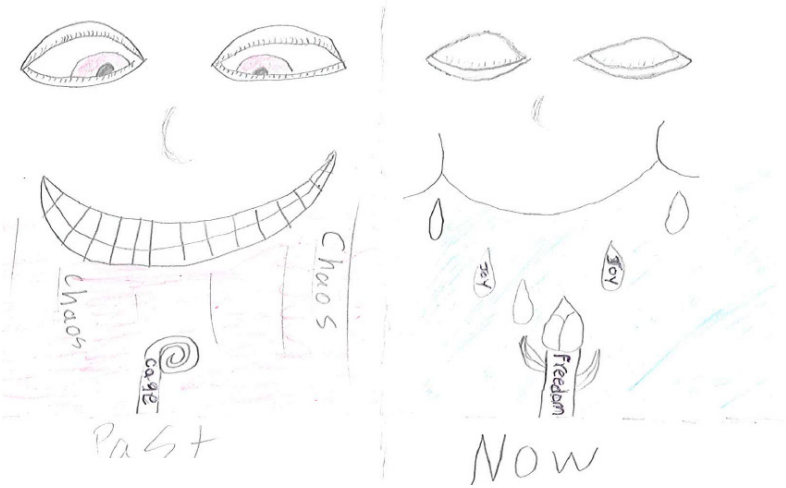
Jessica, Age 17

New Life New Story

My name is Jessica; I'm 17. Three years ago I met a woman I'd never met before. She was helping my sister and I came to visit and I never left. This is why! Growing up for me was horrible we were always moving do to my mothers many men so I never had any friends, and was abused daily by her boyfriends. I was the child born from one of her affairs and she never let me forget it. So she made me do all the cooking and cleaning and taking care of the animals.

Cathy has ms (multiple sclerosis) and lives on her disability only. She believes in having 3 meals a day, discipline, family time, there are no stupid questions, honesty, laughter, doing things together, education, saying I LOVE YOU! I'm learning to cook, can, garden, and morals. I do without anything. We all go to church. Now we are just waiting on the slow system to become legally hers so my mother can't come grab me. We have all my doctors helping us in every way to make this transition smoothly and final.

Tanisha, Age 17



Past—chaos, chaos, cage

Now—joy, joy, freedom

Jordon, Age 18

Influencee to Influencer

Have you ever forgiven someone for something big and life-changing? As the time it happens, you have the thought of *I will never forgive you for this* or *I'll hate you forever.* This is exactly what my thoughts were at the age of five when I was sexually abused by my step-father. There was much abuse, and not enough of the essential needs met. I took care of my step-brother and I. I'm eighteen now and I have forgiven my parents and have moved on with my life.

My adopted parents (who were complete strangers) have taught me how to forgive and live my life successful. My first foster family first introduced me to the Bible. I didn't really care for Christianity. When I got adopted at the age eleven and went to my first youth group the message was on forgiving. That was definitely God-given. I accepted Christ as my Savior and I forgave my parents for everything. After ten years of not talking to my biological mother, I love her and I'm going to see her next summer after high school graduation. I'm going to use my testimony to help other in that situation.

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