



February 2010

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Andrea was six when she was removed from her home and placed with my family as a foster child. She was as close to a wild child as I had ever seen. She hissed like a cat. She lied. She stole things and broke things and kicked holes in the walls during epic tantrums. She wandered away from the yard and around the neighborhood at will. She turned our world upside down every day. What I was witnessing - what Andrea was living with - were the devastating effects of a lifetime of instability. **A victim of crushing poverty and parental neglect, Andrea had spent most of the previous year living in a car with her mother.** She was only in first grade, but she was already failing in school. Where she came from, drug use and violence were an everyday part of life.

When I asked her what she wanted, Andrea said she wanted to go home. It's the same thing every foster kid wants, no matter the bruises, burns or broken bones. All kids crave the safety and stability that a home *should* be - it's what they desperately need in order to love, settle down and just be children. Living with Andrea taught me what happens to kids who are abused or neglected. The consequences are severe and long-lasting and hundreds of thousands of kids living in the foster care system are suffering from them every day.

But there is an antidote, something that can heal the wounds of abuse and neglect: finding a safe, permanent home. I call it **the Power of Permanency, and it's the very thing that CASA volunteers are committed to achieving for every foster child. CASA volunteers know that permanency means more than staying in one place for a long time - it means being part of a family, not part of a system.** Sometimes CASA volunteers help reunite children with their biological parents; when that is not safe, they recommend finding a different permanent solution.



Please turn page over for more...

CASA Mission Statement

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Atlantic & Cape May Counties, Inc. (CASA) and its trained volunteers speak on behalf of abused and neglected children in the foster care system and are dedicated to ensuring these children are placed in safe, permanent homes as quickly as possible.

Going home was not an option for Andrea. But becoming a permanent part of my family was. Last year, after she had been with us for three years, our family adopted Andrea - and we have seen her transformed by the **Power of Permanency**. Small, important things began to change. She started handing in homework. She took baby steps toward making friends. We started laughing together. She's become an excellent reader and is hooked on the *Twilight* series. Her crippling anxiety has started to recede.

Andrea is not out of the woods yet. Like other kids who spend time in foster care, she is still at risk for teen pregnancy, failed relationships, homelessness and unemployment. **But because of the Power of Permanency, she has an equal chance of achieving her dreams.** That's something every child deserves.

Join the **Forgotten Children Campaign** and sponsor a foster child for as little as \$34 a week, \$134 a month, \$805 for 6 months or \$1,610 for a year. Seventy-six percent of your donation goes directly to programming, training volunteers and supporting foster children in Atlantic and Cape May County. With your support last year, 160 CASA Volunteer Advocates served 275 foster children and helped 93 of those children find permanent homes.

The **Power of Permanency** changes kids' lives. **Please join me in supporting CASA of Atlantic & Cape May Counties and help give foster kids like Andrea a better chance of getting out of foster care and into safe homes.**

Sincerely,

Ann Lokey

Ann Lokey, Foster parent, adoptive parent and CASA volunteer

P.S. A gift of \$1,610 will support a child with a CASA volunteer for one year. That's a gift that lasts a lifetime.

..... (Clip and mail in enclosed envelope)

Yes, I would like to sponsor a child (check level of support)

1 year for \$1,610 6 months for \$805 1 month for \$134 1 week for \$34

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Payment Method (check one): Enclosed Check Visa MasterCard

CC# _____ Exp. Date _____