

SUCCESS STORIES

Mea's story continues a quarterly series from Tabor Children's Services. Our Success Stories series is an additional way we are communicating with our friends and donors about the agency's social work efforts. Each quarter we feature one of our programs and the inspiring story of a child, youth or family with children whom the program has helped. To add your address to the Success Stories email list, please contact ariana.burrows@tabor.org.

Tabor Helps Mea Succeed

Mea, a 7-year-old girl, with two younger siblings, was removed from her birth family because of substance abuse in their home. In her short life she had already experienced neglect, abuse and post-traumatic stress (as witness of a crime). For the first year of her foster care placement, Tabor staff endeavored without success to guide the birth family to make a safe home. Then her behaviors hampered Tabor's initial attempt to arrange for her adoption. When Mea's foster family adopted her siblings, Mea was not included. "My dream," Mea recalls, "was to be adopted or at least to have a parent and family without having to be moved around from house to house in the foster care system."

When Mea's first adoption disrupted, Tabor's treatment foster care staff relocated her to another foster home and worked diligently to help her overcome problematic behaviors. Meanwhile, Tabor's adoption unit recognized that the disruption in Mea's home placement increased her risk for lingering in the foster care system. Her placement dilemma was significant enough that Mea was brought to the attention of the nationally-known Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and the child-specific recruitment of its Wendy's Wonderful Kids program. Mea recalls that when her Tabor worker said, "it was time to look for a forever family...I told her that I wanted a mother and sisters that were smart and able to love and take care of me."

During Tabor's celebration of National Adoption Month in November 2006, Mrs. E. (already a Tabor adoptive parent) saw Mea's picture and returned shortly afterward to view a PowerPoint presentation



on this "waiting child." The young lady's unfortunate story and her sad eyes led Mrs. E. to declare her commitment to adopt Mea. With regular therapy and with support from Mrs. E. and her three other daughters, Mea found the stability she needed. Her adoption was finalized in June 2008.

Mea enjoys her new life, takes music lessons, and is an honor roll student. She wants to become a lawyer, and Mrs. E. states, "as her mother, I hope to see her reach that goal."

In July of 2008 the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN) honored Mrs. E. for outstanding permanency services to children and families in the Pennsylvania child welfare system. Mea and her sisters were present during the banquet and began to cry with joy as their mother took the stage. Through their tears the girls could be heard saying: "She deserves every bit of the honor."

Mea believes that on the day of her adoption finalization, "I was reborn to a glorious new family." Tabor social workers are delighted to see that the light of this beautiful, charming young lady, now with her forever family, is shining brightly indeed.