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Our mission is to provide comprehensive mental health and social services to children and their families. Developing healthy alternatives to abuse and violence, addressing emotional and behavioral challenges, results in healthy children, families and communities.

## Ashley's Young Life—A Success Story

Ashley's childhood was unstable and emotionally traumatic. She was terrified by frequent domestic violence and her father's drug usage. Ashley's emotional problems began to show when her mother became ill with syphilis and meningitis. She was unable to care for her five children, or even recognize them. When her mother died, Ashley was only nine.

Ashley's Aunt Melissa cared for Ashley and her siblings during her mother's illness. Melissa began to adopt them; then she too suddenly died in childbirth, leaving her first child also motherless. Ashley was again left without a caregiver. In order to keep the children from being separated in the foster care system, Ashley's Aunt Natalie and Uncle Ron then stepped in and adopted all six of the children. They already had four of their own.

Each wrenching transition took many months. Two years after her mother's death, Ashley was living in a family of 13: Aunt Natalie and Uncle Ron, one grandmother, 5 cousins, 4 siblings and Ashley.

These turbulent and grief-filled years took their toll on Ashley. She developed increasingly severe emotional problems, manifested in angry outbursts and suicidal thoughts. Sensing the need for help, Ashley's Aunt and Uncle sought therapy for Ashley. Eventually she was referred to Intercommunity Child Guidance Center.

Upon intake in July, 2008, Ashley was 11 years old. She demonstrated depression through isolation, withdrawal, and self-cutting. Ashley's life was hampered by anxiety and low self-esteem. She alienated peers due to poor social skills, defiance, and explosive behaviors like yelling, screaming and arguing. Her low self-esteem also resulted in poor hygiene or self care, such as her refusal to bathe.

Because of the intensity of Ashley's destructive behaviors and extremely traumatic history, Ashley was enrolled in our Full Service Partnership (FSP) program. Through FSP, Ashley received intensive services in the comfort of her home. Two goals were agreed upon: to increase her self care by bathing from twice a week to six times per week; and to reduce angry outbursts from three times per day to three times per week.

At ease during home therapy, Ashley has become cooperative in both individual and family sessions. She has improved her personal hygiene (with coaching and modeling by the therapist), making significant progress on her first goal. Through home visits, the therapist was able to assess Ashley's role in the family. Understanding her role has helped Ashley decrease her defiance, and she no longer fights with her siblings and cousins. As a result of therapy, her aunt Natalie reports that Ashley can now follow directions without talking back and has shown an increased respect for the adults in their family.

Outside of the home, Ashley has also learned to develop healthy and appropriate social skills. For the past six months, Ashley has been involved with the cheerleading team at her school and has made and kept new friends. Ashley no longer reports suicidal thoughts, and her nightmares are nearly gone.



Ashley has made tremendous progress, due to the FSP in-home program, her active participation in therapy and constant love and support from her family members. Ashley's aunt and uncle have especially helped by accepting Ashley and her siblings into their home as their own children. These supportive family relationships will continue to help her develop into a healthy individual. Currently, Ashley remains in therapy in order to develop techniques for coping with grief. With all of the progress that she has made so far, there is no doubt that she will reach her next goal and will continue maintaining a healthy and functional life.