

March 25, 2015

Testimony of Megan Stores, Advocate & Board Member for Trillium Family Services

My name is Megan Stores. I am 21 years old and now, more than ever, I celebrate my life. But I would not have been here to experience the happiest years of my life without the treatment I received from Trillium Family Services.

You see, I was born into a terribly abusive family. Several of my family members were arrested with charges of sex abuse, assault, and neglect towards me and at age 14 I was placed into foster care where I bounced around in a total of 11 homes. Some of these families continued to abuse me. I could see no hope, future, love, or purpose. I began cutting and starving myself. I tried to kill myself on multiple occasions. The fact that I'm here today is a miracle.

To make matters worse in my head, the same lack of stability I experienced in home placement I also experienced in hospitals and treatment centers. I began the first of many intense interventions at Sacred Heart Riverbend where I spent six weeks with a feeding tube. I then went to several day treatment and outpatient programs, then to Doernbecher Medical Center, then to St. Vincent Medical Center, and then to Providence Psych. Finally I ended up at the Children's Farm Home where I was diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Anorexia Nervosa, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I spent a year and a half in their care.

This is a similar story to many children just like me, who after many tries, found stabilization at the Children's Farm Home. This is because of their dedicated and carefully selected staff crew, their intense but encouraging treatment program, and their exemplified approach that every life is worth living. Life was safe, understanding, and consistent. And because of this, I learned to love myself. I learned to live.

If I was asked to name a complaint, it would be nothing of the quality of care given, the program, staff, or management. What concerns me is the building. I remember glass windows getting kicked out and fellow clients getting injured. I remember the daunting fence that made me feel like I was a prisoner getting punished. The lighting was dark and there weren't enough quiet spaces. The condition of the building is unacceptable for those being served. Skilled architects have addressed each of my complaints and have dedicated their work to creating a healing and safe environment at a cost, which in my opinion, cannot be denied. We're doing our part to raise funds. I'm asking that you do yours. This isn't just any business. This is a large group of people who have based their business on selling the quality of life to those who most deserve it.

Let me remind you of where I came from, a terribly dark and hopeless beginning. Now I am a healthy member of society working full time. I am a sister, aunt, granddaughter, employee,

friend, tax-payer, and mom to a beautiful puppy. Let me tell you that I am not alone in my passion for life. I am here today representing the thousands of children who suffer from trauma and mental illness. I am representing both the recipients of quality treatment and the unfortunate who have not yet found peace and health. They would tell you the same. We need this care, this building, and your support. We can't do this alone. We are intelligent, successful, and contributing members of society. Invest in us. We are young and we can make a huge impact on this world!