

2/4/2009

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

My name is Stefani Buska, my mother is Donna Schmidt, and I am 16 years old and an adopted child. I don't believe I would still be living with my adoptive family if it were not for the adoption subsidy that my parents receive. I don't think I would have gotten all of the help that I have needed over the past several years if my family did not receive the financial support.

I was abused by my birth family before I was five years old and accepting the care of adults, especially my Mom, was extremely difficult for me. It has taken me several years to trust the care of my Mom, because of my past abuse. When I was a kid my birth parents treated me so badly, I saw things no kid should see, I was beaten and molested by those who were suppose to care for me and keep me safe. My birth Mom didn't always come pick me up from daycare, she left with strangers who hurt me and all I knew was that grown ups, all of them, would hurt me. I didn't really know things should be different until I left my birth family. And when I came to live with my foster mom, who is now my Mom, I couldn't handle how she treated me, it was so different than everything I ever knew. She took care of me, she picked me up from daycare and she didn't hurt me or molest me. I tried so hard to get her to be like a "Mom" should be, because that was all I knew. Then when I started going to therapy I had to figure out why what my birth mom did to me wasn't normal, and it wasn't my fault that these things happened to me. It sounds so easy, but trust me it was very hard, and it still is to accept care, love and compliments. My birth mom really messed me up inside, and I will be working on this my whole life.

I really lashed out at my Mom and my family. I became just like my "birth mom" I was aggressive, violent and didn't care about anybody else but me. And man, did that scare me, and when I was scared that just made me more violent. I needed help and thank God my Mom and my Stepdad were able to get me that help over the years. I went to Shodair seven times and one time the police had to escort me from my therapy appointment to the hospital to get admitted to Shodair. I have been in AFSP (Adoption and Family Support Program) several times between hospital and group home stays. I spent a whole year away from my family in AYA a group home in Boulder, Montana, and all I ever wanted was a family! But I was so scared and I just kept pushing them away. I know for a fact without the adoption subsidy I would be living elsewhere and it probably wouldn't be a great place.

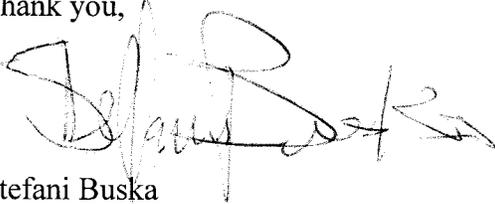
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If I had not gotten adopted I don't feel that I would have gotten the love and care I have now. I feel now that I am wanted and loved and cared for. It is the best feeling in the world.

I am doing so much better then I was a year ago, I am now on the honor roll at school, I participated in varsity volleyball this past fall, I am making good friends for the first time in my life. I am having my first real birthday party next week. I still struggle some with my parents, I am a teen after all, but it is tons better, thanks to the help I have gotten, mostly from my Mom and now my Dad. My Mom was single up until two years ago and I have had new struggles with having a Dad in my life because of my past abuse.

Please support adoption subsidies so kids like me can have a chance at having families that really care and are able to hang in there with them and really care.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stefani Buska', written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Stefani Buska
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