

It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Connections

Building Confidence, Building Family

In the fall of 2014, Sean, a 35-year-old, single, freelance recording engineer in Los Angeles received a phone call from child protective services that changed his life. He was informed that his 16-year-old estranged sister, Jasmine, needed a place to live and asked if he would take her in or else she would enter foster care. Despite not having a relationship with her or having any knowledge of how to raise a teenager, Sean said yes. When the social worker dropped her off, she gave Sean a card to iFoster, a national nonprofit that provides resources for kinship and foster youth and families. She told him iFoster could help with any resources they might need.

When Sean took in Jasmine, she was receiving all Fs in every single class and had missed the entire 10th grade. She was also struggling with self-esteem issues and was not motivated. Throughout that fall, iFoster worked with Sean and Jasmine to address these two issues. iFoster enrolled Jasmine in Method Test Prep and online tutoring and provided her with a laptop, all for free. Jasmine used these programs on her iFoster-provided laptop in addition to taking summer school classes to get caught up. iFoster also worked with Jasmine to get her a TAP card (a transportation program for Los Angeles County) and enrolled her in a gymnastics program (at a very reduced rate) that she loved and which helped with self-esteem issues. She managed to finish 11th grade with five Bs and one A. By 2015, Jasmine was on track to graduate high school and was applying for colleges. However, her self-esteem was still suffering. She did not like to smile because she was ashamed of her teeth. iFoster enrolled her in Smiles Change Lives low-cost orthodontia program for \$630, and Jasmine was paired with an orthodontist that has not only improved her smile but her self-esteem as well.



Currently, Jasmine is in her second year at Santa Monica College and doing very well academically. She has a part-time job in Los Angeles and has just moved into her first apartment. iFoster connected Jasmine to A Sense of Home to outfit her first apartment. They will be working with Jasmine in early October and will have her apartment fully outfitted by the end of the month. Jasmine has also recently gotten her braces off and feels more self-assured and confident.

Jasmine has flourished these last 4 years with her brother, and they have both credited her success to having received the resources they needed through iFoster.

To learn more about iFoster, visit <https://www.ifoster.org/>.



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