

# KERIANA'S STORY



Keriana has lived with us since 8/31/03. She came into care in May 2003 because her then 8-yr-old sister took marijuana to school to sell. Keriana, her sister and three other siblings were taken into custody. Three more siblings are somewhere in the Chicago area. When the children were taken into custody, they were split between two foster homes. The youngest children went to one home, while the older three went to an intake home. Unfortunately, Keriana was separated from the only one of her siblings with whom she had been raised. DCFS had no way of knowing at the time of placement that the children had been raised by various relatives and had been together only for a few months with the exception of Keri and her younger sister. By the time the facts were known, the sister had settled into her foster home and a move was seen as detrimental. Meanwhile, Keri grieves. She lost her family, but most important to her, she lost her sister, the only person she had never been separated from her whole life. Even though bio-mom abandoned them many times, she always left the two girls together.

Keri, her older sister and younger brother went to an intake foster home where it was determined they would need treatment foster care due to sexual behaviors, lack of toilet training, and severe tantrums. All three children have been diagnosed with RAD, PTSD, and ADHD. Keri also had a mood disorder that may be Pediatric Bipolar Disorder. Due to her profound neglect during the critical first 36 months of her life, she has an emotional age of 18 months. She sucks her thumb to calm herself and wets her pants and bed daily. Her tantrums have lasted 6 hours, and she has been hospitalized in a psychiatric ward. Keri has injured teachers, parents, siblings, and police officers during her rages. Keriana is 8 years old.

School is very difficult for her because she has a severe speech/language disorder and is severely dyslexic. After two years of battling, she has finally been deemed eligible for an Individualized Education Plan and will have plenty of help next year. Despite the frustration of her learning disabilities, Keri loves school and her friends.

Keri was the 3rd child born to a 16-yr-old girl in Chicago. Four more children were born and the bio-mom retained custody of all 7 children. In September of 2002, four of the children moved to Beloit with bio-mom and her boyfriend. Another sibling was born in November 2002. All 7 children had different fathers and only two of the fathers are adjudicated. After 22 months in foster care, Keri and her siblings are still not available for adoption because bio-mom has appealed the TPR. During the 22 months the children have been out-of-home, bio-mom has been in jail 6 times, has no job, and no home. Her rights far outweigh the rights of her children and her abuse and neglect continues from a distance by preventing them from having permanent homes. Keri desperately wants to be adopted and have a "real family". She is angry with her mom for making "bad choices" and would very much like to talk to a judge directly.

Keriana loves Hello Kitty, American Girl dolls, Junie B books, and anything pink. She has a wonderful singing voice, a beautiful smile, and a spirit that will not be destroyed. She looks forward to being a doctor and dentist and having ONE child. We'll do whatever we can to help her get there.