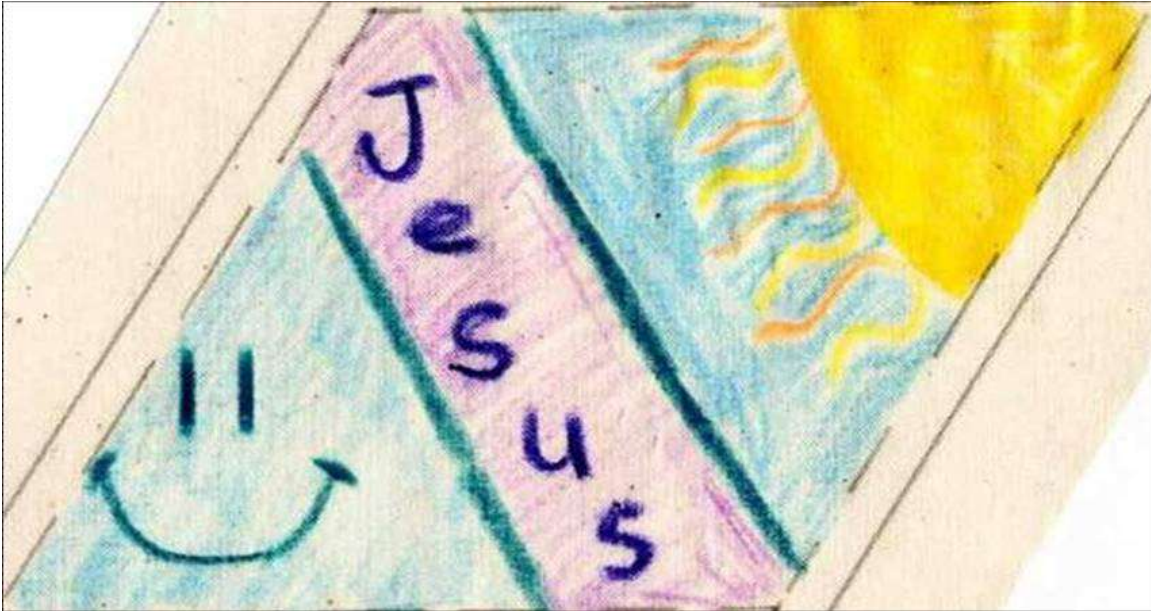


AMANDA'S STORY



Amanda came to us in February as a freshman in high school. She was depressed, using drugs, self-mutilating, and angry, oh so angry. She hated school, her situation, and herself. She loved her parents but hated the fact that their addictions paralyzed them from being parents. She used on a daily basis and resented us and the calm environment we lived in. She would run away from school, slam doors, cut her wrists, drink, smoke pot, and disregard authority. We asked many times, "Why are we doing this?"

Through time, counseling, patience, prayer, tears, and extended stay in a strict group home, and her willingness, there was great change. Teachers began to express it, school attendance and grades began to reveal it, and a genuine smile and contentment accompanied her much of the time. The change was remarkable which took a group effort including Social Services, counselors, dedicated teachers, foster parents, healthy friends, and her ability to drop the pride and say, "I need help and I need to change," which is what she was able to do.

She is now a junior in high school, getting B's, respecting her teachers and us. She is starting to accept consequences for her behavior and continues to work on relationships. She has taken her ACT and did very well, applied to a college she visited, and most of all, likes who and what she is. She has a future.

The final answer to how could this girl change so drastically, the answer for the foster parents to "Why are we doing this", is one and the same. It is a faith in God who can change the hardest of hearts and get people to stick with a task He has set before them. It is the love of giving His son Jesus that can make us love the unlovable and for our foster daughter, love herself. She is a blessing and she has a future!