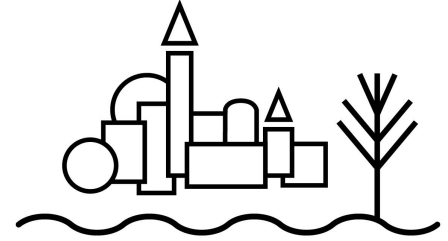


**Connecting with My ABANDONED/
FOSTER CHILD Neighbor**
Luke 10:29-37



Cori came to us after being kidnapped by her mother and forced into prostitution. She is 16. Aaron, Brinn, Michelle, and Jackson came to us after being found alone in an apartment with no running water, food, or furniture, and drug paraphernalia everywhere. They are 7, 9, 12, and 14. A relative has sexually abused Anne since the age of 4. She is now 12. These are just a few of the stories of children who have walked through the doors of Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home (CPCH).

All of their belongings fit into a garbage bag or grocery sack. Most of them are behind in school; far behind. Many have built near impenetrable walls around their hearts due to the traumas they have experienced. They did not ask to be placed into foster care. They did not ask to be abused or neglected. The adults who have hurt them were the people they trusted and loved most. Many of these adults were abused and neglected as children themselves. It's a vicious cycle, but it can be stopped. This sounds like an overwhelming, impossible task, but a difference can be made one moment at a time. It may be a brand-new teddy bear, a new toothbrush, a new pillow, or new shoes. It might be someone to listen, someone to notice that they love to draw, someone to cook their favorite meal, or just a simple encouraging smile.

With the help of many caring adults, we allow these children to add new chapters to their stories, chapters full of healing and hope. God calls us to look after children whose parents cannot. Anyone can make a difference. Together, we can end the cycle of abuse and neglect, one moment at a time.

(Note: names have been changed for privacy)

Reflections

1. Read and discuss James 1:27. Do we accept responsibility for these our neighbors?
2. Can you remember a time when someone took a moment with you that helped change your life for the better?
3. What helps end the cycle of abuse and neglect?
4. What does God mean when He says that He "sustains the fatherless"? (Psalm 126: 7b, NIV)
5. What are the signs of abuse and neglect?
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/whatiscan.pdf>

A Call to action

1. Take a moment to make a difference. Adopt, foster, volunteer, donate, and/or advocate!
2. Be a Children's Home Ambassador for CPCH. (Email cpch@cpch.org for more information)

Resources

1. "Every kid is ONE caring adult away from being a success story." Josh Shipp, former at-risk foster kid turned youth advocate. www.joshshipp.com
2. How do you report in your state?
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/how/>

Prayer

God of the fatherless, thank you for opening our hearts and minds to each neighbor around us. We know that the easy way out is to look the other way, but Lord, we ask that you show us how to look at our neighbors and see them as you see them. Show us how to give them the help they need and deserve. Lord, please protect your children and give us the resources needed to care for them and show them they are loved and cherished. Please give us the courage to stand up for those who can't stand up for themselves and be the ones who help them change their story. Thank you for being with us in every step of this journey. In your Holy and precious name we pray, Amen.

ABOUT THE WRITER:

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