

When I Grow Up

(Names of the authors have been changed to protect identities)

Jesse B. Age 9

Winner (tie) of 3rd Place Prize for ages 7-10.

Every person is born with a special talent and I think when you grow up people have a chance to use their special talent. Lots of people are born with different talents. I think that it is a good idea to try different stuff. If you find something you really like and you're really good at it you should go for it. But talents aren't the only things of growing up. There's a lot of responsibility. Like people have to pay lots of bills. If there was a big family there would be lots of need for money for food and clothes and stuff to provide a family. But if you lived by yourself there still is lots of responsibility. It's nice to have a lot of support.

There are some fun stuff about growing up too. Adults get to stay up a little longer than kids. They can live by themselves if they want to. Being an adult is not all fun, but some parts of adulthood might be nice. I think that when you become an adult it's just like a toddler you're a caterpillar, and when you're a kid you're a cocoon and finally you become an adult which would be a butterfly.

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Nocole C. Age 9

Winner (tie) of 2nd Place Prize for ages 7-10

When I grow up I would like to be a foster parent, so that I can help children. I am a foster child because my parents couldn't take care of me, and I am in a foster home. I would like to help children because it isn't right for kids or teenagers to be treated wrong. Like being smacked or threatened.

There are a lot of children taken away from their mothers and fathers and it's pathetic. And there are many children in foster care and residential care that need someone to take care of them. I wish I was an adult, so that I could take some children that need someone to take care of them.

Anyone who takes any foster children should be proud of themselves. I am glad to have a good foster home to live in and two loving and kind foster parents. And I am glad to have four sisters in all, but there are only three that are living with me in foster care.

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Stephanie W. Age 9

When I grow up I want to be a doctor to make people feel better. I also want to be a police lady to help make the world have freedom and catch bad people. Another thing I want to be is a dog pound lady because I love dogs. I will be proud when I grow up. I will be a hero. I will have my friends to help me and they will be heroes too.

I hope my mom and dad will be very proud of me. I love me. If I were a vet I would help animals.

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Kara B. Age 10

When I grow up I might be a firefighter so I can put out fires and help the world. I might be a lawyer so I can help people with their taxes. I might also just be a Vet so I can help people and animals with their problems. Also because I love animals so much. I might be a butcher. Though I really don't like meat too much.

I might just be a wealthy person. So I can stop world hunger. Also, to stop people from not having houses. I might be a president so I can make world peace. All of the things I picked are really helping people. Out of all of them I really would like to be a Vet because I love animals so much. I would like to recommend writing your future out so when you are big you can see it. When I grow up I'll be very, very happy.

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Joe Age 13

Winner (tie) of 3rd Place Prize for ages 11-14

Hi, I am Joe. I am thirteen years old and I go to elementary school. I have now been in foster care for about six months. So far I like it pretty good.

Anyway, when I grow up, well, I really don't know what I might do for a living. I have a few ideas about what I might do. Well, I have three ideas. They are: go to college and be a computer technician, go to art school and become a cartoonist, or maybe even become a marine biologist.

My main focus of the three is becoming a cartoonist. Ever since I can remember, I have been interested in art. I mean it is my passion to draw. It is what I have always done and probably will always do. I mean I am drawing all the time. To become a marine biologist I would have to go to college and get a bachelor's degree. Then I would look for a place that would need a marine biologist.

Last but not least, if being a marine biologist doesn't work out, I would like to be a computer technician. I have always liked computers. These things are probably what I'll do when I grow up.

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Little Jimmy Age 14

Winner (tie) of 3rd Place Prize for ages 11-14

When I get older I am going to go to high school and play high school football for the Hounds. I am going to play till I get drafted to college football. Then, I am going to play for the Tigers and I am going to be the lineman. I am going to play until I am a senior and I am then going to try to get drafted to the Chiefs and be a lineman. I am going to play until I am 50 years old and then I am going to retire. Then I am going to be a policeman and show everybody that I have pride in myself and others.

I always wanted to be a policeman and catch the bad guys so nobody will get hurt. I am going to be in a high-speed chase and after people and catch the bad people. Then when I get to 60 I will retire become a fireman and save people who are going to get hurt in a fire. I am going to ride on the side of the fire truck with the Dalmatian. Then I am going to hurry and get off and run the water hose to put out the fire on the houses or in the forests. When I am 67, I am going to retire and, by that age, I will still be in good shape so, I will try to be a lawyer so I can help those that need to have a lawyer and be their lawyer. I hope that I don't mess up.

When I am 70, I am going to retire and hopefully I won't be in trouble. When I grow up, I want to get as old as you can get and still be working after I retire. I want to be a Judge so I can find out about other people. I want to be a judge for the rest of my life. I can retire when I am 80 years old and then I will go to my house and pack up to go to a nursing home and live there until I pass away. Hopefully, I won't pass away until I am 90 years old and then, if I do, I will go to heaven and visit my family up there. Well that's all I am going to do when I grow up. The End.

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Star Age 14

Winner of 2nd Place Prize for ages 11-14

I want to be a good role model for younger children because I believe that if younger people have a role model, they will someday want to become a great role model too. And also when I get out of high school I want to go to college on a scholarship, so I can make my dreams come true. Like becoming a doctor or teacher.

And then after college I want to become a singer because when I was a little girl I would love to sing to my mom, and that was my biggest dream. And it still is, but now I'm in a chorus, and I'm going to be in a talent show. And in my spare time, I like to record songs. I sing on my karaoke machine, and then listen to them and sometimes make silly ones. And the reason I want to be a teacher is because I love teaching people things, and helping them with things they don't understand! Also because I love being around people and being helpful. The reason I want to be a doctor is because I like fixing problems and helping people that are sick and need care.

Advice for Foster Kids! Hey! I know how it feels to be put in a foster home. You meet a new family to live with and make new friends. I know it's hard but think of it this way! You get a chance to start over. Try to fix anything you did wrong!

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Little B Age 14

When I grow up I want to be a mechanic so I can help people fix stuff. The stuff a mechanic does includes going to training. First you have to learn how to read and write. Also you have to have a driver's license; and after you pass the training you will get your mechanic license.

I think being a mechanic will give me a good salary. I hope the salary will pay me enough to buy me a house and a car and food in the house and clothes and furniture. And when I grow up I want to be married and have two kids and some pets of my own and I am going to be a good husband and father.

Another thing I want to be is a football player and you have to go to college so you can get in the NFL. I would have to finish school and work hard and get good grades. I have to be a good football player so I have to practice all the time.

If I am a good football player, I will get more money than a mechanic would. Then I would get anything that I need and anything I want. Life would be good then. I would have everything. And I would have a nice life in the sport that I like. And my wife and kids would be happy. And we will live happily ever. Good bye. The end.

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Lisa Age 11

Foster Family -based Treatment Association my name is Lisa. I am an A, B, and C student. When I grow up, I am going to be a cosmetologist. In order for me to be a cosmetologist, I'm going to the seventh and eighth grades and still get A's and B's. I'm going to be on the honor roll. At the end of the year, I'm going to graduate at the top of my class. Then, over my summer break, I'm going to sign up for a school with lots of physical and social activities. When I'm in the ninth grade, I'm going to still get A's and B's. Then I'm going to get a job like at Bath and Body Works, so I can learn more about how to make women feel and look good.

When I get in the tenth grade, I'm going to get my driver's license so that my family doesn't have to take me to work in their time of day. I'm still going to get A's and B's so I can still be on the honor roll. Then I'm going to start to write letters to colleges to find out which ones will accept me. At the end of the tenth grade I'm going to start putting money together for college again.

When I get in the eleventh grade I'm going to keep getting A's and B's during the first and fourth quarter. I'm going to go to the junior prom and when I'm there I am going to sign up for prom queen. When I'm on summer break, I'm going to visit the colleges to see which is the best one. I'm going to come back home and I'm going to talk to my family about the college I've chosen.

I'm going to the twelfth grade and I'm going to still keep getting A's and B's. I'm going to go to after school programs to help the kids that don't know how to do things. I'm going to graduate at the end of the year at the top of my class. Then, at the end of the year in summer break, I'm going to spend as much time as I can with my family. I am going to spend time with my family because I'm going to be away for four years.

During my four years in college, I'm going to study hair and business. I'm going to get my college and master's degree. After I finish college, I'm going to go back home. When I go back home I am going to start a business called All-American Hair. Then I will get everything together like chairs, sinks, and more.

Then I'm going to help out the foster home and give back to the people who gave to me. I'm going to get married to an educated man. After two years of marriage, I'm going to have a baby. If it is a boy, I'm going to name him Tony. If it is a girl, I am going to name her Taniera. When my kids get into school, I'm going to help out part time and I am going to tell kids about my life. After I get tired of doing hair I am going to retire and give the shop to my sister and then I'm

going to retire from teaching and me and my husband are going to live happily ever after. The End.

Brittany B. Age 13

Winner (tie) of 3rd Place Prize for ages 11-14

When I grow up I want to be a successful person. I would like to be the kind of person that people will admire and look up to.

To achieve these goals and make my life better I must graduate from high school and go on to college. In college, I'm going to major in business to become a beautician and run my own business. Being able to do hair means a lot to me. I will hire employees who will be able to do a great job.

When I achieve these goals it, will make me feel like I have accomplished something in my life. It will also make me feel like a successful person.

Then when the right time comes I will get married and live in a three-story house in Atlanta, GA. I'll become a foster parent to help other children, like myself, who are in need of parents to love and care for them.

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Calob Age 13

Hi. I'm Calob, a 13-year old boy who has a skill and will for writing. I want to tell about my life to start off with. My dad, a drunk, smokes and chews tobacco, at times. My mom is unhealthy, can't take care of herself, and smokes. She was completely disastrous, too. I was abused, my sisters were raped and we were all beaten and tortured by our dad. Why? Heaven only knows. Besides, why think about bad; think a little good, like what you want to be when you grow up.

Well, I want to produce movies, act and maybe even novelize books. I'd like to be a money man too. Torn down and hurt by friends, through my faith in God, I have learned the self-confidence that I need to succeed in my life. I learn, as I grow up, that not everybody succeeds in life, but although I've had much hurt and pain in my life, I will succeed and accomplish my goals because my ability has far more for me in my life. Especially with the encouragement of my friends and family, I'll trust God to make me a light to them.

Even when I have my own family, I know my life and my family's life will be different from the experience of my childhood life because of the things I have learned in my home now. My new parents have taught me what a home is supposed to be like. But as I go along life, that all will change because I know I have a life ahead of me.

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Sparkling Diamond Age 14

Winner (tie) of 3rd Place Prize for ages 11-14

When I grow up I want to be a singer. It's always been my dream to be a singer, even though some people put me down about my singing. I don't let it get to me. I think no matter what people say, you should always do what you want to do. This is not their dream and goals, it's yours. A long time ago before I made up my mind to be what I wanted to be somebody told me, I think you should be a doctor, because they make good money. I thought about it but I didn't put it as one of my goals, because I'll probably be living their dream, not mine.

I think people tell you to be something they didn't have the chance to be so they put it on you.

When I lied to people and said I wanted to be a pediatrician they started saying I'm real glad you chose to be a pediatrician because you weren't gonna get anywhere with whatever else you do choose to be but this. When they said that, it upset me because it's like they're telling me what I need to be in life. So my advice to foster kids is to do what you want to in life.

People think just because we were not with our real parents our life ends there and it doesn't. So don't listen to that negativity that people say to you. This is one thing that can go in one ear and go out the other. So like my dream to be a singer, I let it stay that way. I don't let people try to change my dream because if I do I'll be pleasing them not me.

So my advice is don't let people destroy your life because that's exactly what's gonna happen if you let people rule and reign over your life. Don't let that happen! If you let that happen you're going to be living your life somebody else's way. Live your life the way you want to live it, even if it's the wrong way because it's your life but my advice is to live it the right way. My last words are be what you want to be in life not what somebody else wants you to be.

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Ada Hillis Age 13

Winner (tie) of 3rd Place Prize for ages 11-14

When I grow up I want to be the first female black president. As president my platform would address the need of the poor people. I would also make sure the children would never know to be hungry. In addition I would ensure that schools have the funding to provide happy healthy environments.

Everyone who is wealthy would have to share their money with poor families. This would be helpful for mothers, and fathers and children who are dealing when after our country is taken care of. I will try to help more countries. First, I will help Africa. Then Asia until all of the countries are helped. And I hope there would be lots of help for little kids. I will also be able to bring good to all people with disabilities and cultural differences. Domestic violence will not be tolerated. And I would not tolerate kids dropping out of school until they are eighteen.

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Jane Doe Age 14

When I was younger I wanted to be a teacher. I didn't know a lot about what teachers did; still, I wanted to be one anyway. My mother was a teacher so I figured if she was a teacher then, I should be one too.

What I really wanted to do after I get out of high school is go to college. Then become a pediatrician. I wanted to become a pediatrician because I wanted to help children feel better. I want to get a job as an intern so I can pay all my college fees.

I am going to study hard, work and be proud of myself. I am not going to let studying hold me down; I am also going to have fun. I want every teacher to know me as a very good student. I want everybody to remember me as kind, loving, friendly and helpful. I helped everybody that I could. I gave my friends, friendly advice. I love everyone for who they are.

I am in college now, I have so many classes to choose from I am an intern at a hospital. I help care for sick children. I enjoy my job. These children are nice and kind. They want to send me overseas to help with children in other countries. I am really glad I can help make somebody feel

better everyday. After everything I made it. I am a pediatrician still in college. I make a difference in a child's life everyday. My work is different everyday. Now I am happy.

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Pee Wee Age 13

Winner (tie) of 3rd Place Prize for ages 11-14

When I grow up I want to become a lawyer and pay my foster parents back for all the things they have done for me, like giving me money, food, clothes, shoes and a place to live. I also want to show other foster children that they are no different than other kids just because they don't live with their real parents. They should never let anyone call them different because that is a big story. The people who say these things are just trying to make them feel isolated. So if people try to make you feel strange or like something is wrong with you don't let them get to you.

I also want to help the needy and the poor to get food and a place to live. I want to donate money to charities and give clothes and shoes to the Salvation Army. I want to have a special account set aside to help those kids who desire to go to college and don't have the money to do so. Then, when they have their own money, jobs, and families they will be able to serve the purpose God has intended for placed them. He has placed them on the earth in hopes that they will do the same for someone else someday.

I want to have my own family. I want a Hummer H2 and a big house with two kids, a boy and girl. I want to put them in a good school, take care of them, and allow them to play sports. Then I would like to get them through college so they can get a job and buy a car. I want to make sure that they hang out with the right people and stay away from drugs and stuff that can kill them. I want to make sure that they believe in god and get saved some day.

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PoemGirl 17 Age 17

Winner of 3rd Place Prize for ages 15+

When I grow up, I will never put my children through any of the stuff that I went through as a child. It's surprising to look back at my life and think of all the times I wanted to end it, but I'm still here. I try to look to the future for comfort when I'm feeling down.

It all started when I was ten years old. I wasn't a perfect child but I was happy with the way life had been going for me. I didn't have the most perfect family but we all show our love in different ways. Everything was going pretty good in our family. My mom had a decent boyfriend. Our school decided to throw a fundraising benefit at K-Mart. My sister and I really wanted to go, it sounded fun. We begged and pleaded with our mom to take us and she finally gave in. We get there and we have our fun while moms roaming around. As we're leaving, mom tells us she met someone and she wanted us to meet him. (If only I know that he held the key to disaster.) He came over to our house the same day (I could tell mom was hooked.) He was so nice and seemed to be such a great dad to his two kids. For the next few months he continued to come over and spend time with my mom and take us out to dinner. We would go to his house and spend time with him and his kids.

Little by little his actions were getting more suspicious. He started controlling my mom by not letting her do certain things. Before everyone knew it, she wasn't allowed to talk to her friends or family, she stopped taking my little sister and I to our sports or anywhere. Pretty soon, she

wasn't allowed to go anywhere without him, and if she did, he had to know where she was going and what time she'd come back.

Eventually he started being physically abusive to her behind closed doors and he would be emotionally abusive to her right in front of us. The loving father he pretended to be to his kids and my sisters and I was nothing but a lie. He whipped his kids daily with a belt.

I felt so bad for my mom and I constantly felt like it was my fault because I couldn't do anything to stop it. She was trapped and he made her feel so lonely, pathetic and helpless. I tried to stand up to him but he hated it and he would be more and more emotionally abusive to me.

At the time he was hitting us too. Not as much as he was slapping around my mom though. I remember her crying at night because he hit her but she'd never say why she was crying. I cried for her, hoping that it would ease the pain and make it go away. I would cuss him out constantly but he'd only cuss me out back. I'd threaten to call the cops but I was too scared of where I'd end up. I didn't want to leave my mom, if she was going to be put through that, she would not be alone. I was there for her and I always will be.

Of course, it's not like my mom liked being put through that, she tried to leave him but he would follow her and call her and all her family and try to brainwash them. One time mom stayed away from him for four months but he found her and they got back together. She didn't tell me, she sneaked around because she knew I'd be angry. He kidnapped her and held her hostage at his house, I was so worried, I stayed up all night waiting for her. I tried to call but he disconnected the line. After she got back, she told me that he kidnapped her.

After three years of being emotionally and physically abused, she finally made the decision to break up with him once and for all. She'd had enough and so had her kids. It was extremely hard because during the three years she would break up with him and we'd all think it was over and we could get back our lives and finally be happy. A few weeks later, he'd be back in her life terrorizing her and us.

He's been gone for almost five years now. I count my blessings daily. I think if she hadn't of made up her mind to leave him, she wouldn't have had a mind to make up, he would have killed her.

For a long time I blamed my mom for what happened because I was so screwed up in the head. I didn't realize that she tried to break free but he would let go. It was his fault and what goes around comes around.

As for me I took the beating the hardest because I would always stand up for my mom and sisters and get shot right back down even lower. Not only that, I felt like I had an army but I was the only on fighting. I pray that he never does this to anyone else and that he got help.

I've been through a lot because of this one person and it amazes me to know that JUST ONE PERSON could cause so much pain. I stopped going to school because I got so depressed and I was always worried about my mom. I ended up in some pretty back places because of not going to school. I often wish I could turn back time and avoid that one thing but I can't. I've learned a lot from what I've been through. I'm a whole new person. I can write poetry and creative stories.

I'm actually quite successful. I'm a senior in high school; I'll be graduating in June. The family's doing okay now, we'll never be the same, well at least I won't be the same but we're getting normal...

I hope by writing this I can make people see that they are not alone. There is help but you just have to ask for it. This is the most difficult thing I've ever been through but I'm still here. I see myself as a survivor, striving to live and be happy, I'm almost there.

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Poohbear Age 17

When I grow up I want to be a nurse or a social worker. I've wanted to be a nurse for as long as I can remember. I like helping people and getting the wonderful smiles from those that I've helped. I like when anyone has helped me so that's why I want to do it back. When I get my L.N.A. (Licensed Nurse Assistant) and if it's truly not the job for me, then I will become a social worker.

I like the social worker that I have now. She has helped me through everything. When I was in the hospital or needed to talk to someone she has always been there for me. In residential when I really needed a mother figure in my life she was the one. If I needed something and if she could do it, she would. She's the one who I could trust to hold a secret if it wasn't a threat to others or myself. When I did stuff that I knew I wasn't supposed to do or said that I wouldn't do she wouldn't yell or be mad she was calm, knew how to deal with it while still being very concerned about me. When it felt like no one would believe I was a good kid she believed in me.

If it weren't for this very special person's help and belief in me I'm not sure where I would be and I know that I wouldn't have come as far as I've come. I thank her so much. It's going to be hard for me now that I'm almost eighteen years old, and will be graduating from high school soon.

People keep telling me that I won't need her as much. I know this, but somehow I don't want to believe it. For this would be the only reason that I would become a social worker.

I would like some day to help someone, like myself, who's had a horrible childhood, until someone made her teen years as special as mine have been. If I could do that by being a nurse or a social worker then I know that's what life was for and it truly was worth living. If not, at least I know that I've tried my hardest and have gone over so many bumps in the road and have made it through the tough times and through what I thought was impossible. That is all I can do.

Many times I have thought that life wasn't worth living. If I've successfully completed my attempts I would be able to make a spot in another's heart like many have done for me. So when a teenager thinks that ending their life would be better, they need someone who they trust won't get mad at what they're feeling; someone who will comfort them and help them through those feelings.

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Duhi Age 16

I am sitting here trying to write a letter/story about what I am going to do when I get older. The first thing I am going to do is go home and be with my family for a little while and get a job. The second thing I am going to do is get into the Air Force Academy. If I pass into the Air Force, I

will stay in it until I retire. After I retire from the Air Force I will get another job and buy a small house and buy whatever I want. After I turn 50 years old I will stay home and have fun.

Whenever I get out of here, if I do not get into the Air Force I will try to get a good job. This is the only thing I am going to do when I get older, so now I have to start my next topic, which is "My life and times." Okay, here I go. When I was two. When I was two I ran off, or shall I say I crawled off to McDonald's. A couple of days later, I ran off to the neighbor's, which was two houses down the street.

When I was there, my mom left me. I tried to go with her a couple of times but they kept putting me inside, but I still kept running out of the house. When I was four years old I moved away from McDonald's to some apartments in Pottsville. I stayed there for a few months, until we moved into a trailer for a couple of years. I moved to a new town and lived in a pink house. I then got a dog named Ace. Ace is a pure breed Pit Bull with a white star on her chest. A few days later my new step-mom moved in with my dad and me. She had just got a car and I wrecked it.

We finally moved to my step-mom's parents' house. About six years later my dad cheated on my step-mom. I did not get to meet that woman until my dad was going to take me to work, but we went to her house for about a week. We went to my grandma's in Oklahoma and stayed there for a couple of days.

We left Oklahoma and came back to Arkansas and stayed with my step-mom for a couple of days and then we moved out. We also lived with a couple of friends for about a year or two. We finally got our own house/trailer. Me, my brother and sister had to share a bedroom and bathroom, but my dad and his wife had their own room and bathroom. Almost a year later we moved back in with some friends again after getting kicked out of our house. A year later I was taken into foster care for a few years. Well, that's all.

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Meep Age 17

When I grow up I will see my mom and foster parents when I want. I like both my foster mom and real mom and I want both of them to be in my life. Their advice is very important to me. Also, when I grow up I will have a good paying job. I will be a veterinarian for a good clinic or even my own clinic, one day. Maybe it will be an emergency clinic for animals that need operations and special treatment others can't provide. Last, but not least, I will have my own house. It will be big, but not too big; because I don't need that much room to live. It will be decorative and colorful. White sometimes gets on my nerves so I will try to do different colors, but not much.

Maybe when I grown up I will be married and have a child or two. I like kids, but I hope they have better luck than I did with some things. They will not have to worry about food and other things. We will have our own cars. I will have a Mustang or some type of sports car. I like sports cars, they're fast and cool- looking.

I will be my own boss when I grow up. I mean in my own house, that is. I can depend on myself and not someone else to tell me what to do. I will show that I can do things without someone there to coach me along. I know I will have some trails I will have to face, but I will meet them head-on and battle them to the best of my ability.

When I grow up I will have no drugs or alcohol in my house. I'll have no drinking and I will not associate with alcoholics or people who do drugs. The reason for this is that I know what it does to people and I don't want to go through that again.

In the future, I may even have my poems published. I have about ten poems I have written, but I may have to rewrite them. Some will not be published for personal reasons. They help me say things I can't say to people; how I feel and some things I think about myself. I like poems and books, but I can't get into the "lovey-dovey" stuff; it bores me. I would also like to play the guitar. I'd also like to sing. I like music; it's a good stress reliever for me. The music that a person plays or creates shows what's inside, like a fantasy they can't fulfill. See, *Evanescence* has this thing about getting on the right track with God.

I will learn different languages. I know I have a lot of dreams and it will take a lot of hard work to achieve just a few of them. I am not afraid of work, so I hope to reach most, if not all, of my dreams.

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Drek Age 15

I want to be a mother, because when I play with children I play with them like they are mine. I love children so much. I just want to take them home with me. Ok! I want to have my own house with my husband, and I would like to have my own children, and with my own dogs and cats. I want to have my own job, so I can be in the house all the time.

I can move on with my life, and would show my children how to move with their lives. I want to show my kids that life can be, both, so hard and so easy. I don't want my children to be like other people. Other people may teach you how to do wrong, and I want my children to have a good life. I want them to get a job, and when they have children I want them to teach their children how to move on with their lives, and also teach them right from wrong. I want my children to go to college, and move on with their life. I want my children to stay by their children.

I want to go to college so I can learn a lot from there, so I can learn how to get my own job, house and car. While I am young I'm still learning about that so I am going to learn at school before I go to college. I want to go to school first and go to college last then I will move on with my life.

Then I will have my own job, house, car and children, and later I will have my own dogs and cats. I will have a happy family together. Oh, and I also want to be a writer when I grow up because I like to write letters to people and have a good time doing it.

When I was 8 years old, I was in my room trying to write my sister and my brother because we could not see each other, when they didn't call me. I always didn't want to call them—why? Because I always wanted to write them some letters. I also like boys too. I like to write them letters too, they are so nice to me. I will never kill myself, I have a good life, and I have a good home too.

I stay with Mr. and Mrs. Carthage and I love them very much. And they love me very much too, well I had a good time writing to you. Oh, and also I had a good Christmas too, and I hope you had a good Christmas too! Thank you, Merry Christmas.

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Mersades D. Age 16

When I grow up I plan on becoming a Military Officer/Lawyer. I know that is a lot of work but I know I can do it. I'm on the Drill Team so I can pursue my dream as an officer even more. I plan to take the role as the Drill Team Commander to have a better Leadership part.

As I take over the Drill Team I'll learn more and better leadership skills. This summer I plan to go to summer camp to get me more prepared for basic training. That following summer I plan to go to Basic Training and join the Army. After high school I'm going to college to become an Officer, I will attend college courses in ROTC. While I'm becoming an Officer I will be preparing myself to go to Law School in college. The college I plan to attend is University of Alabama.

I have always wanted to become a Lawyer and this is the time now, they need a hard working woman to do the job. I have dreams and I would like to see them come true some day. People have said all my life I couldn't do anything, but I'm doing a lot. I will not let anybody plan my future and destroy it. I have dreams, well everybody has dreams, but they let people get a hold to them and things go on from there.

If I become what my parents want me to be I would be pleasing them, that's great, but who is happy in this case. Yes, you want your parents to be happy but you can not please the whole world, so make yourself happy. Be proud for making something out of yourself because you want to be independent some day.

Independent is just a great word to use: to say I don't have to depend on anyone. I'm Self-sufficient. I can do it; just say and get ready and prepare yourself for the best. Never put yourself down, always say you can do it and I will see myself on top. Watch and see me in 10 years or more. I will be pursuing my dreams.

Advice for Foster Kids is to keep living on. Don't let being a foster kid put you down. I thought being in foster care would be the worst thing, but the grass might not be greener on the other side. Sometimes I just wish this was a dream but I had to wake up and keep dreaming because this is no dream. I can actually say that foster care is good in a few areas. It is actually has an advantage because they do a lot for you like pay for your college maybe.

What I can say is I'm not really depending on DHR because they might have something different to say. I can really speak for the young ladies, don't depend on DHR because it is like depending on men sometimes. If you want it get it for yourself because DHR will not always be there. I can say from my point of view DHR comes when you least expect it, they come when they feel like it. There is one man I know is always on time, he's the man on top, God. He will always be on time and that is the man that will be here if nobody else is.

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Ziggy Age 14

When I grow up I want to be a video, computer programmer. I love to play video games and work on computers. I love the graphics on the video games. There are lots of colors and characters. I want to make games so that people have fun things to look for after they do their homework. I want to make games with a lot more levels. I want a game with more players that

looks more real. I want to make a game that will work on different systems and computers also different kinds of weapons, gear, equipment, moves, missions, skills, screen options, obstacles, and gadgets. I want to make games with explosives, action, and real life strategy. Some games are hard and they need to have “help” buttons.