

MARY'S STORY

Sometimes life can throw you a curve and luckily for me and my three children, we were introduced to Family Continuity's C.A.S.S.P. (Child and Adolescent Service System Program) to help with the effects of that curve ball.

Three years ago, after 15 years of marriage, I became a single parent. I had to leave my children's father due to his addiction and abusiveness in the relationship. I rented an apartment and had to work two jobs because there was no child support.

Six months into our new apartment, I came home to find that we had been broken into by my ex-husband, who destroyed half of our home. Moving back to my parent's home was a temporary safe solution, but we lived in an over-crowded situation where none of the kids had a room or any of their belongings during the summer of 2007.

I had to keep a positive attitude telling them not to worry; that we would have our own place before the school year started. My words were not enough. I could not afford to keep up with dancing lessons or football or all the extra confidence building activities that the kids enjoyed. Up until this point, my 11 year old son was an outgoing kid who made friends easily but he was depressed and just about stayed in every day during his summer vacation. My girls were 7 and 5 and they were upset but they were young enough that I could distract them with going to the park and beach.

This is about the time I was introduced to Family Continuity and their C.A.S.S.P. I could not believe there was an agency out there so willing to help me get my children back on track. My main focus was to get my son out of the house and back into football or any sport he was interested in. C.A.S.S.P. was right there to direct me to Pop Warner sign up's and help with school supplies and clothes for the beginning of the school year. I am extremely grateful for their help.

We moved into another apartment with space for the kids. Financially I was a mess and could barely afford the move, but we needed stability; something they hadn't had in a long time. My son was starting to meet new friends being on the football team and things were looking better...unfortunately, not for long. About a month later, we were broken into again. This time it was a violent assault against me that my children witnessed, again from their father. The emotional damage on the kids was immeasurable. I was out of work for about six months so financially there was nothing left.

Through all this the director of C.A.S.S.P. always kept in touch with me to see how we were doing and to offer help with summer camps and other programs to keep the children positive and happy. Last year my son went to a football camp that was incredible. He played two great years of football and is now pursuing other interests. My girls went to summer camp and loved it. This year they are into martial arts. If it weren't for C.A.S.S.P. my children would have lost out on four years of their childhood experiences that build self-esteem, peer interaction and feelings of accomplishment. I'm sincerely grateful to Family Continuity and C.A.S.S.P.

How wonderful it is to have a program that has such a positive effect on our children's lives. Thank you for all your help and support during this difficult time in our lives.