

LSA CELEBRATES FOSTER CARE MONTH

Lutheran Services in Iowa

HE WANTED TO BE ADOPTED AND TO BELONG TO SOMEONE



When Alicia and Ray decided they wanted to adopt, they turned to Iowa's foster care system. A video of 13-year-old Damien on a website for waiting children stole their hearts.

"His video was the only one I watched," said Alicia. "For some reason, I felt he was the one who should be here. It was a lot in his voice. He said nobody ever wants teenagers. He wanted to be adopted and to belong to someone. His video made me bawl."

Alicia and Ray got licensed specifically for Damien, and he came to live with them three days before Christmas. The transition wasn't easy. Damien entered foster care at age eight after severe abuse and neglect, shuffling through ten placements. But with the support of LSI's post-adoption placement services and behavioral health intervention services, Damien's new family is helping him deal with this past.

"Carmen helped us dig deep," Alicia said about their LSI caseworker. "Damien had never talked about his past to anybody. Carmen got him to open up about big issues, so he could move toward healing and forgiving."

Last September the family finalized Damien's adoption, a rare milestone for a 14-year-old. "The judge said he had done hundreds of adoptions," said Ray, "and he could count on one hand how many teens he had seen adopted."

"I'll be doing something and think, 'Wow, I have a family. I've been adopted,'" Damien said. "It was scary and cool."

A teen's voice in a video. The courage to commit. A new forever family.

Lutheran Services in Iowa

Since 2007, LSI has been a partner agency in Iowa KidsNet, the statewide collaboration of agencies that recruits, trains, licenses and supports all of Iowa's foster and adoptive homes for children in partnership with Iowa's Department of Human Services.

Iowa KidsNet also provides matching recommendations to the Department of Human Services so children entering foster care can be placed in a home that best fits their unique needs.

For more information about LSI, visit <http://lsiowa.org/>

LSI is a member of the LSA Network, an LSA 20-500 Fund supporter and it's part of the Annie E. Casey-Provider Exchange LSA cohort.

[Click here to return to the #LSAFosterCare article](#)

#LSAFosterCare