



MEET JACKIE



Nancy, one of our CASA volunteers who was specially trained as a volunteer mentor for the Fostering Futures Program, was paired up with 16-year-old Jackie when she was removed from her home by the New Jersey's Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) due to abuse and neglect by her mother, a long-time suffering alcoholic. DCP&P evaluated suitable foster homes and eventually placed her in her uncle's home.

Along with the DCP&P caseworker and Jackie's uncle, Nancy suspected that Jackie was bulimic. Jackie was evaluated and found to have an eating disorder. Jackie's therapy required that she enter an in-patient facility in South Jersey, and Nancy visited her there and supported her throughout her recovery.

Once her in-patient therapy was completed, she was placed in a Sussex County foster home where her progress could be monitored more closely. **Nancy continued to strengthen her connection with Jackie during many visits at this home. She found Jackie an eating disorder therapy center and Jackie began sessions for counseling and peer support. She also advocated for Jackie to receive dental braces.**

Nancy wanted Jackie to benefit from the Fostering Futures Program's components that prepare teens for their eventual independence from the foster care system. She acted as a resource for Jackie's college preparation, mentoring and coaching her with her application and interview process. They both talked about Jackie's vision of what a successful future would look like for her.

Over the course of two years, Nancy built a strong relationship with Jackie and served as a reliable role model for the teen. When Jackie entered college, Nancy could not help but think about how far Jackie had come from her unstable home life, to recovery from bulimia, to fulfilling her dream of attending college. By connecting, mentoring and coaching Jackie through her time in foster care, Nancy successfully changed the course of Jackie's life in a positive way.