

## Someone Else's Home

**By Manny S.**

It happened so fast, with no warning. It came and hit me just like that.

My first day in foster care, I was so confused, so lost, I didn't even know what was going on. I only caught a glimpse of my grandmother's downhearted look as we were leaving. I cried as I stood there, dying inside, no knowledge of what lay before me, what my future would be like. All that was happening around me was drowned away by my tears.

## Into the Unknown

I was put into a car with my brother and sister, all of our things packed in blue garbage bags. We were taken to a recreation center-type place. It was a nice place, but it sure as hell didn't make up for the fact that I'd just been taken from my family.

After spending the night there, we were again put into a car and driven to an unknown location. My sister was dropped off first. Then we stopped and my brother and I got out of the car.

We were in front of a building that loomed over me like a skyscraper. We went inside and up the stairs, my heart beating like a conga drum. When my social worker knocked at one of the doors, I stepped back.

## A New Routine

We were greeted and invited in, into a home I was not familiar with, with people I had never seen before in my life. I was frightened out of my mind. I didn't understand why I had to be here, in this apartment, with these people I did not know.

That night I couldn't sleep. I stayed up most of the night crying and wishing I was with my family again. I reflected on memories that seemed so distant, so long ago.

The next morning was the beginning of an undying routine. I would get home, go to the room and stay there. The only time I'd leave was when my foster mother called me out to eat dinner. She had two other children and we all sat at the dinner table. We all just sat there, silent, rushing to finish so that we could go back to our pre-dinner activities. I always had this lingering feeling of isolation, like I didn't belong with this family.

Eventually I moved on to other homes, where those feelings all came back. All the fear and isolation were more or less the same in every place. The truth is, you never really get used to being in someone else's home, no matter how many homes you've been to. It takes a great foster parent and a welcoming home to make you feel like you belong.