

## **Trauma: Life with PTSD**

Trauma is a life changing occurrence – to live it over and over can be debilitating. I am a witness to the devastations of trauma in the lives of children and my family has experienced our own struggles when one of our children was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

My husband and I have been foster parents for 23 years. Our daughter was placed with us at 3 years old and was adopted 4 years later. We are a middle class family and she had the experiences one would expect in a family like ours. When she entered her teens she started to show signs of anxiety, having bad dreams and was fearful of certain situations – many children do the same. She began have difficulty breathing after competitive sports or any stressful situations. The doctors thought it to be asthma. The asthma episodes turned into hyperventilation which led to passing out. The passing out led to convulsive episodes. We began seeing doctors and specialists. The episodes got worse and the paramedics came to our house multiple times. She was brought to the emergency rooms and hospitalized several times. There was no physical reason why she was having these seizures. The seizures were frightening and she began having those more and more frequently. She would pass out and start screaming, crawling across the floor, frothing at the mouth, fighting if you would approach her. When the EMS came they started monitoring her because her blood pressure would drop and her heart would race. One time her stats were at dangerous levels and EMS took her to the hospital where she was admitted. She continued to have pseudo-seizures. Our pediatrician told us once again there was no physical reason this was happening and it was most likely psychiatric. She was admitted to a psychiatric facility. She was diagnosed with PTSD.

She began seeing therapists and psychiatrists. One medication was tried after another. She was hospitalized again. She began having convulsions in school. Our family life revolved around her good days and bad days. Every doctor's visit, every medication, every therapy visit had a co-pay or full payment once the allotted number of visits ran out. Then finally a break through - the right medicine, the perfect therapist, a supportive school and community- she started responding.

It has been 7 years since she was diagnosed with PTSD. Her abusive early years had haunted her teen years. She is a success story – but the story will never be over.