

February 14, 2011

Height Exchange Club Committee
RE: A.C.E. Award

Dear Committee Members,

It is with pleasure that I write this letter of nomination for Tori Dahl, a senior at Skyview High School. I have known Tori for three years as her guidance counselor.

Tori lives with her Grandmother and has since she was in the seventh grade. Her mother, Dana, was a nurse at the time Tori's life spiraled out of control. In 2008, Tori's mother had her LPN license revoked due to repeated drug use. During this time, Tori endured violent outburst from her mother that would last for weeks. At the end of a binge, Dana would sleep for days and Tori had to fend for herself. Tori was not sure of where they would live from day to day as her mother went through several jobs and was evicted from housing five times within four years.

During Dana's tumultuous drug use, Tori was caretaker for her younger sister Macee who at the time was three years old. Tori took care of Macee day and night for close to four years and during this time; mom was nonexistent and would lock herself in her bedroom. Tori put Macee through swimming lessons, cheerleading etc, all the activities that Macee's mother should have been doing. Tori and her grandmother have been splitting the costs of Macee's activities.

Tori's father, Dan was in jail until Tori was age eleven. He was released in the summer of 2005 and was allowed to see Tori. Dan was watching Tori one summer night while Dana was working and he molested her. Tori reports that one of the hardest things she has ever had to do was go to court and testify against her father. She, at the age of 11, had to point to her father in a court of law and tell the court what he did to her. He was sentenced to forty years in prison and is possibly up for release in summer 2014. Drug and alcohol abuse were also a part of Dan's life while he was allowed to visit the girls.

Tori is an amazing young women. She is innately strong and she does not play the victim. She will take her experiences and help others who may someday walk in her shoes. She has been accepted to Missoula and plans to major in business. She maintains excellent grades while working two and three jobs. She helps her grandmother with expenses and while Macee is at home with Dana, Tori still feels responsible in making sure Macee is taken care of financially.

I cannot think of a more deserving recipient for the A.C.E. Award Scholarship. What Tori has survived is beyond amazing and for her to come through it with grace and dignity is surely a miracle.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Hofmann
Skyview Counselor
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