

Living With Courage

By, Thomas Armento

My courage has been growing just like a child grows, because it had to begin when I was born. My birth mom, who loved me dearly, had trouble taking care of me at home. For 5 1/2 years we were determined to make it work together. Soon it became too hard for my mom, because of her Cerebral Palsy level and lack of education. I needed a lot of courage to survive those early stages of my life.

My memories with my mom were mostly scary. I remember falling down a flight of steps in a toy 4x4 car because mom didn't know where I was. One day a neighborhood kid threw me in a garbage dumpster. Being only about 4 years old I can remember crying for help. I needed courage that day, and thanks to a kind neighbor who saved me. She lifted me out and took me home to her house to clean me up. My mom never knew where I was and had little money to clothe or feed me. Mom couldn't read or write. She had trouble talking and needed someone to help her. She loved me and yet she couldn't feed, clothe, or even talk to me!

My courage grew bigger when I was about 5 1/2 years old. This was the courage to go live in a stranger's home with a family of strangers. I became a foster child, assigned to the state. I was tossed back and forth from stranger to stranger. Not all the families were nice to me. The state took me away from my mom. I remember her visiting me from time to time and then she was gone. I never really got to say goodbye. I really needed courage to face my future with strangers alone. My dream and desire was to have a loving family of my own.

I am glad I had the courage to survive my early years because I live in a loving home now. I have a real mom, dad, and older sister and together we have used our courage to become a real family. I still need my courage everyday to face life and to try to keep fixing what was broken from my childhood. Having disabilities of my own, I know that my courage will help me be the best that I can.

**HIGH ROAD SCHOOL AT SOMERSET
2200 COTTONTAIL LANE
SOMERSET, NJ 08873**