

## Derrick's Second Chance

The Morgan family met Derrick and saw past the tough façade and instead saw the frightened, wounded child in need of love, consistency, and a second chance. The Morgan's had raised their own kids and decided that they still had more time and energy to devote to other children in need. They were relatively new foster parents who had worked with only one other child prior to Derrick.

When they were called and asked if they were willing to open their home to a ninth grade boy with a history of being aggressive and resistant to authority, they were understandably leery. However, they accepted the challenge and agreed to give it a try.



Derrick arrived at the Morgan's and brought with him an array of behaviors and baggage that would have frightened the most seasoned foster parents. He had been dropped off at a hospital by his mother at age 6 and was subsequently adopted. In his adoptive home, Derrick was physically abused and neglected. He went on to live in a group home before being moved to the Morgan home. At this point, he was very oppositional, did not respect authority and had dabbled in gang life.

The Morgan's had a daunting task of establishing rules, showing love, and gaining the trust of a boy who felt there was no such thing as security. Slowly, over the course of about nine months, Derrick began to let down his guard and allow the Morgan's into his heart. Mrs. Morgan is a nurturing woman who showed him love and affection. Mr. Morgan bonded with Derrick over yard work and handy man projects. Derrick attended therapy sessions and became involved in church activities. Over time, Derrick was able to admit that he felt safe and cared about for the first time in his life. At the age of 16, he made the difficult decision not to return to his adoptive family and to remain with the Morgan's indefinitely.

Since that time, Derrick has thrived with the Morgan's support and guidance. He has an after school job, leads a youth bible study and looks forward to graduating from high school in June. Derrick was even voted best dressed by his senior class. He is currently weighing his options in another major life decision; whether to attend college or enlist in the US Army. The Morgan's state that they are very proud of the hard work and determination Derrick has shown throughout the years. Derrick states that the Morgan's patience and consistency were the biggest contributors to his successful turn around.

Derrick recently spoke to a group of foster parents about his journey. He asked them to remember his story and not to give up when a child resists accepting their help. He reminded them of the amount of time it took for the Morgan's to show him that they could be depended on and trusted. He also praised the Morgan's for being willing to take a chance on a kid that most people would have never allowed in their home.