



Examples of Stories/ Anecdotes

As you read the following stories, consider the following:

- What makes the following “stories” effective? What makes them emotive or moving?
- What makes you want to read more?
- Alternatively, what are the deficiencies?
- What are some of the common elements that all good stories share?

Note: The stories below do not include background on the programs that are mentioned. For the ones taken from web pages, that background is on the website. In the case of a grant narrative, the background would be part of the narrative, so that the context for each story is clear.

Success stories from Florida Foster Care Review (copied on Feb. 16, 2023 from Florida Foster Care Review’s “success stories” webpage, <https://www.fostercarereview.org/our-work/success-stories/> – see the webpage for more):

(1) Florida Foster Care Review (FFCR) Connects Youth with Needed Services

Sixteen year-old Alana was placed in foster care when her caregiver declared that she was ungovernable and refused to continue looking after her while her mother was hospitalized. Alana’s mother passed away soon after. During a review hearing, the Citizen Review Panel (CRP) learned that Alana had been using drugs. The panel members asked Alana what support she would need to get on a more productive life course. They recommended referral to a substance abuse treatment program and connected her to a volunteer opportunity. Alana pursued both.

Now 17, Alana is a different person. She is doing well in school and has thanked the CRP for connecting her to a treatment program that saved her life and helped her address her traumatic past. She told the CRP panel members that volunteering helped her realize that she wanted to be an occupational therapist. Alana has started looking into career programs and will continue to live with her foster family after turning 18. With the care and guidance of both the CRP volunteers and the supportive adults in her life, Alana is set up for success.

(2) FFCR Promotes Permanency

In 2012, law enforcement discovered Edward*, then 11, alone on a city bus and unable to speak. Upon contacting relatives, authorities learned this was not Edward’s first incident of unsupervised wandering. Edward was living in the U.S. with his father, while his mother remained in their country of origin. Because his father could not provide a safe home, Edward was placed in foster care. Health checks revealed autism, developmental and a speech disorder. Edward received therapeutic services at his foster home and at school. Edward’s father was inconsistent with visits and did not have a living arrangement that met Edward’s needs.

The Permanency Roundtable (PRT) team developed a Permanency Action Plan that included outreach to relatives who had been in Edward’s life prior to his entering foster care as

well as an action item to determine Edward's legal residency status in the US. Over the next three months of Roundtables, the PRT team applied for and secured legal residency for Edward while also identifying a cousin, Ms. Jones*, who had known Edward as a child and expressed interest in once again being part of his life. The PRT team and Ms. Jones discussed the requirements of serving as Edward's legal guardian. She embraced the idea enthusiastically. After a positive home study, a background check, training on Edward's developmental and medical issues, and many visits by Ms. Jones to Edward at his group home, the court approved Ms. Jones as Edward's permanent guardian.

Thanks to the concerted effort of the PRT team, Edward received the security of legal residency and a loving, stable caregiver, while also maintaining a positive relationship with his father.

** All names and likenesses have been changed to protect the identity of the children and families we serve.*

(3) Stories of impact from Catalyst Miami (copied on Feb. 16, 2023 from Catalyst Miami's "stories of impact" webpage, <https://stories.catalystmiami.org/>... see the webpage for more):

[Vanessa](#)

Vanessa created a brighter future for herself and her daughter.

When Vanessa came to Catalyst Miami, she was looking for help finding health insurance for herself and her daughter. While working with her Prosperity Campaign coach, Vanessa realized Catalyst could also help her find other resources they needed.

Aside from being uninsured, they were facing eviction and other financial challenges. Vanessa's coach helped her connect with housing agencies, enroll in SNAP and Medicaid, and find employment. She now works full-time at a law firm and has achieved her goal of financial independence.

"I felt safe. I actually had someone who me and my daughter could count on that was willing to help us, but most of all, show us her human heart and compassion." In Vanessa's words, what she found at Catalyst Miami was not just an employee, but someone who instantly listened and made her feel cared about.

Through the support of her coach, the programs available to her, and above all, her own power, Vanessa transformed her life for herself and the most important person in it: her daughter.

[Keith Preciados](#)

A strong community advocate with a passion for listening, learning, and taking action.

A success story in video/ poem format:

<https://youtu.be/835ZmsZqe0o>

(4) A community's experience with systemic racism across centuries

The population of St. John is predominantly African American (69%), low-wealth, and rural. For decades, both local/ state governments and the petrochemical companies that

dominate the local economy have turned a blind eye to the numerous adverse health and economic impacts that residents suffer as a result of the petrochemical plants' pollution. Most of the communities upriver are historically African American, having been settled by people previously enslaved on the same land. As chemical companies began to place their factories alongside these communities, white families relocated, while African American families – their economic mobility and ability to relocate crippled by racism – found themselves trapped on the “fenceline” of the chemical plants. Today, residents continue to suffer health concerns and economic harm as a result of a multi-billion-dollar industry that has a stake in maintaining the status quo. Joy Banner, founder of The Descendants Project, observed: *“The connection between the plantations which enslaved my ancestors, and the petrochemical industries that now pollute the environment of their descendants is direct and overt. During the era of slavery, these plantations drove the demand for the fuel produced by these factories, and in many cases plantation land was sold to new petrochemical plants as Cancer Alley grew.”*

My Friend Paul

My friendship with Paul is on a spectrum of sorts – I can't exactly pinpoint when it started and it never really ended. We were a year apart in school, so the classroom could not have been the root. In those days, all the kids in the neighborhood played together and walked to and from school so I think one day I probably rode my bike down Sylvan Road and was challenged by Paul to a game of driveway basketball. What is clear to me about my friendship with Paul is that it was true. In our friendship, as in everything he did, his dedication was evident. He was all-in; there was no 'half-assing' it with Paul.

Wiffleball presents an apt framework for examining my relationship with Paul and my lasting impressions of Paul's personality, work ethic, and loyalty. From the time I can remember, all Paul wanted to do was talk about baseball, write about baseball, play baseball – and he sucked me up into his fanatical passion as well! Even as an 11- or 12-year-old, he was well beyond his years in so many ways. Paul would say, 'Hey Kurt, I'm coming over and we're going to play wiffleball.' I was like the little puppy, 'Ok, Paul. Let's Play! Let's Play! I want to bat first!' But with Paul, you couldn't just pick up a bat and ball and play. Oh no.

There were going to be rules. Hell, he made a whole freaking wiffleball league. The bases needed to be official backyard-regulation distances (adjusted, of course per the size of the particular yard we were playing in). There were teams (1-person per team, because there were only 5-6 of us), and there was recordkeeping; Paul took it upon himself to record the scores, batting averages, records, homeruns, etc. of all the teams each game – he even typed up a weekly wiffle-ball newsletter! Seriously, what 11-year-old DOES that?! He typed these bulletins probably on a Commodore 64, literally the first retail computer invented, and then copied and distributed them to the un-appreciative players and fans. And he could care less that we could care less. He did it because he loved it.