My Story: Crystal Guno

There was a point in my life that I felt like I didn't know where I belonged, that was until I found a family that I could call my own. This all started when I was asked to move out of my Grandma's. I had gone to my aunty Diane's place to stay for the time being. As much as I knew how she wanted me to stay there I knew that I couldn't stay long. At times I would feel like I was a burden, because the house was already packed and they didn't need another person in the way. I didn't have a room to stay in so I slept on the couch. I knew that I had to find another place to stay, so I started talking to friend's about it. I heard from a good friend of mine, Erin, who reminded me that her Grandma said I could stay in their spare bedroom. I was pretty excited about this because Erin was my best friend. There was one condition for me staying there and that was I had to make it to school everyday. Once I got settled in, things were going smoothly and I was making it to school. Then I started to get comfortable, we started to sneak out and drink on school days. That got us in trouble when I started to miss school more. Erin's Grandma warned me that if I kept this up, I would have to find another place to live. Eventually I had to find another place to stay. I was in such a rebellious stage, I didn't want to follow rules: all I wanted to do was go out and have fun.

So this next place that I moved to was with my Grandpa Larry. We went over the rules and expectations of my staying there. They weren't to bad, but back than I didn't like them. He told me that I had to make it to school on time and not miss any days, do chores around the house, and become more independent. So I settled in. I now lived a lot further than I did before. I lived in Thornhill on the bench. I had to take the city bus really early just to get to school. Which I didn't like so I was always trying to stay home but my Grandpa wouldn't let me. He made me do a lot of what I wanted to do on my own. I had to find my own rides and do my own thing pretty much. Which I guess you can say I wasn't really used to. My Grandpa and I didn't really get along that well; I didn't know him that well, as he wasn't in my life very often. I rarely ever saw him. I know when he disciplined me, he only did so because he cared and wanted to see me succeed in life. But I was too young and dumb to realize it. I was hurtful and mean because all I wanted to do was party and have fun with my friends. I never thought about my future; it just didn't seem that important. Which was pretty irresponsible and disrespectful of me. So I started to find another place stay because I didn't want to follow rules. Again ail I cared about was partying and having fun with my friends.

The next place that I found to stay was with one of my friends, Corrina. She and her family had told me that I was welcome to stay with them. At this point I was feeling like I just needed to get away from my Grandpa for a while. So I moved in with my friend Corrina. This family was a very religious family considering her father was a pastor. This was a definite change for me. When we sat down and discussed the rules and expectations, I was kind of scared. There

were so many rules and changes for me to adjust to. I had to give up some of the music that I listened to and some of the clothes that I wore. I didn't have as much freedom as I did with my Grandpa. Suddenly my Grandpa's house started to sound a lot better. But I couldn't just pick up and leave right away as I had already moved so I decided I'd stay and see how things go. I had a tight schedule of going to school coming home, helping with dinner, doing homework then going to church. That was pretty much a daily thing. I was all right with it at the beginning but about after 2 weeks of it, I was starting to miss being at my Grandpas. I talked to them about how I was feeling and we had decided that it was a good idea for me to go back to my Grandpa's.

So I moved back to my Grandpa's and he had let me know that I wasn't going to be slacking off and doing nothing while I was living there. I had to start working and doing better in school. I agreed to the conditions and decided that I would try. But in the end I just didn't want to listen and we fought all the time. I bet you can guess what I did next... I started to look for another place to live.

I was talking to one of my friends, Shalane, she had told me that she would talk to her parents and see if I can stay with them. She talked to her parents and they had said that I would stay with them. I moved in we, talked about the rules and I was pretty happy with them. I felt like they weren't too strict or too laid back. I started to think maybe this was going to be the place that I could stay for good at. And I was right; I ended up living at this house for close to three years. I loved it, I felt like I was a part of their family, they took me in and never gave up on me. I feel like I owe them so much. Sure I made mistakes while living there but doesn't everyone? They always made sure that I was all right and safe. They were strict when they had to be and also laid back and awesome at other times. I spent time with them a lot too. Sue and Shane, who are Shalane's parents, were almost like my second parents. I still think of them that way to this day. Even though I don't live with them I still keep in touch and talk with them all the time.

All the while I was moving around and going house to house. I was pretty depressed. I felt as if I were a rag doll being thrown every which way. I had quite the depressing moments while I moved around. My family I didn't really want to stay with because they drank all the time. I was so happy that I got to enjoy my time with Sue and Shane because they taught me a lot. They taught me how to be responsible, independent, more active, healthy and respectful. Theses things will carry on in me so that I can succeed on my own when I go away to College and have my own family. I know there are other kids out there that have been in the same situation. Maybe they didn't get it as easy as I did. Sometimes I think I take some stuff for granted. I'm so grateful that I found a family that took me in and loved me.