

REGION



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ADOPTION >> TEEN SEEKS PERMANENT FAMILY



DAVE ELLIS / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Throughout her foster care experience, 16-year-old Cassandre has experienced many different people and many different churches.

Heaven is her dream trip

BY AMY FLOWERS UMBLE
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

If Cassandre could go anywhere for a day, she would pick heaven.

"I know it takes the surprise out of it, but I want to know what it's like," said the 16-year-old Richmond girl.

Since she can't drop by for a celestial visit, Cassandre learns about heaven by visiting churches.

Luckily for her, she enjoys a variety of worship styles. In the

past three years, Cassandre has lived with a number of foster families and in group homes.

Each time, she tries to find a different church and says she has experienced many types of music and worship.

But she'd really love to find one church—and one family.

Less than two years before she turns 18, Cassandre knows time is running out to find a permanent family. But she would love to watch movies and to play games with parents and siblings.

"I don't really have my particulars: married, single or other kids," she said.

The best part would be "that I could stay there forever," Cassandre said.

Staying is important when you move around as much as Cassandre has.

Sometimes, she arrives at a foster home before meeting the family. Sometimes, she gets less than a day's notice that it's time to move.

SEE ADOPTION, BACK PAGE

ABOUT THE SERIES

On any given day, 1,600 Virginia children seek an adoptive family. The Free Lance-Star joined with the Children's Home Society of Virginia, a private adoption agency offering foster-care services, to spotlight some of these children. First names are used, but no last names are published to protect their identities.

The newspaper will periodically feature a Virginia child available for adoption.

ADOPTION: Teen deals with stress of foster care by reading and studying

FROM PAGE C1

The hardest part of a new place is adjusting to all the new people, she said.

"You just have to play it out, really."

And it's not easy to develop relationships.

"People come and go," she said. "It's not good. It's kind of sad."

Cassandre deals with the stress of foster care by reading and studying. When she discovered her latest public school had a bad reputation, Cassandre managed to get into a private military school.

There, she loves math and English and makes the honor roll regularly.

She also loves hanging out with her friends, playing card games and going to movies.

She also enjoys drawing

WANT TO ADOPT?

Interested in adopting Cassandre or any of the other foster children waiting? Contact Kristy Taylor at Children's Home Society of Virginia at 804/353-0191, ext. 17.

and would like to be an architect when she grows up.

Cassandre would also like to learn to play soccer. But most of all, she would like to meet a new, permanent family.

"It would take more adjusting, but I'm up to it," Cassandre said.

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