

ADOPTION >> TEEN WANTS A FAMILY

Janeva focuses on academics and her future

BY AMY FLOWERS UMBLE
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Teens at school often complain about their parents' nagging about homework, curfews and chores.

But 17-year-old Janeva would love to be in their shoes.

"Children take their parents for granted," she said. "They're disrespectful to them, and they should cherish their parents."

Janeva, a high school junior, first went into foster care as a toddler. She was adopted at 6, then the court removed her from that home when she was 14.

Her second time in the foster-care system, Janeva faces long odds of getting adopted. Once a child is older than 8, the chances of getting adopted grow exceedingly slim.

At first, Janeva told herself it didn't matter--she didn't need a family anyway.

"I have a strong head on my shoulders, and if a family doesn't come, then I'll be my own family," she said. But the teen, who likes to be called Nene, couldn't stop thinking about family.

When her friends complain about their parents, Janeva grows frustrated.

"I would give so much just to wake up to my mom or dad, and no matter how much I hope, how much I pray, it's not going to happen," Janeva said.

So the teen tries to keep her life full. She loves to praise dance at church, enjoys school and hopes to be a forensic psychologist when she grows up.

It's hard to study at times, she said. In the past three years, Janeva has attended four schools, making it difficult to keep up.

She is determined to keep her grades high and attend Longwood University in Farmville. Janeva wants to study psychology and one day get into the



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Janeva, 17, has been in four foster homes in the past three years.

minds of serial killers, to understand how they work.

Janeva would love to embark on that future with a family standing behind her.

"It's a lot harder for teenagers. You give up hope," she said. "But still a little part of me just wishes that a family would give me a chance."

ABOUT THE SERIES

On any given day, 1,500 children seek an adoptive family. The Free Lance-Star joined with Children's Home Society, a private adoption agency, to spotlight some of these children.

First names are used, but no last names are published to protect their identities.

The newspaper periodically features a Virginia child available for adoption.