

Kevin's Story Transcription

As a young girl, I was often called tomboy and told that I would grow out of it. When I was made to wear dresses, I would throw a fit. I was told that I would grow to like them. Years later, I still hated them. My foster parents, therapist, and social worker rewarded me for acting feminine. But that is all it was, "acting." I felt like nobody let me be how I wanted to be.

To make it worse, I was going around telling people I was a lesbian. At least that is what my foster parents told my social worker. Truth is, everyone was calling me a lesbian. They called me a dyke, bull-dagger, lesbo. I did not know what any of those words meant.

One day, I was fed up being called all these names. So when somebody at school called me a lesbo, I snapped. I wound up in the back seat of a cop car in handcuffs. I landed in Juvenile Hall. Nobody cared or bothered to ask me why I lashed out. I was considered a danger to society. I spent time in California Youth Authority. Prison for kids.

While I was in Juvie—I was assigned a new social worker. She took the time to listen to me. And did not judge me based on my looks or what was in my file. After talking to me, she really understood what really happened. She understood that I really didn't belong in CYA.

She searched for a more progressive and open minded area. In Santa Cruz, nobody judged me for my looks, sexual orientation or gender identity. I made my own family and community in placement and out.

I had adults in my life that would go to almost any lengths to show me that I was normal. Like that questioning things, even gender is normal. That being normal, whatever that is, is being my own person.

Through my outside community, I found myself. I found that I was not that little school girl that I started out as. In fact, I was not even a she, I was a he.

Being open and honest with myself, while fighting for my rights, is what got me through foster care. It lead to recognition from county, congress, and monetary awards.

I have my social worker to thank for all my success. Without her I could still be sitting in CYA until this day.

And all she did was listen.

Source(s):

- NCLR. (2006). Breaking the silence: LGBTQ foster youth tell their stories.
- NCLR. (June 2006). Breaking the Silence Resource CD. LGBTQ out-of-home youth training tools and resources.