Topanga's Story

When I was a little girl between the ages of 4 and 5, my mom got herself into drugs and alcohol. I don't remember ever meeting my dad. My mom took my brother and me and we all ran from him. The reason for this is because one day while my mom was away at work, I was all alone with my dad at the house. When my mom came back, she found bruises on my legs and arms. That was the end of him and almost my life. Now it was just my mom, my big brother, and me. We did not have either of our fathers in the picture at the time and she had a hard time bringing money into the house for us to be fed. One day she left to go to work, and I remember my brother and I opening up the refrigerator to find that there was nothing in it. That feeling still dwells in my heart! Later on, she began not only leaving us alone at home, but abandonment started coming into the picture as well. She began leaving my brother at his grandparent's house only to go pick him up and bring him back again. This was becoming a pattern. She was not making enough money to pay for the bills. We got evicted out of the apartment. She abandoned my brother and left him at his grandparent's house. Then it was just her and me. I started to see different stranger's houses and sleeping places. I didn't know these men who would let us in. **We had no where to go!** One day as I was playing, I heard a knock on the door. My mom grabs me and says, "Do you want to play hide and seek?" She tells me to hide in the closet. Little did I know, it was the police looking for me. They had been asked to do a child welfare check on me. **Still without anything, I felt like there was nothing left for me to live for at such a young age.** Finally the day came where my mom hugged me tight and brought me to another house. **She gave me to a lady who I didn't know at the time could give me a better life.** That was Tina. Kicking and screaming, they had to pull me out of my mother's arms. The last thing I remember doing was turning around to watch my mom get smaller and smaller as we drove off. **She gave up 'hiding me' to protect me from the streets and starving to death.**

Now I am 16 and it is a blessing to know that people are out there to help kids who are just like me. I also am thankful for my family who loves me, for my health, my good education, and for my home.