Bring Hope into Hopelessness

Dora & Laurie’s Story

Before Dora’s CASA volunteer entered her life, all she had was shelter staff — not because they were her true support system, but because no one else was there. Dora had just turned 16, was newly in foster care custody, and on paper, she looked completely alone in the world.

At first, she pushed the help away. She wanted it, but trust didn’t come easily. So Laurie, Dora’s Dauphin County CASA volunteer, did the only thing that works: she showed up, again and again, giving Dora the chance to be known and to get to know Laurie in return.

"At most times, she was the only person who picked up the phone for me," Dora says. **"It made me feel seen and heard, like my opinion still matters."** That’s what advocacy is about: being a voice, almost like a cheerleader, for someone whose needs might otherwise go unheard and unmet. Speaking louder when a need is ignored. Saying, "They deserve this."

Youth aging out of care often look around and ask, **"Who's going to help me with all of this?"** — a question that reveals just how much is at stake, and why a CASA presence means so much.

Many of these kids are scared of their own hope. Scared it won’t come true. Scared no one will advocate for them. But their fear doesn’t have to last. **"It’s hopeless in placement,"** Dora said, **"and my CASA worker brought hope into my hopelessness."**

In Dauphin County alone, more than 300 children are in dependency, foster, or independent care on any given day. Every one of them deserves someone in their corner, **a CASA volunteer** like Laurie, someone to remind them they have a future and a chance to grow.