

Taking in Camisha

by Beth Braddock

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When Joey began teaching at Restoration Academy in 2000, our twin girls were one year old. In 2001, we moved to Fairfield and both of us became more involved at the school. I began teaching a weekly girls' Bible study in our home. We soon realized that we wanted to open our home to students that needed a place to live. We prayed about our decision and decided not to have any more children of our own so that we would have room for students.

In 2002, a boy moved in with us temporarily. He had problems with illegal drugs, so we moved him out. Over the next few years, we had some girls from bad home situations move in with us. We started the process of gaining custody of one girl, but she chose to move home before our court date. We became very frustrated with the challenge of trying to provide a safe, comfortable, loving, and secure home environment for teenagers who desperately needed it but chose to reject it.

Earlier this year I began to ask God why he was not allowing us to take in students and hold on to them. In February, a precious girl that had been one of my English students at RA and had attended Bible study in our home came to our doorstep needing a safe place to stay.

She had first come to RA in 2007 because she moved in with some relatives near the school after escaping a bad home situation. At the end of 2008, she returned home with her mother in hopes that her home environment had improved. She came back to Fairfield at the beginning of 2010. We were not aware that she was back in Fairfield until she ran away from her relatives after being abused. She remembered that we lived close to the school and fled to our house. We immediately began custody proceedings.

With the help of DHR and the support of RA staff, we obtained full legal custody in June 2010. At every step of the proceedings, I became nervous and expected her to return to her unstable home just like the others. We have learned to trust God with the lives of

these students and realized that we cannot control the outcome. If students choose to leave our home or even RA, it does not mean that God is through working or that hope is lost. God will continue to work out His perfect will in their lives and in ours.

So far, Camisha is thriving at RA. She absolutely loves the school, the teachers, and her classmates. She plays basketball and is in the grappling club. She has been a blessing to us as a daughter and a blessing to our twins as a big sister. Camisha has been a rock through all of this. She has never wavered and expressed that her strength comes from God. She has been a good example to all of us.