



## **A Story of Hope...**

### **From the Voice of a CASA Advocate**

A tinier-than-most five-year-old raced toward me across the playground, her mop of red curls bouncing off her freckled face. “My name is Hope, and you’re my CASA, right? Where are you going to take me today? I love Scooby Do, how did you know? Can you find a family for me? When I get mad, I bite, you know....” So began my adventure with Hope, in every sense of the word.

Bright little Hope had been abandoned by her parents when she was three, dropped off at a relative’s home who was soon reported for physically and emotionally abusing the toddler who bore scars to prove it. By the time she was five she had lived in more than one group home and had experienced two failed placements in foster homes. In her words: “They brought me back.” She was angry, scared and sure no one wanted her. Her answer to survival as the youngest and smallest child in a large group home was to fight back in any way she could.

Hope was very curious and precocious but could not get along with other children in school. As her advocate I located a private school that could better deal with her behavior problems and give her the attention she desperately needed. She loved to learn and couldn’t wait to read.

My main priority was to see that she was never again given a false promise by another family and that a permanent home be found for her. Every time I heard the words “unadoptable at this time”, I redoubled my efforts as her voice in court. With a change in her social workers three times, I started over three times, working closely with Hope’s therapist and her court-appointed attorney. And during this time Hope and I learned to ride a pink two-wheeler, to fly a kite, to visit bookstores and go to children’s plays, and to chase seagulls on the beach until we collapsed in laughter.

When Hope was seven, her dream started to take shape. A single woman expressed the desire to adopt her, having taken special foster parent training to help Hope deal with her fears and cope with adjusting to this potential new home and family. My visits with Hope from that point forward were filled with her excitement about having her own bedroom and a puppy. It wasn’t an instant adjustment, but she was soon to realize how much she was loved. Hope became very connected to her new mom and the adoption was finalized.

Hope just celebrated her 10<sup>th</sup> birthday in her new home in the Midwest. She now attends a regular public school and phoned me recently to announce: “Guess what? I got straight A’s and three special awards.”

Yes, that’s what Hope is all about!

**By Bonnie MacDonald**

*Bonnie has been a CASA volunteer for over seven years  
and has devoted herself to ten children.*

**“Can you find a family for me?”**