

Helen Habbert



- 5 years
- 3 cases
- 7 kids

21% of abused and/or neglected children suffer PTSD - a greater rate than U.S. war veterans.

Helen's most recent case is messy and difficult. The mother doesn't know how to parent her son. He had been acting out and, at age 9, Patrick tried to kill himself.

Between a stable foster home and the love of a family friend, Helen has advocated for a secure environment for Patrick.

"That's what he needs," Helen says. "Stability and positive reinforcement. That's not what was happening with his mom."

The trauma had caused Patrick to have a hard time at school, despite his academic giftedness. At 10, he is already in sixth grade. Helen says the boy's extraordinary intelligence is just one of his gifts. "He's very insightful and therapy has really helped him to see that he's working on things, becoming a happier person."

His mother stopped coming to visits for a while. Reunification has become less and less likely. And Helen began advocating for Patrick to continue to develop a relationship with a family friend who offers a future of stability.

"She is raising her own child and helping two sisters but she really seems to love Patrick," Helen says. "It's been a great relationship for him to have."

His therapy, the services at his school and a stable

home life – still in a foster home for now – have all helped him get past his crisis. Kathy King, the CASA Manager who works with Helen, says that getting all of that in place is what Helen does as a CASA volunteer. "She acts as a 'team leader' on a case, getting the needed services rounded up for her ProKids children. And everyone knows it and values it. The schools know to call Helen and she'll get everything and everyone connected," Kathy says.

"She keeps so many people in the loop," Kathy says. "She is organized and logical and she is so compassionate."

That compassion is heartfelt as she talks about Patrick. "At the beginning of last school year he was having fights at school and that's when he tried to kill himself. He had thought everything was his fault. His hair was even falling out because of the stress," Helen says. "By spring, he got the Citizen of the Month award at school."

Proud of Patrick, Helen describes him as "smiling all the time now. He knows what progress he's made." The family friend, who spends weekends with Patrick, has filed to get legal custody. "This is about Patrick," the friend has told Helen. "It's all about him."

For Helen, that's what it has always been about.

93% of ProKids children with mental health needs are identified and clinically assessed.