

## A Foster Child's Dream

Angela had a dream.

It wasn't the same dream that galvanized a movement five decades ago. Not a dream of freedom. Not a dream that would change the course of a nation.

Still, Angela and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had much in common. Both dreamed of a day when life would be better, when they could experience the joys that so many other people took for granted.

Dr. King dreamed of equality. Angela dreamed of a safe, permanent home.

Angela lived in a foster home because she had been living with her mother in a car, sometimes being so cold in the middle of the night. They usually had only one scanty meal each day, and often that came from the leftovers of friends' meals. Angela had not been attending Kindergarten regularly, and she hadn't been to a doctor for her chronic earaches. After her mother was arrested for using meth, Angela was placed in a foster home after being deemed a severely neglected child by the State Social Services case worker.

Angela liked having a real bed, warm clothes, and regular meals. She flourished in her growth, social skills, and academics while she was in a foster home. But, she missed her mother and wondered when she would be with her again.

Then Angela met Gordon, her Court-Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA. Trained to represent abused and neglected kids in court and with the State Social Services office, Gordon and his fellow CASA volunteers are advocates for the needs of these foster children.

Throughout the many months that Angela was in foster care, Gordon got to know her and everyone involved in her life very well. He submitted reports to the Court with factual information that protected Angela's best interests when any decisions were made, especially the decision about a permanent home.

Angela was one of the lucky ones. Her mother completed drug treatment, found a job and moved into a low-income apartment. The Court felt confident that it had ample evidence, thanks to the CASA volunteer's reports, that Angela would be safe if she returned to her mother's custody. Angela's dream to live in a home with her now drug-free mother had come true.

You can ensure that all of the abused and neglected children in our area who are in the foster care and court systems will have a CASA advocate by supporting the Southeast CASA Program. For more information, please visit the website at [SoutheastCASA.org](http://SoutheastCASA.org).