

## **I Have a Chance to Get This Right**

### *The Reunification Journey of Megan and Faith*



In October 2023, Megan, a 37-year-old mother from Hartford, received a phone call that would forever change the course of her life. On the other end was Bianca Kennedy, a compassionate and persistent social worker from the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

“Would you like to be considered for reunification with your daughter, Faith?”

For Megan, it was pure excitement. Without pause, she said yes.

“It was the happiest moment of my life,” Megan shared. “I have a chance to get this right.”

Megan gave birth to her daughter Faith when she was just 24 years old. Faith was born with marijuana in her system, and due to Megan’s circumstances, she was discharged from the hospital to the care of Megan’s mother and stepfather. The plan was for them to be the primary caregivers, with Megan allowed supervised visits.

For the first six months, Megan remained in the home with her baby, her mom, and her stepfather. But due to Megan’s unpredictable and often combative behavior, it reached a point where she had to leave the home.

With nowhere to go, Megan entered a homeless shelter in New Haven. She had been in shelters before, but this time she was alone. It was there that she met someone who introduced her to crack cocaine. That same man later exploited her, and she fell deeper into addiction and survival.

Over the years, Megan had two more children. Her mother and stepfather took custody of all three. Megan now sees that as an act of love.

“They didn’t enable me,” she said. “They practiced tough love. They knew if they gave me money, I’d use. They were trying to protect my kids—and save me.”

Even at her lowest, Megan’s heart never let go of her children.

“Even when I wasn’t healthy enough to visit... even when I was using and couldn’t be there—I always loved Faith. I thought about her every single day.”



"I looked at the crack pipe and threw it down," she said. "I never picked it up again."

Megan began her recovery at the Institute of Living (IOL) in Hartford. From there, she entered

By her side through it all was Jessie, a man who had stood with her through some of her darkest days. He had grown weary of her drug use but never stopped believing in her. After she committed to her recovery, they married.

In July 2023, Megan's mother passed away after a long illness. Megan had been sober for several months.

Just three months later, Megan's stepfather died. Faith was temporarily placed with Megan's sister, while the younger two children were taken in by Megan's stepbrother in Ohio.

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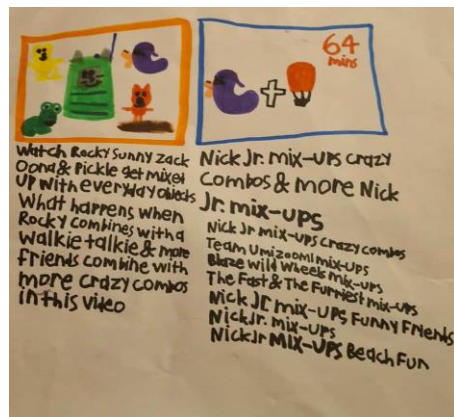
“She rose to the occasion when we called her,” said Bianca Kennedy, social worker with DCF.

“She was nervous and didn’t think she could do it. At times, I felt like I was pushing her too hard. But I’m so glad I did. Megan inspires us as social workers to look, ask, empower, and believe—in change.”

Supervised visits turned into unsupervised visits, then overnights, and finally, in December 2024, custody of Faith was returned to Megan. Within five months, DCF officially closed the protective services case.

“It was a moment of reflection,” Megan said. “I felt so proud of myself. I started to believe—I can actually do this. I can be a loving, supportive, present mom.”

Faith, now 12, came into Megan’s care with limited verbal communication, still not potty trained, and carrying deep grief. Today, she speaks in full sentences, expresses her emotions, and radiates happiness.



“She wakes up early every morning, ready for school,” Megan shared. “She’s such a happy child. She feels safe. She knows she’s loved.”

Faith attends Adelbrook School, where she’s learning life skills, gaining independence, and developing her incredible artistic talent. She’s verbal, affectionate, and remains a devoted fan of Paw Patrol.

Megan and Jessie delight in doing things as a family. They’re planning a trip to Lake Compounce and are especially excited to take Faith to see The Wiggles. “We just love seeing her happy,” Megan said. “We’re making up for lost time by filling our days with memories.”

While Megan does not have custody of her other two children, she remains hopeful and connected. Her sister stays in contact with their caregiver in Ohio, and Megan is building a path to be part of their lives again—sending gifts, making phone calls, and keeping that connection alive.



“I want Faith to have a relationship with her siblings,” Megan said. “She was raised with them. I won’t disrupt their lives, but I want her to feel that family bond again.”

When asked when she knew everything was going to be okay, Megan recalled a moment she’ll never forget. “I was in the kitchen washing dishes,” she said, and you could hear the tears in her voice. “Faith came in and started singing Rainbow Connection—the Muppets song. I used to sing that as a little girl. I couldn’t believe it.”

They sang it together, mother and daughter.

“I know my mom was with us in that moment,” Megan said. “She sang that song to me. And now Faith was singing it to me too. It felt like she was singing it to both of us—just in different generations of time.”

She paused, then added quietly, “That’s when I thought... this is what motherhood is. Maybe I am doing okay. I am a mom. And my heart was warm.”

Today, Megan works as a manager at Dollar Tree, where she’s climbed through the ranks. She is proud of how far she’s come, open about her past, and committed to helping others believe in their own possibilities.

“I know DCF doesn’t want kids in foster care,” Megan said. “They want families together. They offered me support and guidance so I could succeed. And I did.”

And when she thinks about the life she has now—her family, her home, her purpose—Megan doesn’t hesitate.

“The best part of life is having a family again. Having my baby back.”

And through it all, she holds on to one simple, powerful truth: “I have a chance to get this right.”

