

This came in our email this week, from upstate New York.

Once again, a gay teen is at risk for his life. We're being asked to help. We're here to prevent. We need your support to prevent these crises. Now. This is only the tip of the iceberg.

- 1. Visit us at www.athousandmoms.org**
- 2. Forward this letter to your list.**

**Thank you.
A Thousand Moms**

Monday, October 26, 2009 7:47 PM

From: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX :

TO: "'athousandmoms@yahoo.com'" athousandmoms@yahoo.com

RE: **He has resorted to suicide as a way out to this situation.**

Fred,

I am a caseworker from [REDACTED] and I was directed to you through [REDACTED]. **I have a boy on my caseload who will be 16 in November. He was in the foster care system as a young boy, and was adopted 5 years ago by his foster family.** Things seemed to be going pretty well overall. **There was a bond and connection between the child and adoptive family until the child hit puberty and began to question his sexual identity. The child is gay and his adoptive family does not and will not accept that.** Therefore, after 5 years of not being in the system, **the child was admitted to a psychiatric unit after running away and then attempting and threatening suicide.** After the psychiatric unit, he was moved to a diagnostic center where his parents were secretly hoping that therapists could help him to **"get over being gay"**. This did not work, and the child continued to state that he would rather be in placement than back home where he was not accepted. He describes these feelings as so horrid and with so much anxiety to even be in the house.

His parents even have said to case workers in front of him that they had to watch him around the other children in the house, so "he does not try to spread being gay". The child has currently been in foster care for a few months now refusing to have visitation or do family therapy. The family refuses therapy in general, because they feel a therapist will try to force them to change their religious beliefs. The psychiatrist stated that he does not think the child will change his sexual identity and that the adoptive parents will not change their strong religious convictions, so family therapy will not be productive for either party.

The family is willing to allow the child to come home if he never discusses being gay in their home and if they control all aspects of his life, so he will not engage in gay acts. They state that he can choose to do what he wants once he is 18 years old and moves out. The child feels that he should find a new supportive family now, so he has a place to go or someone to turn to when he needs someone in his life after the age of 18. He does not think it makes sense to push this relationship and then have no parental figures later in life. His biological sister was adopted by this family as well and she is currently 18 years old. She will not really talk to him anymore much either after "what he has done to their {adoptive} family".

Although the time in care has been short this time around, the child and parents are both requesting a judicial surrender. The parents note that the child would not follow rules and made stress for the household. The child states he wants to live in a family where he is loved for who he is and accepted. However, the county is not in tune with this solution. They want the child and family to exhaust all possible efforts towards reunification. The lawyer for the parent and the law guardian for the child are challenging the county citing constitutional law as their focus. (The Constitution states that one cannot be forced to change their religious understandings.

The law guardian addresses the current issues surrounding sexuality in the courtroom and the fine line that exists.) The judge seems to be siding with the parents and child for a judicial surrender, but wants to hear the county's argument.

In the mean time, the child has so much desire to be freed for adoption. He wants to be adopted again and still has the resilience to give adoption another try even after what happened this time around. He said he wants to have a family who will love him even if he calls them with a relationship problem with his male partner when he is older, or a family who he can invite to his wedding if gay marriage is legalized in NYS. With being separated from his adoptive parents, the child has done well in school, in the foster home, and in the community. He seems to be happy overall and less stressed. He is a great kid who really needs an understanding figure, organization, or support group. I know he has met some other gay youth, but he is going through struggles that supersede that of other gay youth who are still with their biological family. He has had multiple rejections in life. He has resorted to suicide as a way out to this situation.

Please give me some feedback to what I find an injustice being done to this child. The adoptive family are really nice people as long as you are straight. However, they are rural farmers who have no desire to learn more or accept any of this. The child sent them an educational email once and the county worker shunned the child from doing so again and considered it disrespectful to them.

Thanks,

I refrained from using names as a matter of confidentiality, but I really wanted to be thorough so you would understand this scenario. I read your article about the high suicide rate of gay youth in foster care as opposed to all other groups in foster care. It was alarming!!!