

# CASE STUDY

FAMILY COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER



## TONYA'S STORY

When a child is removed from the home because of welfare concerns, it typically takes 12 to 16 months to reunite the family. Tonya's story, however, extended this already-difficult timeframe to an excruciating six years. Many parents may have given up hope, but Tonya persevered, weathering the ups and downs associated with her demons (addiction, poor relationships) and the emotions that accompany personal turmoil.

## WHY THE CASE PERSISTED

As with many families that FCRC assists, the answer boils down to a single concept: choice. A series of poor choices led Tonya to the unfortunate position of having not one but three of her children removed from her care. Tonya had her own problems, but to complicate matters she was also romantically involved with a man who was considered a threat to her children and herself. As long as he was present in Tonya's life, her goal of reuniting her family was not within reach.

"IF WE GIVE UP ON THEM, WHO DO THEY HAVE?"

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## STEPPING UP SOLUTIONS

Totally excluding a loved one from one's life is not an easy decision, but it was clear that Tonya's only chance of having her children returned to her was do just that. So she mustered the courage to leave her boyfriend and, over time, began making better choices in other aspects of her life, too.

Under the guidance of FCRC's Family Support Specialists, Tonya beat her addiction. Then she struck out on her own and found—and held—a steady job. After saving some money, she moved to a new safe haven: her own apartment. She also participated in parenting classes offered by FCRC. Once Tonya began making things work on her own, she experienced a surge of confidence, and she fought even harder to get her kids back.

## REUNIFICATION

Ultimately, Tonya was able to have two of her three children return to her care. (The oldest remained a ward of the State.) A case like Tonya's—a six-year endeavor—shows that FCRC is committed to working with families for the long haul. When a struggling individual or couple's closest friends and family turn away, FCRC steps in to offer guidance, advice, and encouragement—even in seemingly impossible situations. "If we give up on them," says Reverend Frank McSwain, founder of FCRC, "Who do they have?"