

Rya's story



**Submission Form**

**Agency** GRATITUDE HOUSE

**Agency Contact** GAIL DEMPSEY

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**E-mail**

**CLIENT INFORMATION (please provide this info for each adult in the family)**

**Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB** \_\_\_\_\_ **Social Security #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #** \_\_\_\_\_ **DL #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Children (names and ages):** Kyra (1), Alexandra (13), Lea (11), CJ - Cassandra Jane (9)

**Describe the family's situation, what they've done to improve it and why it would make a compelling story:**

Rya's story shows us both the depth of weaknesses and the strength of determination. It begins at the age of 10, when after being accidentally hit by a truck, a cancerous tumor was discovered on her kidney. Chemotherapy introduced her to the highs of prescription drugs. Continuing to pop pills, her teenage years were marked by recreational drug use, which eventually spiraled to crack and heroin addiction. Rya tried to get it right. She got married and had three daughters, but she could not shake the demon of addiction. Eventually divorced and having lost custody of her children, she found herself homeless, penniless and pregnant again. But, she was given one more chance. It was Gratitude House's Mothers-in-Training program that allowed her to get clean and focus on being a mother to her newborn daughter. She surrendered to the program and learned how to become independent and self-reliant, free of drugs and free to start over.

While living on one's own, holding a job and caring for a family may seem commonplace to most, Rya cherishes every moment of it. Riding a total of six buses a day to and from work, tending to the needs of her toddler and preparing for a reunion with her other three other daughters, Rya relishes the little things like being able to pay bills, stock the fridge and most especially, knowing that she has gotten her life back on track. But she doesn't ever forget what it was like to be so lost and takes great pride in giving back to the place that gave her another chance. At Gratitude House, she looks for the angry girl that sits

alone in the corner, the one that knows how to play the system just like she did. This is girl Rya will try to engage and help mentor, the girl she will try to convince that she should surrender to a way of life that is infinitely better in every way than the hopeless treadmill of addiction.

If you have any questions or would like the form sent to you electronically, please call Vanessa Molina (954) 356-4361 or email at [vmolina@sun-sentinel.com](mailto:vmolina@sun-sentinel.com) Fax completed forms to (954) 356-4333.

**Please Note: Client information and signature MUST be included in order for your story to be considered. Deadline for story submissions is September 18<sup>th</sup>!**

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Agency contact signature

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