

Alpha Christian Children's Home

15017 27th Street, PO Box 727, Perry, Kansas 66073-0727

Telephone/Fax: (785) 597-5235 Website: www.alphachristianchildrenshome.com



Devin's Story

Hi, my name is Devin, and I lived at Alpha for 15 years. I was born in Georgia, and lived most of my first 3 years in Tennessee. I come from a worldly, and sometimes abusive, family. I came to live at Alpha when I was 3 years old, with my twin brother Darrell, and older brother, Patrick.

As hard as it is to believe, I actually remember that day. It is the first memory I can recall. It was a long drive, and we stopped at McDonalds to eat. I remember walking up the sidewalk, carrying my happy meal. We went in the front door, into the living room, and there were a lot of kids in there sitting on couches, the fire place hearth, and the floor. They were smiling, and they were waiting to meet us. Some were my age, and some were older. I remember being confused, and not understanding why we were left.

It was several years later that I finally knew the reasons, and understood. Our abusive father had abandoned us, and our mother was in prison for fraud. Our grandmother, whom we call Nonnie, had been taking care of us. She made the decision to get us away from our family, knowing that being raised in such an environment would be harmful to us. She made a decision, and we traveled several hours away to Kansas, and Alpha Christian Children's Home. To this day Nonnie apologizes to me for that decision. And every time I tell her that there is nothing to apologize for. Alpha was by far the best decision she ever made on our behalf.

Alpha provided a place of security and love, something that all children need. All children should feel safe in their own homes with their families, but unfortunately that is not always the case. My parents at Alpha, Jack and Anne Snavely, (Mom and Dad to me) took us into their home, and raised us up in Christ, all the while loving us as their own children. I never realized how rare of a love that they displayed to us really is until I was out on my own, and was able to observe other mixed and broken homes. As a Minister's wife I see them often; they are all around us. I asked one mom who was having problems with her 12 year old step daughter, "Do you love her?" She looked back at me and said with some hesitation, "I don't think that I do." Every person, no matter how young or old, desires one thing above all others. We need to know that someone loves us; we need to know that someone cares. And in that moment I was struck with a question I had never really considered before . . . What if they had not loved me? And I knew that I had been blessed.

We were in Tennessee visiting family. We were young teens, and in that stage where people ask you what you want

to do with your life. My brother, Darrell, answered our mother's question with the words, "I want to do something that changes the world." His answer was met with such phrases as, "that's impossible" and "nothing you could ever do is going to change the world."

Mom and Dad [Snavely] never told us that we couldn't accomplish what we set out to do. Kids came to Alpha who would hit their heads on their school desks in frustration. They had been told their whole lives that they "can't"; that they were stupid . . . and they believed it. "I can't" is a common phrase to hear. I've seen my mom [Anne Snavely] take those kids, set them beside her, and show them, "Yes you can, and I will help." Mom and Dad set us up for success by encouraging us to finish what we started, educating us, and letting us dream big. When we would say, "I think I want to . . ." they always answered with positive encouragement.

I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Biblical Literature from Ozark Christian College in 2002. A few weeks later I married the man of my dreams whom I met in my very first class, on my very first day of college. A week later we started our church ministry in Nashville, Ohio. My husband, Jeff, was the associate minister for six years, and I worked as the church administrative assistant. We joined the mission at Alpha in 2008 to aid in developing toward an expanded vision of ministry to children in crisis. Together we have dedicated our lives to ministry and serving God in whatever manner He desires from us. Our decision was influenced through the examples of both of our families, and together we are working to "change the world." I thank God that He gave me family that could be such an example to me. They did change the world. They broke a cycle. They showed love, and they changed my life. My world was changed.

Mom told me once that she and Dad were not special. That all they did was follow God's leading and desire to do His will. However, the more I experience life I realize that this very quality is what made them special. And I pray that my life can be as fruitful, and that I can be used of God in such a manner. God gave each of us a job to do, but few take up the cross. Oh, that it were a commonality of the Christian faith, that outsiders could say, "That's nothing special. Christians ALWAYS live their lives with such devotion to God's will."

In Christ,
Devin Mulpas



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Today was different. We were in a strange place, packed into a small car, and going somewhere we had never been before. I remember going down a long dirt road and stopping in front of a house.

We got out of the car and there were several kids running about, playing, and watching us. We followed our grandparents and waited while they spoke with someone I did not know. I remember feeling very uncomfortable and nervous.

I don't remember his name, but a big kid came up to me and asked me if I wanted to play. Being five years old, I could not refuse this invitation. I followed him through the house and remember thinking that the rooms were gigantic. Everything seemed to be so big.

I stopped in the hallway right outside the bedroom the big kid went into, and I looked inside. What I saw in the room is one of the fondest memories I have. Every time I think about it, it puts a smile on my face, and I remember feeling so happy. *He-Man* toys! Lots of them, too. I don't remember doing anything else but playing with those toys. I don't remember what my brother and sister were doing, or if they were even in the same room with me. To me it seems like I stayed in that room and played with those toys for days. This is the only thing I remember from my first moments at ALPHA.

I am thirty-five years old now, and everyday I thank GOD things turned out the way they did. I am so fortunate to have had the privilege of being taken in by Jack and Anne Snavely (Mom and Dad) at Alpha. I was five when I met them, and after all of my time with them, I could not help but to love them. I also respect them very much, and that has to be earned. All the time they spent with me, making sure I did what was right and teaching me what I needed to know to succeed in life, is a testament to their character and resolve.



Patrick's Story

I was not a perfect child, nor am I a perfect adult. But with what I learned at ALPHA, I know I am a much better person for my experience there. I learned that life is hard and often isn't fair. I also learned that even though things may be rough and not going my way, GOD is there looking out for me. I learned to be positive in any situation and to trust God to provide for what I need.

I am married now and have a son and two daughters of my own. I have the job I've dreamed of since I was about 13. I've had to overcome some obstacles and work hard to get where I am today. I know I could not have done it without my Mom and Dad's encouragement and love.

I have been blessed with three sisters and one brother, and (I can't believe I am saying this) my wife's in-laws are not so bad either. I've been asked if I regret what happened, and if I wish things were different. I would do it all again in a heartbeat. *ALPHA is one of the best things that has ever happened to me.* I believe everything happens for a reason, and it is what we do in the situation that defines us and our character. Life is difficult, but we will make it if we just pay attention and listen to what GOD is telling us.

I was scared and confused, but He gave me exactly what I needed to start my journey with the most wonderful people I have ever come into contact with. And He gave me He-Man toys.

Patrick Thomason is an officer with the Carthage Police Department in Missouri.

