CARE LEAVER AND LAW GRADUATE PREPARING FOR A CAREER IN THE COURTROOM

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Law graduate Jess looking to specialise in family law as a promising career takes shape

Having previously been looked-after by Peggy and George in Telford through Fostering Solutions since the age of 11, care leaver Jess has gone from strength to strength, having recently become a law graduate from Aberystwyth University.

Now living in Manchester and studying for her post-graduate with a desire to specialise in family law, we caught up with Jess to find out more about the influence her foster family had on her academic achievements and how her in-built desire to create a 'good life' for herself has helped set her up for a bright future.

On graduating university and studying a post-grad in Manchester

"I'm currently doing my post-graduate at the Manchester University of Law as well as working".

"At the moment I'm studying a bit of everything. My law degree involved all sorts, and now my legal practice course is a bit more focused, but there is still certain modules I have to do".

What would you say has been the main influence on your decision to study at university?

"I always sort of enjoyed school and things like that, so that was never an issue. I think I just wanted to be successful myself. My birth parents obviously weren't successful, which is partly why I ended up being in foster care, so I remember thinking 'I want to make a good life for myself'".

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Is there a particular area of law that you are studying?

"I'm hoping to specialise in family law. I studied family law during my degree and I did a dissertation in that area as well – it's definitely something that I find very interesting, and I do think it stems from my past experiences".

You said that you were working alongside studying for your post-grad, is that also within the field of law?

"Yes. I'm currently a legal administrator in personal injury law, which is a step in the right direction to what I ultimately want to do in the industry".

Was going into law something that you had always wanted to do?

"I had studied law at A-level, so that was something that sparked my initial interest, so I thought that I would take it a step further. It is one of the hardest questions to answer though, as all of my job applications will ask me why I wanted to go into law and the truth is that I don't know!"

"My post-grad would be one year if I was doing it full-time, but because I'm studying part-time it's going to take me a total of two years".

"My legal practice course was a masters, so that's the sort of last educational bit you need to do before becoming a trainee solicitor".

How long were you in foster care for?

"I was in foster care from the age of around 11. If you're talking until I was 18 I suppose it was around seven or eight years".

"My foster parents actually live in the Telford area at the minute, and that's where I lived mainly with them at the time".

Did you have many hobbies outside of school? What kinds of things would you do together as a foster family?

"In terms of things we did as a family, we were always doing day trips on the weekends to the zoo and things like that, as well as going on holiday, which I think is important. In terms of hobbies that I had myself, I really enjoyed dance and was part of a musical theatre group. As a family they would always come and watch me when I was involved in plays and I did that for quite a few years".

Going back to when you were growing up in your foster family, can you recall how it differed from what you had known before?

"In terms of day-to-day, there was a lot more structure involved and I think that's key. I was also encouraged to join after-school activities and things like that, and encouraged to make sure I'm completing my homework on time – so I definitely think that they played a part in me being where I am today".

"Before being part of a foster family you would never really know what was going to happen from one day to the next, such as not really knowing whether you were going into school on any given day. There was a real routine and structure to being part of a foster family, and you always kind of knew what was going on, which I think really helped".

Do you want to help young people like Jess go on to achieve the success that they deserve? Find out more about becoming a foster carer with one of our leading independent agencies part of the National Fostering Group.

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