

## From broken home to fulfilling dreams

*Nathalie Corbin got into college with the help of Orangewood Children's Foundation.*

Story and photo by **KIMBERLY EDDS**  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Nathalie had no idea her normal wasn't normal. The system came to take the 8-year-old away. The little girl with big brown eyes bounced from group home to foster home – 15 in all. That was her new normal.

She was angry.

"I didn't care what was going on or everything that happened at home," Nathalie Corbin said. "I was just angry that I was being taken away."

Corbin was a statistic. Fifty percent of emancipated youth end up homeless. Just 3 percent graduate high school. Just 1 percent graduate college. Orangewood Children's Foundation and Corbin's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) weren't about to let that happen. To them, Corbin was more than a statistic.

Orangewood Children's Foundation and their partner CASA are one of eight charities selected to receive donations from The Orange County Register's Season of Caring campaign. The charities were identified through The Possible Dream – a program of the Festival of Children Foundation that connects donors to children's charities that provide tangible, critical services.

English wasn't Corbin's first language. She struggled in school, she said. After years of getting shuffled around and her 18th birthday coming up, Corbin needed a future. "I was scared of being alone," Corbin said.

What Corbin didn't realize was she was hardly alone. Orangewood guided her along the way, teaching her how to write checks, build a resume and how to avoid toxic relationships. Her CASA, Pam Peters, pointed her in the right direction – Cal State Fullerton.

Years of being told she wasn't going to amount to anything had made their way into Corbin's head. Overcoming her hurdles and making college a reality would mean an attitude overhaul. Peters refused to let her give up.

"Just fake it till you make it," was the mantra Corbin kept repeating in her head.

An independent living coach from Orangewood – something like a life coach – helped Corbin navigate her way through the college application process. Corbin hadn't taken the SATs – she didn't even know what they were. Her coach finagled her way into getting Corbin a spot on the last testing day. There wasn't time to study or even think. She just took it.

Cal State Fullerton answered her prayers.

Now a junior, Corbin, 20, is working toward a career with children – hoping to make an impact early on in their lives. She wants to become a peer mentor at Orangewood and give back, helping children. To her, they are more than just a statistic.

All of your donation goes directly toward supporting charities that support children, so please give generously. For more information and to make a donation, go to [www.ocregister.com/seasonofcaring](http://www.ocregister.com/seasonofcaring).



Yes, I want to contribute to Season of Caring and help improve the lives of children.

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Nathalie Corbin, 20, is a junior at Cal State Fullerton. She has lived in 15 foster and group homes since she was 8.