

# CECELIA'S TESTIMONY

My name is Cecelia and I am originally from New England. I was more or less sent to Cono Christian School as a freshman. My brother and sister had already been attending Cono for one year, which made it an easier, but not yet quite easy, transition for me. It was the week before my fourteenth birthday that I went to live in a dorm with Josh and Michelle Haveman. It was scary for me, but I did not show that. I was homesick, but tried to fill all of my spare time with other things like playing my guitar in order to not think about it. That first year was bad; I did not want to be at Cono and I let everyone know that all the time. I was constantly in trouble and on various levels of probation for my attitude towards teachers and other students. I was told to shape up or I would have to leave. This didn't faze me; in fact I made it look like I didn't care when really I did.



My sophomore year was better; I had begun to learn how to accept correction and apply it to my life. It was a better year. My dorm mom Michelle Haveman always used to joke with me about how my "Cecelia file" was a lot smaller that year. I tried hard, but I knew I was missing something. My junior year was the one that changed me as a person. I knew that I prayed and "talked to God" but I knew that there was a relationship level that I was supposed to have with him that I didn't. So in the beginning of my junior year I set out to find it. That year we had adoptive parents. Mine was Lynn Jahl. I asked her one Saturday morning in October if she would help me to fix my relationship with Jesus. She sat down right there and helped me say the sinner's prayer again. I felt different after that day; like I had found something that was missing. I still had my ups and downs but I knew what my rock was and I stood firm on that through it all.



At the beginning of my senior year I was upset about all of the responsibilities that I had to do extra (like work crew leader). But I knew that I was the example that the younger kids looked up to and my dorm mom let me know that often as well. I began to see it, as mere responsibility to look after other younger girls in my dorm and to make sure everything was okay while trying

not to stress out Mrs. Haveman in the process. This year I spent more time with my dorm parents and their kids, trying to distance myself from other temptations. I was not perfect, but I tried hard to stay out of trouble and encourage others to do the same.

Four years later after I first stepped onto that Cono campus I graduated with plans for college in the future. It did not seem like a reality to me or anyone else for that matter when I first arrived. It happened, but it would not have if it hadn't been for my dorm parents all four years (which is rare) Josh and Michelle Haveman. I am thankful to both of them for continuously encouraging me day after day even when it seemed impossible. God did a lot of work in my life, which I give him all the credit for. He changed me; opened my heart and made me a new person. During this process of change sports is what kept me sane. I played every sport offered and learned how to excel in that by keeping my attitude in check.

I am so thankful for the time that I got to spend at Cono. There were those days where I said that I hated it, but really, deep down, I loved it. I loved the people and the opportunities at new things that I got there. I loved the chances that I got to play sports and to live in a dorm. I am thankful for Cono because it helped me grow up and learn how to live a life with God at the front and center. After graduating and looking back on my time, with memories crossing my mind, I miss Cono already.

