



2011 G.E.A.R. Parent Network winning poster, "Hand In Hand" by an 11-year-old Maine artist.

## **Honesty is the Best Policy**

*By Chelsea Moran*

*Children's Mental Health Awareness Day - May 3, 2011*

*Hall of Flags, Augusta, ME*

Hi. My name is Chelsea Moran. I was involved with the Department of Corrections at the age of twelve, and then got involved with Child Protective Services at age thirteen. I was a witness to a lot of violence and drug use in my family which led to a lot of trauma and created much instability in my life.

After I was unsuccessful in multiple family placements and group homes, I was committed to Long Creek Correctional Center for three years at age sixteen due to my use of illegal substances, cutting and eating disorders.

Although I had a long history of trauma, I always kept focused on my goals and achieved in the class room and in sports. I realized who I was as a person while I was in Long Creek, and, although I had a few slips along the way, I was able to graduate a year and a half early and started taking college classes at age sixteen. I displayed my determination and willingness to make my self a better person through the Long Creek program.

I was referred to Wraparound in January 2010 after completing the Long Creek Correctional Program in eleven months.

I have learned a lot in the last year from the Wraparound program, and feel that honesty is the best policy. The best thing is to open up to people you trust to help you get through the hardest times in your life. I feel it is very important to identify what supports are there for you, and also feel that it is important to be able to eliminate the negativity in your life, since it will not help you succeed and reach your goals.

Today, at the age of eighteen, I am living with my step-sister and her husband and their two children in a stable living environment. I am taking classes at Southern Maine Community College in the spring of 2011 and working at Panera Bread. I am also participating in the York County Collaborative Board as the youth voice and participate in the New Moon Youth Group.

I had a dream in life to become a successful story opposite of the statistics that are put up against me. I feel that with the Wraparound program I have been able to change my life and move forward in a positive direction and hope to be a story to help others change and reach their goals.