IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CRAWFORD COUNTY, ARKANSAS

JUVENILE DIVISION

NO. JV-11-7-012456-6



Name: Graciela Amarillo

DOB: 8/19/14

Age: 4

Gender: Female

Total Placements: 3

Days in Custody: 1082



Name: Joanna Amarillo

DOB: 9/1/15

Age: 6

Gender: Female

Total Placements: 4

Days in Custody: 1082



Name: Maria Amarillo

DOB: 5/18/05

Age: 16

Gender: Female

Total Placements: 7

Days in Custody: 1082

**Re:**

**COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE REPORT**

Date of Report: June 9, 2021

Date of Hearing: June 19, 2021

Type of Hearing: Permanency Planning

Persons Interviewed / Met With:

Albert Gillis, FSW

Maria Amarillo, Child

Julia Mansfield, Guidance Counselor

Karen and Stanley Becker, Foster Parents

Consuela Amarillo, Maternal Aunt

Pedro Valdez, Uncle

Anna Valdez, Aunt

Lourdes Valdez, Cousin

Records Reviewed:

CPS Case File and Notes

Medical Notes written by Dr. Madeline Bemelmans

Background Information:

On July 3, 2018 a neighbor called police as a result of “loud shouting’ in the home of Jose and Myrian Amarillo. Police found three children on the scene (Maria, age 13; Joann, age 3; Graciela, age 1) and removed the children from the home based upon evidence at the scene including parents too inebriated to provide a safe home for their children and mother’s bruises and bleeding as a result of a fight between her and her husband. Child Protective Services (CPS) was notified and the children were placed together in emergency foster care.

Child Developments Since Last Hearing:

All three girls are currently placed in the same foster home.

Parent’s Progress Towards Case Plan Goals and Order of the Court:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Court Order, Case Plan Item & Brief Description** | **Status** |
| (Mother) | Rights terminated |
|  |  |
| (Father) | Rights terminated |
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Other Relevant Information Concerning Parents, Relatives or Others Involved:

Parent’s rights were terminated August 9, 2019.

Child Concerns and Wishes:

Joana and Graciela have stated that they enjoy living with their current foster parents. Maria has expressed that while she enjoys living in the same placement with her sisters, she is not happy with her current foster parents. Maria believes her foster parents are insensitive to her and her sister’s religious beliefs and they force the girls to attend a church that is of a different denomination the Catholic one they are used to attending. Maria also does not get along well with her foster parent’s daughter.

CASA Conclusions & Recommendations:

Based on the information gathered to date, CASA has some concerns regarding the girls’ placement as they are still living in a foster home and not a permanent placement. The girls have been in foster care for about 3 years now with multiple moves and their parents’ parental rights have been terminated. Foster care is supposed to be a temporary solution for these children. They need safety and permanency in their lives. These children are free to be adopted; however, measures do not seem to be in place to achieve this type of permanency.

Maria is facing several challenges as she is fast approaching adulthood. Maria does not currently have legal permanency in this country. She is in danger of “aging” out of foster care without legal permanency and risks being deported once she exits foster care. Maria has not acquired the skills she needs to appropriately transition from foster care to adulthood. While Maria enjoys school and has a decent academic record, without permanency she will not qualify for the funds needed to attend a higher learning institution. Maria is still currently in contact with her parents even though their rights have been terminated. Maria does not want anyone to know about this because she fears that she will not be allowed to continue talking to them.

The foster parents have expressed an interest in adopting the girls but have reservations about adopting Maria as she and their daughter do not get along. Maria has an Aunt who has expressed an interest in having Maria come to live with her so she can help with her cousins. The Aunt lives in El Salvador and has stated that there are not many opportunities for Maria to be a successful adult. Maria is not interested in moving to El Salvador to live with her Aunt. She has expressed an interest in being placed with kinship relatives; however, CPS had deemed this as an inappropriate placement. The family does not have the resources available to take care of these girls, they are an undocumented family and they already have several other family members living in the house.

CASA has other concerns regarding the foster parents as it does not appear that they are being sensitive to the girls’ cultural and religious beliefs. There appears to be a racial and religious insensitivity and bias on the part of the foster parent and the social worker, as the girls are not living in a placement that allows them the freedom to embrace their cultural and religious beliefs.

CASA recommends….

*Remember, recommendations to the court are written to reflect the child’s best interests and are the result of the CASA volunteer’s work. The judge will decide whether or not to order the recommendations, so it is important to write recommendations that are concise, clear and backed by evidence that you have collected and reviewed.*

Respectfully Submitted:

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CASA Volunteer Melanie Allen, Advocate Supervisor

Submitted: date Yulonda Testerman, Advocate Coordinator

Rebecca Gibbons, Executive Director