

## Katarina



I have 2 children. I. is 8 years old and arrived as a severely abused girl, which she barely survived. The abuse has left severe consequences on her, so she doesn't speak very well, and we often go to doctors for damage. She is a very fragile and thin, but very joyful girl. Now she is adopted, so she no longer sees her parents. She has a great time in kindergarten, she has friends with whom she likes to hang out. This fall, she will start the 1st grade of elementary school, and she can't wait for it. There is also a beautiful Roma girl of 23 years who studies law. She repeats the 3rd year, which is difficult for her. She is also small and thin, but a very happy and dear girl. She sees her parents every week.

## Jelena

L. is a girl who has just celebrated her 3rd birthday. She has been with us since birth because her parents are addicted to opiates. She came to our family after being in neonatology for 1.5 months, because she was born from an addictive pregnancy. Despite this, thank God, she is a healthy girl today. There are no health problems. She grows, develops, learns and progresses according to her age. She is very cheerful, curious, loves to play, and most of all she loves children's songs and dance. She is the youngest in the family, so we all cuddle and take care of her. She shows great affection for all family members. She goes to kindergarten gladly and likes to hang out with children. Her parents could meet her once a month, but they are not regular. Recently, she started seeing her grandparents, whom she accepted very well, we have a good relationship with them and they are very nice.



## Anita



A. (11 y.) and her sister A. (15 y.) have been placed in our family for many years. First, the younger sister came in 2013, at the age of 6 months. She was separated from her family due to severe neglect that almost led to her death. She was in hospital to recover from neglect. However, the real challenges started at school, as her struggle for life and her mother's alcohol left consequences in her emotional development. Experts at the hospital confirmed that she is 2-3 years behind in emotional development. This is most reflected in her school, and she has great difficulties with it. Despite this, she finished the 5th grade of elementary school with a very good Success. She doesn't like to learn and that's our biggest challenge

at the moment, but she still wants to enroll in agritourism and be a police officer. She loves music and acting, and sings beautifully. She graduated from the 2nd grade of music school, majoring in violin, and is training karate. We met her older sister through contacts with her mother, who in 2015 asked us to take her too, when she was 6 years old and she was starting the first grade of elementary school. She did not know the Croatian language. so she worked hard to achieve good results. When she arrived, she was very wild, and she had to learn basic hygiene and social skills, how to go to the toilet and wash her hands, put things away, and that there are rules that must be respected. She loves music, likes to draw and to hang out with her peers. She has just enrolled in a high music school majoring in cello, and she regularly completed the first grade of the high school for technician of tourism with very good results. She has heart problems, so she is under regular monitoring and must avoid exertion. Her conduct at school is exemplary Both sisters at home try to push the boundaries as much as they can, but at the end of the day, we still manage to solve everything. With us, they have much more opportunities for progress in life than if they stayed in their family, and they have no contact with their parents at all.

## Jasmine



The girl S. is now 17 months old and has been with us for 8 months. Although she didn't even crawl at 9 months when she arrived with us, she crawled after 3 weeks, and walked at 14 months. She has adapted very well and today she is a cheerful girl who is slowly starting to talk. She is very bright, extremely curious and learns new things very quickly, and in the fall she starts nursery. She has no contact with her mother, which only called for her first birthday in January, and after that she didn't call, although she promised.

## Andrea

Little N. (4 y.) came a year ago, and is a cheerful child, full of strength for dancing and jumping. With our daughter J. (5.5 y.) loves to play mom and baby. They prepare lunches, picnics, take the babies for a walk, prepare plays for us, shape plasticine and ride bicycles. From her arrival, she gained 2kg and grew by 2cm, which she is very proud of and says that she is big now. When she came to us, she had a very bad immunity, as soon as she went to the seaside, she would get a high fever and bronchitis. We didn't sleep at night, and we spent many days in the house. Now she is strong and healthy, and swims in the sea like a fish. Since her arrival, she has been using therapy for her lungs, but now she no longer needs it. She loves her kindergarten, and is sad because it is closed on the weekend. Then the girls plan what to do and where to go. She is often stubborn, but she is learning how to agree and cooperate, so now the atmosphere in the house is calmer and relaxed. Every evening we pray together, and on weekends she enjoys the cartoon Superbook. We will start the adoption process, and she can't wait to have our last name.



## Matea



Our children are brothers N. (9.5) and D. (6) and a girl B.J. (2). All of them are well-developed, advanced and very active, each in their own age and interests. They train gymnastics, attend music school, gladly participate with us, in all our activities. They joyfully welcomed the end of the school and kindergarten year, and now a long warm summer awaits them, more time together, and a lot of play and rest. Each of them has their own small tasks and responsibilities in household chores, in which they are mostly happy to participate. They usually get along well, except when they want the same thing at the same time, then they have their own methods and tactics to get what they want and, of course, they protest when it doesn't work out. They are very motor dexterous, so from an early age they ride a bike, rollerblade, skate, swim. They are also gifted for music, so they participate in musical activities and get acquainted with various

instruments. They defend and protect each other when the need arises, like true brothers and sisters. The older one is an excellent student in school, but he likes to have his own ways solving tasks. The younger often copies him, which is sometimes interesting, but sometimes it bothers him. Little B. watches and learns everything that is good, but also what is less good. They are playful and cheerful, often tireless, which is sometimes too much for us, so we are happy to have a healthy and young grandmother who occasionally takes care of them. Our family is large, so they always have the experience of a large warm family, of different ages, but closeness and acceptance. Our children are a great gift from God to us and they arrived in the best possible way at the perfect timing. We never suspected that this was not our role or that we should have done differently.

## Jasminka

We have been in foster care for a long time, and now we are taking care of 3 children. F. (5) is a boy who has been with us for four years, because he spent the first year more in the hospital than with his parents. When he came to us, he had infections and diarrhea, and thank God, since he is with us, he was not in the hospital. He is small, spoiled and playful at home and likes everything to be his. He behaves nicely in kindergarten and hangs out with the children. A year ago, contact with his parents stopped, and he never showed feelings for them.

S. (11) and S. (10) are brothers who have been with us for four years. Their father is in prison for a long time and their mother left with another man.

Their grandparents could not take care of them, so they handed them over to the social welfare center. When they came, we could not communicate well because they did not know Croatian or Romani language, and they did not have any hygiene habits. Today they are completely different, they learned the Croatian language, as well as reading and writing. The older brother S. Does not hear in one ear, he could not follow the classes, and now he attends school in the education center. Otherwise, both brothers are of smaller build, but healthy. They are very obedient and diligent in everything,



## Marina

M. (26-month), and she came when she was 1 year. Due to her illness, she weighed only 5 kilograms at the time. We fed her on a tube through her nose for a year. Not long ago we were with her for two weeks in the "feeding school" and now she eats normally, still a little and slowly progressing, but all the doctors are very satisfied and often tell us that we have saved her life. She has contact with her parents and brothers once a month. Although it is envisaged that she should return to her family when she is removed from the tube, her parents said that they would like her to stay with us as long as necessary, because she is progressing nicely and that she is happy.



L. (2,5 y.) is a girl, placed with us for 8 months. We noticed that he was intellectually lagging behind in development, she didn't say a word, and she walked bad. With regular visits to

specialists, she began to make progress. The experts think that most of her difficulties are due to neglect in the first year of life. She has no contact with her family and is already up for adoption. M. is a boy (12-y.) who arrived in our family a year ago. He started the fifth grade of elementary school without even knowing how to read. We have invested a lot of effort and now we can see progress. Most of the difficulties were with work habits and respect for authority, especially teachers at school. He has contact with his parents, but after the contacts he is revolted, restless and unhappy, and he occasionally says that he does not like this contacts. He did very well within the family, and in a very short time he wanted to call us mom and dad. He is very obedient and diligent, and we especially see great progress in behavior at school, in grades and in respect for teachers.

S. is a boy (16-y.) and finished the first grade of the Secondary School as a waiter. During the school year, he had a desire to drop out of school, but with a lot of conversation and effort, we managed to motivate him to continue and he finished the first grade. He spends his summer holidays with us and does his praxis. We still have a certain relationship of mutual distrust due to frequent thefts, but we feel that he respects us and that he is uncomfortable when he creates a problem. He contacts his father and sister. We notice that he is very happy when he comes for holidays, and all the other children are very happy about him.

M. is a young man who became an adult (18) a month ago and completed the third grade of High School, majoring in Road Traffic Technician. This year he is going to an extension class in mathematics, but his other grades are better than in previous years. Regular learning has always been a problem for him. Although he has a large capacity, he does not use it because he is lazy, and cigarettes are also a problem. Although his parents are deprived of parental rights, he contacts them by phone. He also has contact with other siblings who were placed with us and are now adults or adopted.

E. is a girl (15 y.) who finished the seventh grade of elementary school. Due to her many health problems, she started school later, which she attends according to an adapted program. She loves school very much and works hard to complete her tasks, which is why teachers reward her. Although we adopted her a few years ago because she has been with us since the first year of her life, she still has occasional contact with her family. She is not attached to them, and these contacts have become increasingly rare. Her health condition is currently stable and under control and she does not need to take any medication.

N. is a young man of 32 years old, but due to mental retardation he is at the level of a seven-year-old child. He is still a student at the Center for Education, where he has many of his long-time friends. In the family, as well as at school, everyone loves him very much, because he is peaceful and kind. Although he doesn't have a large choice of words, his smile and firm handshake show that he loves everyone around him very much. He likes to play with little girls, and they are happy when he carries and plays with them. His health condition is permanent, and someone needs to take care for him his whole life.

## Anka



M. is a young woman who was in a children's home with her twin sister, and later came to my foster family. She finished high school, but left us to live with her boyfriend and became pregnant. After that, she left her boyfriend and gave birth to her first child, A. I continued to take care of her and the baby in my abilities. She later meets another man and becomes pregnant again and gives birth to a girl named S. Although she is trying to find a job all the time, she never stays longer at work, but quickly gives up. She is currently unemployed and lives with her children as a tenant. They are in great need, so I help them as much as I can, and Oaza is also very helpful. I buy clothes and shoes for the children, and occasionally food. A. is a boy (8 y.) who has finished the first grade of elementary school with very good results. He is still very playful, but he is also obedient and cheerful. His sister S., (4 y.) is a small cheerful and smart girl. She loves to sing and dance. However, due to insufficient care from her mother, she is often ill. Neither A. nor S. have contact with their fathers( they do not have the same father).

## Drenka

There are 4 foster children and one adopted child in my family. S. is a Boy (12-y.) and is 5 years with us. He is in good physical and health condition, only with a very small physique. He accepted the foster family well and fit in nicely. At home, he is lively, and occasionally disobedient. He finished the fifth grade of elementary school with a very good grade, and he has good behavior at school. He trains and is very talented for football. He has no contact with his mother. L. is an 8-year-old girl, who came to us with her brother and sister 2 years ago. She finished the 1st grade of elementary school with good results and good behavior. She is in good health, a little chubby. She still has problems with bedwetting at night, and at home she is often disobedient and irresponsible, and does not want to perform her tasks. I believe that in time this will also be resolved.



Her sister L. is 7 years old and has a small physique, and her health condition is excellent. At home, she is good, obedient and playful. In the fall, she will start the first grade of elementary school. Their brother M. is 3 years old, he has kidney reflux, he has tubes placed, and we go for regular check-ups in Zagreb. All three are in contact with their parents, they regularly hear from each other every Saturday and see each other once a month.

B. is an 8-year-old boy, whom we adopted. He has been with us for 7 years, and he is a sick child, who has had heart surgery 4 times so far. He has a heart defect and has an artificial heart valve and a pacemaker. We regularly measure his blood density, give him a certain therapy and drive him to Zagreb every 3 months for check-ups. He finished the first grade of elementary school with very good results. He has mastered numbers and letters, and is quite good at home and at school.

## Vedrana



R. a 7-y. boy. and M., a 4-y. girl, are brother and sister who arrived with us at the beginning of last year. As I grew up with one parent (dad) myself, I knew what it means to grow up in a family that is "incomplete", and for the past 10 years I have been thinking about how much it would mean to help at least one child to have a good family. But when they offered us 2 children, my husband said: "Where there is one, there is room for two children, we will not even feel the difference". That's how brother and sister arrived in our family.

R. came to us with hearing impairment and problems with pronunciation, while we did not notice any health problems with his sister M., except that they both spoke Croatian poorly because, as we affectionately call them, they are "little Roma". R. has undergone two ear surgeries to date and can hear well, and now we are only waiting for speech therapist exercises, while M. is nicely adopting and speaking Croatian words. R. is developing beautifully, like a real

boy, and he is shorter in stature like his sister. R. is a good child, calm in nature, empathetic and always ready to help. He got a postponement for enrolling in the first grade because it is difficult for him to absorb the material, but he has dexterous hands and what he catches, he does. In preschool, they said that he was a wonderful boy and others accepted him very well because of his character. He is very obedient and modest, most of all he likes to collect chicken eggs in the yard, and he likes other farm animals we have. He was very attached to his parents, and hopes to return to his own family, but most likely it will not happen. What made us happy was that recently (for the first time in a year) he said that he didn't want to go back to his mom and dad because they didn't have chicken to collect eggs. Then he cried to throw that weight out, after which we prayed that God would remove the sadness from his heart and that he would feel even more accepted in our family. His sister M. is a girl who blinks with her big eyes, shows off her dazzling white and regular teeth (who didn't see a toothbrush until they came to us) and wins over everyone who is nearby. She will start kindergarten only in the fall because we didn't get a place for her. This is a shame because kindergarten means a lot for socialization and development, with which she is lagging behind. We have a bit more challenges with her, in terms of education. She is a child who must always know her limits, because if she is allowed she begins to manipulate crying. It is not difficult for us to solve it, because we know how to deal with it, but it is difficult when we leave our children with our parents to look after them, who think that everything will be fine if they give them everything and give in to everything – which always turns out to be wrong. We are still fighting with her not to break things, but we want to teach her that things have value, and that breaking things is not the way to get attention. As M. came to us when she was 3 years old, she immediately accepted us as her own and did not express a desire to return to her family. Only when we sometimes wouldn't

give her what she wants, she tells us that her mom would give it to her. Meetings with her parents have been passing without tears for a long time, but with a smile because she picks up sweets from them. There is certainly progress, but what makes me most happy is that we all love each other more and more every day and that we look at the yard full of chirping and joy. In this world full of hustle and bustle for material and career achievements, we are glad that we can leave a mark for eternity by looking at those most in need, and in this case these are children who come from poverty and broken family relationships.

### Mariana

The boy Đ., 6 y. came to us in August 2023 from the children's home, where he had been for two years due to neglect in his own family. After his birth, he lived with his mother, his grandmother, who is mentally ill, and his grandfather, who was the only one who worked. The children's home offered him to us because he had been there for a long time, almost no one visited him and it was necessary for him to come to the family environment. They were unable to find foster parents because he had health problems and was lagging behind in development. When he came, he spoke only a few words and it was very difficult for us to understand him. It was nice that our son (7 years old) understood him best, so he often translated what he said or what he wanted. He used diapers for night and day sleep, but we managed to remove that in a few months. He was diagnosed with the third degree of disability due to lagging behind in developing.



We continued the examinations with specialists (geneticist, neuropediatrician, ophthalmologist, ENT, physiatrist, psychologist, sensory integration...) who mostly started while he was still in the home. His health is now good and he needs to develop speech, motor skills and sensory integration. Although he was supposed to start school this fall, we asked for a postponement so that he could start as ready as possible and that he had another year of adjustment. Only now is he starting to distinguish letters and many terms are still unknown to him or he uses them incorrectly. He went privately twice a week to a speech therapist for sensory integration and analysis, and in the 9th month he will have these two therapies at the Center for Education in our city. The doctor's recommendation is that Đ. has both an educational rehabilitator and a social pedagogue, but unfortunately he could not get it, with the explanation that we should be happy that he received any therapies at all. At home, he continues to test boundaries, often resenting and getting angry for no reason. He loves to help and participate in household chores, enjoys family outings and travels. He is much better at communicating with our son, and although he did not accept the game at first, now the boys often know how to play, and he also tries to play football so that our son does not play alone. In kindergarten, he also progressed, although there are days when he cannot regulate and express emotions in an acceptable way. In these moments, he can hit or even bite other children or have violent reactions. The mother has the right to visit once every odd month, and the father once every even month. The father does not answer or come, and the mother (who has a second child with her new partner) has been only three times. Such encounters do not have a good effect on Đ. because they are very short, his mother does not know how to communicate and in the end he is confused. Now he needs a safe and stimulating environment, and help to progress in the development in which he was deprived due to neglect. We see progress and we are glad that we were able to save a very dear and warm boy from living in an institution and further regression, because children really do not belong in children's homes.

### Dubravka



B. is a girl (14.5-y.) that came to live with me a few months ago. She will turn 15 at the end of July. The reason she had to be placed is the poor condition of the house, since in winter they cannot pay for heating or have hot water for bathing. In addition, the mother is an addict who does not want to spend a long time in the hospital for treatment, but goes out often and returns to addiction. Grandma has a pension that is not enough for the costs of the house, all utilities and food for the three of them. B. is in good physical condition, except for obesity, and is emotionally very sensitive. She had a hard time adjusting the first month. Today, after three months, I don't see much progress, because her mother and grandmother live in the same street. This proximity is an advantage, on the one hand, because the girl can often visit the family, and on the other hand, it is aggravating because she cannot easily adapt to life in a foster family. So far, she has finished all the grades with very good success, but this year she finished the 8th grade with excellent success. She has a desire to enroll in a graphic school like her friend. She likes to go out and follow social networks. Until recently, she sang in the church choir, but lost interest in it. My goal this summer is to motivate her to get a job for 4 hours daily in order to prevent her to

spend so much time on social networks, to develop independence and gain self-confidence. So far, we have been working on establishing communication, building mutual trust and establishing house rules with varying success. Still, I can see that she accepted some basic things when she realized that I was not giving up on them. I hope and believe that over time she will begin to mature and separate herself from the unfavorable past with an optimistic view of the future.

### Natalia

D. (15 y.) is a boy from Ukraine, who arrived in Croatia. He is physically healthy, loves football and swimming. He finished the 8th grade with exemplary behavior and good results and enrolled in high school as a chef. He is also calm and quiet in the family. Occasionally, of his entire family, he communicates only with his mother.



L. (8-y.) is a, physically healthy boy, with a small physique and hyperactive. He experienced violence in his family, after which, 5 years ago, he was placed in a children's home, later in two foster families, and we are his third. Now he has adapted well and wants to participate in all activities in the family, where he is good, obedient and kind. He is the youngest and very curious child, who is always protected and cared for by all the older children of the family at home and at school. He finished the second grade of elementary school very

successful, and in the second half of the year he got a teaching assistant. He doesn't have much of an emotional connection to his parents, but he misses his younger brother. His father was recently released from prison, and now travels around Croatia allegedly in search of work. His mother is employed, and she comes to meetings twice a week.

J. is (12-y.) is a physically healthy, cheerful girl. According to tests by psychologists from the social welfare center, he has a behavioral disorder. She underwent treatment at a child psychiatrist, and professional services have no solution or help for her inadequate behavior and constant mood swings. Because of this, she often causes restlessness and quarrels in the family. She attends school according to an adapted program, and she finished the sixth grade of elementary school with good success. Her older sister L. (15 y.) is physically very well developed, and is an excellent swimmer and athlete. At home, she is calm, quiet, kind, always ready to help. She attends classes according to a special program, and she finished the eighth grade of elementary school with excellent success. After graduating from elementary school, she enrolled in high school as an assistant chef. Both sisters do not see their parents, because the parents have been deprived of parental rights.

D. (13 y.) is a boy with a slightly smaller physique, good health, plays football and is an excellent swimmer. He attends classes according to an adapted program, and finished the 7th grade of elementary school with very good success. Lately, he feels like he's entering puberty, and we have to talk to him a lot. His older brother K. (14 y.) is also in good health, developed in sports, and like his brother, he plays football, is an excellent swimmer and loves fishing very much. He is very kind and good in the family, and he is always a peacemaker for everyone. He finished the seventh grade of elementary school with good success with an adapted program. At school, he is obedient and quiet. Both brothers do not know their father, and their mother lives quite far from us. She calls them on the phone and they see each other during the summer holidays.

### Mirjana



S. (18-month()) is a boy who has been with us since May 2023. He came to us at the age of 5 months, and at the time of birth there was a suspicion that he had a hearing impairment, but this proved to be incorrect. He is a healthy, cheerful, playful little boy who loves music and driving a tractor very much. In February of this year, we adopted him, we all love him very much and we are happy and very grateful that he is part of our family. At the end of December 2023, his younger brother K., 2 months old, came to us. Immediately after his birth, he was separated from his family. K. is a healthy, cheerful but also gentle baby, who loves attention and cuddling, and his brother who is very attentive to him. Unfortunately, there was no contact or interest in the children on the part of their parents. Recently, we also adopted K. and changed his name to B. which means "son". We had another son, and B. became a son. We are grateful to God for this and happy that he is also part of our family.

### Vedran

3.5 years ago a girl J. was placed in our family, from the children's home where she had been since birth. Now she is 4 y. and fits in our family well. She is good developed, but with regular treatments with a sensory therapist, special education teacher and speech therapist. She goes to kindergarten where she adapted well with the help of a personal assistant, and we can see the progress in her development. She is a very playful and active child, physically of good structure, and she is developing more and more and clearly shows everyone how big she is. She likes to hang out with other children and that makes her happy. J. has fit well into the environment that surrounds her and feels calm and safe in our family. She has contact with her parents once a week for half an hour.



### Adriana



L. (17-y.) is a girl who was placed with me when she was 5 years old, while I was still unmarried. She comes from a Roma family, has six other siblings, and she is the eldest. Her father spent most of his time in prisons, and mother lived in very poor social conditions alone with the children, without electricity, water, or toilets. L. was malnourished and in the worst state of health. After arriving in the family, she was diagnosed with a rare disease of adipose tissue deficiency that requires special diets, skin treatments and constant check-ups. Now, her health condition is under control. She has done well in our family, although sometimes we have difficult moments that we solve together.

She has accepted my 2 younger daughters nicely, and they like to play together, and sometimes she is jealous of my husband, and she is still in the process of acceptance. She finished the 2nd grade of high school with very good results and as the best student in the class. She is intelligent, curious, funny. She has been practicing tennis for 6 years, and she loves it very much. She has not had contact with her parents for several years.

### Violeta

M is a girl (4-y.), that is in the younger group In kindergarten, while her older sister V. (5 y.) goes to the older group. They both like to go to kindergarten and get along with the other children. In October M. will have surgery on excess toes on both feet (she has 6 toes each, which bothers her). Her sister V. is 5 y. and both of them are making good progress in learning and speaking the Croatian language, through playing and being together with all the members of the household and other children in the kindergarten. When they arrived to our family, they did not speak Croatian. Both sisters have recently suffered from chickenpox, and now, the



front teeth are falling out too. They grow and progress physically, motorically and mentally. They are mostly obedient, however, both can sometimes be stubborn and copy bad things from older children in the family and kindergarten, but in an agreement with the educators in the kindergarten, we manage to put everything back in order. Both sisters have contact with their parents once a month at the Social Welfare Center.

### Karmen

I would like to express my great gratitude for your help. My husband and I are seriously ill, and we were not able to withstand our financial difficulties, any help from you was more than welcome, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We are parents of 4 sons, D. 30 y. is married and no longer lives with us, but the other three are still in the family. P. 23 y. graduated from the Faculty of Economics, he has one more year, D. 20. has just been employed as a driver, and his twin brother N., 20, has been diagnosed with autism. N. is unable to live independently, and we have great challenges with him because he has developed severe OCD, and he needs therapies from psychologists.

## Ivana



S. is a girl (19 y.) from a family with seven children in which the father has been in prison all his life, and the mother is illiterate and an alcoholic. At home, she lived in very difficult conditions, without water and toilets, in a room of several square meters. She was 7 years old when she came to me and was about to start elementary school. She did not know the Croatian language, and her mother tongue was not developed in accordance with her age. Through these years, with a lot of effort, discipline and sacrifice, she has overcome all obstacles. She is a beautiful, cheerful, positive girl, who successfully completed the 4th grade of the School of Economics and finished the final thesis with excellent success. She took the state graduation exam and wants to enroll in preschool education, she finished the entrance exam at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and is now

waiting for the results of the graduation exam. She is extremely responsible and disciplined. In her free time, she likes to play the guitar, singing, and enjoys making others happy. In a church group, she plays drums (kahoona) and leads a small group for girls (from 10 to 13 y). She is very attentive, gentle and compassionate. S. feels just as she should in the family - at home, and it is the only family she knows. She has very rare contact with her family, but most often, she contacts her two sisters by phone, who are also in a foster family. Her parents never contacted her.

## Renata

L is a girl (13-y.) with intellectual disabilities, and she has been in our family for 5 years. Her father can not take care of her, and the mother, who was violent towards the girl, passed away 6 years ago. She maintains contact with her father regularly, now every weekend. Her father was in Germany until recently, but he is currently working in Croatia. L finished the 6th grade with a very good grade according to the adapted program. She is entering puberty and new challenges.



V. is a girl (9-y.) who came to us last year. She lived with her mother and her partner, both former addicts, with very poor conditions, constant quarrels and rejection of the child. This was reflected on the child who has no motivation for anything. However, she is slowly

progressing and we are happy because she recently said to the psychologist: "I am happy where I am". She completed the 3rd grade of elementary school with very good results with a lot of encouragement to work and learn. She adapted well to the family and stopped hitting other children. She will probably not return to her mother.

D. is a boy (4.5-y.) who was placed in our family from a maternity hospital, and his parents are chronic alcoholics and abusers. From the beginning, the child had problems with sleep and eating, and today his diagnosis is ADHD and a language disorder. We take him to therapy with a speech therapist and an educational rehabilitator. He is progressing well. He also attends kindergarten and is very lively. In the meantime, we adopted him, so he is now our child, and his older brothers adore him. J. (14 months) came to us 4 months ago from conditions that we would not wish on anyone. Parents who are alcoholics, drug addicts and an abusive father even towards the baby. The child was hungry and scared, he was always crying. After 3 months, he began to sleep normally and be a cheerful baby. The parents have not asked about it for 2 months and the procedure of deprivation of parental rights has been initiated.

## Davorka



N. is a girl (19 y.) that graduated from high school as a hairdresser, and also took a course for nannies. Now, with 2 other girls, she works as a nanny in a business with small children. She got a job and is very happy. She regularly goes to church and likes to hang out with young people. Whenever possible, she goes to camps and various gatherings, and really enjoys her youth. She is very happy and satisfied with us, and will be with us until she decides to become independent.



## Goran

3 years ago, 5 children from the same Roma family were taken out of their family, because they did not attend school, and the eldest daughter (13 years old) reported to the police that her parents sold her to an older man. (Roma often do this with daughters). The center of social welfare immediately singled out the children because of the threat that the same would happen again with her younger sister.

Recently we got two another children who are cousins to previous children. A. is a boy (17-y.) that came to us from other fosters who no longer knew what to do with him. At that time, he had two reprimands at school and barely finished the 6th grade of elementary



school. They led him to doctors because he complained of palpitations, fainted, had a toothache and was often absent from school. Since coming to us, his health has improved, he loves going to school and no longer complains of pain. He exercises and likes to do physical work. We took him to the dentist and now he has all his teeth repaired. These days, he finished the 8th grade with good results. He is proud of his achievement and while reading the thank notes to the teachers in front of the class, he also thanked us fosters, which really touched us. He is aware that his stay with us contributed to him finishing school. We thank Jesus because we see progress not only in school, but also in the spiritual field and in behavior in the family. He asks for all of us, and if we don't allow him to do something, he doesn't complain but accepts. He hears from his parents despite the court's ban, because he has his own mobile phone. We wrote an application for high school, to enroll as a welder, because he is 17 years, which the school approved. His sister A. (14-y.) completed the 6th grade of elementary school with excellent results in a special program. At school, she is trying, to the best of her ability, she has not yet managed to master the multiplication table, and memorization is also a problem for her. Her behavior at school is not the best, due to various verbal and minor physical conflicts. At home, she is calm, but when she gets angry, she reacts very violently. Now it is no longer so common, and even when she has such a reaction, it does not last so long. She is in good health, except that she has a crooked spine due to rapid growth. Already at the age of 12, she had a prepared husband to whom she was sold, and is still very angry with her parents. She has no communication with them, except when her brother offers to talk to them while he hears them on the phone. Their younger sister E. (12 y.) and she was the first to arrive in our family with her younger brother. After her arrival, she celebrated her 9. birthday, and now she is a beautifully developed girl. She loves all her brothers and sister very much, she is neat and loves to clean. She finished the 6th grade of elementary school according to a special program, because even after the 4th grade she could not read or write. Now she can read, although quite slowly, and can write, although she occasionally changes some letters. Progress can be seen, but it is difficult to encourage her to learn. E. has exemplary behavior at school, although she often has verbal conflicts with friends who, according to her, sometimes have a bad attitude towards her. She loves to dress up for school, but she doesn't care about learning and success. She sometimes communicates with her parents. She is healthy, except that she occasionally tears her toenails, so we have to take her to the pedicurist.

Their youngest brother, A., is 7 y. This year he finished kindergarten and is waiting for the beginning of the school year. When he enrolled in school, everyone praised him for being progressive, ready for school, he can read and write, he calculates and is very smart. While we were teaching his older sister to read and write, he learned all with her. After coming to us, he celebrated his 5. birthday, and now he is already a schoolboy. He loves to be noticed, and he always calls us when he wants us to see his achievement. He loves it when we cuddle and play with him. He has a very good memory, although he is a bit clumsy in terms of motor skills. When he came to us, he was taught to watch TV or tablet all the time, and due to insufficient movement, he did not develop his motor skills well. Now he develops with the game and is much more agile.

B. is an 8-year-old girl, with a smaller physique, who arrived with her brother in our family three weeks ago. They were separated from their parents due to the inability to take care of the children. A family of 7 persons lived in very unhygienic and dangerous conditions. B. came from her family malnourished, full of lice and worms, and after we took her and her brother to the doctor, everyone in the family had to take an anti-worm medicine. In the family, she begins to get used to the rules and hygiene habits, and likes to help in the household. She finished the first grade of elementary school, but she can't read or write and doesn't recognize all the letters, and she also was 4.5 months absent from school. We tried to convince the school pedagogue that it was better for her to repeat the first grade, but they did not approve of it. They told us to work with her over the summer and make up for what she didn't learn in the first grade. She never asks about mom and dad, while her mother calls often, and this week she will start seeing each other once a week for an hour.

Her brother L. (6 y.) is a cheerful and playful boy. He loves to eat bread very much and quickly stuffs all his food into his mouth. He is quite developed, unlike his sister. He also arrived infected with worms, and all his teeth are decayed. He is obedient and gets along well with the other children and with our son who approaches him gently like a small child. He learns to ask politely and we teach him hygiene.

## Antonia



A girl D. (4 y.) was placed with us 3 years ago, because the father does not want her, and her mother shows little interest and does not meet the conditions for taking care of the child. She was in a children's home until the age of one, and she came to us with motor disorders (crumpled arms and sensory disturbances) and emotionally somewhat blocked. Now, after 3 years, she has reached the other children of her age and the disturbances have completely disappeared. We also have our three children who have accepted her very well, although D. occasionally does not want to play with them, she likes to hang out more with adults. She also plays with babies and sings, and occasionally challenges us to get attention. In kindergarten, it took some time to fit in. She's in the english group, and she's youngest

there. Her father doesn't want to see her, her mother rarely calls, sometimes we go to the park or McDonalds where they met.

**Jelka and Nikola** N. is a healthy girl (8 y.) with a normal physique, appropriate for her age. She for the second time went to the first grade of elementary school according to an adapted program due to speech therapy difficulties and concentration in teaching. She finished the school year with very good results. Her behavior is well at home and is good towards other household members. She has not yet been in contact with her mother, but once a week, she sees her grandmother for an hour. Lately, we have noticed that her grandmother is persuading the child against us, and N. tells us everything.

A. is a boy (6-y.) in very good health, although of a slightly smaller build. He is a good child, and treats everyone in the house nicely. He goes to kindergarten as a preschooler. He is very good in kindergarten and his educators praise him. In the fall he will start the first grade of elementary school. His parents were deprived of the right to visit.

A. is a healthy boy of 6 y. with a smaller and thinner physique. He is obedient and gets along nicely with the other children in the family. He goes to kindergarten in a preschool group and is good at kindergarten. He is most often visited by his uncle, while his mother rarely visits him. He is now visiting his new adoptive parents. K. is a boy of 4 y. mostly healthy, only occasionally he catch a cacold. He has a smaller physique, very nice and cuddly, and is good at home. He has accepted all the children in the family nicely and is always ready to play with them. Both parents have the right to visit and we have no problems with the mother. The father always creates some problems, something does not suit him all the time, he asks that his child must wear only the clothes that he brings. He always has some inappropriate requests when he comes to visit, and the child is afraid of him and is reluctant to go to him. Once he even took a child to the emergency room, even though the child was healthy. That is why the Center for Social Welfare ordered him to visit under the supervision of their employees. The father complains that we do not take care of the child, that we do not take him to the doctor, although these are all untruths because we take the child for all the necessary examinations, and we send all the results to the Center for Social Welfare. He accuses us because he thinks that in this way he will get the child back, and the employees at the center are fed up with his outbursts, so they are of the opinion that it would be better to move the child somewhere further, where the father could not to visit him so often.



## Ljerka

I. is a boy (19.5-y.) with a beautiful physique. His health condition is in order, and he is a child with mild mental impairment and autism. He behaves nicely at home, has matured a lot and is obedient. In the past, there were some problems with impatience when he didn't get what he wanted. He often goes with me to Zaprëšić, where we then occasionally take care of my grandchildren together. Together with my son D. he likes to work around the car. I. has completed the second year of work training at the primary school in Zagreb with a descriptive grade, partially or completely mastered, he knows capital letters and numbers. Every Thursday they have a household as part of their work training, and they cook together. At home, he knows how to put laundry in the wash, he goes to the store and buys what he is told with the previous list, which he then hands over to the salesman in the store, and goes to the milk vending machine to get milk on his own, and he takes care of personal hygiene, tidying up, cooking some dishes. I. likes to ride a bike and goes to handball training. He is grateful for his summer vacation in Rovinj.



