

“Little Wild Thang” is the firsthand account of Michelle’s journey through early childhood. The story is riveting, heartbreaking and unnerving with details of all the experiences Michelle went through in her young life. The book is a valuable way to see inside the thoughts of a child as she experiences foster care. So many times decisions are made in the “best interest” of the child, but “Little Wild Thang” provides the thinking of the child to help us understand the mixed emotions and thoughts children in the foster care system experience torn between foster parents, caseworkers, parents and various family members. While the book is lengthy, it’s an easy read. I don’t believe all of the child welfare case reports were necessary in telling the story and it may have flowed better if tightened up a bit. But overall, the book provides a unique perspective into the child’s thoughts. “Little Wild Thang” is a good book for foster parents to understand the thoughts of the child and for caseworkers to understand how the system can be improved to support children in a very difficult time in their lives.

— Reviewed by Kim Phagan-Hansel

continued to struggle in her life and determining who she was. She eventually connected with the Muslim religion, however her brother struggled with her choice.

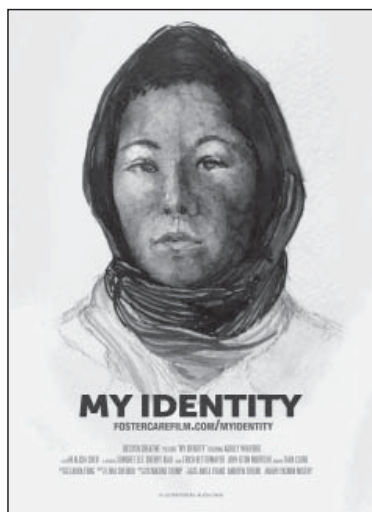
Today Ashley speaks out as a strong voice for the experience of children in the foster care system in “My Identity.” The film is the second in a series of short films that share the stories of individuals impacted by the foster care system. While Ashley’s story is unique to her experience, many children in foster care struggle to find their identity and place in the world. Ashley’s story highlights the struggle familiar to many children in foster care. As her story unfolds, it’s difficult to hear all of the challenges she has faced in her life and the heartache she feels because of the disconnect between her and her brother. Today, identifying as Choctaw and white, she has built her identity and found a place of contentment in her life. While “My Identity” is only 11 minutes, it packs a hefty punch in its messaging. It’s definitely worth a watch.

— Reviewed by Kim Phagan-Hansel

MY IDENTITY

Produced by Yasmin Minstry
Foster Care Film, IDesygn Creative, 2016, 11 minutes

In the film, “My Identity” Ashley shares her journey into the foster care system and the struggles that ensue because of her identity issues. Ashley was raised by her drug addicted, neglectful mother. Ashley shares heartbreaking experiences such as waking up alone and afraid after undergoing open heart surgery as a 5-year-old. As her mother’s drug abuse escalates, Ashley enters the foster care system at age 8, moving in with her aunt while her brother went to live with his biological father. Eventually, Ashley was also placed with her brother’s father who sold drugs and continued to expose the children to a tumultuous lifestyle. Though the siblings were happy to remain together, they were surrounded by violence and drug abuse.



Drugs would forever change 12-year-old Ashley’s life when her mother overdosed and was considered brain dead, kept on life support for five years before dying. Ultimately, Ashley would move in with her cousin after her brother’s father was arrested while her brother went to live with his grandparents. More than 30 caseworkers later, Ashley

Vietnamese Children’s Favorite stories

Retold by Tran Thi Minh Phuoc
Illustrated by Nguyen Thi Hop & Nguyen Dong
Tuttle Publishing, 2015,
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Vietnamese Children’s Favorite Stories is a charming collection of fifteen tales beloved by Vietnamese children for generations, retold here for Western children. Experienced storyteller Tran Thi Minh Phuoc vividly recounts such favorites as the story of Tam and Cam (the Vietnamese version of Cinderella), the legend of the Jade Rabbit, the legend of the Mai Flower, and many others.

Children and adults alike will be enchanted by the legends of bravery and beauty, fables about nature, and stories in which integrity, hard work and a kind heart triumph over deception, laziness and greed. Gods, peasants, kings, and fools spring to life to celebrate Vietnam’s rich cultural heritage, forging bonds with people around the world, and bringing us all together in ways that only great stories can do. The beautiful watercolor illustrations are by veteran artists Thi Hop Nguyen and Dong Nguyen, whose work perfectly captures the charm and flavor of traditional Vietnamese culture.

— Reviewed by Richard Fischer