

# Orphan's Plea at Church to Be Adopted Sparks Flood of Inquiries

Davion Navar Henry Only is catching the nation's attention after his plea to be adopted in a Florida church was publicized.

Two weeks ago the 15-year-old orphan told a packed service at St. Mark's Missionary Baptist Church in St. Petersburg that he was looking for a family.

"I'll take anyone," he said, according to the *Tampa Bay Times*. "Old or young, dad or mom, black, white, purple. I don't care. And I would be really appreciative. The best I could be."

More than 500 people have called Eckerd, the agency handling Only's adoption, says the *New York Daily News*. Fox News reported that the church has been flooded with phone calls. Several parents stated on an ABC News online discussion thread that they were seeking to adopt Only.

"We live in NY, but my husband just called the agency," Denise Aponte Smith Kline posted. "We are waiting for a call back from them. We are foster parents and we have had 13 children come through our doors over the last five to six years. We would be willing to adopt Davion if there isn't another family, locally in his county, who don't come forward. Trusting the Lord to work this all out in Davion's favor. No child should have to ever make a plea like that."

Only has been in foster care his entire life after being born while his mom was in jail. He has bounced from home to home. He found out in June that his mom died while searching for her records on a computer. He has always longed for a family but had a problem with his temper. That changed when he learned

this mother died and he decided to let the anger go.

"When I found out all that stuff about my family, it made me want to be more successful, no matter what," Only told ABC. "I don't want to go down that same path. I'm not going to use all my bad stuff that happened to me as an excuse, but I'm going to use it as motivation to push me more and give me more courage."

His grades improved, he lost 40 pound, and he started learning to deal with his temper.

"He's come a long way," Floyd Watkins, program manager at Davion's group home, told the *Tampa Bay Times*. "He's starting to put himself out there, which is hard when you've been rejected so many times."

In three years Only will be "emancipated" out of the system so he decided to take matters into his own hands.

"I know they're out there," he told his caseworker, Connie Going. Though he is shy, he said he wanted to talk at a church. "Maybe if someone hears my story ..." Two people in the church responded after hearing his plea. Only lives in Carlton Manor Group Home with 12 other troubled teenage boys. His plight has put the cause of adopting foster children in front of the nation.

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services there were almost 400,000 children in foster care in 2012. More than 60,000 of these kids had parents who terminated their rights as parents. Once they are "emancipated" from the foster care system, they are most likely to become homeless, unemployed or incarcerated, according to Children's Rights.

"I just want people to know that it's hard to be a foster kid," Only told *New York Daily News*. "People sometimes don't know how hard it is and how much we try to do good."