

THE GATEWAY

Single Mom is Single Minded: 'I'm on a Mission'

Erin Tracy's neat and tidy apartment, two well-behaved boys and full-time college course load offers few clues to what her life was like only a few years ago. Her transformation is inspiring and due in no small part to her time at Family Gateway coupled with her natural tenacity and resourcefulness.

"Growing up I was never good in school and always felt like an outcast. I acted out, ran with the wrong crowd and didn't have a lot of family support. I got it in my head that school wasn't for me," Erin said. "Then, right before my 18th birthday I made a choice to do well. I earned my GED and started working full-time. I budgeted \$2.00 a day for lunch and saved every penny I could for my future." Erin used her savings for an apartment of her own and tuition. She was independent and doing well when someone changed her life forever.

"I was focused on school, but didn't have many friends or family nearby for support. I was 18 and met a man who was 23." Before she knew it her hopeful new life turned into a nightmare of abuse. "There was nobody to help me. I was pregnant, terrified and alone. It was so bad I would pray that God would just take me and my child," Erin recounted.



When her son Jeremiah was born Erin knew she had to make a change. She arrived at Family Gateway with a bag of diapers and the clothes on her back. "When they told me I had my own room, I couldn't believe it. I knew I would be OK, I knew this was my chance," Erin said. "At that time I was in crisis and not thinking long-term about my future. The staff encouraged me to consider school and getting a college degree. I arrived at Family Gateway in July, and with their help started school in August."



Above: Jeremiah proudly poses with his meticulously constructed creation.
Left: Erin, Jeremiah and Israel at home before bedtime.

Erin's path has been filled with challenges and blessings, including the birth of her second child Israel and balancing motherhood and full-time enrollment at UTA.

"I'm on a mission," Erin said. A mission to be successful, to provide a stable home and opportunities for her boys and to help others. "I used to think about being a missionary, but as a mom, I have to look for other ways to give back. I enjoy volunteering at Family Gateway as an Ambassador and showing other residents that they too can change their life for the better."