



# Bright Light Foundation

## Bryan Dear

*2013 BLF Recipient*



I figured I would tell you a little about how our family came together as one, and give you an idea of who we were and where we were headed before the fire. So here goes ... my wife and I have been friends for many years, meeting one another through mutual friends around 2005. Her oldest son Colby, was around 2 1/2 at that time and my children and he would play together quite often and they got to know each other at a pretty young age. Heather and I started hanging out more and decided to become a couple in August 2011. I was in the process of regaining custody of my children and was looking for a house to rent. The house next

door to Heather's was empty so I moved in. Our relationship between each other and between one another's kids was growing fast and for the first time in a long time, EVERYONE was happy. Everything we were working towards was falling into place and it all felt "RIGHT". After going back and forth from her house to mine between hitches, Heather and the boys decided to move in permanently in January 2012. I was still in the process of getting custody of my kids, so they were only there every other weekend at the time. About the end of February we found out that Heather was pregnant!! Everyone was excited to say the least: We had been talking about getting married already and when we found out about the new baby decided there was no better time than the present to get married. On May 20, 2012 we got married in our backyard, with our four boys standing up as my best men and my daughter the flower girl, surrounded by lots of family and friends. It was by far the happiest day of our lives. A few weeks later when school got out for the summer my kids moved in permanently. To say things were a little chaotic to begin is probably an understatement. An oilfield wife is by far the strongest of women in my opinion, but



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on top of that, my wife was pregnant and taking care of five kids. Things were pretty hectic for all of us.

Adjusting to a mixed family isn't an easy task. The kids had their moments for sure. The two oldest boys, Bryan Jr and Colby, were either attached at the hip or at each other's throats. The same for the two youngest, Colton and Riley. The 2 youngest got along the best though and the majority of the time had few issues.

But believe me if any of them were gone doing something else outside our household the others couldn't wait for them to be back. We all were happy and content in our lives. We had routines, stability and a sense of confidence about our futures together. We needed a bigger house for sure and started a "New HOUSE" savings account in an empty five gallon water jug. Every penny the kids ever got they put in there. Seeing their excitement about something that meant so much to Heather and myself gave us a very proud feeling. When Brooklyn was born on October 4, 2012 our household became complete. Four proud big brothers and a sister came together even closer to make little sister's life perfect. It was all about Brooklyn and whatever it took to keep her happy. Each one had a special bond with her from the beginning and knew and recognized each one separate from the others. Our family was complete. We were all healthy and happy and couldn't have asked for anything better. Saturday April 6 2012 we went and spent the day and evening with our best friends, Donny, Dean A, Laila, Jaxs, and Cheyenne) riding four wheelers and cooking out, something we did often. Jaxs and Riley got together and plotted out a plan to get Jaxs to stay overnight at our house and it was too cute how they worked it up together that none of us had the heart to say "no". And then, of course big sis Laila had to come, figuring it would be best anyway since both had only stayed overnight with family before, so we agreed Laila could come too. So it was an extra full house for us that night but nothing we could not handle. It was pretty late when we got back home, around 11 or so and all the kids were pretty worn out. They all piled up in their rooms watching TV, most of them knocking out before their heads hit the pillow. Jaxs was the last one to settle down, finally getting up and down several times before my wife was able to get him tucked in and eyes slowly closing. My wife remembers checking on all the kids around 1:30 am making sure each one was covered and comfortable. Last time she remembered looking at the clock it was 1:50 am she sat down on the couch for just a few moments to catch a breath and relax a minute before going to bed, herself. Later that night, close to 3 am, I woke up to a smoke filled room in our home, where my six month old daughter and I were asleep. In a "dazed shock" of trying to gather what was going on, I knew I had to get to my family. After finding out I couldn't get through our bedroom door, I



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bust the window out to make an exit with my daughter. Coming around the side of the house I could then see the living room was totally engulfed with flames. I handed my daughter off and got help from my father-in-law next door. We both went on the hunt for the other kids and my wife. My wife had already gotten four of the kids out, and in the process lost consciousness. After several attempts in and out of the smoke and flamed filled house I was able to get her out. After that I was like a "noodle" myself and could do nothing but point and mumble that there were more kids inside the house. The neighbors were unable to pursue any further and as of yet there was still no fire department. Once the department did arrive they attempted to put out the horrible flames and make entry to the boys' room. After making an entry to the boy's room, fire officials found the two youngest-gone from smoke inhalation. The third and oldest son was not yet found, and wasn't found until the fire was completely out. He was found in the hall, where we later found out he was on his way out when he turned back to go help his little brother and friend. I don't know how to write this story or even begin to explain the magnitude of what a gruesome and evil day that was for me and my family. We lost three children and have yet learned how to deal with that. Following this tragic event in our life my wife and I were separated from the rest of our children, from having to remain in the hospital to receive medical attention. We have now collected several medical bills that we don't know how we are going to pay. Then, with the cost of just living in hotel rooms, and trying to make sure our other kids stayed in school, clothed and taken care of, all while we tried to rebuild some of what we had as a family. In conclusion I would like to say I'm sorry if the story isn't long enough or in more details, but I would also like you to know it took every emotion and bit of strength I had to relive that horrible morning and somehow type it on my computer. Again I thank you for your time and consideration.