

March 30, 2016

To whom this may concern:

In 2011 my marriage of 28 years fell apart. My world turned upside down, but what was worse was how the divorce effected my children. I had originally taken my minor children to live with me in another city. They were very homesick for their friends, sports teams and their old school. I let them return to live with their Dad. During the court process, I was awarded visitation, but my ex-husband blocked it and kept the boys from me. He was very angry towards me and punished the boys if they talked to me or wanted to come and see me. He turned them against me with his lies and the emotional games. I felt helpless.

I would hear things from my older children about Brett not doing well in school, about how he was not being properly supervised, about how his Dad and him were no longer getting along. I wanted to help my children when I would hear what was going on, but everything that I tried, failed. Recently, Brett's Dad decided that could not handle Brett, he called me and told me that I needed to take him. I went and got Brett and brought him here to live with me.

I am elated to have him live here. I had hardly been allowed to see or talk to him for the past four years. It has been an adjustment, he is not the boy that I once knew. He is now a young man. It seems that he has basically been raising himself during a crucial time in his life. Things are very different for Brett here. My new husband and I are helping him to understand that he is accountable for his actions and that there are consequences for his choices. We are helping him to see that his education is a very important. We have set boundaries and rules and he is adjusting to this different parenting style. Not to mention the adjustment to a different living style.

I wouldn't trade this time with him for anything in this world, but I see that the adjustment is hard on him and it hurts my heart. All I wanted for my children was to give them a good life. I have a second chance and I am not taking it lightly. I see Brett struggling, but I see progress as well. I see him beginning to care about things, to set goals and think about his future.

One thing that has always been a part of his life has been playing sports. He feels that he belongs when he is a part of a team. There is a bond that team mates share that I want him to have in his life. We realize that playing sports is a privilege that needs to be earned. Brett is willing to put forth the effort and our newly formed family is here to give him support.

Thank you,

*Alicia Burlington*