



Photo by: Hannah Dowding

# building bridges

## teacher creates non-profit, to create inclusive daycare

**F**OR SOME, A RANCH-STYLE, limestone house off of 183A might not symbolize a promise for much, but for teacher **Jeremy Fry** and his wife, Tabitha Fry, it means hope.

The signing of the lease represents a step closer to the ultimate goal for Brady's Bridge: opening a full-time daycare for children of all abilities.

The pair created Brady's Bridge when their son, was born, but it has grown into a large non-profit, involving many other organizations within the school, and they only have plans to continue growing.

Brady's Bridge is a non-profit that was started by teacher Jeremy Fry and his wife. For them, it all started with their son, Brady, who was diagnosed with hydrocephalus at 20 weeks in the womb. He has received 32 brain surgeries and open-heart surgery.

"I think a lot of times [with] those complications or those diagnoses, people don't see that joy, that beauty, that smile and that love," Fry said. "He's still laughing and smiling, and he brings so much joy to other people that interact with him."

When Brady was born, the couple spent 22 days in the hospital with him, from Dec. 2 to Dec. 24.

"We were in the hospital for Christmas, and we kind of knew that even in the midst of everything that was going on, Brady was going to be okay," Fry said. "We felt like God had put us in the right position to meet and build relationships with other people."

Fry and his wife decided to set up a small Christmas tree in the hospital room, and Fry said it changed the whole atmosphere of the room. So, with a new idea and small Christmas tree in

hand, they decided to set up a Christmas Tree Drive.

"That next year we decided we would raise money and then take that money and buy Christmas trees for kids that were in the hospital," Fry said. "That's where it started. We took those trees to Dell Children's Hospital, and 55 kids got a Christmas tree for the holidays. The cool part is that they even got to decorate it when they're not home for the holidays. The part a lot of families don't think about is the fact that kids who are in the hospital don't get to do Christmas. This was just one small way that families could be together. They could do something together and decorate a Christmas tree."

To treat his Epilepsy, Brady was placed on a ketogenic diet. In the beginning, the pair would make Brady's meals each night for the following day, but making the meals every night became too time-consuming. Fry's niece and her best friend helped him start Keto Kitchen.

"My niece and her best friend came over one day to help, and then they came over the next week to do it too, and then the next week," Fry said. "So, I put it out last year to some students in my classroom that if they wanted to get some hours, we'd be happy to sign off, and we would make it a Brady's Bridge thing. Now [Monday's have] become my favorite day of the week."

Multiple students gather every Monday night to prepare meals for Brady, but for the Fry family, Keto Kitchen is about more than just meal-prepping.

"It's been more than just 'let's come over and make food!,' Fry said. "It's an opportunity to get together, and what started out as three different cliques last year, just became a family. It

continues to grow every year that we do this."

When Brady entered elementary school, the couple realized that there were no available options to provide adequate after-school care. Multiple daycares refused to take Brady because they were unequipped to handle his needs.

"My wife quit her job that way she could get home after school so Brady would have the level of care that he needs," Fry said. "We wanted to [create] a place where other families would feel safe dropping their kids off."

The next step for the Fry family is to open a daycare for children with any level of ability inside of a home they just rented out and are now renovating.

"What we are trying to do is help families that have kids with special needs that also have siblings," Fry said. "In most cases [of] kids that have special needs, the parents don't get to work. For us, that wasn't an option, so we wanted to make that a reality for other parents where it might not be an option."

The organization hosts multiple events each year to raise money, including an annual 5k and a golf tournament. Brady's Bridge has created a community of support among the students.

"I don't know if I could find the words to express our gratitude and our love for these kids," Fry said. "It feels like it's not just about us. It's a community thing. It's people gathering around us and our cause. I'm in awe of our kids. It makes my heart happy, and it blesses us and our family in terms of what we're trying to do."

Story by: McKenzie Henningsen

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