

# Swamp Rabbit SOUTH

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*Let There Be Mom:*  
**CREATING FAMILY  
LEGACIES**

October 2021



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# *Let There Be Mom.* CREATING FAMILY LEGACIES

By Kipra Anderson & Meredith Conroy | Professional photos by Southern Son Photography

Let There Be Mom (LTBM) is a local (started right here in Greenville) non-profit organization with the mission of preserving the legacies of Upstate moms and dads who have been diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses. All of the families they serve have at least one child under the age of 19. It's mom or dad that are battling a life-threatening illness and facing the very real possibility of not having a future here with their child (ren). Their goal is to capture the life story of the parent in tangible keepsakes that are given to the children now and throughout their lives for future milestone events.

LTBM usually ends up creating 12-15 gifts per child (depending on their age and the milestones the parent wants to mark). While the requested milestones they cover vary from family to family, some of the most requested occasions include getting their driver's license, sweet 16, prom, HS graduation, going off to college, college graduation, first job, engagement, wedding, first house, and first baby.



Many times they use items that belong to the parents to create something new and meaningful for their child. "We are working with a dad who is a builder – one of his requests were gifts for his children when they become members of the church," says Kipra Anderson, founder of LTBM. "We will be welding some of his tools together to create a keepsake cross for each of them." Another Dad wants to mark College Graduation for his sons with a reminder of his love for travel; he had them create travel sets with a special message to "Embrace the Culture". Another mom wanted her clothing sewn into a quilt for her children as a gift for now – each square is appliqued to tell the story of her life, making it possible for her little ones to physically wrap up in the mom's life.

"One mom we served taught her son, at a young age, the value of being able to grow and cook your own food," says Kipra. "When he gets his first home he will receive a set of gardening tools engraved with a special message from his mom, as



well as a cutting board engraved with his two favorite recipes that she made.”

All of their services are free to the families; the organization supported by community donations and fundraisers. The biggest fundraiser, Dine Out for Mom, happens each year in October. This year the 15th Annual Dine Out for Mom is Thursday, Oct 21. Local restaurants partner with the agency by donating 20% of their sales from the ENTIRE day to the organization - supporters just have to go buy food (or gift cards). It's an easy way to have an impact that will last for generations. And since it is an all-day event, every meal and snack can come from a Dine Out for Mom Restaurant Partner!

They use many volunteers to make the event a success. If you would like to learn more about our organization, apply for services, find out how you can help, or even where to Dine Out for Mom on Thursday, October 21, please visit the website at [LetThereBeMom.org](http://LetThereBeMom.org)

Now that you know the background of the organization, I would like to introduce you to the Brown family. They live in our area and are supported by the Let There Be Mom Organization. In 2020,



Taylor Brown began to have some muscle tremors. Being an avid runner, he has always been in tune with his body and knew something was off. He went to his doctor, who then referred him to several specialists to begin ruling things out. Within two weeks of his initial visit to his family practitioner, the physicians and specialists all agreed that all indicators pointed to ALS, which was confirmed in January 2021. When I reached out to the family to talk about this feature I was not sure what to expect. We text back and forth a bit about how the feature would look and then finally Taylor invited me to their home to do the interview face-to-face rather than through emails. I accepted his invitation and was set to meet him on a Wednesday morning. The morning of the interview Taylor text me and asked if we could have our chat on a walk. When I got to the home, he introduced me to his wife and then we hit the road! Taylor and I walked nearly three miles while he told me the story of his diagnosis and how the Let There Be Mom organization became a part of their family. I immediately picked up on his positive attitude and the fact that this illness does not define who he is. His tone and demeanor during our walk was confident, courageous and matter of fact, glass half full, if you will. He shared with me that shortly after his diagnosis he went on a guy's trip with some fellow Clemson alumni and one of the men there approached him about the organization and how it could help the Brown family. Taylor's initial response was appreciative, but he was certain they would not qualify as he is not "a mom." However, the organization did not turn him away, instead welcoming Taylor and his family with open arms. Taylor and LTBM immediately started brainstorming what they could do for the Brown children, Tanner and Presley. His hope and the mission of the organization was to create gifts that would always remind them of him; and help his children be able to continue to share "the Family Tree" with future generations. I would love to share what some of the gifts are but we do not want to ruin any surprises! In the meantime, the Browns want to do anything they can to promote this organization to the community so that other families, too, can create legacies of their loved ones impacted by terminal illnesses.

Taylor and Brittney met while attending Clemson University. They dated for four years and were married in 2007. He graduated with a degree in Construction Science and she with a nursing degree. Brittney went on to get her masters in nursing and is a nurse practitioner with Prisma Health. Taylor currently works for Clayton Construction. The couple has lived in the area since

they married and love that their two children can bike all over the neighborhood. Tanner plays baseball with Greenville Little League and Presley enjoys gymnastics. Both Brown children play CESA soccer and attend Sara Collins Elementary School.

This family is strong. They are positive, upbeat and faithful. I learned a lot about perspective during my walk with Taylor. I walked with a man that was given an undesirable situation and has chosen not to let that get in the way of him being the best husband, father and friend he can be. I walked with a man that is funny, full of life and excited about sharing Let There Be Mom with the community he loves so much. To learn more about Let There Be Mom please visit their website, [LetThereBeMom.org](http://LetThereBeMom.org).

**Everybody has a story. Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at [mconroy@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:mconroy@bestversionmedia.com).**

