



Submit your Spotlight Profile - Submit a Tip or Event

Dad's Scoreboard



Read below about our MVP Dads...

MVP Dad

Business Networking

MVP Dad

Mike Nattell



Profile:

Lauren Burlison of Family Care Network wrote: The Family Care Network, a private children and families services agency for over 21 years, has been asked to help the County meet the increasing need for qualified and loving foster families to serve children in need.

The Nattell Family is one foster family that has stepped up to the plate. After trying for years to have a child of their own, Becky and Michael Nattell decided to become foster parents with the Family Care Network in 2005. The day their first foster son entered their home, Becky found out that she was pregnant. Having a big family

was always a dream of the Nattells so they happily adopted their first foster child and then proceeded to adopt two more foster children last November. When asked why she chose to adopt, Becky stated "There are so many [kids] that need a mom and dad that don't have one, it just made sense to me. I wanted to have one biological child of my own but after that, having kids was my goal... I didn't care where they came from."

Becky said that their initial research into the adoption process through adoption agencies proved to be costly and complicated, so they turned to the Family Care Network. "When I looked into [foster care] everything fell into place perfectly." The Nattells now have two daughters, two sons and a foster son. Becky says adopting children from foster care is especially rewarding because foster children appreciate so many of the things other children might take for granted, like family outings, time with Dad and being able to show off their new family in their school projects.

Michael and Becky have watched their adopted children transition from uncertainty to security, stating, "[Our foster son] had been through 14 foster homes before ours and used to go to his room and pack his stuff and say 'its time for me to go.' He went through stages of testing me by acting out every month, then only every two [months]. When we knew we could officially adopt him and explained to him that he wasn't going anywhere, [this behavior] just kind of went away." The Nattells have given these children the chance to experience permanency and have been overwhelmed with joy to watch them blossom into healthy and happy children because of it. Not only are the Nattells proud parents of their biological daughter and three adopted children, they also continue to provide a safe and loving foster home for other children in need.

Profession: Finance Manager at Home Motors in Santa Maria.

Education: Santa Maria High Graduate

Children: Josh 9, Hilary 8, Sean 3, and Nalani 2 and 2 foster children

Fun Q & A with our Spotlight Dad:

Personal:

What phrase or motto do you live by?

Give your all, practice makes perfect and tomorrow is always another day.

Inspiration:

My Wife and Kids

Business Networking



Business 2 Business breakfasts offered through the **Goleta Valley Chamber of Commerce** are a new way of networking your business. They're on the first Tuesday of each month at Earl Warren Showgrounds. Registration is required. Future dates:

May 5
June 2
July 7
August 4
September 1
October 6
November 3
December 1



Save the Date
October 17 & 18, 2009
Join us a sponsor or plan on having a table! [details](#)

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If you could teach your kids one thing and have it impact them, what would it be?

Finish what you started.

How do you measure success?

Being able to learn something new everyday

Greatest Accomplishment:

Adoption of my kids

Proudest Moment:

Watching the birth of my daughter

Biggest Challenge:

Finding more time to spend with my kids

Wildest Dream:

Being able to work less so I can hang out with my family more

Sport/Exercise Program:

Whatever I can fit in. Biking, walking, and swimming

Where did you grow up:

Santa Maria, Ca

How many siblings:

1 brother, 1 sister

First Job:

Paper Route

Childhood Ambition:

I wanted to be a Indy Car driver

Favorites:**Favorite Local Restaurant:**

Patricio's Pizza

Favorite Coffee Spot:

Starbucks

Favorite TV Show:

Used to be ER

Retreat:

Time alone with my Wife

Last Book You Read:

The Love Dare

Indulgence:

Chocolate Chip Cookies or Chips and Salsa

Tell us about a product or item that you can't live without as a parent:

My Van

Your Perfect Day:

We just did Disneyland with the kids and to see them so excited for what they got to do next or see was a blast

Other:

What inspires you to go to work every day?

I get to work with different people everyday, so its never different

[Step-Parent] Your advice/tips to other step-parents?

I consider being a foster parent close to being a step parent. Respect the fact that you can't ever replace the relationship they have had with thier biological parents. Even though you can't replace it you can make your relationship a unique and fun thing. Focus on structure that you would like observed and lovingly show them how to follow it. Focus on a commen ground that will create bonding for you and your step or foster child.

FAMILY CASH

by Leon Scott Baxter

CouplesCommittedToLove.com

Times are financially hard for us Americans. Money is tight. We are looking to hold on to the money we have, bring more money into our pockets, and reduce our spending.

As a father, my daughters have been asking me about what's going on with the nation's economy. They've heard things on TV or discussed the topic at school. So, I realized I wanted my daughters to have money skills, so they could traverse life's economic and financial obstacles with experience and wisdom.

My wife and I give the girls allowance for their chores. They stash away some of their birthday cash into their mutual funds. They have savings accounts at our bank. The older one has purchased shares of Intel and Disney and also has her own business, which she started with a loan from the Bank of Mama and Papa. But, we thought it important to add one more piece to this money puzzle: family cash.

Unlike allowance, which is paid for completed chores, family cash is paid based on attitude, good behavior and character. And, family cash is not actual U.S. currency. It's just what its name implies, currency that can only be spent within our family.

I hopped on the computer with a couple of photos of my daughters and a one-dollar U.S. bill by my side and got right to work. I scanned the girls' photos into the computer, then started building our family cash template using the dollar-bill as a model. Instead of George Washington, Maya, my youngest has her face on her bill (which is called "Maya Money"). And, Madison has her face on hers (Maddie Money).

And, I just made the rest of the bill pertinent to the family or to the girl. The serial number reflects their birthdates. The ages are on the bills. They are signed by me. Instead of a bald eagle, the bills are emblazened with a chicken.

I printed originals, ran them off on green paper, cut them to size, and Voila!, we have our own economic system.

Of course, if you choose to try something like this yourself, you can individualize it to make it your own. You also can decide how the money is to be used in your home and what a dollar represents. My wife and I decided that one of our family bills would be worth about twenty-five U.S. cents.

The next step was to create the "Incentive Catalog". We sat down with the girls and brainstormed things they'd like to earn. This step was pretty crucial. Their involvement allowed them to "buy in" to the new family economic situation. Of course, there were the material possessions: the American Girl Dolls and Webkinz. There were the outings: Chuck E. Cheese's and bowling. But, what we really wanted to emphasize were the things that you usually can't purchase: an extra bedtime story at night, thirty minutes of "my choice" activity, a trip to the library, choice of the weekend movie, going to bed half an hour later on Saturday night... The catalog is in constant flux, new items are added and items earned or no longer yearned for are discontinued.

And, what about payment? In our family this is how it works. Each girl gets one bill at the end of the night if they had a fine day. They can earn extra bills if Mom or I deem an act as "giving of oneself": sharing, complimenting, letting someone else have the biggest slice of pie, etc... So, they can theoretically earn many bills each day. On the flip side, though, Mom and I also have the power to fine (which also distinguishes itself from allowance).

If we've asked a girl to pick up her shoes and five minutes later those shoes are still there, they owe us a buck. If they say something hurtful to their sister, costs them a buck.

The family cash has been a great tool in our home. The girls realize that they can

earn things, so they set "financial" goals for themselves. They have short-term goals (things that cost maybe \$5.00) and long-term goals (a \$400 doll). They understand that Mom and Dad can pay them (giveth) and also taketh away. They learn that their pay is contingent upon their behavior and character. And, it's also really been a wonderful math supplement to what they learn in school.

Maya, our five-year old, is using the family cash to learn counting. Once a week she opens her "safe deposit box" (an old check box) and counts her money. Then, she works on figuring out how much more she needs to reach her newest goal.

Madison, the fourth grader, has another component to her family cash. See, I only printed up about fifty bills for each girl. As a result, when Madison has earned over fifty dollars, she needs to deposit her cash into the Bank of Mama and Papa. And, in doing so we teach her how to keep a bank account ledger and how to balance it.

The family cash system is motivating, character-building, educational, and has been a fun experience for our entire family.

Leon Scott Baxter is a father of two girls and has been married to his college sweetheart for sixteen years. As well as creating adventures based on movies from the eighties, Baxter is an author and offers relationship advice to couples via articles, seminars, books, workshops, and his website, CouplesCommittedToLove.com.

Each month we feature a dad making a difference in our community. We want to acknowledge working dads and stay at home dads. Suggest a dad by emailing us at info@sbparent.com.

Past profiled dad...

Mike Rice

Brandon Beaudette

Holger Peters

Mike Nattell

Robert Galle

Charles M. Oxton

Bill Strong

Paul Grafton

David Litman

Brad Hempy

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