

The Many Lives of Hunter LaGrone

This was not the first life threatening accident that this teenage boy had experienced. He had long been known as the “Nine life” child from his family & friends.

Hunter LaGrone¹⁰ was in a life threatening accident Oct. 19 while going down South Shelby Street. He was temporarily blinded by the sun which caused him to not stop in time to avoid hitting a train. The impact of the wreck instantly threw LaGrone into the bed of his truck and he had to be airlifted to ETMC Tyler.

“I was coming up on the railroad track and the sun was in my eyes,” LaGrone said. “I never saw the crossing rails until it was too late.”

Denny’s held a fundraiser to support LaGrone on his road to recovery. The restaurant donated 10 percent of their sales on Nov. 12 in an effort to show their support.

“There’s really no way to express how grateful our family is for everything that was done for us,” sister Ashley Metcalf said. “It’s such a blessing living in a small town. When something tragic happens to someone, everyone pulls together to show their love and support.”

Hunter’s close family and friends also held a benefit trail ride and auction for him on Nov. 21, in Deadwood.

“After Hunter’s accident many people in the community wanted to do something to help out the family,” **Grace Harris**¹¹ said. “100 percent of the proceeds went directly to the family to lighten the burden of expenses.”

LaGrone had a lengthy recovery, as he suffered from several different injuries. Throughout his time in the hospital, he underwent a total of ten surgeries.

“I had a broken femur, tibia, crushed ankle, two fractured hands, a missing tooth and numerous cuts and scratches,” LaGrone said. “Mostly all of the surgeries were on my leg and then they cut my hand open to get some glass and paint chips out.”

Unfortunately, this wasn’t LaGrone’s first life threatening accident. At four years old, he drank a bottle of lighter fluid. At nine years old, he tripped on a .22 Cricket, where he had two entry wounds and two exit wounds leaving him with four bullet holes in his body.

“He has had many broken bones between major accidents,” Metcalf said. “We are so blessed to still have him!”

LaGrone returned home from ETMC Tyler on Nov. 17 and continued to recover from the accident that almost cost him his life. He returned to school on Jan. 18.

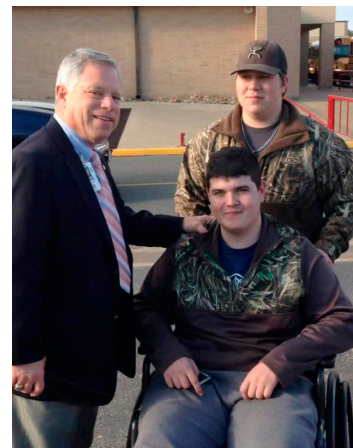
“It was good coming back to school and getting to see everyone again after being out that long,” LaGrone said. “My family and friends were what helped me the most during my recovery stage.”

LaGrone had been told by the doctors that it would be six to eight months before he could attempt to walk again, and there was no guarantee that he would. On Feb. 19, exactly four months after his accident, he was up and walking.

“It was hard going from doing whatever you wanted to needing someone every second of the day,” LaGrone said. “I’m thankful to still be alive and that nothing more happened than what did.”



Hunter LaGrone¹⁰ Photo courtesy of Renee Metcalf



Assistant Principal Pat Browning, Hunter LaGrone¹⁰ and **Morgan Delk**¹² Photo courtesy of Renee Metcalf