

## *From Rock Bottom to The Roof Top*

*By : Kellie Taylor*

Every Person who's lived has a high and a low in their life. Most are constantly striving to continuously add greater and greater achievements; so as to put miles between the two. I am so proud to say that I am one of these people. In the last two years, I've experienced my rock bottom, found my way out of that darkness, and I am now striving to the roof tops of every goal I have set for myself. There are many reasons I've been able to possess so much resilience, but the most valuable to me are few: My daughter, her father, and my involvement in Nevada Families First.

I met my daughter's dad, Shawn, during my lowest times. I was floating through life because I had given up on all of my responsibilities, turned away from my family and God, and had fallen victim to addiction. Shawn, unknowingly, laid the first paver in the walk-way to my recovery when he invited me to make his house my home, no-strings-attached. I believe that out of the kindness in his heart, he saw that he could save a life and willingly did so. Being at the receiving end of such generosity, I was quickly swayed off of my feet and fell in love with his selfless soul. It was with young love and irresponsibility that I found out I was pregnant. With this news, we were both frightened and unprepared, but through the entire experience our daughter has changed our lives for the best.

My daughter, Mackenna, brought me sobriety and laid another paver in my path. Once I knew I was pregnant, I immediately started turning my life around. Shawn and I moved in with his uncle, whose grown to be like a dad to me; a grandfather to Mackenna. Shawn took the first step into starting a career, and has allowed me to be home to raise our little girl. The day she was born, a nurse had asked about my life before and during my pregnancy. When I had finished telling her my story, she suggested that I look into the Nevada Families First program and she helped me schedule a home visit. Thanks to that kind conversation, I have learned a great deal about my daughters development, I have laid several more pavers in my path, I've taken back my responsibilities, and I have future goals that I'm striving to reach every day.

My involvement in Nevada Families First has taught me so much about my daughter's development and shown me activities that I can do with her that will build and strengthen each of her areas of growth. The thing I most love about these activities is the detail in the explanation of which part of my daughters growth the activity is focusing on. One of my favorite lessons that we have had called "Obstacle Course: Crawling Over and Around." One of the focus points in this game is motor skills and it explains that when fully engaging in the activity, the

child is planning her movements and making her body move the way she wants it to. We all love to play with our children, and to know what is going on in their little noggins just makes it that much more amazing, in my opinion.

Thanks to the wonderful connection that I have with my home visitor, I've realized that I want to become a home-visitor myself. I want to have the chance to impact new moms and their children in the same miraculous way that my home visitor, Cindy, has impacted me. From the very first time we met, Cindy has had such an accepting and nonjudgmental presence about her. Her positivity and optimism has been my inspiration to achieve the progress I've made in my life in this last year. She has been the flowers on either side of the walk-way to my future and I know that the rest of the way to joining the Nevada Families First team, and raising my daughter will be such an adventurous, positive, and healthy journey.

It is with so much love in my heart that I say thank you to Shawn, Mackenna, and Nevada Families First. You all are my reason for finding my way off the rock bottom and climbing to the highest peak of every roof top. I thank God every day that I have been so blessed with your love, support, encouragement, and inspiration. You all are the most valued aspects of my life and it is with your admiration that I continue to lay pavers, one after another, in the road to a successful life.