



# The Nick Burns Celebration of Life Memorial Scholarship

The Nick Burns Celebration of Life Memorial Scholarship was established by the family and friends of Nick Burns in appreciation for the education and support he received growing up in Spencer County, Kentucky. Nick was a 2002 Graduate of Spencer County High School. The Scholarship stands as a fitting tribute to the memory of Nick, who passed away in April 2015 at the age of 31 after a courageous two year battle with colon cancer. Nick represents the true meaning of a kind and selfless young man and his spirit and accomplishments will live on through this award.

Nick's absence is felt by all who knew him and The Burns family hopes this award will make an impact by carrying on a legacy of all the things Nick represented: compassion, love of family and friends, a desire to always help others and deep ties to the Community.

The annual \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a graduating Spencer County High School Senior who will use the funds toward their upcoming tuition and the applicant that overall most exemplifies the life values and goals of Nick.



Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a 2018 graduating Senior who is furthering their education through:
  - Technical/Vocation School
  - Junior/4-year College/University
- Submit a 500-word essay describing yourself and why you think you deserve this Scholarship, along with outlining your educational and professional goals the scholarship will be used towards.
- Submit a list of leadership awards/work within the community and/or school activity involvement.
- Submit **Two signed** recommendation letters from Teachers, Guidance Counselor, Employer, Pastor, Volunteer Coordinator, etc...**This does NOT include family and friends.**

Deadline for the application is March 31, 2018. The applicant must fill out the attached Application Form and return all items to Brandy Scott at the College and Career Center or Taylor Yancey the Senior Guidance Counselor.

Questions may be directed to Bob Burns at [burnsrk@yahoo.com](mailto:burnsrk@yahoo.com).

# The Nick Burns Celebration of Life Memorial Scholarship Application Form

Applicants Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: State: Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

List honors or awards you received during your high school years. (Please use a separate sheet if necessary)

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List any volunteer work you did or job you have had in your high school years.

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College / University Considering?

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What course of study do you plan to pursue?

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## **Application Checklist**

- Application Form
- Required Essay
- List of leadership awards/work within the community and/or school activity involvement
- Letter of Recommendation #1
- Letter of Recommendation #2
- Additional Letters of Recommendation (Optional)

List any other special conditions to support your request to be considered for this scholarship. Please attach a separate paper if more space is needed.

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# The Spencer Magnet

Serving Taylorsville and Spencer County since 1867

## Community rallies around Nick Burns

By Mallory Bilger

Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at 11:49 am (Updated: February 11, 3:18 pm)



Submitted

Nick Burns, far right, wears a smile while posing for a photo with his step daughter, Lilly Cate, and wife, Lyndsay Burns. The photo was taken in Oct. 2014 following a gymnastics awards banquet.

Thirty-year-old Nick Burns is the kind of easy going, hard-working guy that doesn't like to be in the spotlight. The 2002 Spencer County High School graduate enjoys the company of family and friends and is known for his caring, positive demeanor. So when a highly unusual diagnosis of stage four colon cancer suddenly turned his young life upside down in 2013, he was shaken, but not destroyed.

Nick's friends and family testify that he continues to keep an upbeat attitude even as his health is in dire straits. Today he continues the fight and community members from Spencer County and beyond are rallying around him and his family to ensure they don't have to go to battle alone. "I've always felt and had the support of family and friends, but it is pretty amazing to see the outreach," Nick said last week.

It was two years prior to his actual diagnosis when Nick said he started experiencing severe abdominal pain. He was working second shift at the Ford Motor Company Kentucky Truck Plant and said the pain became unbearable. He sought medical care and was given an initial diagnosis of Diverticulitis -- an often painful condition that occurs when pouches form in the wall of the colon and become inflamed or infected. Nick said he followed his doctor's advice, worked to avoid trigger foods such as corn, nuts and seeds, and his symptoms subsided temporarily. But one evening while working, he began to experience severe pain yet again. Further testing and a colonoscopy revealed stage four colon cancer. In addition to his colon, doctors found cancerous spots on his liver and a few in his lymph nodes. It was a very rare diagnosis for a man so young without any

close family history of colon cancer. According to the Mayo Clinic, most medical guidelines suggest colon cancer screenings should begin at age 50. Nick was only 26 when he first began experiencing symptoms.

The cancer treatment started almost immediately. Nick was diagnosed on March 29, 2013, and began his chemotherapy treatment April 15, 2013. After around 12 weeks of treatment, he was forced to change chemotherapy drugs due to a reaction. He then continued treatment for the rest of 2013. Nick had mixed success with chemotherapy, with some treatments shrinking the cancer but not eliminating it. But 2014 brought an array of problems. He suffered from esophageal varices, a condition that Nick's wife, Lyndsay, said was a result of the chemotherapy and caused her husband to lose blood internally. The issue hospitalized Nick and caused him to need numerous blood transfusions, but was eventually repaired, Lyndsay said. Doctors then put a stent in Nick's colon which was supposed to help improve the blockage caused by the tumor and help him avoid major surgery, but the procedure was ultimately unsuccessful. "When they did the stent, things kind of backfired," Nick said. "The tissue broke down."

The stent ended up perforating Nick's colon, forcing a long hospital stay during which doctors had to surgically remove the tumor, along with a portion of Nick's colon. Since the middle of 2014, Nick describes the outcome of his treatment as "hit and miss." While the cancer is technically gone from his colon, he said there is still a great deal on his liver, and a recent scan revealed spots on his left lung. He has lost around 100 pounds and, while he is refusing to give up, he is noticeably weak and his appetite is poor. Nick has received numerous liver therapies and faced a time when his liver almost completely stopped functioning. He also recently had fluid removed from around his lungs.

Nick said during one his most recent visits with his oncologist, it was clear that his case was very serious.

"His words were that we still have options, but we are running thin on the options," Nick said.

His oncologist spoke to Nick and Lyndsay about 17 different clinical trials that could potentially provide some hope and treatment.

Currently the couple is investigating those options. Nick, who has been unable to work, said Ford has been gracious to him and his family and his insurance has provided good coverage. Lyndsay recently took a leave of absence from her job so she could be with her husband at every appointment, and ready to travel out of state if the right clinical trial presented itself. In the meantime, Nick continues to receive chemotherapy treatments and regular scans to monitor the cancer.

Nick said the strength and support Lyndsay has provided him during this difficult time has been paramount. The couple married in July 2014 literally days after Nick was discharged from the hospital, and with that union, he gained a step daughter, Lilly Cate. He said Lyndsay saw the best in him when he thought no one would consider him as a potential husband.

"I kind of had the mindset that I wouldn't be dating," he said. "Who would want somebody going through this? But I found someone who liked me for me and not what I was going through. She's been with me every step of the way."

Nick and Lyndsay agree that the support and prayers of family and friends have gotten them through the toughest days. But it's Nick that usually keeps everyone else going, his family said.

"He was the one that comforted me, when I was the one that should have been comforting him," Nick's mother, Cindy Salyer said.

Lyndsay agreed.

"He's the one that comforts us. He is a constant inspiration. All the time, every day," she said.

Nick said if he could offer advice to anyone going through a similar situation as his, he would tell them to listen to their body and seek medical treatment immediately. He said he wished he had not ignored some of the signals his body gave him when he began to have problems.

"I've said from day one, listen to your body and what it's telling you," he said.

He added that what you put into your body matters and, although he didn't consider that before his diagnosis, he thinks about it all the time now. He said people should carefully consider what foods and chemicals they ingest, as you never know how they might adversely affect your health.

As Nick and Lyndsay are considering clinical trials and alternative treatments, they recognize that insurance is not going to cover the

entire expense it will take to continue fighting the battle. That is where the community has stepped up. There have been several efforts to help raise money for Nick, including the Fund the Fight Night event Friday, 6:30 p.m., at the Shelby County Fairgrounds. The fundraiser will include a concert featuring local favorite Judge Angus, as well as a meal. There will also be a silent auction and photo booth. Tickets that include the meal have sold out, but anyone wishing to attend the concert and silent auction only can pay \$10 admission at the door.

One of the event's coordinators, Lauren Collins, is a high school classmate and longtime friend of Nick's. She said so many people have rallied around the cause to help a man that she described as having a "huge heart and gentle spirit."

"He's never asked for help before and this was our chance to show him just how many people he has backing him through this," Lauren said. "Once we decided the benefit was a go, people started coming out of the woodwork to help -- friends, family and local businesses. It was amazing!"

There are also other opportunities to help support the family as they seek medical treatment. Monetary donations are being accepted through the online website YouCaring.com by visiting <http://www.youcaring.com/medical-fundraiser/nick-burns-cancer-benefit-fund-/290250>. Those not wishing to donate online can visit any Fifth Third Bank branch and request to make a donation to the Nick Burns Cancer Benefit Fund.

Spencer County resident Jennifer Waldrige is helping organize a Miss Spencer County Sweetheart 2015 pageant that will benefit Nick's cause. The pageant is scheduled for Feb. 21 at 5 p.m. at Taylorsville Community Church. There are categories for children and youth of all ages. Entry forms can be picked up at Madonna's Salon in Elk Creek. The entry deadline is Feb. 14. For additional questions, call 502-477-0054. The pageant is sponsored by Taylorsville Community Church, Madonna's Salon & Tanning and Morgan McDonald Photography.

Madonna's Salon is also hosting a day of support for Nick this Friday, when all money made off services and products will be donated to help offset medical expenses.

Spencer County resident Ashleigh Maddox will also be hosting a Jamberry nail wraps fundraiser to benefit Nick's cause Feb. 16. The Spencer Magnet will provide more information about this fundraiser as it becomes available.

Nick said he and Lyndsay have been humbled by the outpouring of love from community members, some they don't even know personally. He said the support has reminded him that he is not alone, and he offered that encouragement to anyone else enduring a battle with cancer.

"Trust and know that you do have people that are there for you," he said. "There are people out there who do truly care."