

Letisha's Story

Letisha was born 14/10/2005. What an absolutely delightful baby. She stole our hearts from the moment we saw her. Letisha was like most 3 year olds and had a mind of her own and always amazed us with her antics. Letisha loved being at Nana's house, and would say "thank you Nana you make me sooo happy". Letisha spent many happy hours in the bath tub, the hot tub and our swimming pool.

Letisha was a water baby. Just 3 weeks before her 3rd birthday on that most horrible day, the 29/09/2008, Letisha had stayed the previous night with me. Letisha was playing in her sand pit in the back yard, I spoke to her, and a knock came at the door. I knew Letisha was safe as she was playing in her sand pit and the pool gate was closed. I answered the door and briefly spoke with the handy man and we looked for his lost hat for couple of minutes. The handyman went into the back yard of the adjoining property to have a look for his hat and I checked the garage. The fence between the 2 properties is glass and Ron didn't hear or see anything. I went back into the house and I went to check on Letisha. I couldn't believe my eyes, this wasn't happening to us. *My baby grandchild was floating in the pool.* Letisha had moved a chair over to the gate and climbed up, then opened the gate.

We rushed to her aide, throwing the very chair she had used, to the side so as we could enter the pool area. Letisha was barely alive when her aunty Dimitie pulled her from the water. I tried to resuscitate Letisha but mucus was coming from her mouth and nose and it was impossible. I felt so alone, so scared. I screamed for help but no-one came. Dimitie rang 000.

Once the ambulance and police arrived Dimitie and I were moved away, there was nothing I could do. The police wouldn't even let me stay with my little darling and I felt so helpless. I had only let Letisha out of my sight for a few minutes. This is my baby's baby and I let them both down, I failed to keep Letisha safe. How will I live without her? She was my best friend. It's been almost 12 months since Letisha left us, and the hurt and the guilt never goes away for me.

We did everything, we built new fences and gates and they had been inspected just months before the accident, and they passed the inspection. The latches that we had on our old gates were replaced with new ones. The old latches were a slide bolt with a spring and in 20 years no child ever got into our pool area without an adult. The



new latches have a pull up knob and I never suspected that Letisha could climb up and open the gate.

Letisha could swim very well last summer, but that was last summer and she must have forgotten.

I am sure that Letisha didn't go swimming that day, as we have a hot tub and she thought it was her pool and she knew it was hot for her to swim in and that the pool was too cold for her. We believe that Letisha was running to talk to the handyman and fell into the pool. Fences and gates are a wonderful deterrent but a small child with a mind to climb the fence will find a way.

love and light Rosemary (Letisha's grandmother)