

## Badland Badgers Thank Billets

Another year for the Badlands Baseball Academy is winding down. Each year the Badges recognize those people whom generously offer their hearts and homes to them. On Sunday May 21 the Badlands Baseball Academy took time in between ball games to thank their host families. Billet families are an essential component of the Badlands Baseball Academy as there would not be an Academy. By offering their homes to these young men it makes it possible to bring 15 more students to our high school. This in turn equates to maintaining a quality high school staff and curriculum choice for all attending South Central High School. The boys come from all across Canada as word spreads as to the academy program and positive experience Oyen and Community has to offer.

Announcer Doug Lehman introduced the families and read the messages of gratitude the boys wrote to them. The boys say it best ...

#63 Joel McGrath to the Jody and Aaron Anderson Family – i would like to thank the Anderson household for taking me in to live with them this year. The Anderson's were very inviting for na anxious grade 10 like me. They made their home feel like a second house for me with a all the great cooking and family support. They are sure not a boring bunch, there is something always going n whether it is baseball, hockey, hunting or the kids chasing each other around the house. The Andersons have made it very easy for me to excel as a better baseball player and all around person. Thank you for the great year.

#11 Cody Knox to the Gene and Shannon Hauck Family – I would like to thank the Hauck Family for taking me in to live at their house this year. Leaving home at 15 years old, transferring to a new school, new town was a tough decision, and the Haucks made me feel welcome and apart of their family. I soon felt like I was at home. By opening their house and heart to myself, they provided me with the opportunity to achieve better baseball skills. When the year is over, I definitely will not forget the fantastic meals cooked every night by Shannon, the laughter brought to the table by Gene and Garrett and the positive impact you have made in m life.

#32 Ethan Loran to his parents, Dean and Patricia – I would like to thanks my parents, Dean and Patria Loran for everything they've done for me on and off the field. From making me eggs on toast before my games to making sure I get up on time for school. They have always been there for me no matter what. They even drive the grain truck from over west to see me play. Thank you very much Mom and Dad.

#27 Paul Georget to Lyle and Karen Smigelski –I would like t thank Karen and Lyle for letting me stay in their home again this year. Once again, Lyle has taught me that baseball is not a sport because hockey is the only sport! Karen teaches me valuable life lessons, like bite to be polite! thank you for this year.

#14 Tanner Huber to the Kevin and Tenelle Brost Family – First of all I would like to say thanks to Kevin, Tenelle, Taryn and Koby, for opening their home to me. They have been a big part of why I am enjoying my time here in Oyen. There is never a dull moment in the house from mini stick games with Taryn and koby to Kevin and I making fun of the survivalists on Naked and Afraid. I know Mom was relieved to find out that Tenelle was a teacher and that I would be in good hands and Mom was right. I know that luck was o my side when I ended up with the Brost's as my billet family. They truly have made a home for me away from home. Thanks for everything.

#31 #12 Rheal Letain and #10 Keeshaun Such to Paul and Cecilia Christianson – Rheal and I (Keeshaun) would like to thank our billet family. Paul and Cecilia Christianson have been great since the first day we

arrived in Oyen. They always make sure we eat enough food so they do not have leftovers, with Rheel and I that is never really a problem. I have not heard a joke from Paul that has not cracked me up yet. Every joke that has come out of his mouth has been hilarious. Cecilia cares about everything most of the time in a good way. She has such a warm heart and no matter how her day is going she will make sure our day is going well. Every morning before we leave for school, she will give us a hug and say "I hope you have a great day". Rheel and I would like to say thank you for everything you have done for us. As Rheel and I are graduating this year, we both really hope to see you guys in the near future because you guys are like family to us. We wish you the best of luck, and we thank you for everything you have done for us and the baseball academy.

#24 Cameron Bendfeld and #13 Braden Bendfeld to the Curtis and Renee Tye Family – Ever since day one, you guys have made us feel like part of the family. We'd like to thank you for all the great meals you made for us and the entertainment at the supper table supplied by Hayden. Cameron and I got so lucky to be able to stay together which has made conversations very interesting, especially when Curt's home to put in his opinion. Whether it's making fun of Curt in his muscle shirt or bugging Renee about not knowing what kiwis were, we are always laughing. Thank you for all the other little things you guys do. , we couldn't have asked for better billet parents.

# 39 Brick Krebs to the Aaron and Karen Ann Thornton Family – The Thornton Family has been very welcoming and supportive these last 3 years at the academy. They have given me a home away from home which is not an easy thing for anyone to do. The kids find ways to keep everyday exciting whether it's starting an ice tea business or ripping around the yard with their little quads. Karen Anne and Aaron have also been great in the way they keep me up to date and on schedule as well as cheering on the team no matter how good we're playing. It has been a great 3 years at this household that I'm sure to miss in the future.

#34 Jaden Hofmann to the Trevor and Christy Hittel Family – I would like to give a big thanks to the Hittel family for taking me as their billet this year. I especially appreciate the free haircuts and the good meals that came along with the fun dinner table conversations. They made me feel at home right at the very start of the year. I hope I could live up to the solid expectations that your billet last year set. So thanks for everything.

#63 Curtis Boyd to the Jody and Aaron Anderson Family – I am thankful for my billets making my Grade 12 year feel like I never left home. Jody and Aaron have cooked me dinner every night and provided me the opportunity to experience life away from home. The kids, Bennett, Kowan and Keifer have made my stay at their home more enjoyable every day. Thank you for everything you guys have done for me and I will miss you all next year in college.

# 31 Brandon Racett to Heather and Brian Norris – Dear Heather and Brian Norris. You two have been my second pair of parents. You know what to say and know when to say it. I appreciate how you go above and beyond by picking us up after practice, making the best homemade meals, and doing our laundry (Heather). Brian, you make a mean steak , just like my papa back home. Heather you make the best food hands down, except for the Yorkshires when they were like hockey pucks. Thank you for welcoming me and putting up with me. Love Brandon

#30 Chance Brown to Heather and Brian Norris – Heather and Brian thank you for welcoming me into your home with open arms. Although our time together has been short you couldn't have been more welcoming. I appreciate everything you do for me from picking us up from practice to making us a home

cooked meal every night and that one time you bought pizza pops they were great while they lasted. Hopefully you will let me drive the quad again someday. Both of you made the transition of moving across the country very easy and I will be forever grateful for everything you have done for me over the last 5 months.

#17 Zack Zinck to Heather and Brian Norris - I would like to thank Heather and Brian for making my move from east to west so easy. They have kept me fed well. Kept me busy when I was missing home, and have showed me many things around the farm. They have treated me like family. I'm really going to miss all of them while I'm gone. Thank you for having me and thanks you for a great year.

As you can see many great relationships have been built over the time these young men have spent with their host families. 9 players will be needing homes for the school term of 2017-18. The Academy offers a \$500 stipend per month per student. A criminal record check is required for all those over eighteen in a home. If you would like to become a billet family contact Heather Norris at 403 664-0917.