



## PART FOUR OF FOUR

# Did Ryan Really See a Dinosaur in His Backyard?

By Donna Sievers

Illustration by Ryan Ito-Allen

**R**yan was the first person to see a baby T-Rex in Boulder, Colorado, and actually the first person in the whole world to see a real dinosaur. At the beginning, Ryan was not sure if he was dreaming or if he really saw the baby T-Rex in his backyard ravine.

Finally, after his mom and dad also saw the baby T-Rex, Ryan believed that the baby T-Rex came from a prehistoric dinosaur egg. Now they had to decide what to do with the baby T-Rex. What do you think they should do about the baby T-Rex that they named Ryanasaurus? Do you think the baby T-Rex could live in their ravine?

Do you remember that Ryan's parents worked at the University of Colorado in Boulder, which is also called CU? It was lucky that they worked there because they could ask the Paleontology Professor at CU what they should do with a baby T-Rex in their ravine. The Paleontology Professor studied and taught students about the history of life on Earth and was an expert on fossils and dinosaurs: a perfect person to ask for advice because he was a well-known scientist. It is always a good idea to ask a world-renowned scientist what to do.

The next day, Ryan and his parents met with the Professor and with the Director of the Zoo in Denver, Colorado. The five of them met at Ryan's house and watched for the baby T-Rex, hoping Ryanasaurus would come out so everyone could see him. Pretty soon, there he was! Ryanasaurus was just looking around the ravine for Ryan. Ryan went down the ravine and took his dinosaur books and started reading to Ryanasaurus while the adults watched. Can you imagine how excited the Professor and the Zoo Director were? They could actually see a baby T-Rex!

During the evening, Ryan and the adults decided that it would be best to have Ryanasaurus go live in the Denver Zoo, so they made plans to build the largest area in the Zoo just for Ryanasaurus. Ryan wished the baby T-Rex could just stay in the ravine but the adults convinced him that the baby T-Rex was just going to get bigger and bigger and that it would not be safe for anyone if the dinosaur lived in the ravine.

It took a few weeks for the Denver Zoo to get ready for the baby T-Rex, and Ryan tried to

explain to Ryanasaurus why he could not stay in the ravine. Ryan drew pictures of the baby T-Rex traveling to the Denver Zoo and hoped that Ryanasaurus could understand him.

Ryan's parents went to speak to the Principal of Bear Creek Elementary School, and they made a plan for all the kids to walk over to Ryan's house and see Ryanasaurus in the ravine before the baby dinosaur was moved to the Zoo. Each class got to walk over and sit quietly while Ryan read stories to Ryanasaurus. The kids were so excited but they sat quietly because they did not want to scare the baby T-Rex. It was the most amazing thing that had ever happened in Boulder! When the kids went back to school, they read stories about dinosaurs and drew pictures of them. Ryan collected the pictures and showed them to Ryanasaurus every day after school. Ryan thought that Ryanasaurus really liked the dinosaur pictures that the kids at Bear Creek drew.

Pretty soon, the day came when Ryanasaurus had to move to the Zoo in Denver. Ryan went with him to make sure the baby T-Rex would not be afraid. That is what good friends do for each other! The Zoo made a great space for him, and Ryanasaurus seemed pretty happy to be there. The Zoo put other animals in the space so the animals could all play together and the Zoo fed Ryanasaurus a lot of food so he would never be hungry and he would not have to hunt for food.

Ryan missed his friend but his parents drove him to the Denver Zoo every Saturday so he could see Ryanasaurus. Each weekend, they spent the whole day together and even when Ryan got older, he still went to see Ryanasaurus, who was now a full-grown dinosaur. When Ryan went to college, he continued to visit Ryanasaurus because they were such good friends.

Ryan decided that he wanted to study paleontology in college because he wanted to always know what was best for Ryanasaurus. He studied and studied and always continued to visit Ryanasaurus whenever he could. When Ryan graduated from college, he applied to teach paleontology at CU, and he also was hired to be in charge of caring for Ryanasaurus at the Zoo. Those were the perfect jobs for Ryan.

Ryan and Ryanasaurus stayed friends forever, and Ryan was always glad to tell kids how he first met the baby T-Rex in his ravine in Boulder, Colorado. The story started like this:

"There is this little boy named Ryan, and one day he saw what looked like a baby T-Rex in the ravine behind his house in Boulder."

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*Donna Sievers was raised in Long Beach and taught at Stanford Junior High, Bolsa Grande High, Pacifica High and CSULB before leaving the classroom for administrator duties in Garden Grove USD. She and her husband live in Bluff Heights, where their retirement activities include volunteering for the Joyful Child Foundation in Memory of Samantha Runnion, gardening at the Bembridge House, bike riding, walking to the ocean and maintaining a 107-year-old house and garden.*