



# GET TO KNOW “LEGO BOY” BRYNJAR KARL!

**What is your full name?**  
“Brynjar Karl Birgisson.”

**Where do you live?**  
“In Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland.”

**What grade are you in?**  
“Here in Iceland I’m in the 9th grade and when I’m finished with the 10th I will go to High school & to College.”

**When did you become interested in LEGO building?**  
“When I was around 5 years old I remember sitting and playing with LEGO all day long. I sometimes build from instructions and sometimes I used my own imagination. At that time, I was obsessed with trains and shortly after that ships became my biggest obsession.”

**When did you start learning about the Titanic?**  
“By the time I was turning 10 I knew everything there was to know about the TITANIC.”

**How old were you when you built the Titanic model?**  
“When I travel with my mom to LEGO-land in Denmark and saw for the first time all the amazing big models of famous houses and planes, locations and ships I probably then started to think about making my own LEGO model. By the time I was 10 I started to think about building the LEGO Titanic model in a LEGO man size.”

**How old are you TODAY? When is your birthday?**  
“Today I am 15 years old. Born January 20.”

**Who were the key people to help you with your Titanic Lego project?**  
“My grandfather “ Lulli” helped me make the instructions by scaling down the original blueprint of the Titanic down to LEGO man size. He also helped me figure out the number of bricks we needed to buy for the model. My mother was my coach and mentor. She helped me to find ways to make this dream become a reality. She helped me with communication and make sure I was on track with my journey. Other key people where all my family and friends that donated money to the project, so I could buy all the LEGO bricks.”

**How did your grandfather contribute to the project?**  
“He calculated how big the model would be to fit the scale of a 4cm LEGO man was equivalent to a 1.75m real person. He also calculated how many Lego Bricks it would take to build it, Plus, he helped me with the blueprints and built a platform for the model.”

**How many Lego Bricks did the model need?**  
“56,000 Lego bricks. But after the front part broke and we rebuild it in Hamburg, Germany we had to buy more, taking it to a total of around 65,000 LEGO Bricks.”

**How did your mom contribute to the project?**  
“My mom had diverse roles in my projects. If she had not supported my dream project it would never have been a reality, because there were so many obstacles that I as a kid could not tackle. Like hosting a crowdfunding online. Ordering the LEGO Bricks from Denmark, finding a location for the building process, buying the tools I needed to work on the model. Teaching me how to communicate to the press and guests that came to visit. And pushing me and comfort me when I was almost ready to give up.”

**Is this your first trip to the USA. How did you feel when you found out you were going to have your model moved to the United States?**  
“This will be my third visit to the US. I was invited to speak at the TEDx kids in San Diego when I was 13 years old and again a year later in front of 1200 teachers in San Diego. I managed to explore the San Diego marine area and also to visit the Queen Mary in LA. When my mom told me that the Titanic Museum had connected with her and offered to host the model I was so happy it was my big dream. I can’t wait to visit the Titanic Museum and meet all the people.”

**When you built the LEGO ship did you have any idea it would receive such publicity?**  
“I never imagined my project would make such impact. Things just evolved and we followed the flow. But I’m very honored and happy that my project was an inspiration to so many others – also motivation to follow your own dreams. Also, I understand much better today, that it’s not only the model that was the attraction, it was my story and how the whole process helped me out of the fog.”

**You did many interviews, but how did you feel when you did the TEDx TALK?**  
“TEDx was an amazing experience and I must admit that my heart beat faster when I stood on the stage and looked out and saw all the crowd. It was my first time standing on stage and performing to an English speaking crowd in San Diego, California.”

**Reflecting on this experience, how do you feel about the project today?**  
“This whole journey has helped me out of my autistic fog. Although I’m still autistic and will always be, I have trained myself to be “as normal as possible”. Whatever normal means ☺ I was totally unable to communicate when I started the project and now I’m standing on stage and giving interviews. It has given me confidence. When I started the building process I had a person helping me in school in every step that I took, but today, I’m studying without any support. My grades have risen and my classmates consider me as their peer. I have had the opportunity to travel and explore and meet wonderful people.”

**As Brynjar’s mother, how do you feel about his accomplishments?**  
“The lessons learned are the most important gift. When parents of autistic kids start their upbringing, they are often totally blind on what the future looks like. There are so many hindrances that their kids will have to overcome to become functional citizens. It’s a really good feeling to be able to share with other parents that it’s more than possible to train autistic kids to the overcome these hindrances.”

**And lessons you learned from this experience?**  
“When your child comes to you with an interesting “BIG / Crazy” dream/mission or goal, he or she would like to reach and need your help. Listen carefully and make an attempt to find ways to support the child to reach that goal. It might be the best investment you ever make for your kid. - That’s my personal experience and not only the LEGO Titanic project has molded him in a very positive way - I supported Brynjar in other projects that I didn’t believe he could handle and he proved me so wrong and that’s the big lesson.”