

Education and Faith in Action WITH THE BLAINES

BY NATALIE LERNER



Vacationing in Jamaica

Photos Courtesy of the Blaine Family

It's not every day you get to have a one-to-one with your district superintendent. After all, she represents over 35,000 students spanning across 44 square miles and does her best to be at every community activity involving those students. Should you ever get the chance though, you'll learn she is always putting education and faith in action, and that some of the best memories in her life have happened at the crossroads of those very things. Down-to-earth, and incredibly inspiring, Spring Branch Independent School District (SBISD) Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Blaine opened up about home life with her husband Will and their son Chris, as well as the steps it took to get to where she is today.

Dr. Blaine is a 1990 University of Iowa alumna with a bachelor's in Elementary Education and a minor in Reading. During

her 31 years in education (the first 10 in the Aldine Independent School District, and the past 21 in SBISD)

she kept working on her own professional development. In 1996, she completed her master's in Mid-Management from Sam Houston State University (SHSU). While working toward a doctorate in Leadership, that she would later also receive from SHSU, Will entered the scene.

"Will and I met my first year in SBISD," started Dr. Blaine. "I was the principal at Spring Branch Elementary in 2001 and had a fabulous team of volunteers from Chapelwood working with our students. They encouraged me to start attending church at Chapelwood. There I met Will during a Faith in Action Saturday. We were both assigned to volunteer at the Shriners Hospital for Children. One of the teenagers Will was talking to encouraged him to introduce himself to me. Apparently

she caught Will staring at me. We went to church together that night, and the rest is history!" The couple has been married 18 years.

Those 18 years have been full of many memories for the Blaines, the fondest being the birth of their son. "We were in awe that two people could create such a perfect little person," she shared. She then admitted, "I also distinctly remember us being scared to death that we were now responsible for another life!"

A little bit of learning and a lot of faith paid off though. Chris, now 17, is a junior at Stratford High School. He enjoys cars and studying stock market trends. Additionally, he loves sports and attending high school and college games. His sport-of-choice is golf. He plays on the Stratford golf team and in individual tournaments sponsored by America Junior Golf Association, Texas Junior Golf Association, and South Texas Professional Golfers' Association.

Will likes golf alongside Chris, so the family frequently travels to places where they can play their “bucket list” courses. Dr. Blaine grew up playing sports, and although she enjoys golf like the guys, as an avid sports fan, her favorite sport is baseball. She’s an Astros and Cubs fan.

The family tries to take a trip once a year together to relax. However, Dr. Blaine’s daily recharge comes from reading. She is even a member of a local book club. “I love to read, so I am happy as long as I have sunshine, a good view and a great book,” declared Dr. Blaine.

Dr. Blaine also makes time for Friday Bible Study and to serve on the Church Council and the Study Committee at Memorial Drive United Methodist Church. There she and her whole family attend The Journey service.

Their extended family of fur babies stays home of course. The Blaines have three dogs, two Great Pyrenees—Simon (7) and Lady (8), as well as one Basset Hound named Lucy (3) and a 9-year-old cat named Blackjack. Outnumbered 4 to 3, they’re definitely a pet family!

“Our pets are super funny and provide non-stop entertainment,” laughed

Dr. Blaine. “Lucy is the funniest and very mischievous. She’ll eat anything! We refer to her as the ‘sandwich stealer’ as she frequently steals peanut butter sandwiches off Chris’s plate when he isn’t looking. She also likes to grab the toilet paper from the holder and run through the house until all the paper is unraveled.”

The pets aren’t the only ones with a funny bone though. Chris and Dr. Blaine love to play jokes on Will! Sometimes they play the same joke twice!

Other fun facts include that Will and Chris once ate two whole boxes of Girl Scout Thin Mints within two days. Likewise, Dr. Blaine once ate three bags of candy corn in one afternoon! The family was almost in a Nature Valley granola bar commercial, and they were in the only train accident ever involving a slow-moving tractor in Hermann Park when Chris was three. Chris was interviewed by the media and put on quite a show!

For 11 years, the family has lived in Nottingham Forest. “Living in Nottingham Forest is like living in a small-town neighborhood,” explained Dr. Blaine. “We all look out for one another and our kids. There’s a true sense of community.



Blackjack



Lucy



Simon



Lady

They say it takes a village to raise a child. I would not trade my village for any other place in the world.” Dr. Blaine has been a huge component in the lives of many Spring Branch children herself, and we are so glad she stays committed to this village!

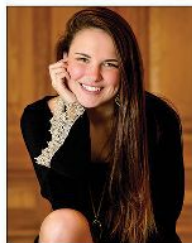
Dr. Blaine has been an elementary and middle school teacher and principal, as well as has served as Area Superintendent, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, helped in Administration and Human Resources, and last served as Chief Operating Officer prior to becoming the Superintendent in 2019.

These achievements make a lot of sense when you see how Dr. Blaine has spent a lifetime putting education and faith in action. It is as much about mindset as it is putting talent or ability to work. Thus the Blaines leave us with this, “Whether you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re right.”



R. Scott Jackson

Photography

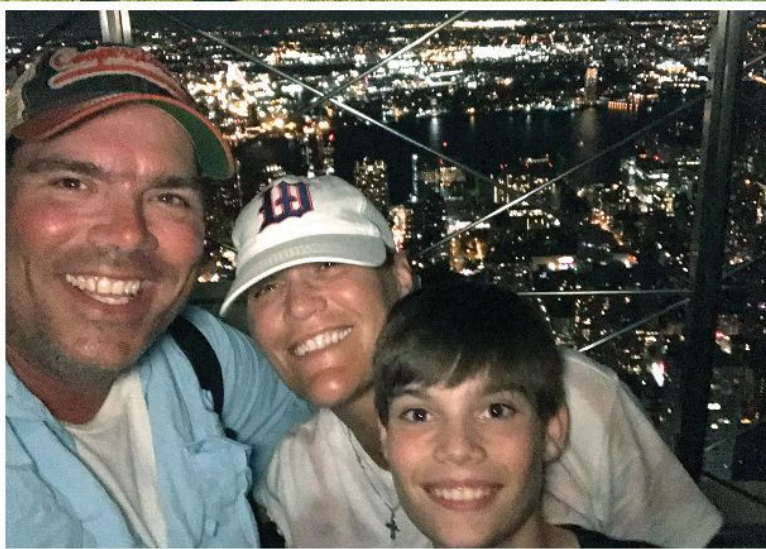


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Will and Chris at Hilton Head



Vacationing in New York City

Thank you to Greg Dial Jr. with Spring Branch Sportsline for coordinating this feature.



 We would like to thank Allegiance Bank for bringing you this month's cover story.

Quick answers.



L-R: Jack McCullough, Jason Sykora, Ignacio Pujol, Jr., Scott McDonald

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