

JULY 2021

Glenview

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Laughing All the Way to Glenview!

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An exclusive magazine serving Glenview & Golf



Laughing All the Way to Glenview!

By David Telisman ♦ Photos by Sari P. Photography

Kim Greene Hiller is serious about comedy and education. A native Californian, she has studied under the best comedic minds in the world and performed and written for the cream of the crop of improv

comedy institutions. Kim the student became Kim the teacher, and she started The Laughing Academy in Glenview.

So, how did she put down roots here?

The answer is two-fold: virtually all theatrical comedy



career roads lead to Chicago, and as we know, Chicagoland, especially Glenview, is a great place to raise a family.

“Right Time, Right Place”

A successful karaoke night usually involves bonding with friends, singing relatively in key, and enjoying some brews or spirits (optional, of course). And when you add meeting your husband to it, well, that’s a big win. That was the case for Kim when she met Jason Hiller on a fateful karaoke outing in 2012.

“We’re both in a second marriage and I met him on the very day I told a friend I was finally ready to start dating again,” Kim says. “Our best memory is the day we met. It was instant chemistry, so much so that inscribed on our wedding bands is ‘right time, right place.’”

Now, that’s putting the “met” in kismet. Kim and Jason married in 2015 at her favorite place, a cozy town called Lakeside in Ohio on the shores of Lake Erie.

Practice Makes Funny

The late Del Close, considered one of the Godfathers of modern improvisational theatre, famously said, “The world is a slightly better place for having improvisation in it than it was before.”

Kim feels the same way. She earned her bachelor’s from Menlo College in California and her Master’s of Education at DePaul University, followed by studying acting at San Francisco’s American Conservatory of Theater and the Stella Adler Conservatory and Michael Howard Studios in New York. From

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there, Kim was accepted into the Second City Conservatory in Chicago and learned under the tutelage of Steve Carell and Stephen Colbert. Next up, she studied under improv legends Charna Halpern and the aforementioned Close at Chicago's ImprovOlympic, sharing the stage with classmates Amy Poehler and Tina Fey.

"Now Tina and Amy host the Golden Globes, and I host the Glenview Education Foundation Trivia Night," Kim says with a smirk.



Having a Laugh

For Kim, getting from point A to point Laughing Academy involved training with the best of the best and fiercely pursuing a career in comedy. She was a performer and writer at Second City Chicago followed by Second City Detroit, where she also taught classes at its Conservatory. In addition, Kim was a member of Chicago's Annoyance Theater's mainstage improv troupe, Screw Puppies, made regular appearances with long-form improv groundbreakers, The Free Associates, and acted in a wide range of industrial videos, voice-overs, and commercials.

Kim's blood, sweat, and tears in the industry culminated in her founding The Laughing Academy in 2010 in Glenview, an all-ages performing arts school offering improv comedy classes in a pressure-free and inclusive environment. More than anything in her professional career, Kim loves being an educator. She loved teaching at Hawthorne Scholastic Academy, Northside College Prep, Apachi Preschool, and she feels right at home teaching students in her own studio.

The Storm

In August of 2019, Kim moved The Laughing Academy to its new space at 3230 Glenview Road. But you see, Improv has no scripts; its essence is its spontaneity and unpredictability. You have to work with whatever is foisted upon you, and the pros embrace the unknown, rapidly molding what they're given into a funny scene. However, nothing could have prepared Kim and her family for the pandemic. A handful of months after opening her doors, she had to close them and suspend classes. But Kim accessed her improvisational spirit and converted her backyard into an outdoor stand-up comedy venue because, after all, the show must go on. She was able to reopen in August of 2020 to hold a summer camp program, and though it was still touch and go for a while, today, students are flocking to her studio.

"I sometimes felt like giving up, but I just kept moving and waiting for the storm to pass," she says. "In a world where nothing ever goes as planned, the genius is not in the planning, it's in your grace to handle the unexpected."



Performing Runs In The Family

Kim’s sons were bitten by the performance bug as well. Her 16-year-old, Terry, plays drums, guitar, and bass in a cover band called Next Week and one that records original songs, called Candy For Breakfast. Tanner, 14, is a vocalist who plays ukulele, keys, and percussion, and recently formed a band with friends he’s known since kindergarten. Jason is their stepfather, whom they’ve affectionately nicknamed, “Jason Guy.” Rounding out the family unit is their 11-year-old Shepherd mix, Quin.



An Amazing Community

As a child, Kim’s family moved every two years, and during her first five years after college, she lived in four different states. When she moved to Glenview in 2006, Kim was hopeful that she finally found a permanent home. By the looks of it and the success of The Laughing Academy, it’s a safe bet that she’s here to stay.

“I am so grateful that I landed in Glenview so long ago,” she adds. “I could never have known then what an amazing community I would soon be part of. The Laughing Academy has been around for 10 years now, and through this I have worked with literally thousands of Glenview families, and their support has meant so much. There are so many entrepreneurs and go-getters and so many people from around the world doing such incredible things here.”

For more information about The Laughing Academy, visit thelaughingacademy.com or call 847-724-2787.



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