

The Kusbels of Manchester Meadows

A Community Focused Family

By Cheryl Wooten

If there's something positive happening in Valparaiso, chances are you'll find the Kusbels in the middle of it with their sleeves rolled up. They've never met a stranger and there's nothing they'd rather do more than join in with what's happening in the community and help wherever it's needed. Frank, Lisa and their three children, Matthew, Lauren and Jacob, are on the go-go-go!

Both region natives, Frank hails from Hammond and Lisa from Griffith. After graduating from Griffith H.S., Lisa was working as a temporary receptionist at JL Prescott where Frank also worked. "He accidentally followed me home from work one day and that's how we met. Frank is six years older than me, so my parents weren't too happy with that," laughs Lisa. During their four-year courtship, Lisa became a flight-attendant with American Airlines which came in handy after their August 1991 wedding. "I had nice travel benefits so we asked around for a good honeymoon destination. Jamaica kept coming up so we picked a resort out of the travel book. Let's just say it was less than four-star. We need to re-do that trip, but at a different resort!"

Frank graduated from Morton Senior H.S. in Hammond then studied business at IU Northwest in Gary. "I started working for the Hammond Group in 1988. Four years ago, our division was sold and I was one of two people tasked to find a new location. We found a great place in Valpo and moved the division here where it became AM Stabilizers. We recently purchased a liquid heat stabilizer manufacturing company in Franklin, PA, so I travel there frequently." Frank has been in the same business for 30 years and "wouldn't give it up for the world! I started out as a quality lab tech, moved up to quality manager, then production manager and now director of operations. It's a great fit for me. I love working with people."

In 2014, after 25 years as a flight attendant, Lisa retired from flying but realized she missed the social aspects of her career. "I wanted to find a job that actually helps people and one where I could talk to the public. So, I got my real estate broker's license and began working for Realty Executives Premier. A few months later, I was approached by the Valparaiso Parks Department's executive director, John Seibert, who asked if I would be interested in being the director of development for Valpo Parks and I accepted." Wearing two hats, Lisa enjoys both her real estate career and Parks position. "I love visiting with the many companies in Valparaiso and showing how they can partner with the Parks Department on projects and campaigns. We're still in need of more sponsorships."



Frank, Lisa, Matt, Jacob, Lauren and their dog, Lexi.

The Kusbel's oldest child, Matthew (23), graduated from Chesterton H.S. and was involved in basketball, baseball and cross country. He is currently finishing his degree in business management at Purdue NW and for the last five years he's worked in the lab at AM Stabilizers. He lives in Valparaiso and enjoys playing guitar, Franklin House, water sports, snowboarding in Michigan, and ice hockey with the Valpo Parks league at the Urschel Ice Rink. He also coaches his younger brother, Jacob's, hockey team.

Jacob (10) is a fifth grader at Memorial Elementary. The family recently moved to Manchester Meadows and "Jacob loves his new school, his teacher and his 'job' helping the coach out during gym class," says Lisa. He loves playing Nerf guns and his favorite sport is ice hockey. But Jacob's real passion is Civil War reenacting. The first time Jacob experienced a live reenactment, "all the sudden they were charging, shooting and falling," recalls Lisa. "The other kids around him were terrified and screaming, but not Jacob. He wanted to be in the middle of it. He loved it! Now he has a uniform and we had to buy him a musket," she laughs.

Lauren (21) also graduated from Chesterton H.S. where she played volleyball and varsity basketball, threw discus and ran cross country. Lauren was a National Honor Society member, made the principal's honor roll and has done two summer internships at AM Stabilizers. Now a junior at IU Bloomington, she is studying speech and hearing sciences. "I have a cousin that has Down syndrome



Jacob helping Frank serve at the annual Chefs Around the Table.



Lisa, Jacob, Lauren and Frank celebrating a road win at PNC Park in Pittsburgh.



Matt, Lauren, Lisa and Frank on a bike ride in Santa Monica, CA.



Enjoying a visit to see Lauren at IU.

and he would go see a speech pathologist, so I started looking at that area of study," Lauren says. "Also, for a high school field trip, I had the opportunity to shadow several professionals and I really liked what the speech pathologist did." She stays busy as the Phi Mu sorority community involvement chair and loves "giving back to the community. Like mother like daughter!"

If community involvement was an Olympic sport, Lisa and Frank would be medalists. "Our nights are always filled with something," says Lisa, a Tri Kappa. "We volunteer where we can and enjoy helping Opportunity Enterprises and the United Way. We're on the board for Rusty's Hope and Frank has coached many of the kids' sports teams." This past October, Frank and Jacob made Baked Potato Soup for Our Greater Good's Chefs Around the Table fundraiser.

Each year the Kusbel's try to attend a Cubs' game and in summer they spend sunny days at Porter Beach. Lisa's father lives in Florida, so they get away there for sunshine and sand at least once a year. And on New Year's, they head to their family lake house in Michigan to "celebrate on Eastern time, one hour before Valpo gets to," grins Lisa.

One of their favorite events is the Popcorn Festival. Frank says, "It's my second favorite holiday next to Christmas! I love the 5k, listening to music all day and enjoying the downtown area" And Lisa likes shopping at the festival's craft booths. Throughout the year, they enjoy the many outdoor concerts in the park and favorite restaurants like Stacks, Main & Lincoln and Shoes Pizzeria. "There's plenty to do downtown," says Lisa. "That's why we moved out here and we couldn't be happier living in Valparaiso."



Jacob in his Civil War reenacting uniform.



Frank and Lisa at the Valpo Night Ride.

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