

NORTH VALPO

NEIGHBORHOOD

Inside This Issue

Chicago Architectural Tours
Fishing Derby
Spelling Bee Winners

Cover photo by
Angie Januchowski,
Aspen Studios

The
Gadacz
Family

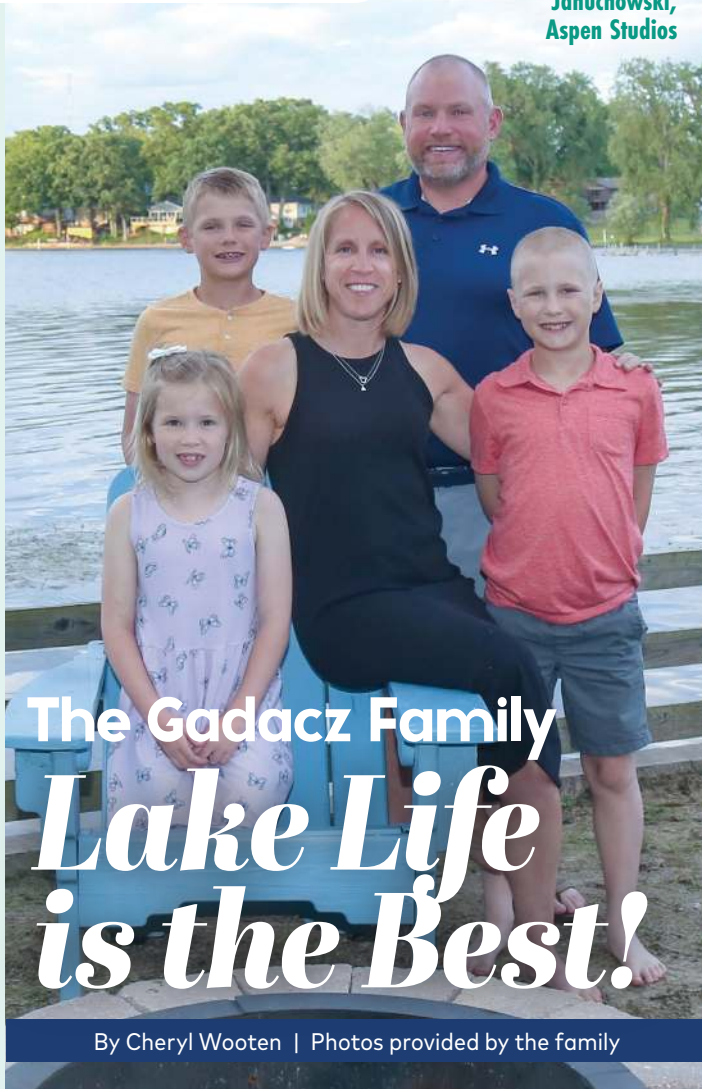
*Lake Life
is the Best!*

POWERED BY
BVM
BEST VERSION MEDIA

www.bestversionmedia.com

◆ MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

Photo by Angie
Januchowski,
Aspen Studios



The Gadacz Family Lake Life is the Best!

By Cheryl Wooten | Photos provided by the family

The Gadacz family, residents of picturesque Flint Lake, thrive on the joys of living on the lake. From early morning sunrises, to serene evenings, summer days are filled with endless fun and adventure. Whether it's boating, fishing, swimming, or simply relaxing on the dock, the Gadaczes embrace every moment spent on the water.

Brandon and Staci Gadacz purchased their home on Valparaiso's Flint Lake in 2012 just before their first child was born. "We moved here to enjoy lake living," shares Staci. "We love the relaxed life the lake provides during the busy years of raising children. We have lots of fun nights with campfires, pontoon rides, swimming and playing wiffle ball in the yard."

Both Staci and Brandon grew up in New Carlisle, Indiana and graduated from Rolling Prairie High School. "It's a very small town and all four of our parents went to high school together," laughs Brandon. "There's only one stoplight and no fast food." He and Staci began dating during Staci's sophomore year and Brandon's junior

year. "We dated through high school then long distance while we were in different colleges." After graduations, in 2005 they were married at The Old Republic, a beautiful and historic Italianate style mansion in New Carlisle. After honeymooning in Riviera Maya, Mexico, the Gadaczes settled in Valparaiso.

Brandon earned a degree in computer science from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana and in 2004 began his career with IBM as a managing consultant. In 2018 he took a position at Mondelez International--a multinational confectionery, food, holding, beverage and snack food company based in Chicago--and is now the SAP (System Applications & Products) business intelligence platforms manager. "I work on the software programs that help businesses run smoothly," says Brandon. "Before we had kids, I traveled a lot, but now most of my work is remote. It allows me more flexibility with my family." In addition, his kids are big fans of the new product samples that Brandon occasionally brings home such as mint flavored Oreos and Blue Sour Patch Gum.

Staci, who knew she always wanted to be a teacher, attended and graduated from the University of Indianapolis with a degree in Spanish teaching. "Originally, I thought I was going to be a math teacher, but then it dawned on me that most children don't care for math. But I loved my Spanish teacher and had more fun in that class, so that's the direction I chose," she explains. During college, Staci studied abroad for a short time in Mexico City, Mexico where she was immersed in the culture and language. She also completed her master's in education through Indiana Wesleyan University. From 2005-2012, Staci taught Spanish at Valparaiso High School up until she had her oldest son, Mason. "Early on as a teacher at VHS, Brandon and I chaperoned a student trip to Spain which was very fun." Staci is now a part-time instructional aide at Flint Lake Elementary.

Mason (11) will be a middle schooler this fall. An avid baseball player with Valpo Americans, Mason enjoys nearly all sports. He



Fun on the double decker!

swam with the Valpo Swim Club, likes football and will be trying cross country in the fall. "But baseball is my favorite," he says. "I play shortstop. I also like playing wiffle ball in the yard and if it hits the house, it doesn't break anything." During the winter, Mason--an excellent skater--plays hockey at Central Park and on Flint Lake. In fact, the entire Gadacz family enjoys ice skating on the lake. Mason

is very involved in robotics club, math bowl, science bowl, and has been a member of student council in the past. He does very well in school and loves math.

Jonathan (9) will be going into fourth grade in September. Like Mason, he is a dedicated baseball player with Valpo Americans. "I like playing catcher, shortstop, first base and second base," he says. When he's not playing baseball, Jonathan is an all-around athlete who likes to swim, play soccer, basketball and flag football. He was



The Gadaczes are Disney people!

a member of student council this past year, is a great student and loves math. "I also like video games."

Emily (7) will be entering second grade this year. A typical baseball sibling, Emily gets to tag along to all the boys' games and tournaments. She is active in gymnastics, likes to play with her brothers, and will be trying volleyball camp this summer. Emily is the artist of the family and is extremely creative. "I like to draw baby kitties and all animals," she shares. Emily's artwork was even chosen for the school art show this year.

The Gadacz family is constantly on the go and finding ways to stay active together. "We are Green Bay Packers, Chicago White Sox, and Notre Dame fans," Staci says. The kids enjoy Urban Air Trampoline and Adventure Park in Merrillville, Valpo's Zao Island, and Emily's favorite playground, Butterfly Park. If the kids get to pick where the family dines, it will most likely be Chick-fil-A, Ben's Pretzels, or sweet treats at Rocket Fizz. Brandon and Staci enjoy Blockhead Beerworks, Tomato Bar, and El Salto. And when time allows, Staci likes to pop into The Press Bookstore & Coffee Shop to read a good book over a cup of coffee. "It's a really cute, quaint place."



Minnie and Daisy.

Both Brandon and Staci actively volunteer with their kids' many activities. Brandon is the president of Valparaiso Americans Baseball and coaches multiple teams for their sons. Staci has coached soccer and basketball at the YMCA and volunteers at their children's elementary school. Staci is an avid runner and has participated in several runDisney races. "You get to run through the Disney Parks at 5:00 a.m. before they open to the public," she says. "They have four events each year at Disney World and my goal is to do each one at least once." So far, she's done the Disney Wine & Dine Half Marathon, the Disney Princess Half Marathon, and with Brandon, they ran the 4-day Disney Dopey Challenge.

The Gadaczes are now full-fledged Disney people. "Our hearts are in Disney," says Staci. She and Emily even named their two cats Minnie and Daisy. The family takes a yearly vacation to Florida and Disney World. "We enjoy all four Disney parks for different reasons, and we love riding and experiencing as much as we can while we're there." Mason's favorite rides are The Tower of Terror and Guardians of the Galaxy; Jonathan's is Avatar Flight of Passage; and Emily's is the Seven Dwarves Mine Train. "We always drive there and the past few times we've tried to incorporate a visit to the coasts. We enjoyed visiting Cocoa Beach and the Kennedy Space Center and this past trip we enjoyed the beautiful beaches of Clearwater."

Although Florida has a lot to offer, nothing beats the fun that the Gadaczes have every summer day at home on Flint Lake. There's paddleboarding, kayaking, swimming, floating, fishing, and jumping off the dock. But their favorite way to spend the day? It's aboard their rebuilt double-decker pontoon boat where the kids jump off the top or ride the slide into the lake. Every splash brings laughter, and every moment together is cherished. There's no question about it. Lake life is the best!



Baseball is a family affair.



Climbing the dunes.

DO YOU KNOW A NEIGHBOR WHO HAS A STORY TO SHARE?
 Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at cwooten@bestversionmedia.com.