



MARLER

Christmas Newsletter



Volume 14

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December 2004

Once again, this has been a year of trials and tribulations for our family. Fortunately, we ended the year with a great experience we will share later in this newsletter. We look forward to the New Year and pray Jeff's job keeps him within U.S. boundaries, Keegan's health improves and the kids continue to catch up.

We concluded 2002 with a visit



from Kristy's parents. We enjoyed the Christmas festivities and playing in the snow on Mount Charleston (20 minutes away).

January was very busy. We con-



tinued with the kids demanding schedules. Jeff prepared for three flying upgrades while running the scheduling office for his unit by himself. The gray hairs started to show!

In February Jeff was off to San Diego for 3 days to learn how to rescue people at night in the ocean.

In March Keegan celebrated her 5th birthday. Keegan dressed like Strawberry Shortcake since that was the theme for her party. She had a great time.



In April Kristy spent her 38th birthday with a girlfriend on a hotel getaway with full spa treatment. Kristy enjoyed the adult company and relaxation. During

spring break, we headed to Salt Lake City, Utah. We visited our autism specialist; Dr. Jepson. He ran several tests and evaluated the children's diet and overall intestinal status. The children are on a regimen of many vitamins and supplements to improve their condition. It has helped to relieve our worry about their poor diet habits and immune system deficiencies. A longtime girlfriend of Kristy's (Suzee), her husband and sweet son came to Las Vegas for a visit. We met up for dinner at the Hausbrau Haus. It took Jeff, Kristy and Suzee for a trip down memory lane when they went to Oktoberfest in Munich eight years prior. The Easter Bunny made a visit to the house leaving baskets full of wonderful treats. At the end of the month Keegan underwent her annual MRI. The procedure went smooth and Keegan remains blessed! **NO reoccurrence** for the fourth year. We are slowly approaching the 2006 "cured" date!

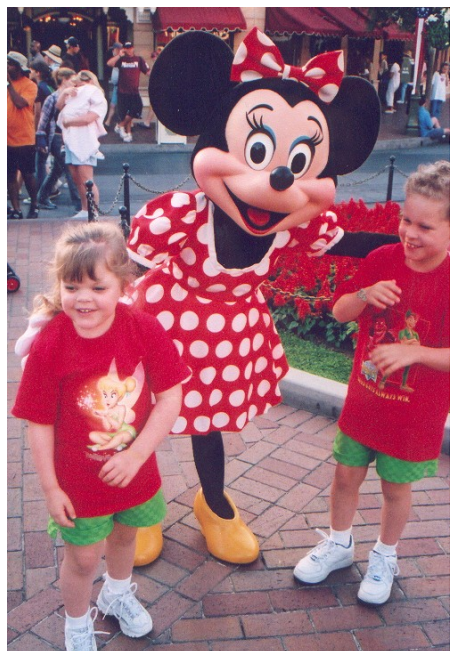
In May Braden started an American Youth Soccer Organization VIP soccer



team. It was so heart warming watching this "special needs" team enjoy the game. The cheering from the parents and players make you tear up with pride. Keegan underwent an EEG to check for seizure activity in her brain. Before receiving the results we had a terrible fright. Early one Saturday morning we heard Keegan gag over the baby monitor. Jeff went to retrieve her, to bring her to our bed. He carried her into our room and informed Kristy that Keegan was paralyzed and unable to talk. The panic set in. Was the tumor back, did she have a stroke, or worse? Jeff rushed her to the ER for tests and scans. The results were puzzling. Keegan seized so hard on the left side of her brain that she paralyzed the right side of her body and some brain functions. This phenomenon is known as Todd's paralysis. Eventually, she regained her functions and strength. There was no clear reason for the seizure. Keegan's previous EEG result came back showing incredible seizing activity despite her anti-seizure medication. The answer was to increase her medication. Unfortunately this caused Keegan to function at a low rate. She was extremely exhausted and fought so hard to stay focused. It was so painful to watch her struggle! At the end of May we had to say farewell to a person we all adored. Dani Cook was Keegan's homeschool teacher for the last two years. She was so kind and gentle with Keegan. The friendship will stay with us forever. We love you Dani!

Once again, we spent the first week

of June in the Grand Californian Hotel in Disneyland. This has become our annual vacation. The trip was wonderful. We spent six days enjoying both Disneyland and Disney's California Adventure. We rode all the rides and visited our favorites several more times. Braden's new favorite was the Califor-



nia Screamin' roller coaster. Keegan loved the Matterhorn. They both love speed! Of course Mom & Dad enjoyed the smiles and cheers from the kids. We can't wait to return next June! In mid-June the kids started swim lessons, a great way to beat the Nevada heat. The kids love the water. The kid's home ABA schedule increased once school ended for the summer.

On the second of July we mourned the loss of our beloved dog Dakota. Her health had drastically declined and we didn't want her to suffer so we had her euthanized. Dakota found Jeff & Kristy 14 years ago as a few week old puppy. She is deeply missed and fondly remembered by our family and other dog Cheyenne. God Bless you Dakota! We stayed at Mandalay Bay for the Fourth of July. We hung out poolside all day and had an amazing view of the fireworks that eve-



ning from our room. That night we met up with another Marler family. Kelly, Natalie, Nic, Garrett and Payton (Jeff's middle brother and family). We had a great visit with them. Keegan finally had a girl cousin to play with. Braden enjoyed hanging with his older boy cousins as well. Braden celebrated his 7th birthday in mid-July. He had a Shrek party. We had a piñata for the first time. Braden didn't like the hitting of Shrek at first...then he really got into it. We then had to say farewell to Jeff. He redeployed to Operation Enduring Freedom. We had to pull up our bootstraps and tough it out again. The military family and its role. Jeff was



gone before we could celebrate our 16th wedding anniversary. Before he left Jeff had an anniversary cake designed to duplicate our original wedding cake. Knowing Jeff was leaving Kristy decided to join Gold's gym to have a daily stress relief. It was her saving grace!

In August Kerri, Jonathan, Christian and Connor (Kristy's sister and family) stopped by for two quick visits. It was such a treat for all! Suzee and Bernard returned to Las Vegas and spent a great evening with Kristy on the strip. Keegan continued to



struggle with paralyzing seizures and her medication. Her neurologist decided to change anti-seizure medications. It took six weeks, and trust us, it was difficult. Keegan went from exhausted to overactive. She was thinking clearly,

energetic and for the first time able to potty train. We were ecstatic! In late August the new school year began. Braden transferred to a new and much improved school. We chose to repeat first grade to give him a second year to build a strong foundation. This year he spends 50% of his time in a Primary Autism class with three other classmates. The purpose of the Autism class is to focus on academics. He is in the best autism program in our district. It's a relief knowing he



is in a classroom that is prepared and knowledgeable about autism. The rest of the day he

spends in a typical first grade class, which includes PE, music, drama, computer lab and art. We are pleased that Braden is working on the three Rs and showing great progress. We are so proud of Braden and all his hard work. Keegan continued home schooling with a Kindergarten, OT and speech teacher. With the seizure setback, medication issues and lack of immunizations, homeschool is the perfect fit.

In September, swimming classes ended and soccer season continued. We were all staying busy and looked forward to Jeff's return home.

Before we knew it, it was October. Jeff came home safe and sound. It was time to celebrate Jeff's 38th birthday and Halloween. Kristy and the home therapist threw Jeff a small surprise party. Unfortunately the day before, Jeff's unit crashed a helicopter and member of his unit was killed. It was a tough thing to go through. Finally Halloween arrived. Braden and Keegan were dressed as their favorite Disney characters this year: Peter Pan and Tinkerbell. They were adorable! It was a bit chilly trick-or-treating that night. Poor Tink nearly froze off her bell.

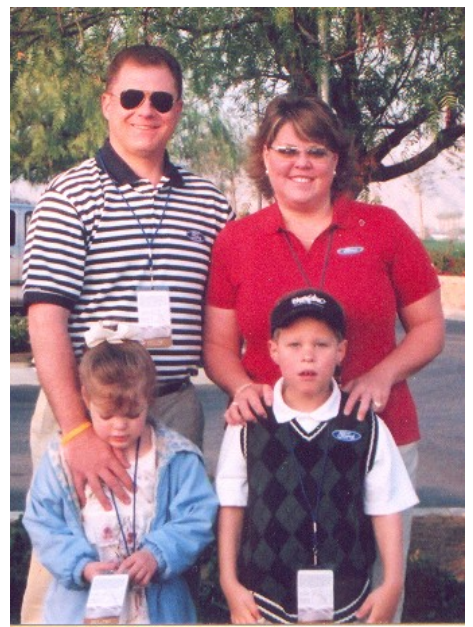


Peter stood arms akimbo every chance he could.

In early November Jeff worked the Nellis Aviation Nation Air show. Braden loves getting into all the aircraft, especially



the Pavehawk (a chip off his ole' man's shoulder). Braden & Keegan fought the flu. Keegan also continued to seize at night despite the new anti-seizure medication. Her doctor increased her medication by 50% at night and Keegan had a negative side affect...a skin rash. We had to stop the medication immediately. Keegan was put on Klonipine (valium type drug) as a temporary measure. She was a little zombie. She couldn't think clearly, walk well and was always exhausted AGAIN! We waited until she was healthy to start back with the newest anti-seizure medicine. We spent Thanksgiving in Palm Springs, California at the Merrill Lynch Skins Golf tournament. Kristy had won an all expense paid trip to the tournament and a chance to win a 2005 Ford Five Hundred car. Jeff randomly chose Tiger Woods golf ball prior to the tournament to represent the family. On the 17th hole Tiger

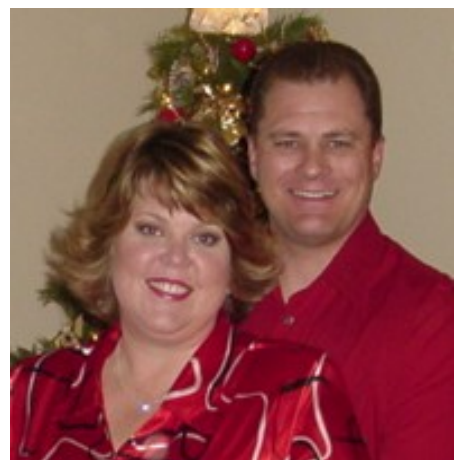


was the closest to the pin and won Kristy the car. Ford is letting Kristy pick any options she wants for the car and will deliver it within 6 weeks. We hope to get it by Christmas!

As soon as Kristy could get the Christmas boxes out she was making the house look festive. She just loves to decorate for the holidays. Keegan was able to restart her previous anti-seizure medicine and is doing well on it. We are planning a Christmas Gathering to thank our therapists for their dedication and commitment to our children's fight with Autism. Some of our girls have moved on. We want to say a special Thank You to: Kathryn, Kassandra, Amy, Jill, Whitney, Dani, Terri, Lucia, Marcie, Kris, Mr. Dean, Sandy, Janet, Joyce, Heather, Mr. Cory and Noreen. All these special people have really big hearts and we adore them. We also plan to have our neighbors over to thank them for their support during Jeff's deployment and how they lined the street with "welcome home" signs and balloons. They are so wonderful to have as friends and neighbors. We still have some shopping to do for Christmas and plan to take the kids to the mountains soon so they can play in snow. We plan to be busy but together.

We continue to have monthly Lovaas workshops, endless therapy hours (ABA, Speech, OT) and school. The kid's schedule remains full and they continue to achieve. We are proud of their accomplishments and their drive to succeed.

We hope your family remains blessed and together during this holiday season and New Year. We continue to pray for our service members, their families and America. If you are ever in Las Vegas, be sure to look us up as we recently found out we should be here at least another two years.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Love,
Jeff, Kristy, Braden and Keegan
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