



MARLER

Christmas Newsletter



Volume 16

December 2006

We have had another great year! We faced many hurdles and managed to come out blessed! We look forward to the New Year and what surprises it has in store for us. We will be separated a bit the first part of 2007 (nothing like this past year). We will pray for less separation, Keegan's health and the kids continued developmental gains.

We concluded 2005 with the four of us together safe and sound. Christmas was simple and cozy. New Years Eve rang in an addition to our family. We adopted an American Pit Bull Terrier from the humane society. Bailey was 5 months old and the runt of the litter. She was the only survivor...a miracle puppy. She looked adorable with her pouty bottom lip. We knew instantly she needed to come home with us and join our family. She is the sweetest dog. She is gentle, cuddly and smart. Cheyenne, now 16 years old, is adjusting to having a younger sister. A perfect way to start the New Year!



The rest of January remained typical. We continued with the kids' demanding schedules. Jeff continued his flying schedule. He went to Florida for an Instructor Pilot course.

In February Jeff was off again. This time to Albuquerque for simulator flight training. When Jeff wasn't traveling he was the Chief of Mobility. This kept him very busy with all the deployments..

In March Jeff was preparing to return to Iraq. Prior to leaving we needed to get one thing done for our peace of mind. It was time for Keegan's annual MRI. This one was truly significant. This would mark her 5th year of remission from her brain cancer. This clean scan proved Keegan was CANCER FREE! This was a moment we were awaiting for a long time. With news like that it was time to celebrate. We went all out. We rented a banquet room at the officers club, chose the meal, ordered the cake, ordered the live butterflies, hired the videographer, bought the princess like gown (tiara to boot), sent out the invitations and bought a ton of decorations befitting of such a party. Days before the gala our lives were flipped upside down! Kristy was called to the school as Keegan had began acting oddly. As Kristy reached the nurses office, she could see a seizure was immanent. Kristy prepared Keegan for her anti-seizure injection. The seizure came and showed no signs of stopping. An ambulance was called. Just as they showed up Keegan stopped seizing. The paramedics left and Keegan went into a non-stop cluster of seizures. The ambulance returned and she was rushed to the emergency room. The seizures continues throughout the transfer and into the Pediatric ICU. She was given so much sedation to stop the seizures that she was out for nearly a day. During this Kristy's parents arrived in Las Vegas for



Keegan's big celebration. Their arrival was a blessing. They kept Braden and helped cancel all the party plans. After many cat scans it was discovered that Keegan's VP shunt (in her brain) had come apart and stopped working. Oddly enough, this did not explain the seizure clusters. Keegan had surgery to replace the shunt. She also started a new sei-



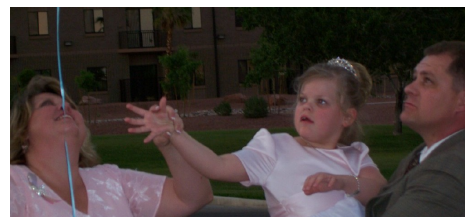
zure medicine. Another blessing, Jeff didn't deploy. He was replaced due to Keegan's emergency. That helped relieve some of our mounting stress. Keegan remained in the hospital for over a week. While in the hospital she turned 7 years old. This is how she spent her 1st birthday (in the hospital having chemotherapy). When she was released we had a little birthday party for Keegan at the home. The big gala would be rescheduled!. Another blessing came from the kids school. The teachers put together a collection and made a donation to Dr. Reddy's research foundation in Keegan's name. Dr. Reddy was Keegan's Pediatric oncologist/neurologist.



In April we spent Kristy's 40th birthday at Disneyland. This was our annual vacation that we took it early since Jeff would be redeploying to Iraq for the entire summer. It



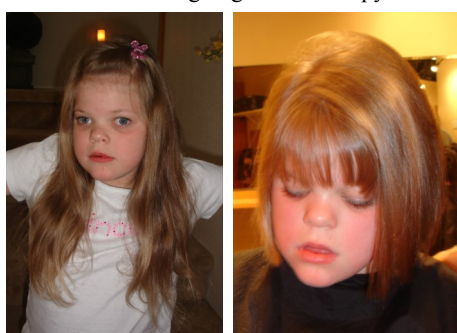
was the perfect place to celebrate the big 40. Kristy felt like a kid and the entire family had a blast! Both the kids remained "daredevils" and tackled all the roller coasters. When we returned, Kristy rebooked all the "Cancer Free" party plans. Keegan had a beautiful celebration on April 30th. She looked like a princess! We had a large gathering. Some of the highlights of the party were the letters read from her Doctors, nurses and cancer



family, the release of live butterflies (the start



of her rebirth), the Daddy daughter dance and all the love felt and shared that evening! It was a party befitting of our



angel here on earth~ Keegan Shae Marler.

For those awaiting your copy of the party CD...we apologize, it is not done. Life has been crazy as you will read. We hope to get it to you by the one year anniversary of being cancer free. Keegan marked her amazing blessing by having her first haircut and donating to "Locks of Love". They make wigs for children undergoing chemotherapy and/or



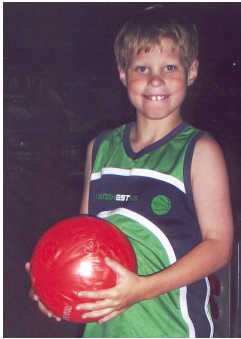
radiation treatments. In May we attended the Cure Autism Now 5K walk. The kids school joined in and we were a team worth reckoning with. We raised quite a bit of money. We received a new Lovass consultant Joe Donohue. We thank our previous consultant, Noreen Laberinto, for her time and knowledge while leading our team. Joe is the perfect addition to our team/

family! The transition was easy. To wind out the month Kristy celebrated Mother's day and we had a short visit from Jeff's Mom, Lucille and husband Doug just prior to Jeff deploying.



In June, Keegan graduated from Kindergarten. She was so cute singing songs at the ceremony. Days later, Jeff left for Iraq. It would be a whole summer without him. Hard on all of us! Kristy's Mom came out to help ease the boredom. Now that they were on summer break we kept the kids on the go. Swimming, bowling, movies, riding their bikes and ATVs, music lessons and therapy. Jeff celebrated Father's Day in Iraq. We were really missing him!

The weekend of the Fourth of July, we stayed at the Mandalay Bay hotel to enjoy the awesome pools and holiday fireworks. We returned home to host our annual block



party. It was great food and friendship! Grandma returned home by mid-month. Braden celebrated his 9th birthday. He had 2 "Cars" parties, one with best friend Katie and then one with the therapy staff. Braden enjoying them both. At the end of July, Jeff & Kristy celebrated their 18th wedding anniversary. Although they were world's apart they



feel blessed to still be together and in love after all these years and life's hurdles.

In late August the new school year began. This year Braden is in 3rd grade; spending majority of his time in a typical class (which includes "SPECIALS": PE, music, science, computer lab, library and art), with Resource for academics and a half an hour a day in a secondary Autism room with the assistance of his aide, Mrs. Sandy. Keegan started 1st grade with the same set up as Braden with her aide, Ms. Christine. The kids love their aides. They provide stability, compassion

and security while on campus! The kids have many friends at school this year. The social gains are invaluable. They love school. Keegan's strengths are academics. She is blowing us away.

In September, Jeff returned home. We all could finally take a deep breath and relax. Our neighbors through him a Welcome Back



party. He really enjoyed it. Jeff also presented many of our friends and loved ones with American flags he flew in Iraq on his 50th combat mission. Everyone was truly touched by the sentiment. Jeff presented a large flag to the kids school. The Principal is very patriotic so it seems fitting, Braden continued drum lesson and Keegan began piano lessons. Keegan is doing so well! She is a natural. Braden has improved so much. His sessions are easier on the ears now!



Before we knew it, it was October. Jeff surprised us all by buying us a new home. We decided we wanted more space for our growing children. We started the fun (not) of selling a home while living in it and preparing a new house for the move in. The new house is so nice. It is located in a gated golf community (we need to learn how to golf). We have a community center, gym, pool, sports area and children play area. The home is gorgeous. It's 3665 square feet. It has 4 bedrooms, four full baths, a retreat off the master bedroom, an office which provides both the kids with their own therapy room, 3 car garage, a huge yard (unusual for Las Vegas) and a ton of amazing upgrades. The sweetest part of the house is that it was a builder close out so we purchased it for nearly 100,000 dollars below the cost of the home. We also were apart of a great Pulte incentive program. When moving from a Pulte home to a new Pulte home they provided the realtor, pack and move, professionally clean the old house and return 3% of the commission. All too good to pass up. While closing on the new house, the Air Force decided to cut us orders to move us to New Mexico. WHAT???? As if we didn't have a enough to do, we now needed to prove why we are not candidates to move. Albuquerque



just doesn't have the medical providers and autism services we need. While dealing with all of this we managed to celebrate Halloween. This year Keegan wanted to be a purple butterfly and Braden adorn a medieval warrior costume. We also celebrated Jeffery's



40th birthday with a Halloween costume party.

In early November we once attended the Nellis Aviation Nation Air show. This year we took a special friend, Flat Stanley. He is



our nephew's (Christian Hinkle) school project. Braden enjoyed watching the Thunderbirds. The noise was too much for Keegan. For Thanksgiving we moved to the new house. We did make ourselves stop long enough to go to a restaurant to eat a traditional Thanksgiving meal. We have spent every free moment trying to get the house together before Christmas. We are making very slow progress with no end in sight. We also received word that our moving orders have been turned off and we would remain in Las Vegas. Another blessing!

In December, we continue to get the house put together. It is driving Kristy crazy not being able to decorate for the holidays. She will make up for it next year! We closed on our previous home in mid December. What a relief and blessing! We will be attending a few holiday parties this month. We look forward to our annual previous neighborhood dinner (no longer hosted by Kristy) and the other for our therapy team. Amongst our chaos we insist on hosting a Christmas Gathering to thank our therapists for their dedication and commitment to our children's fight with Autism. We want to say a special Thank You to: Home team~ Kassandra, Whitney, Elaina, Cameron, Beth, Noreen, Joe, Heather and school team~ Mrs. Sandy, Ms. Christine, Mrs., Graf, Mrs. Engh, Ms. Erica, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Peterson, Mr. Dean, Ms. Joyce, Ms. Kay, Katja, and our new & wonderful principles Mrs. Murray and Ms. Fredi. All these special people have really big hearts and we adore them. We feel so blessed to have so many wonderful friends. We still have shopping to do for Christmas and plans to finish setting up our lovely home. In January Jeff will be leaving for Alabama to attend a military education school for Captains.

We continue to have monthly Lovaas workshops, endless therapy hours (ABA, Speech, OT) school and music lessons. The kids' 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 fellow service members overseas, their families and America. If you are ever in Las Vegas, be sure to look us up. We love to see old friends.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
Love,

**Jeff, Kristy,
Braden and Keegan
Marler**

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