



Oak Haven Happenings

December 2011

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Merry Christmas to all of our friends & family!

We hope that all is going well for you. It's nice to take the opportunity to reflect and appreciate all the blessings in our lives as we close on year 2011.

Our biggest blessing this year is that our family grew from 6 to 10 people! Elizabeth Little joined our family officially on April 30th when she married our son, Brian. What an exciting time that was with



Elizabeth & Brian

Bridal showers, the Dress Rehearsal outdoors at Chilo Park, the wedding at her church in Felicity, the reception following at a country club in Amelia, and a brunch the next day at our house. Wow! It was great to see so many of our friends and ex-



Jennifer, Michelle, Kristin, Elizabeth, Brian, Julie, & Jim

tended family. Thank you for sharing this milestone with us.

We also now have three grandchildren: Gabby (5), Landon (4), & Matthew (3). Kristin & Jennifer have been

fostering them for the past 15 months. Most of the summer was spent thinking that we were giving them up soon. In August, Kristin had all of their things packed up since they would be leaving di-



Gabby helping Elizabeth & Brian with shower gifts.



*Gabby, Landon, & Matthew with their new baby brother Lakin.
(Lakin lives with his grandmother, but gets to visit often.)*

rectly after the court hearing to Florida. The outcome of the hearing took a surprising turn and a 2 month delay followed. Kristin was thankful to have the extra time with them. She also filed for permanent custody and was told that she had a half of 1 % chance to get the kids. Then in October the judge surprised us all by awarding Kristin permanent custody. Another big wow! It was definitely a God move. (Thank you to so many of you who were praying for this situation.) I figure that God's best for these three kids was to be placed in our family. The kids adore Kristin and call her "Mommy". We have been Uncle Jim & Aunt Julie all along, so I'm not sure what they will end up calling us. Jim is not ready to be called Grandpa



Landon, Gabby, & Matthew take a walk with Kristin.

since it sounds too old! ☺
Kristin (26) Along with raising Gabby, Landon, & Matthew, she is in her 4th year

teaching at Imagine Schools in Dayton. Her time is split between two schools now teaching science and reading to K-4th grades. She loves her job, but her dream is to be a stay-at-home mom and homeschool her kids. She still finds time to garden, quilt, cook from scratch, do read-alouds with her kids etc. She is a wonderful Mom.

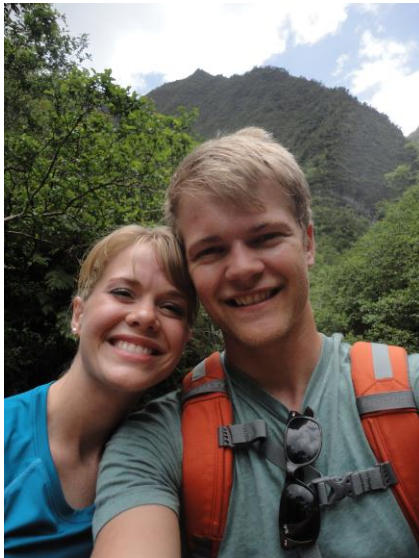
Jennifer (25) She is in her 11th year working for 4 Paws for Ability. She continues to help teach classes, train service dogs, and coordinate foster and breeding homes. She & her dog, Connor, are also involved in competitive obedience and now have a Rally Novice title. Her foster puppy Slugger is now a multi-purpose service dog trained in seizure work and tracking skills for his partner Cole. Currently she has a new golden puppy to foster, Dewey! Jennifer's house continues to be transformed both inside



Jennifer, Gabby and Connor being "buddies".

and out. *(Partly because of insurance money from hail damage, but mainly due to all Mom and Dad's amazing hard work. Love you guys and thank you! - Jenn ☺)* It's amazing how much more welcoming her home is now. She is so busy, but she always finds time to help out with Gabby, Landon & Matthew. Their favorite phrase together is: "You're sooooo my buddy!"

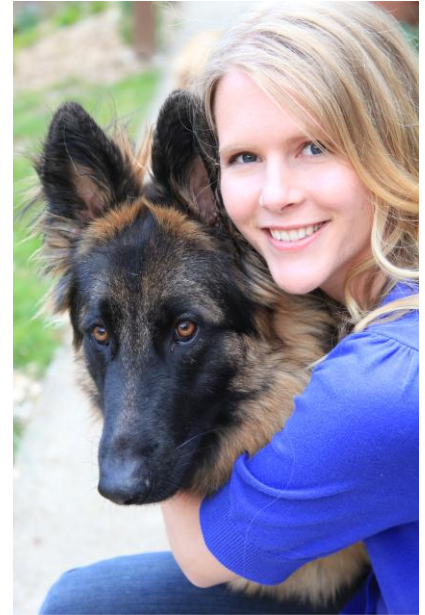
Brian (22) He & Liz live thirty-five minutes away in a cute little country house in Felicity that Liz's parents own. Jim has been helping Brian build a deck on the back of the house. The deck would be finished except that they started a new venture of renovating a house to flip. Brian is learning so much about doing renovations. It also suits his strengths of negotiating, researching materials and finding good deals. He hopes to use his real estate license to find the properties with the



Elizabeth & Brian on their honeymoon in Hawaii.

best potential. He also helps us out in our photography business. Liz works as a nurse at Clermont Mercy Hospital 10 min. away from us and is also going to school part-time to get her bachelor's degree in nursing. We like it when they spend the night at our house several times a month so Liz can be closer to work. (We also appreciate their great cooking!) We're thankful that both Brian & Liz value family and spend a lot of time with both sides of the families.

Michelle (21) She is a realtor for Sibcy Cline and is always on the lookout for potential real estate deals for us. She found a great house in the East Gate area that we just closed on last week that we plan to renovate and flip. (Our 2nd flip.) She also works part-time as a Vet Assistant at



Michelle and Dash

Family Animal Hospital in Batavia. It has made her appreciate what a great dog she has in Dash. She & Dash just started taking dog training classes this Fall, which is helping Dash with his shyness.



Kristin, Julie's mom, Jennifer, Michelle, Jim, & Julie in County Kerry, Ireland

Another highlight of this year was a trip to Ireland in July. Jim, Kristin, Jennifer, Michelle, me and my mom all went. It is as green as they say (because of all the rain). We had a wonderful time and just took our umbrella everywhere we went. We toured castles & manor houses, drove along the coast of Dingle Peninsula, explored quaint little towns, and drove all over the countryside seeing ancient ruins dot the fields. Our favorite day was watching a sheep herding demonstration with dogs in the Killarney National Park along the Ring of Kerry. It is a beautiful country, but I am glad that we live in the U.S.

Jim & I celebrated our 29th Anniversary this year. The end of October we flew into Portland, OR and drove up to Mount Rainier in Washington. Breathtaking! Then we drove past Mount St. Helen's, through the Columbia Gorge separating Oregon & Wash-

ington, down to Mount Hood, and over to the coast at Newport, OR. What fun we had exploring mountains and coastline. We saw several new birds for us and especially enjoyed watching the seals & sea lions! (Being married to Jim is a huge blessing in my life.)

It has been a fun year seeing the world again through the eyes of little children. Just the everyday things of walking through the woods with them and looking up close at insects or colored leaves, being at the park and playing like a kid again, swimming in the pool and helping them gain confidence, singing in the car, listening to Gabby read, camping with them in the pop-up camper and answering their myriad questions a day.

Life is full of blessings!



Thank you for being our friends! We always enjoy getting cards and letters. May you cherish the blessings in your life!
With love,
the Varicks



Julie & Jim at the base of Mount Rainier, Washington.



Julie at Multnomah falls in the Columbia Gorge, Oregon.