

# I-35 North

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## The Trieb Family: Choose to be Happy



Engage  
Publications

Photo by Rick Mayo | Mile 90 Photography  
Location: Tobacco Barn Farm



Left to right: Tessa, Tucker, Kandis, and Travis Trieb. Belle, a 1.5-year-old lab, is in front. Photo by Rick Mayo / Mile 90 Photography



# The Trieb Family: Choose to be Happy

by Kristi Mayo

If you had to pick one thing that has defined the lives and careers of Travis and Kandis Trieb, it would be the ability to adapt. Throughout their relationship, the couple—who met in 1998 and married in 2005—have reshaped and redirected their careers as needed. But at the same time, they have strived to put down roots in the community and reach for happiness at every turn.

Kandis grew up in Goodland, Kansas and graduated high school in Baldwin City, Kansas. She met Travis, who attended Kearney schools from Kindergarten through graduation, at his cousin's wedding. In 2003, Travis proposed to her at his sister's wedding, and in 2005 they were married in his parents' Kearney back yard.

They both jumped into careers straight out of high school. Travis opened his own painting business, Paint4U, in 1996. Kandis attended The Travel Academy and started working for a travel agency in Lawrence, Kansas. She was at work on September 11, 2001, a day that she will never forget.

"We had clients calling that were stranded in different places, trying to get back home to their families, but flights

weren't going anywhere," she said. "We watched the towers on the news and it was just such an emotional day and then to add in that feeling of helplessness when our clients were calling wanting to rent cars or get flights rescheduled to get home and we could not help them."

Not long after 9/11, Kandis—now living in Kearney—switched gears and got her real estate license. She started working with the Kearney Reece & Nichols office, specializing in new construction.

In 2006, Travis and Kandis were newlyweds, living in their new home in the Hills of Westwood subdivision, both working careers that focused heavily on new construction. And then the bottom fell out of the housing market.

By the mid-2000s, Paint4U was well established in the area, but when new construction dried up, Travis needed to find a way to adapt and fill in during the off-season. He and his parents, Gary and Terri Trieb, started a Christmas-light hanging company to help keep the Paint4U employees working through the winter months.



“That was the start of Santa’s Holiday Lighting,” said Kandis, “a true family business, as it takes each of us to make it work: Travis, Gary, Terri, and me. We just completed our thirteenth lighting season.”

Meanwhile, Kandis was faced with another career move. She continued with real estate until the couple’s daughter, Tessa, was 2.5 years old. Then they decided that Kandis would stay home with her and take care of all the bookkeeping for Paint4U, Santa’s Holiday Lighting, and the family’s rental properties in Kearney.

The transition opened up an opportunity for Kandis to find something new that she truly enjoys. “I am a Beachbody coach,” she said. “Finally, after all the other career paths, I have found my passion!”

### “Choose to be Happy”

Despite all of the career twists and turns, the Trieb family puts an emphasis on enjoying life to its fullest.

Their daughter Tessa, now ten years old, leans toward the performing arts: she has danced with Studio 320 since she was three years old, and is involved with Southview Singers—a choir group at Southview Elementary that is invited to sing at different events throughout the year. Her favorite subject in school is math. Also, Tessa and three friends started a club with the objective of helping animals.

“They do different little activities around Kearney to raise money that they are saving to donate to an animal shelter,” said Kandis. “They call themselves the 4 Seasons Club!”

Their son, Tucker, is six years old. He loves playing outside—especially riding his bike, camping, fishing, and exploring around the lake. He also attends karate at Advantage Martial Arts. “He loves Master Phillips and the special events they do during the summer months,” said Kandis. “Last summer he did a Ninja Camp for a week and enjoyed every second of it.”

Travis’s hobbies are hunting and fishing. “He has managed

to make that the kids’ hobbies as well,” said Kandis. “Both kids love spring turkey hunting and Tucker got his first turkey this spring, so he was thrilled! We love camping and fishing together as a family. We are also huge Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) and Royals fans.”

There are also three canine family members in the Trieb household: 14-year-old Princess (who was the flower girl in Travis and Kandis’s wedding), 4-year-old Sadie, and 1.5-year-old Jezebel (“Belle”).

“The younger two are both Travis’s bird dogs, but they are extremely spoiled and treated as members of the family,” said Kandis. “Lounging on the couch and begging for table scraps are a couple of their favorite activities.”

The family, which now lives just outside of the Kearney city limits on a few acres of land, is happy to call this town home. “Travis grew up here and has never left so that should be proof of the love we have for our community,” said Kandis. “One of the things that makes me proud to be a member of the Kearney community is the love and support that is given when one of us is in need.”

She added that the community has been essential in helping Paint4U and Santa’s Holiday Lighting keep going all these years. “As local business owners, our message to the community would always be a huge thank you for the support of our business,” said Kandis. “When we bid and paint a house in Kearney, it is such a great feeling to be working right here in our community and increasing the value and appearance of someone’s home or business for them.”

That feeling of satisfaction ties back to the family’s motto, “Choose to be Happy,” said Kandis. “We all get so wrapped up in what we have to do and get done and fit into each day and I think it is so important to try and not let all that swallow you up. I try to remind my kids to always look around and realize all of the blessings in their life and be happy and thankful for that, every day.” 🏠



(Photo left) Tessa dances with Studio 320. (Photo above) The Trieb family takes an annual fishing trip to Canada. Left to right: Travis, Tucker, Tessa, and Kandis... and Belle in front. (Photo right) Tucker attends Karate with Advantage Martial Arts. Photos submitted by family.

