



*“Holiday Greetings from the Zweibohmers”
Travis, Britta, Matthew and Kelsey
2013*

Kelsey is in middle school, can you believe it? We certainly can't! The sands of time are falling quickly... Matthew will be in high school next year and both of them are already exploring their college options in Florida and Iowa. Kelsey still dreams of one day becoming a dentist and takes her education very seriously. Her constant dedication has earned her placement in all the gifted classes and continued honor roll certificates. She just recently won a science medal and is also looking forward to a national leadership conference in Washington D.C. over the 4th of July. Kelsey continues to play clarinet in the Liberty Pines Academy school band, and is excited about an opportunity to be a make-up artist for school plays. Over the summer Kelsey visited the St. Louis arch and spent a short time in Cedar Rapids before bringing her friend Camryn back to spend a week with our family exploring area tourist attractions. Kelsey has flawlessly kept her friends back in Iowa while making new friends here. It's as if she has the best of both worlds having close friends in two different locations, and she's hoping to meet even more with her upcoming involvement in the national leadership conference.

Matthew's move from Iowa to Florida a year and a half ago has proven to be a positive one as well. He is far more involved in activities here and has a practice, meet or event every day of the week other than Sunday. He and Travis became heavily involved in Gracie Jiu-Jitsu over the past year and attend classes together three nights a week. Matt quickly earned four stripes and it has not only improved his physical strength, but has the added benefit of spending quality father/son time with Travis. Matthew also had fun participating in Liberty Pines Academy's track team, playing both alto and baritone sax for the school band and he still found the time to be on the honor roll. But, it seems we can't go anywhere without someone mentioning Matthew's involvement on the school's morning televised announcements. From teachers and parents to fellow students, everyone seems to know Matthew from his work on anchoring the morning news or helping with the daily productions in one way or another. It is something that happened quite by accident, and allowed him to meet people quickly.

Britta had hoped for more quiet time after her parent's deaths and the move to Florida, but it has proven to be quite the opposite. With Matthew and Kelsey's increased involvement in and out of school, the addition of a hamster and turtle and numerous issues with our newly built house, it seems there is rarely down time other than our monthly trips to Disney World. We were extremely saddened to learn that the expansion joints were improperly installed in our custom built home, so all exterior stucco will be removed in coming months and new stucco will be applied. We feel as if we never fully got the chance to enjoy our new home, before we were forced to pack up three rooms on the first floor. It has been a devastating nine month set back and has thrown us into "new house limbo" for far too long. On a brighter note, custom cabinets have been installed in Britta's upstairs tea room, and she is anxiously waiting for the exterior construction to end, so she can unpack all her pretty china and glassware permanently. With the house currently in disarray, it is often easier to get in our vehicles and explore our new state, rather than face torn out walls and displaced furniture. So, Britta's new Mercedes Benz SUV is her current little piece of heaven until our home is properly fixed. It's hard to feel too sorry for ourselves though while being surrounded by so much beauty in our new state and being blessed with so many new experiences and adventures. We love Florida, despite issues with our home's builders!

Travis' year was all about accomplishing personal goals and checking items off his bucket list. He had always hoped to take his mom on a cruise and he did so in addition to taking his sister Ivy as a college graduation gift. In fact, he went on three tropical cruises, a trip to France, multiple trips to Canada and too many Orlando getaways to count as we purchased annual Disney passes for the entire family. He is also exploring Florida on a custom Harley Davidson motorcycle that was more than a decade in the planning and building process. As one would imagine, he was elated with the opportunity to drive both a Lamborghini and Ferrari racecar for an afternoon as part of his 40th birthday celebration too. Knowing his enthusiasm for vehicles, most of you won't be surprised to learn that he bought a new vehicle again, this time an Audi SUV. But, not all his goals are centered on work, travel and vehicles. Travis accomplished a personal goal of obtaining a Jiu-Jitsu blue belt and he continues to work out and sharpen his shooting skills as well. Most importantly though, we fit in a record number of family weekends and treasured every moment of them! The kids are growing quickly, and we value our time together.

As always, our year was filled with some ups and downs, but the good always seems to outweigh the unfortunate things that occur. The house may be facing some major re-construction, but our family continues to be thriving despite it. Four walls and beautiful surroundings mean nothing, if you don't have loved ones to share them with. We are feeling abundantly blessed to have so many new opportunities to share time together and enjoy one another's company—in fact, we'll be celebrating the holidays on a tropical cruise. Christmas day will be spent on the white sands of Key West, and although the thought of that isn't everyone's idea of a typical Christmas, we take great pride in the fact that we've become a lot more open to change and trying new things. May you also find happiness in new adventures and treasured traditions over the holidays and throughout the coming year!