

“Holiday Greetings from the Zweibohmers”

Travis, Britta, Matthew and Kelsey

2016

Kelsey is thrilled to “finally” be in high school, and stepped onto campus just one class shy of sophomore status. Always wanting to be a step ahead, she received special permission from the district to take an extra class, thereby officially being one full year ahead. Kelsey is enrolled in all honors and advanced placement classes, and despite the enormous amount of homework she encounters, she still finds time to be heavily involved in extracurricular activities. During her last year in middle school she was the school mascot, a student ambassador, a member of the Junior National Honor Society and won the President’s Award for outstanding academic achievement. Kelsey served as student council treasurer in both middle school and high school. She’s also enjoying photography club, Future Business Leaders of America, and will be performing in the Nutcracker play at school this week. Kelsey opted to attend the same high school as Matthew, which is outside our zone, and has met several like-minded and highly motivated friends whom we adore. The transition has been seamless and well worth the lack of bus service to and from school. Kelsey recently obtained her driver’s permit, so it won’t be too much longer before she can drive herself. In the meantime, the entire family has been busy happily driving Kelsey to her many activities.

Matthew is a high school junior and is also heavily involved in school activities. Over the past year, he received his band letter and two state medals for his work with the Future Business Leaders of America. He went on to place tenth in the nation at the FBLA National Leadership Conference in Atlanta Georgia in July. He competed in the “Management Information Systems” category, and is already working on his latest project. Matthew was also very pleased to have been appointed Secretariat in the Model United Nations Club at school and recently won the Gavel Award at a state competition. He’s been busy taking some college courses and also earned several national certifications in information systems and cyber security—most of which are too complicated for his parents to understand! Matthew is now the proud owner of a 2014 Volkswagen Passat and will be doing a lot of driving back and forth to Orlando City soccer games as the boys look forward to using their season tickets when the new stadium opens this spring!

Britta has come to the sad realization that she has a mere year and a half left of having both kids under our roof. Suddenly each family memory is a bit more special knowing our time together is limited. Britta decorated three full sized Christmas trees this year and is paying special attention to family holiday traditions. With Matthew and Kelsey’s many activities, it’s growing increasingly difficult to schedule family travel, but we did enjoy a short trip to Savannah Georgia in the spring and a weeklong trip to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon and the Hoover Dam over the summer. Britta continues to rent out china and glassware for local parties, but has hosted very few of her own recently. She considers her main duty to be “support staff” to the family and takes on all sorts of duties and odd jobs, such as frequenting second hand shops for theatre performance props. It seems each day is drastically different, yet each night ends with the same hugs and kisses—therefor it’s the best job on earth!

Travis continues to enjoy the Florida lifestyle of biking year round with the Jacksonville Harley Owners Group. He’s logged in more than double the miles he had in previous years and loves visiting sites throughout Florida and Georgia that would more than likely be missed in family outings. He also spent a great deal of time teaching Kelsey how to drive a car and teaching Matthew how to find a car that is the right fit for his needs. In fact, Travis purchased two cars this year—a Volkswagen Passat for Matt and a Mercedes Benz C300 for himself. With three German cars in the driveway, there is no mistaking our heritage! In his spare time, Travis cleared brush in the forest preserve behind our home and remodeled our laundry room to include beautiful dark cherry cabinets. At work, Travis and his team won the “Medtronic Star of Excellence” award this year, which is no small feat among ninety eight thousand employees. He is the first to downplay his many accomplishments, but jokingly admits he was just trying to keep up with is award winning children!

Among the highlights of 2016, was encountering our first real hurricane, ironically named “Hurricane Matthew.” Our local friends tell us that we can now refer to ourselves as true Floridians after we hunkered down and weathered the storm, rather than fleeing the state. We consider ourselves very blessed to not have encountered any damage, but our county was hit hard and there are still many people in the process of rebuilding. This year, and EVERY year, there is much to be thankful for! May thankfulness fill your heart as well this holiday season...Merry Christmas to our dear friends and family!