



Transplanted Katyites

**"I wasn't born here,
but I got here
as fast as I could"**

Britt and Tracey Simmons with
their kids Ryan 8, Mathew 6,
Abbie 3 and Aaron 9 months

Katy has seen drastic changes over the last few decades and the growth that has occurred in this once small rice farming community is simply astonishing. Even more amazing is the fact that Katy manages to maintain its strong sense of community while growing so rapidly. One thing that remains the same is echoed in the city motto which proudly asserts that whoever you are, "You'll Love Katy!" This motto (which all true Katyites are familiar with) contains an invitation and a promise that many have found to be true. It doesn't take long to discover that there are people from all walks of life that have moved here in recent years and now call Katy home.

Living here and Loving it

Unlike many areas that have grown through urban sprawl, Katy remains a community in the truest sense of the word. Founded as a family settlement in the late 1800s, Katy retains that atmosphere that makes it inviting, even after absorbing thousands who find themselves living here - and loving it. There just seems to be something about Katy that feels like home no matter where you came from before.

Melissa Toney is originally from New Orleans, but now proudly calls Katy home. Like so many others, she and her family came to the area in the wake of hurricane Katrina thinking they would go back home a few days after the storm had passed. However, she and many others soon found that conditions in New Orleans were much worse than anyone had originally imagined.

Community Unity

Toney's first experience in Katy came just days after that tragedy, when she and her family stopped at a fire station here. She recalls being given things they needed like water and clothes, and it was then that she felt a sense of how great the people of Katy are. Her first impression was that "the people of Texas are just too nice!" During a time when they most needed to see a smiling face, they found it in Katy.

When it became clear that she could not return to New Orleans, she and her family immediately thought of Katy as the place to settle down. They were impressed by the "open spaces" that Katy had to offer, "all the new development," and her feeling that "the people here are wonderful." After researching the area and the schools, they knew that Katy would be their new home, and would be a place where they would want to stay.

In New Orleans, Melissa had worked as a nurse. However, she now works as a teacher at Morton Ranch High School, where she teaches Health Science Technology. It is just one way for her to give back to the community she has come to love. When asked if she plans to stay, Toney says she can't imagine being anywhere else and that Katy is all she had hoped for. Not only that, but she has become one of Katy's strongest advocates, persuading her mother, sister and aunt to move to the area. Her brother is still thinking about it, but she almost has him convinced as well. "I'm trying to influence everyone to move to Katy!" she says.



Melissa Tomey and Family
relocated from New Orleans

Coming Home Again

Another new face in Katy is David Yates, who moved away from the area in the early 1980s, and has now returned to Katy. Upon returning, he was surprised by the amount of growth that has occurred, remembering the days that I-10 was a “two-lane highway each direction.” He relates how just 20 years ago there was not much between Hwy. 6 and the City of Katy and how everything past Highway 6 was considered to be “in the country”. Newcomers to Katy are amazed to hear there was a time not too long ago when the stretch of road between Houston and Katy was not a seamless thread of restaurants, hotels, businesses, and shopping.

When Yates lived here over 20 years ago, he says there was nowhere close by to go out to eat after church. Katy was also not as diverse and did not have the city feel that it has now. But what he finds most appealing about Katy of today is that it still feels like a small community where a person can go out to places and run into people that you know. He likes going into locally owned businesses like his favorite restaurant - The Bagel Café - because it still has a home town atmosphere where people will chat with each other or start up conversations.

Friendly Texans

Britt and Tracey Simmons feel very much the same way. They moved from Ohio, but she is originally from Canada. So when asked what Katy has to offer she says she loves it here because “Katy has an atmosphere of a small town, with all the big city choices.” When first moving here they were surprised to discover how friendly people in Katy are. “I was invited to almost

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David Yates

every church in the area; the cashiers were friendly, and I made several friends within weeks of moving.” The Simmons moved to Katy looking for a place close to family, where the cost of living and wages were better, which seems to be a common factor that attracts people here. She loves that the people here are always outside in the evenings, and the kids are always out playing. “It’s just like when we were kids,” says Simmons.

The small town charm, big city amenities, friendly people, and available opportunities will continue to draw new faces to Katy, and these stories represent those of many new ‘Katyites’ that have grown to love Katy and call it home. ★

Jason Soroski is a writer, musician, transplanted Katyite and father of five who teaches at Morton Ranch High School and loves living in Katy.

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Where Newcomers Go for Katy Resources

KatyMagazine.com

Katy Magazine's online magazine has up-to-date Katy jobs, events and news for the area. The site also has thousands of local business listings including restaurants, stores, churches, childcare, doctors, dentists and more. katymagazine.com

Katy Area Chamber of Commerce

People moving here can get maps and information at their LaCenterra headquarters. katychamber.com.

Katy Sports Leagues

Putting the kids in a sports league is an excellent way for all of you to meet new people. Try one of these excellent Katy area programs.

Katy Youth Basketball (katyouthbasketball.com)

Katy Youth Soccer Club (katyouthsoccer.com)

FFPS Soccer (ffps.org)

Houston Youth Football League (hyfl.net)

Katy Youth Football League (katyouthfootball.com)

Katy America Little League (katyamerican.org)

Katy National Little League (katynational.org)

Restaurant Reviews

B4-U-Eat.com has listings of local restaurants, online reviews, listings of kids-eat-free or seniors discounts on certain nights of the week, and more.

Katy Life

Katy Life is the 2008 Newcomer and Resource Directory that's jam packed with resources for Katy area newcomers. It's in production now for an April release date. To request a copy, contact Katy Magazine at 281-579-9840 or watch for it in Katy Magazine's stands around town.

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