



Raising Boys,

Katy's Van Hoozer family embraces challenges as they raise an all-boy family

Written by Meagan Clanahan | Photography by Anetrius Wallace

Mike and Gina Van Hoozer knew from the beginning that they desired to have a large family. Mike grew up as an only child and wanted his children to have the siblings he never had. Gina, one of three children, had a blissfully happy childhood and yearned to pass that along. They have five children, all boys - Drew, Will, Kyle, Ben, and Grant. They couldn't be happier to be raising their troupe in Katy the past 16 years.



The Van Hoozers have a blast raising their five boys, Kyle, 16, Will, 19, Grant, 11, Ben, 13, and Drew, 20

Building Men

Bountiful Blessings

On any typical day, the Van Hoozer household is buzzing with children, parents, and friends. Extremely active in the Katy community with church, sports, and various clubs, they often open their home to host a multitude of gatherings. For Gina, an art teacher at Seven Lakes Junior High, even the overwhelming amount of laundry and dirty dishes that comes with five boys is absolutely worth it. “I am thankful that I have dirty laundry to wash because it means I have an active family,” says Gina. “I consider that a blessing.” Of course they have systems in place to keep their family organized with all of their activities, but they always

allow for flexibility, which keeps everyone happy. “I have learned over the years that trying to keep a ‘perfect’ home and having ‘perfect’ children is unattainable and just not what’s important,” says Gina. “Muddy shoes, dirty clothes, and spills on the floor just don’t matter.”

The Juggling Act

All of the boys, including two now in college and one as young as fifth grade, have always participated in a variety of sports. However, the Van Hoozers set down some ground rules to keep their schedules somewhat sane. “One activity or sport per season for each son was what we’ve tried to



Mike and Gina Van Hoozer cherish many memories of their boys being not only brothers, but best friends and partners in mischief

stick to,” says Gina. “We feel that some downtime and family time is just as important as scheduled activities.” They love to eat out as a family, go to movies, take in a high school football game, or just throw the ball around at a local park. Some of their best afternoons have been spent turning off all technology and focusing on their family.

As for Gina and Mike, they are 100% devoted to each other and their family. When they can, they take full advantage of a date night out to Carrabba’s, their favorite Katy eatery. In the evenings, when the house is quiet and the boys are in bed, they use that time to connect and check in with each other.

Controlling the Chaos

Of course, raising active boys has brought challenges, or as Gina refers to it, “controlled chaos.” She recalls a day years ago in Target where she had all of the boys with her as she was trying to get some quick shopping done. She remembers purchasing the obligatory popcorn and red Ices to make it a little less painful but by the end of the trip, two or three were whining in the cart, red sticky slushes had dripped through the cart and all over the boys, popcorn was falling on the floor in the checkout line, and Gina was on her hands and knees trying to clean up the mess while the children kept screaming. She laughs now to remember what that must have looked like, but in her ever-positive manner she says, “We survived!”

Celebrating Uniqueness

The Van Hoozers realized each time they left the hospital with a new baby that they were bringing home a completely unique personality. “All five of our sons are so very different and special,” says Gina. “We have raised them to be similar in their values and morals.” They are committed to praying together as a family, and often call their two eldest in Waco so they can all pray for each other. They are flexible in their parenting style, adjusting to the personalities of each boy. They understand that what works for one child may not work as well for another child, and they’ve learned to embrace their differences. Their hard work has paid off. Gina recalls a time when their “spender” Kyle took out a loan with the “saver” Will to purchase an Xbox. “Will did not charge him interest, but Kyle graciously paid him back, plus some, to say, ‘thank you.’”

Lessons Learned

Gina and Mike recognize now that the boys most often remember the memories of time they have spent together over any amount of money their parents have spent on them. Their sweetest moments have been times when they’ve let the laundry or dishes go, and instead walked outside to watch the boys play together. They also recognize that this is all too brief a season and project contagious positive attitudes. “In the coming and going of a busy family, with what seems to be a never ending cycle of carpooling; dirty, smelly boy laundry; grocery shopping; scrubbing and cleaning; preparing meals; doctoring wounds; packing lunch boxes; helping with school projects; feeding the pets; and attending the many activities and events the kids are involved in, I will choose to be happy!” Gina reflects. **KM**



MEAGAN CLANAHAN is a wife and mom who loves meeting such fun and unique families in Katy.

Fast Facts on the Van Hoozer Five



DREW, Baylor University student, 20
First born, responsible, natural care taker of younger brothers, leader, and good friend



WILL, Baylor University student, 19
Kind-hearted, sensitive to others, easy going, shares his knowledge with younger brothers so they can improve, and the “saver”



KYLE, Seven Lakes High School sophomore, 16
Assertive, passionate, finds an efficient way to get things done, ups the fun of any event, and the “spender”



BEN, Seven Lakes Junior High seventh grader, 13
Easy to be around, goes with the flow, goal setter, disciplined, and organized



GRANT, Kilpatrick Elementary fifth grader, 11
Aggressive, outgoing, head-strong, wants to win with a caring heart

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