

Keeping UP With Kristin Miller

find out how this wife, Mother of six, and Executive Director of the Katy Visual and Performance Center Manages to Juggle it ALL

Chantelle



Kristin



Aaron



Rhiannon



The Katy Bunch

Andrew



Aiden



Clyde

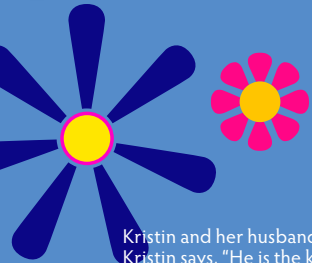


Chris



What's the secret of raising six energetic kids ranging in age from 2 to 21 while working as a hands-on Executive Director of a fast-growing Katy area arts organization? Only Kristin Miller can answer that question. Known for her vivacious personality, boundless energy, and genuine love for children and the arts, Miller is clearly passionate about two things: 1) Her family and 2) The Katy Visual

Everyone pitches in at home – leaving time for fun as a family



Kristin and her husband Clyde. Kristin says, "He is the kindest person I know."



and Performing arts center. She's best described as a fun-loving, wise cracking theatrical type who thinks big, yet doesn't sweat the small stuff. Born and raised in Utah, Miller began acting and dancing at age seven and spent her youth performing at the Life Arts Center in Salt Lake City. As a teen, Miller went on tour with Life Arts playing the title character in Molyan and the Magic Paintbrush. The center offered her a job and Miller felt right at home teaching dance classes in the center she spent so many years. But soon, the starry-eyed teenager fell in love and traded in her Molyan costume for a wedding gown. The young couple started a family and Miller's acting ambitions were temporarily put on hold.

The Road to KVPAC

When Miller's first husband was offered a job in Houston, the young couple moved from the cold Rocky Mountains to the hot flat lands of Texas. Several years later, the marriage ended and Miller found herself a divorced mother of three. Going back to what she loved, Miller started a performing arts troop called *The Moving Company* that traveled to different childcare centers and schools teaching theater on location. A few years later, Miller joined the group of artists that made up KVPAC and it took off. Over time, most of the artists left, but Miller, along with another KVPAC founding member, Cindi Gardner, stayed and helped transform the small center into a fast-growing arts organization, now serving 18,000 students a year. "KVPAC is amazing because each year we say there's no way KVPAC can grow by 50% again and every year it does," says Miller. But she is quick to give all the credit for KVPAC's growth to her talented teachers, staff and board of directors.

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Having fun at KVPAC



Kristin surrounded by some of the kids at KVPAC

Her philosophy: "Hire people you really trust and then get out of the way and let them do their jobs." Miller is also proud that 89% of the students served are served through community outreach programs at no charge.

A Family Affair

In the early days, KVPAC was based out of a small warehouse in Old Katy until they moved into an historic Victorian home that served at KVPAC's headquarters until 2006. Miller says the upstairs room in the Victorian house made a nice area for her kids to do their homework, play video games, or rest while she taught after school classes. Over the years, Miller's kids would participate in various arts classes, and still today, all of them feel like KVPAC is their second home. Christian, Miller's 15-year-old son, spent many hours taking classes at KVPAC, but has also stepped up to help on many occasions as a last minute understudy for actors who couldn't go on stage. Even Miller's two-year-old son is in on the KVPAC action. "Aiden has his little class that he goes to, but he calls it Baby Pack (instead of KV-PAC)," laughs Miller.

Being at KVPAC is a way of life for Miller and although she makes a very modest salary (averaging about \$9.50/hour) she says working with the kids and bringing arts to Katy makes it all worthwhile. "My day starts at 5 AM and ends at 11 PM. A lot of caffeine comes in to play. But everybody I'm around seems to be striving for positive things so it keeps me going."



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Kristin's Tips for Balancing Work & Family

FAMILY DINNERS

"One of the rules of our house is nobody leaves the kitchen after dinner until the kitchen is clean. The best thing about it is everyone stalls because they don't want to clean, but we all get a chance to talk for a long time."

CLEAN BEDROOMS

"Actually I have low standards at home, but I really hold to them," jokes Kristin. "As soon as we can smell you're room, you've got to clean it."

ONE ON ONE TIME

"We go on dates with individual children and spend time one on one so each child has time with each of us. Once a week, Clyde and I go on a date together."

DISCIPLINE

"I just count backwards from 5 and it works great. On 4 I'm standing up. On 3 I'm walking toward you. I've never had to get to number 1."

PITCHING IN

"When I need the house cleaned, I set a timer for 15 minutes and we all run around and clean as fast and as hard as we can until the bell rings. Even my 2 year old runs round with a rag from room to room. Then 15 minutes later, every thing is done."

The Man Beside the woman

Miller has had to learn to incorporate her family into her work schedule while still putting her family first. Three years ago, Miller married Clyde, an engineer at BP and the two of them merged their two families into one. Seventeen days after the wedding, they got another life-changing surprise -- they found out they were having another baby. With 6 kids total, some might say the Millers are a modern day Brady Bunch. But unlike the Brady Bunch, the Millers have no maid; everyone has to pitch in to help at home. And unlike Mike Brady, Clyde Miller is a 50% partner in the marriage, sharing equally in everything. Kristin teaches or attends meetings at least three nights a week while Clyde takes over at home. "People ask him if he babysits when I'm working and his response is always, 'No I don't babysit - I parent,'" explains Miller. "He's the kindest person I know."



Big Dreams and a Big Calling

What does the future hold for KVPAC? Miller admits she has big dreams and hopes KVPAC will one day be a full-fledged arts organization housed in a 35,000 square foot dedicated arts center and serving all facets of arts in Katy. "One of the signs of a healthy community is that the arts organizations really thrive," says Miller. I feel very driven with regard to KVPAC. It's my calling. Maybe someday I'll move on to world hunger, but right now I'm doing arts in Katy." **KM**

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