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At Home with the Harrods:

**MEET THE GENTLE
VETERINARIAN AND HER
GLOBE-TROTTING KIDS**

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At Home with the Harrods: Meet the Gentle Veterinarian and Her Globe-Trotting Kids

BY LAURA I. WINN | PHOTOS BY ISABEL OLLINGER PHOTOGRAPHY AND COURTESY OF THE HARROD FAMILY



In its best moments, Rebecca Harrod's job is "exciting and tremendously rewarding." At its worst, it's "gut-wrenchingly sad and heartbreaking."

As an emergency veterinarian at Mar-Queen Animal Clinic in Roseville, Rebecca devotes 12 to 15 hours per shift caring for animals facing an acute crisis. She works without scheduled lunches or breaks. Then she comes home to Fair Oaks and stays "unofficially on call" to help friends and family with their pets. It's a "physically and

emotionally challenging" profession, and it's what the single mom of three has always wanted to do.

Since the day she was born, Rebecca has always shared her home with a dog, a cat or both. Growing up with a love for animals and children, she dreamed of being a pediatrician or a veterinarian. Settling on the latter, she studied at the UC Davis Veterinary School of Medicine and received the Gentle Doctor Award for her kind heart and clinical excellence. After graduating in 2001, she moved

to Orangevale with her then-husband to begin her career and family.

Rebecca's work began close to home as a general practitioner with Hazel Ridge Veterinary Clinic in Fair Oaks. During the first six years of her practice, she and her husband welcomed son Connor and daughters Skyler and Savannah, called Rosie.

While the pace of general practice was slower compared with emergency care, the demands of working full-time and raising a young family still left her feeling as if she was



running a losing race. "Sometimes each day was just a chaotic marathon to get through until bedtime," she said. "Then we would do it all over again the next day."

Rebecca decided to shift gears. "I had to make a conscious effort to slow down and enjoy the many little special moments," she said. "Worry less about having a clean house and more about reading and playing together with my children."

With a mindset focused on patience and gratitude, Rebecca spent 16 years at Hazel Ridge, caring for pets through every stage of life. Her flexible schedule meant she could chaperone field trips and enthusiastically support her children's many athletic endeavors, including soccer for Connor and Rosie and basketball for Rosie. In 2010, the Harrod family moved to the Rollingwood neighborhood of Fair Oaks, and for more than 10 years, Connor, Skyler and Rosie all swam for the Rollingwood Rockets. Rebecca volunteered her time as a league rep.



As her children grew more independent, Rebecca shifted gears again and leapt into the overdrive of emergency medicine in 2017. Although her marriage had ended, she knew her kids had their supportive father and grandparents to be there when she couldn't.

"I missed a lot of games and events and felt guilty every time. I did my best to be there when I could, and I focused all my attention on the kids during my days off," she said. "It helped that my kids understood that my job was important, and they were proud that I was helping animals."

Focusing on quality time together, Rebecca started planning family trips to locales near and far. The foursome explored the beaches at Lake Tahoe and Santa Cruz, zip-lined in Puerto Vallarta, and learned to surf on a weeklong adventure in Portugal in 2022. "The day spent learning to surf was beautiful and a fun bonding experience. I was terrible, and they were all pretty good," she said.

Even after her children — all varsity athletes and graduates of Bella Vista High

"My most amazing privilege as their mom has been to take my kids on some incredible adventures."

School — left home for college to pursue their passions, the trips continued.

For Skyler's recent 21st birthday, mom and daughter jetted off to Croatia in celebration. Skyler, 21, studies environmental science at Cuesta Community College in San Luis Obispo, where she maintains a 4.0 GPA while also working at a climbing gym.

Marking milestone birthdays with an excursion has become a tradition. A trip to Munich for Oktoberfest is already on the books when Connor turns 25. A member of the Air Force National Guard Reserves and recent graduate of Lewis & Clark College in Oregon, where he competed in rugby, cross country and track, Connor, 23, now works for the Sacramento-based tech company Datacare.

Youngest Rosie, 19, hasn't yet decided which far-off place she and Rebecca will journey to for her 21st excursion. She just finished her first year at Cal State San Marcos in San Diego, where she is taking business classes and planning to put those Portugal surf lessons to use.

"My most amazing privilege as their mom has been to take my kids on some incredible adventures," Rebecca said.

When the adventures end, and the Harrods return to their beloved Rollingwood neighborhood, they enter "a happy, lively home," Rebecca said. "Our life is full of laughter, energy and joy."

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Skyler, Rosie and Connor



And pets. Remington, 7, is the "exuberant" Labrador. Bean and Miso, 6, are the "judgmental" female felines. "Favorite child" Ralph, 3, is the mischievous Devon Rex kitty.

With four four-legged friends scurrying around and three grown children throwing down on game nights with friends, Rebecca said there's an "element of chaos" to the full house, but it's in the most life-affirming way



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for the vet who saves lives but can't save every life.

"There are days I break down and cry before pulling myself together to move forward again," Rebecca said. "I don't think I could face any of this if I didn't have a healthy balance outside the hospital. Time with my family and friends recharges me and fills my emotional cup."

Despite the hard moments when she must deliver the worst news, Rebecca said she

couldn't imagine working anywhere else. Her veterinary work is incredibly gratifying, but her greatest achievements are her children.

"For the young parents out there, I know the chaos and challenges of raising kids, of just trying to get through each day," she said. "But slow down and be present. Time flies. You won't regret the time you invest in your relationship with your babies. You may find it to be the most rewarding and fulfilling thing in your life." ■