

Fair Oaks

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A LOCAL LOVE STORY:
*The Gryder
Family*

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Photography by Isabel Ollinger Photography



A Local Love Story: The Snyder Family

By Laura I. Winn

Photography by Isabel Ollinger and photos courtesy of the Snyder Family

Shelley was the cheerleader. He was the football player. It's a classic origin story, except the Snyder's romance comes with a time jump and an unlikely twist in the setting. Shelley and Shawn Snyder met as 11-year-old kids having fun on the field for the Citrus Heights Dolphins cheer and football teams. The two were casually acquainted; Shelley's twin brother was also Shawn's teammate. But once youth sports ended, a decade would pass before their paths would meet again.

Enter Buffalo Wild Wings. Yes, that chain restaurant. In their early 20s, Shelley and her twin brother were working at the Sunrise location, when who would again join their team, but that friend from childhood, Shawn. The former cheerleader

and football player had an instant connection.

"First, I noticed that he's super handsome," Shelley explained. "What also attracted me to him was his work ethic. He was the hardest worker there. Growing up, I watched my parents work so hard, and I value that in a partner."

For Shawn, it was Shelley's easy smile and conversation that grabbed his attention. "Seeing her walk into Buffalo Wild Wings with that smile ... and then reconnecting over our past, the conversations just flew," he said.

It was in those conversations that Shelley realized what a "gem" Shawn was. "It was the way he talked about his mom," she said.

The two coupled up and leveled up in their careers. Shawn

took a job with the auto repair company, Caliber Collision, where he has advanced through his trade for over 10 years and works as an automotive painter. Shelley obtained a Bachelor of Arts in child development and a Master of Science in counseling from Sacramento State. She works as a counselor at Bella Vista High School, which happens to be her husband's alma mater. Shelley graduated from nearby Casa Roble High School.

"Being a school counselor is everything I imagined it to be. I love being able to support students as they navigate high school academically, socially and emotionally," she said. "Working at Bella Vista is such a blessing. The parent involvement is amazing. The staff is fantastic. It's such a positive place to be. I love living



so close, as well."

After starting their lives together with an apartment in Fair Oaks Village, the couple found a house for their family in the Rollingwood neighborhood. The Snyders are the parents to cheerleader Delilah (11), spooky-fan Sonny (3) and tiny dancer Rose (18 months).

"When we saw our house on the market, we instantly knew it was the one for us," said Shelley. "When we walked through the doors, I envisioned hosting my family there. You come in through these double doors into a grand room with high ceilings. I thought, 'This is a space we are going to create so many memories in.'"

Shawn said he felt the same way. "When you're in the room, you can see the backyard through big sliding glass doors and big windows," he explained. "I knew this was where I wanted to raise our kids."

The Rollingwood location was also ideal. Shawn's parents are a 5-minute walk away in the Phoenix Field subdivision.

"It's a dream location," said Shelley. "We are close to the river, parks and beautiful bike trails. Fair Oaks has the charm of a small town, but the energy of a big city. From the amazing food and community events to the friendly people and sense of safety, it truly feels like the best of both worlds."

Self-proclaimed "foodies," Shawn and Shelley frequently patron favorite area restaurants, namely, Fair Oaks Brew Pub, Dad's Kitchen, Pitch and Fiddle, and Mikuni. As for the latter, Shelley said her last dining meal



would be her standing sushi order: BBQ tuna, Benjamin roll and pepperfin.

The couple love to eat on their many travels, including trips to New Orleans, New York, New Jersey, Cabo San Lucas, Puerto Vallarta and an annual trip to Disneyland. Yearly, they head west to vacation with extended family at Dillon Beach.

Both Shelley and Shawn count their 2023 honeymoon to Maui as their most memorable trip. After the stress of rescheduling their Cancun wedding three times because of COVID, the newlyweds delayed their honeymoon and focused on growing their young family. Three years after tying the knot, a relaxed honeymoon on the serene beaches gave the couple a chance to reconnect after having children. "We got to go back to how we were in the beginning," said Shelley. "We hit all the spots we wanted to eat at, went whale watching and watched the sunset. It was an easy-going vacation."

In addition to summer travels,

the couple love to celebrate the holidays with family. Halloween is a favorite for everyone, but no one more so than 3-year-old Sonny. "He is obsessed with Halloween," said Shelley. "He thinks and talks about Halloween 365 days of the year."

"We probably visit the Spirit Halloween store at least once a week," added Shawn.

Together, the family has dressed

up as classic horror characters, even putting baby Rose in a Wednesday Addams wig. They always look forward to celebrating at the annual Bella Vista Halloween Extravaganza and trick-or-treating with cousins through their beloved neighborhood.

"Fair Oaks is a special place to raise our kids, and we are thankful to share it with our wonderful neighbors," said Shelley. ■

Isabel Ollinger
photography



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