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MAKING MOVIES AND MEMORIES

*Behind the Scenes with
the Vattierra Family*

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Making Movies and Memories

Behind the Scenes with the Valtierra Family

BY LAURA I. WINN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ISABEL OLLINGER AND PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE VALTIERRA FAMILY

PICTURE YOUR FAVORITE moments in film and television — the epic chase scenes that take your breath away, the speeches you quote word for word or the comfort shows you turn to after a hard day. Now, consider the credits that run at the end. Beyond the actors, directors and writers, there are accountants, schedulers, technicians and long lists of names that collaborated to produce those everlasting moments on screen.

"All these different people find each other and create something together for other

people to enjoy," explains Brittney Valtierra, a video production teacher at Vista del Lago High School in Folsom. "There's something beautiful in that."

As a former production coordinator and production manager on *MasterChef* and *The Biggest Loser*, Brittney knows firsthand what it means to be part of that team.

"It's what I've wanted to do since I was a kid," Brittney says. "I remember watching the kids' news and thinking it was the coolest. My favorite Christmas gift was a

black-and-white Tyco toy video camera."

Following her dreams after high school, Brittney moved from the East Coast to study at the Brooks Institute of Photography in Ventura, California, in the early 2000s.

And like it was written in the pages of a romantic comedy, it was there that she fell for the spiky-haired "know-it-all" fellow filmmaker Travis Valtierra from the Bay Area. He was cute, and she was curious. At a party one night, with liquid courage running

through her veins, she made the first move on the dance floor. He followed up with a phone call the very next morning.

"We had the same career trajectory, but also the same mindset and family values," Travis explains. "We are both very close to our families."

While Brittney worked in the reality TV world after graduation, Travis took his degree and experience to Rockstar Energy Drink, where he built the video department from the ground up. Drawn to the problem-solving aspect of video production, he created action sports content that saw stunt cars, wakeboarders and helicopters alike flying through the air — a style of filmmaking not too far removed from the motorcycle movies he made in high school.

For over a decade, the Valtierras successfully pursued their passions in the competitive Los Angeles market, but as their family grew, so did their priorities. With

"In theory, we only get 18 summers with our kids. Make them count."

the addition of young daughters, Codie and Harley, the long daily commutes to sets in Beverly Hills and Santa Monica no longer seemed worth it.

"We wanted more time for family," Travis says. "Moving felt like the natural next step to raising our family with a better work-life balance closer to home."

When it was time to scout a location to launch their next act, Brittney had one requirement: Their home had to be within 15 minutes of the water. "There is no better feeling than to be on the water," Brittney explains. "Water heals your soul."

With both a river and lake within that dis-

tance and extended family only a couple of hours away, the Valtierras made the move to a quiet Fair Oaks neighborhood seven years ago, pivoting their roles to achieve a happy balance between the personal and professional.

Guiding and collaborating with the next generation of storytellers, Brittney is proud to have her students compete at the prestigious All American High School Film Festival in New York year after year.

"I still get to be involved in doing what I love, but now I teach it," she says.

As a senior creative specialist with Vision

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Service Plan (VSP Global), Travis continues to work behind the camera, scripting, strategizing, storyboarding and directing stories on how the Rancho Cordova-based company helps human potential through sight.

"I've somehow turned my passion into a career for the last 20 years, making some pretty cool things," he says.

When they aren't behind the camera or in the classroom, the couple is never far from the water and can often be found on their boat or catching a wave behind it, wake-surfing and tubing with their girls. Devoting long hours to the pool, both daughters make a splash with the Glen Oaks Sea Lions swim team in Carmichael, and 13-year-old Codie hits the water with the Powerhouse Dive Club team in Folsom. On dry land, 11-year-old Harley plays soccer while Brittney, a former player, assistant coaches.

On weekends free of sports and school obligations, the foursome hit the road to visit family with three dogs and a 20-foot travel trailer in tow. "It's cozy," Travis laughs.

Summers are spent by the sea, where they surf, ride dirt bikes and camp with friends in the salty air. "In theory, we only get 18 summers with our kids," Travis says.



"Make them count."

Along their travels, Travis and Brittney focus on making memories with their girls — the kind that play back in your head like family movies: watching the sun rise over a lake, hiking to a waterfall, cheering at a motocross competition, and sharing a TV



show that evokes nostalgia of home and togetherness.

"I think we are pretty lucky," Brittney says. "We have created a pretty awesome life together, but like anything, you have to work at it." ■



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