

Eden Prairie Offers SO MUCH

BY BARTT PIERCE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELE JOKINEN



▶ This month's feature family enjoys all the benefits of living in Eden Prairie. Chad Hardwick and Kelly Rogers, along with their children, love everything the city and the surrounding area offers, including excellent schools, beautiful parks, shopping/restaurants, sports, and the arts.

Kelly Rogers and her two children, Connor and Aida, moved to their home near Round Lake in 2016. Chad Hardwick and his sons Cole and Caleb have brought even more love to the home. Kelly and Chad met when Chad was earning his degree from Minnesota State in special education. Kelly attended Indiana University for both her undergraduate and graduate school. She

earned a Bachelor of Arts in history, and later a Master of Science in secondary education. Kelly has been a 7-12 teacher for 17 years. She has worked for Roseville Area Schools for the last 11 years. Chad was an EMT for 17 years, and he is currently teaching special education at Eden Prairie High School.

The Rogers/Hardwick family loves the location of their home; it is close to excellent schools, the Round Lake beach, and their favorite shopping and restaurants such as Patina, Kowalski's, and Tavern 4 & 5.

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The family enjoys the outdoors, specifically walking and jogging the numerous trails in the area. The children may benefit the most from living in Eden Prairie. They are involved in sports (baseball, basketball, and Nordic skiing), eSports, and theater. Connor plays on the Eden Prairie High School eSports team, and he is very much enjoying learning coding in his AP Computer Science class. Aida has acted in three plays for Stages Theater Company, and she has taken to her enriched science classes at Central Middle School. The family attends musicals put on by the exceptional students at Eden Prairie High School. Aida and her friends enjoyed seeing the “The Wizard of Oz” this past fall. Having both parents in the education field, the four children have excellent role models that show the value of being lifelong learners.

Kelly and Chad also enjoy a relaxing night at home playing board games with their children. Many a winter night has been spent playing Villainous, Codenames, and Ticket to Ride to name a few. Not much beats playing a board game sitting next to a fireplace (or Netflix “fireplace”) on a Minnesota winter night. The two oldest

children, Cole and Connor, are learning survival skills with classes held by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The family loves the area and everything it provides. When they do venture out, they travel to the family cabin in northern Minnesota, and they also enjoy traveling outside the United States. Last year Kelly and her children traveled to Denmark. Kelly and Chad recently returned from a trip to Portugal. Guimarães, a city in northern Portugal, was a highlight. One such memory was of attending a family-style traditional meal that included singing a fado. A fado is a traditional Portuguese song that is often about family, love, or loss. That sounds like an excellent at-home karaoke experience if you ask me. The family is greatly anticipating a Disneyland “honeymoon” trip planned for this summer.

Kelly and Chad described their neighbors as, “Wonderful!” The summer is especially conducive to getting together for various activities. Every spring the family is excited to pull their bikes out from storage. Minnesota winters do eventually end, but it sometimes feels like it takes forever. Eden Prairie has 225 miles of sidewalks and trails. Round Lake has a 1-mile trail around it, and Staring Lake has a 2.25-mile trail. They are perfect for a relaxing evening walking, biking, or training for a triathlon.



Early summer is a favorite time for Kelly and Chad's family. In early June Schooner Days at Round Lake Park has a carnival, vendors, rides, games, a beer garden, and a pickleball tournament. This is Eden Prairie's highest-attended event for over 60 years. One tremendous aspect of this community event is that all proceeds go to those in need. The Eden Prairie Jazz Fest at Staring Lake Park is an annual event for the family, as is the Night to Unite. Kelly

mentioned that their neighborhood goes all out for the chance to connect with neighbors. The neighborhood also holds an annual block party with an inflatable water slide.

Kelly and Chad have enjoyed utilizing all that Eden Prairie has to offer. If you see them out and about, be sure to introduce yourself. They would love to meet you.