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Finding Home in Westmont

Meet the Zekiri Family

By Marybeth Lewanski

The Zekiri's story begins like many others - with a search for the perfect place to raise a family. In June 2020, Lauren and Boyar made the decision to move from Chicago to Westmont, drawn by a combination of factors that made the village stand out.

"We fell in love with the house" Lauren explains. "But the most important consideration for us as we were growing our family was the community we would eventually be a part of."

What sealed the deal for the Zekiris was Westmont's commitment to education. Earlier in 2020, Westmont High School had won the DuFour Award, a national recognition for the best Professional Learning Community in the country. This accolade spoke volumes about the district's dedication to academic excellence.

Boyar, with his passion for community and economic development, was impressed by the Village of Westmont's strategic plan.

"We knew Westmont was set up for long-term success thanks to village leadership," shares Boyar.

Building a Community

Despite not knowing anyone in Westmont when they moved, the Zekiri's quickly found themselves embraced by the community.

"Fast forward 4 years and we've cultivated and nurtured an incredible community," Lauren says, crediting this to Boyar's outgoing personality and her consistent planning.

The family's integration into Westmont life has been swift and comprehensive. Boyar serves on the Westmont Planning & Zoning Board and coaches Zoey's soccer team. Lauren is a Homeroom Parent for Zoey's Kindergarten class and serves on the Bookfair Committee. Together, they organize annual block parties, 4th of July celebrations, and holiday gatherings for their neighbors.

A Family Affair

The Zekiri household is a bustling one, with three daughters under six and a rescue dog named Lloyd. Zoey (5), Ellie (3.5), and Grace (2) are active participants in the community, taking dance lessons at Expressions Dance Studio and gymnastics classes. The girls are already showing their individual talents - Zoey in gymnastics, Ellie in singing and dancing, and Grace in her growing independence.

Lauren and Boyar met at their first post-college job at CDW in Chicago. Their love story is one for the books - Lauren knew she had met her future husband the day she met Boyar! They married six years later in 2018 at the Bridgeport Art Center Sculpture Garden.

Professionally, the couple has thrived. Lauren has been with LinkedIn for about eight years, supporting the company's largest and most strategic clients. Boyar works in cybersecurity at Zscaler, continuing his career in information technology sales.

Westmont: A Community on the Rise

The Zekiris' enthusiasm for Westmont is palpable. They praise the village's accessibility, noting its proximity to both Chicago airports, major shopping centers, and endless dining options. The couple's commitment to the community is evident in their recent involvement in the VoteYes CUSD 201 referendum, aimed at upgrading the district's aging school buildings.

"Schools, and the incredible staff that make them run, are the backbone of a community," Boyar emphasizes. "Today's students will be tomorrow's doctors, teachers, first responders, and public servants and they deserve to learn in a healthy and safe environment."

This dedication to community improvement extends to their family life. Boyar's mother, Zelly, recently moved to Westmont after frequent visits to the Zekiri home. She now lives just a 10-minute walk away from her grandchildren, in the heart of downtown.

Looking to the Future

As they look ahead, the Zekiris see a bright future for Westmont.

"Westmont will be the destination suburb for young families over the next 5 years and beyond," Boyar and Lauren both predict.

Their favorite spots in town include Veterans Park, Ty Warner Park, Westmont Yards, and local eateries like Golden Basket, Whiskey Hill Brewing, and Neat Kitchen + Bar.

The family's motto, "We may not have it all together, but together we have it all," seems to encapsulate not just their family dynamic but also their relationship with their adopted

hometown. Their story is a testament to Westmont's welcoming spirit and its potential as a growing, thriving community.

As Westmont continues to evolve, families like the Zekiris play a crucial role in shaping its future. Their active involvement in local affairs, from school committees to zoning boards, demonstrates the power of engaged citizens in building strong communities.

For those considering a move to the suburbs or looking for a place to put down roots, the Zekiri family's experience offers a compelling argument for Westmont. It's a place where young families can find excellent schools, engaged neighbors, and ample opportunities for community involvement.

In the words of the Zekiris, "If you see us at a community event, please say hello. We'd love to meet you!"

It's this spirit of openness and community that makes Westmont not just a place to live, but a place to call home.