

MERRY CHRISTMAS 2009!

It has been yet another whirlwind year for the Deba family. Let's get right to the details.

We started 2009 in crazy mode with our first-ever family trip to Disney World. While this was definitely a big undertaking for the two of us to wrangle a four-year-old boy and twin one-year-olds, we had an amazing vacation. We were surprised at how well the kids handled it (and enjoyed it), and Jamie actually did complete his 5K run through Animal Kingdom. We expected that the trip would be a lot of fun (which it was), and we expected to make some life-long memories (which we definitely did). What we didn't expect was how poorly Drew and Lexi acclimate to air travel. We will spare you many of the details (we wish we could have been spared a few of these details, too). Suffice it to say that both heading to Florida and flying back home, we should have taken the in-flight air sickness bags with us off the plane to be used a couple of hours later. Even so, we just can't wait to go back.

Andrew just recently turned five years old, but he is as tall (and as smart, of course) as a seven-year-old. He loves to do whatever Daddy is doing, including wearing clothes that match whatever Daddy is wearing. Now in his second year of preschool, he seems to be learning new things every day, including all sorts of new phrases from his classmates. He still loves the Imagination Movers and was very excited that we got to see them in Kansas City in October. Yes, we packed up the whole family and drove 13 hours in the snow and rain to Missouri to see an 80-minute kids concert. And, we got to see some extended family along the way, too. It was also great that Drew got to meet Rich after almost all the other kids and parents had left the theatre. He, of course, asked us if he could meet Smitty too, but we were happy to have him meet at least one of them. Beyond the Movers, Drew loves dinosaurs (especially T-Rex) and playing with his "little Lego's." He is VERY good at following the directions with new Lego sets and also building his very own creations from the big Lego bin. We love each new stage, but our little boy is growing up too fast for sure.

Alexia is our little Snow White girl. She is really starting to master the English language and is always surprising us with some of the things she says. She is very tall for her almost 30-months (97th percentile), but is about the skinniest kid you can imagine (30th percentile), even though she is a great eater! She is a quiet, independent little thing that is happy to play on her own and always seems to have her own agenda. She is ultra-organized and likes to clean and straighten everything. Picture a little girl methodically picking up each little piece of confetti off the floor at the Imagination Movers concert. That's our Lexi. Recently, Lexi has also learned that she can have a say in what she does, and her favorite new phrase is "I NOT!" whenever she doesn't want to do something, or eat something, or is generally unhappy with the current situation. She is still the little happy girl that will quickly turn on you if you happen to even think about making the wrong move. And, she has mastered the art of crying for Mommy when Daddy says No to her, and vice versa. And, she will resort to crying for Drew (and one time even Toby) when both Mommy and Daddy said No. Our little Lexity seems more and more grown up every day.

Brielle is the perfect mix of a princess and a monkey. We call her our little rough-and-tumble girl. Brie loves to jump in and play with anyone and everyone who will play with her. She is a little girl who lives to have fun, which really wears her out. Unlike both her brother and her sister, Brie will fall asleep anywhere, and is always the first of them to do so. More than anything Brie loves to run and play with her brother and take whatever her sister currently has. She is just as tall as her sister, but she weighs a few pounds more. Her huge smile is still her trademark, and she loves to sing just like Cinderella, her favorite princess, who she calls "Blue One." In fact, she claims as hers anything that is blue, and she has the charm to usually make it happen. If you own a blue car, we would love to have you visit anytime. Briebly is a unique and wonderful little girl for sure.

Tracy is staying very busy playing Mommy, your favorite small-town Cake Decorator, and Zookeeper, many times simultaneously. She is very active in the local MOPS group, and she enjoys teaching cake decorating at Hobby Lobby. She continues to take on cakes that are more and more challenging, totally spoiling our kids on their birthday with thousand-dollar cakes that always outdo the previous one. And, as if Tracy is hiding a secret cache of doppelgangers, on top of everything else, she is part of Cake Club, the Twins Club, loves to paint her very own tea set at the pottery studio, and still finds time to update her Facebook page, clean the house, and take care of Froggy, who came home with Drew at the end of his first year of preschool. All of this while maintaining our family calendar, making sure that gifts are always bought on time, thank-you notes are always sent, and being an overall great wife to Jamie, who is luckier than he should be.

Jamie has kept up with his running after our Disney World vacation, finishing the BolderBoulder 10K in May, and he plans to run the Disney World Half Marathon this coming January. While this has always seemed like a big challenge, he is somewhat disheartened to see the Biggest Loser contestants running full marathons on TV. It will have taken almost two years of running for him to run a half marathon, and these morbidly obese people run twice as far in about 20 weeks. Even so, Jamie surely wasn't racing to sign up for the Disney full marathon before it reached capacity. Once his normal morning run is complete, Jamie moves to the upstairs office for his job with IBM. He was fortunate to dodge the layoff bullet earlier this year and now has too many jobs to work as he transitions to a new project after eight years on his previous one. He loves working from home where he can take some time to pick Drew up from school, to see the kids do new things and to hang up all sorts of original artwork that the kids deliver to his office. What could be better?

And, while we have not yet told Toby that his paragraph in this year's letter was left out of the initial draft, he still sends his annual request for meaty bones. Toby is a great pet for our family, plays with (and sometimes tolerates) the kids, and is a faithful running partner for Jamie, although at eight years old, he does have to stay home for anything past four miles.

We simply love where we are as a family right now, and though some days we can't wait for the kids to go to bed, we feel very fortunate for all that we have. We walk a fine line trying to teach our children to grow into good, responsible people, while at the same time allowing them to be kids as much as possible. Sometimes it is Mommy letting them paint (which Daddy would NEVER do), and other times it is dragging them on a sled around the back yard because they got excited that a couple inches of snow fell. While we hope the kids remember these special moments, it's ok if they don't, because we always will.

We hope the past year has been as memorable for you as it has been for us, and we are thankful you were there to share it. We love you all and wish you the very best for this Christmas and the coming new year!

Love,

The Deba Family

Jamie, Tracy, Andrew, Alexia, Brielle and Toby too!

Please help us improve our service!

If you complete this short survey and return to us, we will let you buy us a free appetizer next time we are out to dinner.

1) Should Froggy be included in our family signature on our 2010 letter (assuming he has not yet met his demise)?

- Yes, of course poor little Froggy should be in there!
- No, Froggy should stay in his aquarium!
- Who is Froggy? (If you select this option, please reread more carefully. And, we're disappointed.)
- Replace Jamie with Froggy



*Merry Christmas 2009!
Love~ The Deba Family
Jamie, Tracy, Drew, Lexi & Brie*



Merry Christmas