

Merry Christmas 2012!

As we wrap up another year in the Deba household and write our annual Christmas letter, it is a perfect time to look back over the past 365 days and remember all that we packed into them. Now that the kids are all in one form of school or another, and are all busy with extra activities (not to mention Mom and Dad), some days (and some weeks) are just about survival, and it is hard to remember much about them. But looking back at the end of the year, it's in those "survival" moments that we live our lives, make memories and watch our children grow up.

For Jamie, working long hours for IBM can make many days blur together. But those long hours are still worked at home, which is not only convenient, but it lets him enjoy moments in the kids' childhood that he would have otherwise missed. And, although working from home means he is basically "on call" all the time, it is a fantastic trade-off, especially since he enjoys his job. When not working, Jamie has continued as Drew's Cub Scouts den leader this year (lots of fun!) and has been dodging cars twice a month while helping direct traffic at church. His favorite time of day is bedtime, when he spends time with each kid for their bedtime routine, and the kids snuggle and talk unlike any other time. Yes, snuggle. Shut up.

Tracy has continued to be all things to all people in 2012. She is in her third (and final) year as coordinator for her MOPS group, she is making more amazing cakes than ever, and somehow she still finds time to do more with the kids than just keep them clothed and alive. Tracy goes over the top being Mommy, which usually means staying up all night finishing *something* while trying to stay on top of the laundry at the same time. When not being Mommy, Tracy still enjoys teaching cake decorating, having girls' nights, and buying entirely too many new "thirty one" bags. She even finds time to help lead the girls' Girl Scout troop a couple of times each month. And, heaven forbid the kids go anywhere with store-bought cookies! Many wonder how she does it all, but Jamie knows. It's called no sleep. It's that simple. You can be Super Mom, Super Wife, Super MOPS Lady (What would you call it? Shut up.), and Super fill-in-the-blank. All you have to do is stop wasting all that time with your head on that pillow. You're welcome. Our family is more lucky to have Tracy than we will ever know. And the kids will certainly never know (or perhaps appreciate) that they enjoy birthday cakes each year that would cost \$400 or more to buy. That just "Mommy" to them, and that's just how Mommy wants it to be.

Andrew has struggled a bit this year health-wise, mostly caused by medication that caused more trouble than it helped, and we watched helplessly as our playful little boy changed into a lethargic, snotty 2nd-grade middle-schooler. Stopping his medication, we were overjoyed as we saw our little 8-year-old emerge again, with his happy personality and energetic demeanor. We have our boy back and, whether he realizes it or not, he sometimes gets away with anything simply because Mommy and Daddy are so happy that he is his little mischievous self again. He loves Cub Scouts, and that Daddy is his den leader. He enjoyed a two-night mountain campout this summer with Daddy, shooting BB guns, arrows, and paint balls and climbing Spyglass Hill. This year, he is asking Santa for a pocket knife with his name on it; enough to make any father proud and any mother punch any father in the shoulder. Drew is also learning to play the piano (all things to all people). He also started playing basketball and will join a team in January. He still enjoys pirates, but has become fascinated with playing The Legend of Zelda with Mommy and reading (English accent everyone) Harry Potter each night with Mommy before bed. He was Link for Halloween, and he still wears his Link hat and gloves whenever we will let him, including sleeping each night! We can't believe our little boy is growing up so fast!

Alexia always seems just a bit older than her five years. She has started to look and act much more like a school-age girl than a preschooler. She still loves preschool, though, along with Girl Scouts. She also really enjoys dancing and lip-syncing to music, so long as nobody is watching, or at least as long as she *thinks* that no one is watching (and she's really, really good!). Lexi is a thinker, and sometimes says things that you wouldn't think a five-year-old could understand, let alone be able to formulate into words. She is also learning to play the piano by simply watching and listening to Drew as he learns and practices. Lexi is also the most stubborn kid ever. No kidding. She will sit there at the table, all alone, crying, to the point where the other two kids feel they need to explain to Daddy that "she just isn't going to eat that meatball." Daddy can be stubborn too, on the outside at least. On the inside, he was "this close" to stomping into the kitchen and eating that meatball himself! Oh yeah, she ate the meatball. On that day parenting prevailed, because Daddy knows that while today it's a meatball, tomorrow it will be the back of a motorcycle. (Shudder....Mufasa style.) We are just so proud of the little girl Lexi has become!

Brielle has continued to be (and surely always will be) our fun-loving, wonderful, caring, daring little punk. If anyone were ever a Muppet, it would be Brie. She has always been one to jump head first into anything, usually with reckless abandon. But this little girl is also a very sensitive and caring person who will surprise you around every corner. She liked when Daddy massaged her forehead when she had a headache, and from that point forward wants this every night at bedtime. But she is not above reciprocation. She is known to try to massage your throat and sweetly ask "Do you like that?" No! It's terrible! Er, um, no honey, but thanks for trying to do something nice. Brie looks forward to Girl Scouts each week, and is becoming quite a swimmer (reckless abandon). She is also learning to play piano by osmosis. There is nothing this little girl can't do, simply because (like we all should) she doesn't know she can't. The best times with Brie are those one-on-one Mommy-Brie and Daddy-Brie nights. She loves direct and undivided attention, and we love that she just eats it up. Brie is still our "sleeper" who will fall asleep anywhere and in any position, and there's nothing quite like watching her slowly and wobbily walk about of her room each morning before the other kids, still mostly asleep. And then there's her smile. If you know her, you know what that means. If you don't know her, you should. We love our Brie and are so glad for the joy and excitement she brings to our family.

Good ol' Toby is still plugging along. Of course we assured him that we would include his annual request for meaty bones, but this year he would probably appreciate a dose or two of Rimadyl as well. Toby is definitely getting older, although he has not really changed his look too much over his eleven years, so it can be hard to tell. The kids just love their dog and, whether he knows it or not, he is getting better and better at playing the "sympathy card" which Tracy just eats up, meaning Toby gets a lot of special meals (usually the leftovers from dinner that would have otherwise become Jamie's lunch the next day.....bad dog).

We try to look to the future and hold on to our memories. We are excited about the kids being able to really begin finding out what they like and who they are and start to come into their own, but we would be lying if we said we weren't a bit sad leaving our very last Imagination Movers concert this October. It's easier to get the kids to eat their vegetables than it is to stop them from growing up. Well, maybe that's a tie.

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 (ugh!), Tracy (ugh! - 2), Andrew (8), Alexia (5), Brielle (5) and Toby (77) too!

www.TheDebas.com
(2012 Christmas Video and Family Blog)

P.S.: We are very traditional, and this just wouldn't be a traditional Christmas letter if we didn't say "We can't believe it has been another year already!" There. Whew! Almost ruined the whole thing.



Love~
Jamie, Tracy,
Drew, Lexi
& Brie
2012

wishing you a very
Merry Christmas