

JAMES RIVER NEIGHBORS

March 2020



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Irish Mint Brownie Recipe

The Amazing Abplanalp Family



The Amazing Abplanalp Family

By Elizabeth Fickenscher

*Photos by Paige Stevens Photography
unless otherwise noted*

Met the Abplanalps! Brian, Ashley, Reese (14), Sophia (10) and Wesley (9) live in the Hallsley subdivision. Brian and Ashley met during their freshman year at Virginia Tech. Brian lived on the same floor of the dorms as a high school friend of Ashley's. That friend paired the two for a Pi Kappa Phi fraternity event, and the young sweethearts were set. They married on December 9, 2000, not too long after graduation.

At Virginia Tech, Brian earned a bachelor's in management science and information technology. Ashley earned a bachelor's in science, double majoring in business management and sociology.

The couple lived in Northern Virginia for three years after getting married and moved to Richmond in 2003. "We wanted to get away from the long commutes, expensive housing, and endless traffic but still desired to be within driving distance of our extended family and friends. We drew a circle on a map that represented the boundaries of our move and we began our search for a new place to call home," said Brian. Once the couple chose Richmond as their destination, Brian was able to make arrangements with his employer to work remotely from home, Ashley landed a Human Resource position with the Richmond Times Dispatch, and the couple was off on their new adventure.

Brian works for CGI Technology Solutions, the same company he started working for 20 years ago, and is now the Director of an Information Technology Call Center. The call center is staffed with employees from around the world and it fields support calls from some

of the company's North American clients. Brian has continued to work from his home office since moving to Richmond sixteen years ago and he notes that the work arrangement established with his employer turned out to be one of the greatest blessings. He says that it has provided him with the opportunity to be there for his children and wife in a way that would not have been possible working outside of the house.

In addition to work, Brian has recently been active as a founding member of a new father/son and father/daughter outdoor adventure program called Wilderness Warriors. Focused on building strong bonds between fathers and their children, the program is centered around outdoor camping events that occur twice annually, as well as other fun activities that occur throughout the year. The camping events are currently



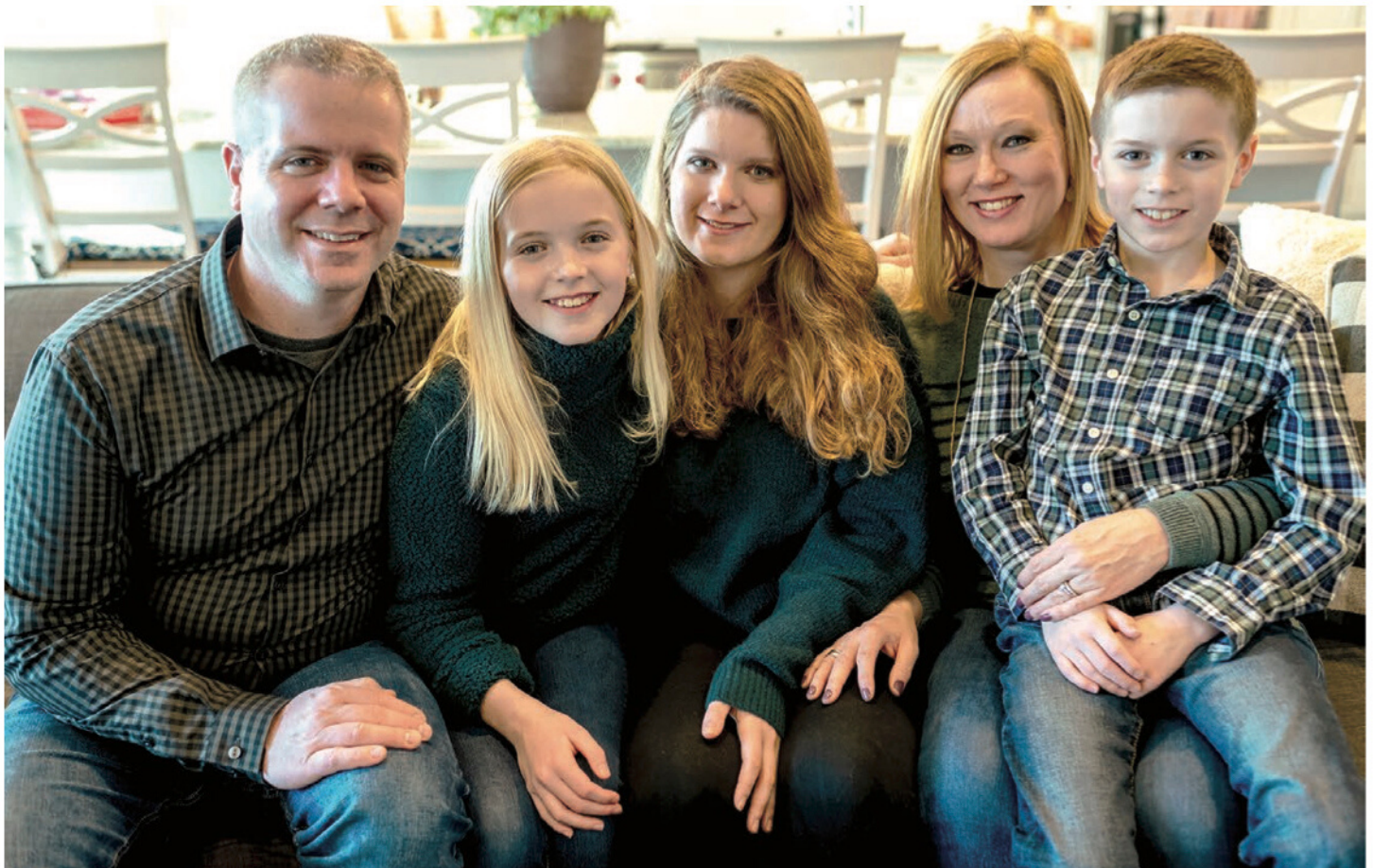
being held at Chanco on the James, which is situated on a one hundred twenty five acre tract along the James River. The events offered during the camping weekends include canoeing, archery, hatchet throwing, ziplines, camp fires and many other fun activities to keep the kids engaged. During the inaugural campouts this past fall, there were four hundred registered participants who attended!

Due to overwhelming interest, the program is expanding from two weekends to four weekends next fall to accommodate additional families that would like to participate.

Ashley is a money coach and speaker at The Money Mom, a personal finance coaching and training company she started in 2012 after her family became free of consumer debt and student loans. Ashley attended Dave Ramsey's counselor training class in 2013 and met other like-minded entrepreneurs who wanted to build their own coaching practices. While Ashley predominantly serves the Central Virginia region, she has had clients referred to her from across the nation and coaches them online.

Ashley's mission is to impact and improve families' lives and her vision is to make Richmond, Virginia the most abundant city

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in the world – both by helping families achieve financial success and by making an impact through her workforce workshops. She delivers her “Winning the Money Game” workshop within businesses that want to help their employees develop solid financial strategies outside of retirement contributions and investing. More specifically, Ashley works with families to set up their financial foundation, helps to organize banking processes, and helps establish a WORKING monthly household budget. She helps create a plan to attack consumer debt, works with couples & individuals toward developing





healthy behaviors with money (and communication), and holds her clients accountable when working through the system. While Ashley loves working with all of her clients, she particularly enjoys working with small business owners to help them get financially organized and to differentiate their household and business banking systems. She knows they are working toward their version of the American Dream. The most rewarding aspect for Ashley is seeing her families begin to have hope again as they look toward their futures - free of debt and full of vision - all because they learned how to build and maintain a monthly budget AND lean into the process of changing their money behaviors. One of Ashley's most recent clients stated, "I wish I had done this years ago!"

Outside of her business, Ashley is very active within the local community. One of her community projects involves the YMCA where she sits on the board for the Swift Creek YMCA (SCYMCA). She has helped plan a Good Friday community prayer breakfast, conducted practice interviews for teens in the Leaders' Club, and assisted the new Teen Director in preparing the Youth In Government (YIG) teens for the Model General Assembly (MGA) that will take place in April. The MGA program is designed to introduce high school students to the Commonwealth's legislative process -

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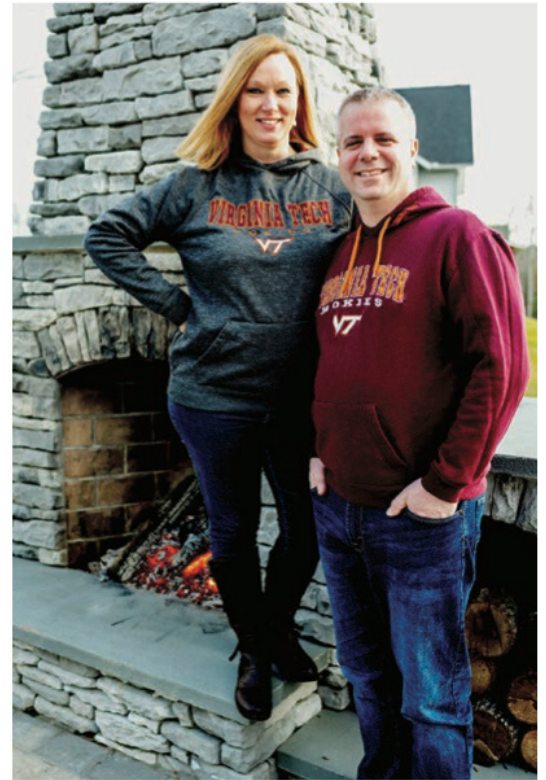
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one that Brian and Ashley feel passionate about instilling in their own children as well. All of this, in addition to regional YMCA board meetings and activities, keeps Ashley heavily engaged with her community.

In addition, Ashley recently joined the Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce, where she participates on the Government Affairs Committee. This committee focuses on legislation, policy, and helps businesses and the Chamber build relationships with the county's elected officials. She is also a member of the Executive Women International (EWI) organization. Through her membership, Ashley has participated in EWI's ASIST (Adult Students in Scholastic Transition) scholarship program, an initiative aimed at providing scholarships for men and women making a career change. EWI awards \$20,000 each year to ten recipients and, in 2019, the organization was successfully able to award \$22,000 to ELEVEN recipients. About the awards ceremony, Ashley says, "It is such a wonderful and inspiring evening filled with a LOT of tears, hugs and laughter."



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Reese (14) is also actively involved with the Swift Creek YMCA as a participant in their Leader's Club program. As a member of the club, Reese is required to dedicate at least one hundred volunteer hours per year in the community, splitting her hours between activities both inside and outside of the YMCA. To do this, she helps with different activities

such as fitness rallies, lock-ins, dances, Parents Night Out, and even on the soccer field. As a young member of the Youth in Government program, Reese believes that she will serve either as a page or in a similar role since delegate and senate roles are reserved for juniors and seniors. The group is currently developing legislation regarding a student's ability to choose between a computerized version of the Standards of Learning (SOL) Test and a paper version. Reese plays volleyball, and in her downtime, she enjoys baking. This past summer, she won first place at the Chesterfield County Fair for her Aunt Cathy's snickerdoodle recipe!

Sophia (10) is the family's outgoing cheerleader. She has participated in association cheerleading since she enrolled in kindergarten at age five. Sophia cheers with the Midlothian Athletic Association's strong program that has really encouraged her to play to her strengths. Her team won grand champion at the popular County Battle competitions



this past fall! Sophia plans to develop more tumbling skills so she can do more stunts for the team. In September, she will also be attending a cotillion group, though she says she's most looking forward to the "after parties." Her mom's reaction to that: WHAT!?!? I guess that will be a fun conversation this fall!



Nine year old Wesley has an engineer's mindset and enjoys building things using race tracks, Lincoln Logs, blocks, and Legos. He enjoys playing computer games as well, including Minecraft and games on Roblox. Most recently, Wesley was selected to participate in the county's Robotics STEAM competition through Old Hundred Elementary School. It is the first year the county is holding this competition for elementary school kids and Wesley couldn't be more excited! Outside of school, Wesley started playing basketball with the Midlothian Athletic Association where he's looking to build better ball handling skills and improve his game. So far, he is off to a great start!

The family pup is Ms. Georgia Kay, a five-year-old rescue from Virginia German Shepherd Rescue (VGSR). The Abplanalp's adopted Georgia shortly after Ashley's mom passed away in February 2018. Kay is Ashley's mother's middle name and, as Ashley says, a "nod to Georgia's heavenly grandmother." While Georgia Kay is a good pup, the family can still remember an incident that happened about

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a week after they adopted her. Ashley explained, “as we were settling in with our new family member and getting to know one another, Georgia (who didn’t know her new name), managed to slip off her leash and chase after a herd of deer! We spent over an hour trying to locate our new pet and finally did...in the red clay retaining pond in a newly constructed area of the neighborhood. Georgia definitely got a few baths that week!”



The Abplanalp chose Hallsley because of the location, schools, amenities and the custom homes with beautiful architecture. In addition to providing a housing upgrade into an up-and-coming neighborhood, the family chose to move to Hallsley so that they could build a carriage house that Ashley’s parents could move into. The additional home will be for Ashley’s father and the family is looking forward to Pop moving from Spotsylvania to be part of daily life with this extremely active family.

Hallsley has amenities and activities suitable for people in all stages of life. The Abplanalp like the pool and the events the HOA hosts through Jane, the Director of Fun. These events have created fond and fun memories, and Ashley, Brian and the kids really enjoy their neighbors.

In her VERY limited free time, Ashley has been doing some digging into family history. Their last name, for example, is Swiss in origin and means “from a plain in the Alps.” Ashley says, “it’s just as common in that mountainous region of Switzerland as Smith is here in America.” Ashley also discovered paternal ties to a Revolutionary War patriot, via the Daughters of the American Revolution, which has brought about feelings of great pride and curiosity about America’s founding era. She says she MAY have to take up genealogy in her spare time. What spare time? This busy family is delightful, so if you see them around, say hi!



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