

THE RHEMS – MIKE, BRE, NOLAN



Family Adventures in Austria: A Memorable Journey

This year marked a significant milestone for our family—our first trip out of the country together, and it was nothing short of magical. Dad, Mary Anne, Shelly, Blair, Bre, and I embarked on an unforgettable adventure to Austria, a land brimming with charm, history, and breathtaking landscapes.

Our journey began in Vienna, Austria's majestic capital, where we spent a few days immersing ourselves in the local lifestyle. Vienna enchanted us with its elegant architecture, vibrant café culture, and rich history. Wandering through the cobblestone streets, we marveled at grand palaces like Schönbrunn and the Hofburg and indulged in delicious Viennese cuisine. It was the perfect introduction to Austrian culture and a great way to adjust to our new surroundings.

The most heartfelt excursion at Vienna, was traveling to the home where dad grew up. After searching and asking locals how to read the addresses, we stumbled upon the home which he grew up in. Right across from the home was a quaint café where we were all able to sit and enjoy some lunch and glasses of wine! Truly a memory that won't be forgotten and a very special moment for dad!

From Vienna, we traveled to Salzburg, the city of Mozart and the "Sound of Music." Along the way, we took a side trip to the picturesque village of Hallstatt, a UNESCO World Heritage site nestled by a serene lake and surrounded by towering mountains. Hallstatt was like stepping into a postcard—quaint houses, shimmering waters, and stunning views everywhere we turned. The weather was not quite as pleasing on our short visit to Hallstatt, being rainy and dreary, but that didn't stop us from enjoying the town.

Salzburg captivated us with its blend of history and charm. We explored the Hohensalzburg Fortress, wandered through the Mirabell Gardens, and took in the sights that inspired the famous



musical. The city's cozy streets and vibrant markets gave us plenty to enjoy as a family, from hearty Austrian meals to delightful souvenirs.

The trip was a perfect mix of family bonding, culinary delights, and awe-inspiring landscapes. We shared laughter over meals, marveled at the beauty of Austria's countryside, and created memories that will last a lifetime. After years without a family trip, this journey reminded us how meaningful it is to explore the world together.

Austria left a mark on our hearts, and we're already dreaming about our next adventure. Here's to more travels and more time spent together as a family!

Adventure in the Red Rocks: Celebrating Bre's Birthday in Sedona

This year, Bre's birthday became the perfect excuse for an unforgettable getaway to Sedona, Arizona. Joined by two of our closest friends, we embraced the beauty and adventure of the desert landscape, packing an incredible amount into our short trip.

Sedona's iconic red rocks set the stage for a celebration like no other. We kicked things off by kayaking, gliding along serene waters with the stunning cliffs towering above. The tranquility of the river was the perfect contrast to the adrenaline rush of riding UTVs through rugged desert terrain. Flying over bumps and trails, we felt like true adventurers in the heart of the Southwest.

No Sedona trip would be complete without hiking, and we made the most of a breathtaking trail. The hike offered inspiring views, from the vibrant hues of the rock formations to the endless blue sky. It was impossible not to feel a sense of wonder and gratitude for the natural beauty around us.

Adding a touch of serendipity to the trip, we discovered that Emma and Logan were also in Sedona at the same time. As fate would have it, we were able to meet up and share some time together. Catching up with them amidst such a magical setting was an unexpected highlight, making an already memorable trip even more special.



Bre's birthday in Sedona was the perfect blend of adventure, friendship, and celebration. The memories of those red rock sunsets and the laughter we shared will stay with us forever.

Nolan Turns 4: A Mario-Themed Adventure in Nature

This year, we celebrated Nolan's 4th birthday in true style. A Mario themed bash surrounded by the natural beauty of one of our favorite places, Anne Springs Close Greenway. It was the perfect blend of adventure and celebration, reflecting so much of what makes Nolan's personality shine.

The Greenway provided a fantastic setting for the party. With its lush trails and open spaces, it gave the kids plenty of room to explore and enjoy the outdoors. The Mario theme brought a playful touch, complete with colorful decorations, themed games, and a cake fit for a little adventurer. Seeing Nolan's face light up with joy was the best gift of all.

Anne Springs Greenway has always been a special place for our family. It's a spot we frequently visit for hikes, live music, and even splashing in the creek on warm days. This year, it also became the site of another exciting milestone: Nolan's first "real" camping trip.

We pitched our tent and built a campfire that became the heart of the evening. Together, we roasted hotdogs over the flames, laughed as Nolan ran off his boundless energy, and played until the stars came out. When the night finally quieted, we cozied up in our sleeping bags, surrounded by the sounds of nature and the warmth of family.

This year has been filled with adventures, but celebrating Nolan's birthday and sharing these outdoor moments together reminded us of the simple joys that matter most.



Tee-Ball Triumphs: Nolan's First Two Seasons

This year, Nolan stepped up to the plate, literally, as he completed two seasons of 3-4-year-old tee-ball. Every Saturday morning, the field came alive with the buzz of excited kids, and Nolan was right in the mix, eager to take on the game.

At the plate, he shined. Nolan consistently exceeded expectations, showing impressive focus and a solid swing for his age. Watching him connect with the ball and dash toward first base was a proud moment every time.

Of course, there's still some room for improvement, throwing and catching remains a work in progress. But at this age, it's more about the joy of the game than technical perfection. And joy was certainly in abundance. Whether it was chasing the ball around the infield, cheering with his teammates, or celebrating post-game snacks, Nolan embraced most aspect of tee-ball with enthusiasm.

Most importantly, tee-ball became a special way for us to spend time together as a family. Saturday mornings were filled with fresh air, laughter, and camaraderie.



Golf Nights with Nolan: More Sand, Less Swing

This year, our family found a new rhythm in the peaceful evenings of the golf course. Golf outings became a cherished tradition for Bre, Nolan, and I, especially on Tuesday nights when we'd grab the last tee time and head out to play 9 holes. Well, at least that was the plan.

The reality? Nolan turned these outings into something delightfully unexpected. While we started with the intention of playing through the course, we rarely made it past five holes. Nolan's fascination with sand traps often took center stage. Watching him gleefully dive into the bunkers, tossing sand into the air and crafting his own version of golf, was more entertaining than any perfect swing could ever be.

Running behind the golf cart became another highlight for Nolan, his endless energy transforming the evening into what looked more like a training montage from *Rocky* than a casual golf game. We couldn't help but laugh as he dashed around, channeling an athlete in training more than a golfer in practice.

Though our scorecards may not have been filled out, these evenings were far from wasted. They were filled with laughter, fresh air, and the joy of seeing Nolan embrace the course in his unique way. It was a reminder that golf—and life—isn't always about the perfect game. Sometimes, it's about the sand, the running, and the memories you make along the way.



Making Waves: Nolan's Summer at the Pool

This summer was all about sunshine, splashes, and milestones as we spent countless days at the pool. Nolan made incredible strides in the water, turning every visit into an opportunity for fun and learning.

His growing confidence as a swimmer was inspiring to watch. Whether it was jumping in with a big smile, swimming back to the wall with determination, or tackling new challenges in the deep end, Nolan embraced the water with fearless enthusiasm. The highlight for him—and for us—was the trust and excitement he showed when letting Dad throw him high into the air before splashing back down. His laughter echoed across the pool, a sound that defined our summer.

These days at the pool weren't just about swimming; they were about building memories, strengthening bonds, and watching Nolan grow. Each jump, splash, and kick brought more confidence and joy, making it a summer to remember.

As the warm days fade, we'll hold onto those moments of laughter and look forward to even more adventures next year—maybe with even bigger splashes!



THE KEETERS – SHELLY, BLAIR, AUDREY, BECKETT

The Year of Adventures, Milestones, and Memories

Which way are we going today? Between Audrey's dance and Beckett's baseball, we're constantly on the move—literally. Audrey had an incredible year competing in four dance competitions, including a national one where she placed 15th overall for her solo. Watching her shine on stage has been such a joy! Beckett, meanwhile, kept busy with baseball in the fall and spring, taking a well-earned break over the summer.

One of the year's highlights was when Beckett and I caught two of his favorite teams—the Golden State Warriors and Kansas City Chiefs—right here in Charlotte, thanks to Uncle Allan and Mike. Audrey and I also made a special memory at her first country concert, singing along with one of her favorites, Lainey Wilson. She stood the whole time, belting out every word!

The biggest adventure of the year? Taking Dad back to where it all began—Austria. Mike, Bre, Blair, Dad, Maryanne, and I spent seven incredible days exploring Vienna, Salzburg (my favorite), Hallstatt, and other stops in between. The history and beauty were breathtaking, but the most meaningful moment was standing outside the address where Dad lived before being adopted. It was a family trip we'll never forget.

And then there were the weddings—Erin and James and Emily and Shoji! Each celebration was uniquely perfect, filled with love, laughter, and so much joy. It was wonderful to see family and friends come together to honor such special couples. We couldn't be happier for them!

We also kept up our annual Keeter family trip to Myrtle Beach, squeezed in a few lake days, and balanced a steady stream of work trips for Blair and me. Add in cheering on the Pirates at a few ECU

games, and it's safe to say life with Audrey (10.5) and Beckett (9) keeps us busy, exhausted, and endlessly entertained.

Here's to another year of chaos, fun, and making memories!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from our family to yours!

Love,
Shelly, Blair, Audrey, Beckett, and Winter