

NEIGHBORS OF Andover

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Andover Borough and Township

MARCH 2019

Meet the Gruswitz Family: A FOCUS ON FAITH



Best Version Media

Cover Photo by Todd Holtz Photography



Meet the Gruswitz Family:
A FOCUS ON FAITH

By Linda Presto

Photos by Todd Holtz Photography

Resident Feature

Musical instruments beautify the entrance to the Gruswitz family home. The natural light gleams on the harps, piano, cello, violin, and other instruments that decorate the lesson area of their home and business, Olive Tree Music Academy. This bright, fun room speaks volumes about this musical, faithful family. Andy and Trish Gruswitz met at Montclair State University while they were both attending college. At the time Trish was a music education major and Andy was studying elementary education. Andy was in the music building one fateful day posting flyers to entice other students to join him in an a cappella group. In the process, Trish became his biggest fan. As Andy performed around the coffeehouses and on campus, Trish was a regular at his performances and admitted she “had a crush on him” even then. Andy says he’s generally “oblivious to advances, but that was not an option with Trish.”

Both Trish and Andy earned their bachelor’s degrees at Montclair and lived there for a while before moving to Andover. Andy is the youngest of six boys and has lived in this area most of his life. His brothers: Franz, Carl, Nik, Abe, and Ben are known locally and his unique family name is known in this community. Andy’s parents were music directors for Good Shepherd church in Andover. Trish grew up in Linden and her parents were originally from the Philippines. Both have lived and worked in other countries but are happy to call Andover their home. Andy has a great interest in Africa and causes in that part of the world. He is now pursuing a program for his M. Div (Master of Divinity) degree to become an ordained pastor. Trish went to Russia as part of the Moscow Conservatory program while attending Montclair University. Though while dating their studies, at times, took

them away from each other, they weathered the distance and eventually married in 2006, after they both had graduated.

Trish and Andy have 3 children and another baby on the way. Their child-to-be is a girl; Trish says jokingly, “We do girls here.” Their three daughters all love music and play instruments. Olive is the eldest, 12, Eden is 10, Violet is 7, and their youngest daughter is due late May. Olive and Eden will be in this year’s production of the Lion King at the Newton Theater. Olive has been given one of the lead roles, playing Rafiki. All three girls go to Upwards Basketball at Sparta Evangelical Free School. The girls were homeschooled initially and are all at Northwest Christian Church. Andy and Trish say they take a “high responsibility, high freedom” approach to parenting. Their girls get privileges early such as using the stove and oven when they

show an interest and trustworthiness in safety and technique. They focus on raising their children in their faith with “sincerity, faith in God, and a constant thorough effort.” Their girls’ names are all derived from the Bible, and Andy feels they exemplify these attributes more by nature than by nurture, putting their love and effort into all they do. It’s quite evident through their gift of music as well. The girls all play at the Olive Tree Music Academy’s recitals: Olive plays cello and piano; Eden plays flute and piano; Violet plays the harp and piano. Olive, a sixth grader, is also very interested in computers; Eden, in fourth grade, enjoys reading historical fiction and gym class, particularly basketball. Violet is in the first grade, but already has big plans. Her interest in music and desire to help others leads her to want to become an art or music therapist when she is older.



Olive, Eden, and Violet from left at their family piano.

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As a family, their favorite outings involve hiking, biking, and boating. They enjoy biking as a family and have also climbed the challenging hike to Observation Point at Zion National Park together. They spend a good deal of time on the Sussex Branch Trail. On a nice day, you're likely to see them there. They also enjoy camping and completed a 26-mile bike-a-thon with their dog, Ruby, who rode on the back of Trish's bike. Their other pets include a lovebird named Love and a lizard named Sticky Licky. This may be a family of mostly girls, but it's filled with wild critters and adventure!

The Gruswitz family business, Olive Tree Music Academy, has locations in Morris Plains, Flemington, Verona, and Andover. They launched ten years ago with the intention only to help Trish gain new students, but it has snowballed into where they are today: 20 instructors, four

locations, and roughly 200 students. They are so thankful for their business as it allows them to spend more time at home and as a family. When the business began to take off, Andy left his job at Apple, Inc and focused his efforts on marketing and local search engine optimization (SEO) for the music school as well as helping Christian ministries with their similar outreach efforts. In addition to handling the scheduling and billing for the business, Trish teaches at Montclair State University. She conducts the orchestra for the extension division for kids. She teaches violin, viola (her main instrument), and piano. She also teaches and conducts youth orchestras as part of a weekend program at MSU and their summer program at Stokes State Park. Trish has also been a guest conductor for local youth orchestras and is currently working as orchestra teacher for Clifton, NJ, schools. Andy plays guitar and sings as well, making music truly a family affair. Trish says, "Music is what we do; our faith is who we are."

In addition to music and their business, this busy family is deeply involved with their faith, volunteerism, and their church. The Gruswitzs are very involved in their local community and their church, Heritage Reformed Congregation in Kinnelon. Trish plays piano at church, and Andy is part of outreach efforts including planning conferences, coordinating ESL classes, and welcom-



OUR 2019 RACE SCHEDULE

 SUMMER SOLSTICE	June 22 5mi & 5K
 HOT CHILI CHALLENGE	October 20 8mi & 5K
 THUNDER RUN	December 7 13.1mi & 10K

DETAILS | friend2friendscwf.org



Brought to you by the Sussex County Women's Forum and Friend 2 Friend, a grassroots, volunteer-based organization dedicated to raising funds to provide free mammograms, breast ultrasounds, breast MRIs and breast related office visits through the Free Digital Mammography Program

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Resident Feature

ing new residents. He also manages the web design and SEO for their church, other churches, and other Christian ministries. Additionally, Andy helped launch, market, and moderate the Andover Borough group of the local community social media site, Nextdoor.com. Users can find garage sales, bear sightings, announcements, referrals, lost pets, local events, and many other items of local interest on the Nextdoor app. Andy enjoys the community feel of Nextdoor and his Andover community as well. They love hearing wildlife over cars and construction and enjoy their proximity to great outdoor activities, such as trails and parks. They feel blessed to live in what they feel is “arguably the best house in town to view the daily spectacle of God’s handiwork – the incredible sunsets.”

Music, community, and faith makes this family unique. They truly believe that the closer you are to people locally, the better you will feel about the home you choose to live in. Andy says, “We have been blessed by neighbors seeking relationship with us, and we are so happy to see local friendships that we helped connect.”



Who would you like to see on the cover of Neighbors of Andover? Help us honor those people who make this community a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Email your nominations to doneill@bestversionmedia.com with your suggestions and nominations.

Todd Holtz
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