Family Spotlight: It’s a Family Affair

The Criswells: Roland and I (Bethany) met in 2000 while attending the same church. Little did we know, within three years, we’d be walking down the aisle together, watch both our boys being blessed at the altar and now, capture videos of our two boys singing in the choir.

After completing my Master’s Degree at Temple University, I was led to Pittsburgh for my first job at Carnegie Mellon University. I had never been to ‘the burgh’ and only associated The Steelers with Pittsburgh. While working in the University Advancement Department as the Sports Information Director, I would often see children walking with the handheld ropes across the street and into the gym. I never imagined that my children would be attending the Children’s School, which was just steps away from my building office in Skibo Gym.

My husband, Roland, and I brought home our first bundle of joy, Roland Andrew, in December 2006. It wasn’t long before I was searching for the best Pre-K program to enroll my very bright three-year-old. I was led to the Children’s School by the Pettiford Family who had their son in the program but were moving to York, PA. This created an opening for Roland in 2009 and we have been so grateful ever since.

Roland’s love for building, tinkering and play were all nourished at the Children’s School. I remember so vividly his first day as he yelled from the sandbox, “Mom and Dad, you can go now, I’m okay!” It was a bittersweet moment because I knew he would be just fine, yet I would miss him being with me all day. Roland enjoyed the Green Room with Mrs. Solomon’s PM 4’s, Mrs. Bird’s Green Room Annex AM 4’s with Extended AM, and finally the Kindergarten with Mrs. Perovich and Ms. Scholes. He has since matriculated and is doing phenomenal as a 1st grader at Shady Side Academy.

Then, there’s our Baby Brandon - aka Mrs. Rosenblum’s “boyfriend”! We brought him home in March 2010. This pleasant, mild-mannered child was truly different from his brother, yet in many ways the same. After three years of bringing Roland to school, Brandon was more than ready to go to “Roland’s Old School”, as he called it, so he quickly acclimated to the Children’s School’s program. It brought back special memories as I heard Brandon sing the “Weather Song” and “Down by the Bay.” He absolutely loves being a part of the Morning 3’s class with Mrs. Tomer and Mr. Salinetro.

Now that both boys are in school, I am back to work with my husband at the East Liberty Branch of our family business - Coston Funeral Homes, Inc. I can’t believe how much the boys have grown. The Children’s School has allowed our family to connect with other great families who have also matriculated to SSA and has made learning a lifelong adventure for our boys. We are so grateful for the sincere love and special care the teaching staff and administrative staff has shown to our children and our family. Although this is our last year, we will continue to stay connected to Carnegie Mellon as Roland has started the C-MITES program.