

MADISON NEIGHBORS

NOVEMBER 2015



The Terreri Family...Sharing Footprints of Kindness

Photos by Amy Etra Photography



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Jack and his mom, Ruthanna, relaxing on their front porch with Annabelle

The Terreri Family

Sharing Footprints of Kindness

By Lisa Lelas

Photos by Amy Etra Photography

When 16 year old, Jack Terreri Fuchs calls his mom a hippie, Ruthanna Terreri takes it as a compliment! “I think I’m an old spiritual soul,” explains Ruthanna, “I’m a bit of a free spirit that still believes in kindness, compassion and taking care of each other and the environment we live in, but I’m always present as a social entrepreneur and driven to bring my philosophies into the business world that I am a part of.”

Ruthanna’s journey has been an interesting one, for sure. After growing up in Guilford, the middle child of 5 kids, she left home for a career in marketing and promotions in the entertainment industry, which brought her to Los Angeles. After 8 years she applied all her marketing expertise and unrelenting passion for the environment and became the first ever head of the marketing and corporate support for the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, later changing their name to Earthjustice. Her next path would take her to developing ‘For the Cause,’ a non profit helping other non-profits in a variety of platforms from the U.N. to the rainforests. When she became pregnant with her son, she knew it was time to come home, knowing her work could be done from a home office.

In 1999, Ruthanna purchased a home in Madison, in the same neighborhood she resides in today with her son. They fondly refer to their home as ‘the enchanted cottage,’ a 1930’s bungalow, a block from the beach in the Neck Road area of town.

“Jack and I are very much homebodies,” she explains, “we do

travel a lot together and go to a lot of concerts and cultural events, but our favorite place to hang out is right here at home.” They enjoy neighborhood gatherings and partaking in community sports, such as baseball and sailing (Jack teaches sailing at the surf club in the summer). “We are very much all about baseball, I think Jack has been playing since he could walk! I even coached his little league team for 3 years, and we love to entertain,” adds Ruthanna. “We get our mother/son conversations in while walking Annabelle (their Briard French Sheep dog) down at the beach or at Bauer Park. Jack and I also love just lying in the field grasses near our home. I have strict rules about cell phones and technology. I want my son to look out the window to really see and experience life.”

Growing up in Madison, Jack attended the Country School and is now a sophomore at Choate, living on campus but coming home almost every weekend. He’s a drummer, sings in the school’s Acapella group, of course plays baseball and partakes in the social entrepreneurship club and photography club at school. “Jack is such a Renaissance kid,” says Ruthanna, “I’ve always encouraged his love of music so that it wouldn’t get neglected because of all the time we spend with baseball. He’s certainly embracing the opportunities that were given to him. I’m sure he’ll do something creative in his future.”

When I asked Jack why he loves Madison, he didn’t hesitate. “Just look at where I live! It’s like you are in another world. We are so lucky to have the sound and grasslands surround us. It feels like



Ruthanna and Jack sharing laughs at home



Taking Annabelle for a walk on the shore

we're so far away from the world but then we jump on our bikes and are downtown in five minutes!"

Ruthanna has also been a professional photographer most of her adult life but it wasn't until 2008 that she found her true calling. She started the Hope Water Foundation to raise awareness about diminishing water supplies around the world. With many local sponsors backing the foundation, they distributed more than a half million bottles of water to those in need. In 2015, Ruthanna got her real estate license and joined Coldwell Banker. "I love my job because I love my community, but to totally make it work for me, I knew I had to tie it in to something greater than me. I started a new foundation called 'Give-Live-Thrive' (her third Madison based business) whereby I donate 10% of my real estate earnings to local charities." Her very first check went to the Madison Food Pantry, which proved to her that this was a necessary step to make real estate resonate with her heart. "It's all about harnessing the power of business to help

solve problems." A lesson we all can learn from.

Jack is very much like his mother when it comes to giving back. Since early childhood, they have sponsored a child through the World Vision Organization (a boy named Akram for seven years, now sponsoring Khaireel) and in lieu of teacher gifts, they always donated to a needy child, in their name.

"I sometimes worry that Jack is too kind, although I understand that being kind is not a bad thing," Ruthanna admits, "his heart is so full of giving. I really engrained that in him. I teach him to see all perspectives because everyone comes from different situations. He has also been very fortunate in growing up in a nurturing community of family and friends and he's been blessed with a top notch education along the way."

"Oh, trust me," adds Jack, "I am well aware of how lucky I am for having grown up here!" What more could a mother ask for?

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