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NEIGHBOURS

EARTH ISSUE

of Joshua Creek

A LIFE OF
ADVENTURE &
DISCOVERY

**CHRISTINE LANGEVIN
& FAMILY**

HALTON ENVIRONMENTAL
NETWORK & OAKVILLEGREEN

ZERO WASTE SWAPS

GUIDE DOG
FOSTERS NEEDED



Resident Feature

A Life of Adventure & Discovery Christine Langevin & Family

By Deborah Everest-Hill | Photos by Karen Mak

Much of Christine Langevin's life has involved adventure and discovery. She had the opportunity to travel to more than 30 states with her parents when she was growing up and has since visited more than that number of countries.

"I have ridden camels in the outback, climbed active volcanoes, swam with stingrays, scuba-dived in a cave at night, camped in the rainforest, and gone white-water rafting," she says.

Christine says her perspective on life is, "don't be afraid to try" and when it comes to adventures, she has tried many things the average person would shy away from.

Christine, her husband Bruce and children Wil, age 23, and Acadia, age 21, have travelled throughout Canada and to Hawaii, Tahiti, Iceland and Europe. Christine and Bruce are certified divers and have enjoyed underwater excursions along the Great Barrier Reef and in the Caribbean.

In 2018, the family went snorkelling in the glacial water of the Silfra in Iceland. "The Silfra," explains Christine, "is a fissure created by volcanic activity...It fills with very clear, cold water and is about 300 feet deep." She goes on to say that when you swim there, you are swimming between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. "I literally, swam from side to side touched each side, and said in my head, 'North America to Europe.'"

While the pandemic has put a damper on the family's ability to travel, Christine did have the opportunity to visit the Bavarian Alps when she was in Germany on business in September of last year.

"I jumped off the Hochires, a Bavarian Alp at 1,500 meters high and paraglided to the ground," she says. While she admits she did it in tandem and not by herself, it was still exciting. "My clients were impressed." Back at home, she has done the Courage Brother's Polar Bear Dip once, taken a hot air balloon over Hockley Valley and rappelled off Rattle Snake Point for her 40th Birthday.

Christine says the pandemic has made her realize that travel is a gift that cannot be wasted. "She hopes to travel with Wil to Japan in May, go to Iceland on business later that month, travel to Ireland with Bruce in June and go on an Alaskan cruise with the entire family in July. That's a pretty busy schedule!

The Langevin family also likes to explore its own backyard. The kids were enrolled in dance lessons, summer camps and swimming lessons growing up and the family has everything from skating, swimming and badminton to karate, kendo and mother-daughter yoga. They also enjoy taking part in local fairs and festivals which have unfortunately been on hold for the past two years.

Christine says Wil, like his mother, likes to travel. He enjoys exploring new cultures and interesting places. He is also bilingual and is presently learning Arabic. He is also athletic and plans on completing the Scotiabank Marathon this October. Christine says Acadia is a great singer and also enjoys photography.

Volunteering is another way family members opt to explore the community. Christine has been volunteering since she was in high school and she and Bruce have encouraged the kids to do the same.

Christine is a member of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, has served on Town committees and boards, was chair of the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, and president of a Charter service club. She has also volunteered for political campaigns at all three levels of government and local riding associations. At present, she is a member of the Finance and Risk and Audit committees for the Oakville Community Foundation, on the Board of Directors and Treasurer of the Independent Wine Education Guild and the founding Director of the Kevin Flynn Mental Health Foundation.

During Wil's time at university, he volunteered for business competitions/events and tech events and Acadia was an orientation leader at Windsor and volunteered as a photographer for the school's theatre group.

"We want our children to be able to think critically and question the status quo," she says. "If they find that the process no longer works or needs improvement, they should be part of the solution."

When Christine was just 16-years old, her mother died after a two-year battle with cancer and a few months later her dad suffered a massive heart attack from stress. "I nearly lost my entire family in three months," she says. Fortunately, her dad recovered and checked himself out of the hospital on Christmas Eve because he didn't want to be away for Christmas.

It was just Christine and her father then until she left home to go to university. She says her dad has had the biggest influence on her life because of their mutual love of travel and interest in learning and exploring other places and cultures.

She attended the University of Guelph to obtain an Honours Bachelor's degree in Commerce but she couldn't fight the travel bug so she spent some time visiting Mexico and Europe before she graduated. When she completed her program, she travelled to Australia where she spent ten months discovering the country and

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working. One of her jobs was at the Polynesian Pavilion of the World Expo in Brisbane in 1988.

"I saw more than half of Australia, New Zealand and spent three weeks in Fiji," she says. "I climbed Ayres Rock (now Uluru), went to a play at the Sydney Opera House, slept underground in Coober Pedy, held a Koala and fed a kangaroo. I also met two lifelong friends from Australia, one of whom the kids call Auntie."

When Christine came back to Canada, she "got a real job" with a consulting firm and began working towards her accounting designation. She finished her Certified Management Accountant (CMA) designation and earned the Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) designation and hasn't stopped learning. In 2015, she became a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) and in 2019 earned a Chartered Director (CDir.) Designation from DeGroote School of Business and the Director's College.

Christine met Bruce through work. "I would go out with him and another girl because she was interested in him but as it turned out we had more in common, and he had no interest in her."

Bruce obtained a Bachelor of Science Degree from Dalhousie University and completed the Canadian Securities Course. He was born in Calgary but calls Nova Scotia home. He is also a member of Mensa and an avid writer. Within a year, the couple married. Sadly, Christine's father passed away just three years later. Christine and Bruce were working and living in Toronto at the time but when her father passed away and left her his home in Oakville, she reevaluated her priorities. Within a few months, she quit her job and started her own business. "I felt like I had returned to Oakville," she says."

Christine and Bruce welcomed their children a few years later. Wil recently graduated from the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University in Montreal and Acadia is in her third year of a 5-year concurrent Education and Psychology degrees program at the University of Windsor.

With each new milestone Christine experienced, she thought about her biological parents. "When I was pregnant with my son, I finally got the courage to contact my birth mother. Terril. Within three months of searching, I was talking to her on the phone."

Christine also got lucky and found her father. The adoption agency didn't provide her with any information but she was able to find him with some information her biological mother provided and some internet sleuthing. "I sent him a letter and he sent one back and from then on, we were fast friends," she says. "He, Chuck, was open to introducing me to his family and was really happy I had children because that made him a grandfather." Christine met her half-siblings and continues to stay in touch with them.

Unfortunately, not long after Christine met her biological parents, they both passed away. "Since my biological mother's family was from PEI and my biological father's family was from Vancouver Island, I got to see these two coasts in some detail and I don't think I would have if I had not met them," she says. "I was lucky to meet them."

Christine says that when she decided to look for her biological family, she realized that she had to be secure with herself and be ready for anything, good or bad! "I feel lucky that I found both of my bio-parents alive," she says. "It was a happy ending. I learned more about my roots; however, I am as much a daughter of both sets of parents. I understand that family is something you create with love, not bloodlines."

At Neighbours, we believe everyone has a story to tell. Get in touch to share yours or nominate someone for a feature article by emailing deveresthill@bestversionmedia.com.

Zero Waste Swaps to Consider

By Sheridan Hill

When you walk down the aisles of your grocery store or local pharmacy, you may notice the overwhelming use of plastic. It's estimated that Canadians use and waste roughly 3.3 million tonnes of plastic every year and one-third of all the plastic being used in Canada is single-use (Oceana, 2021). On top of that, 2.8 million of that 3.3 million tonnes, roughly 86%, is not recycled and ends up in landfills (Oceana, 2021).

With Earth Day approaching, I would like to share some ways in which you can start to decrease your plastic consumption. One of the most highly consumed single-use plastics in Canada is plastic grocery bags. Roughly 15 billion plastic bags are used every year in Canada (Ocean, 2021). Switching to reusable grocery bags is not only an easy way to reduce plastic, but it is also extremely affordable and more worthwhile in the long run. Today, plastic grocery bags come at a small fee generally around 10 cents per bag. Reusable bags can be purchased for about one dollar from many retailers such as HomeSense, Winners and the Dollar Store.

Reusable bags provide more support, are reusable and allow you to use fewer bags. I take reusable bags everywhere and make sure that they are always in the car and ready to go.

Another easy and affordable swap is investing in a reusable water bottle and filter if preferred. In Canada, more than 2 billion plastic water bottles are used every year even though Canada is known for generally having clean and safe drinking water (Barlow, 2020). One single reusable water bottle replaces the need for endless unnecessary plastic water bottles.

Reusable water bottles can be found anywhere you shop and are available over a very wide price range to fit everyone's needs.



Last, but not least, my favourite swap is shampoo in bar form. This eliminates plastic waste completely and most bar shampoos are made with more natural ingredients and therefore tend not to contain cosmetic chemicals that have been found to have lasting effects. Bar forms of all shower products are on the rise and easier to find than one may think. They are available online from retailers such as Unwrapped Life, Well.ca, Dew South and Ethique. I love my shampoo bars and I have switched to a completely plastic-free shower with everything in bar form. They lather very well, last long and are easy to travel with. Sometimes the new ways aren't always better.



Would you like to learn about your life purpose, your relationships and/or how to align your business with your life path?

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Almerinda Amaral, HeartCentred Teacher

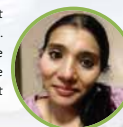
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SPRING TIME MEANS HEALTHY OPTIONS!

As the saying goes, spring showers bring may flowers, it also brings happiness and joy to many families around. This month of April is a joyous time for many as some may be graduating, some may start a new job, some need a change, some may be having a baby or just getting married.

Whatever the occasion may be, we have options and bundle gifts for every type of "special" moment in your lives. So why not give us a call and to find the right option for your "special event"?

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