

## FORT BEND FAMILIES

The Vogler Family, including Nathan, mom, Donna, Matilda, Kori, dad, Cory, and Andrew



Photo by Matilda Vogler



# Fort Bend's Brady Bunches

Stepfamilies Discover the  
Blessings of Life Together

*Written by Ingrid Karazincir  
Photography by Suzi Issa*

**W***e all know The Brady Bunch sitcom from the 60s and 70s painted a rosy picture of the perfect stepfamily. Their household was made up of six well-behaved siblings, two adoring parents, and even a full-time, live-in maid. Blended families abound in Fort Bend, and while their dynamics may be different than those of the Brady family's, they are turning those differences into strengths. Sugar Land Magazine met up with two real-life blended families to see how they are forming lasting relationships and bonds of love.*

Licensed family counselor, Rachel Eddins says blended families make up more than one third of today's family dynamic. "If done right, it can work even better than a regular family," she says. With a consciously created structure, children can blossom through the change, knowing what role they play and that they have gained family, rather than lost it.

### A Spirited and Strong Step-Family

John Newman suddenly found himself alone with his four adopted and two biological children three years ago, after separating from his wife. With two children still in diapers, he managed to take his six children to and from school, keep the house in working order, keep them all fed, and still work a full-time job. He was ready for help when he met Allison over the Internet on eharmony.com. She was a nurse with two children of her own and newly divorced, as well. Her friends told her she was crazy when she passed around the picture of John with his six children, but she saw it differently. "I saw an amazing opportunity," Allison recalls.

She stepped in, and after two and a half years of marriage, they say they have blended their family together as best as anyone could. "Everyone has a job around the house," says John, as the children finish cleaning up their home. It's pleasantly surprising to receive a warm welcome from each and every child, ranging in age from 1 to 17.

### Growing Together

The Newman's home is spacious, with add-ons John completed himself, creating plenty of room for each child to have their own place and enjoy activities with each other. As Kristin, the baby, toddles through the playroom with two siblings behind her, it's easy to see how a blended family can embody love and how that love has forever illuminated the lives of the Newmans.

*"When you have a blended family, you get the best of both worlds."*

- Donna Vogler

Family friend, Heidi McKeenan says, "They are a blessed, happy, and joyful family. Their lives are an example of love." Together, they are raising their nine children by combining great organization, consistency, patience, and above all, spirituality as the glue that creates their loving, integrated bond.

### Creating Lasting Bonds with Each Other

When Donna and Corey Vogler decided to create a life together, they took care to prepare their children for life as a blended family. Soon after Corey and Donna met and began to date, she introduced him to her 14-year-old daughter, Matilda. She warmed up quickly to her new step-father, and when her biological father passed away, Matilda soon called Corey, "Dad".

After dating for a year and being engaged for another, Donna and Corey finally tied the knot on Oct. 9, 1995, with Matilda as her

**2010 SPAliday**  
FALL. WINTER. NEW YEAR'S.

Join us at Regal Day Spa and enjoy all these Spaliday promotions! There's more promotions in-store. Look and feel great during the holidays!

Promotion valid from:  
10/1 to 12/31/2010

**Regal DAY SPA**  
Missouri City, TX

H-E-B 8900 Hwy 6, Missouri City, TX 77459  
Corner of Santa Fe and Hwy 6  
Mon-Fri: 9am-7pm • Sat: 9am-5pm • Sun: Closed  
Hours subject to change

1. 888. 864. 2418  
www.regaldayspa.com

**SANI SMART**  
disposable liner, buffer and files  
1x use  
SAFE & SANITARY

The Newman Family, including (back row, from left) Zoe, Hannah, Steven, John, Emily, Noah, (front row, from left) dad, John holding Christin, mom, Allison, Lauren, and Abby



© 2010 Sugar Land Magazine



# Larry Caldwell, D.D.S.

AND ASSOCIATES

Specializing in Dentistry for Children  
and those with Special Needs

- Oral Health Education • Sealants • Intravenous Sedation
- High Speed Digital X-Rays • OraVerse Anesthesia Reversal
- Laser Soft Tissue Removal • Accepting New Patients

**A Special Place for Special People!**

*Diplomate of the American Board Of Pediatric Dentistry*

15200 SW Freeway • Sugar Land, Texas 77478 • 281-565-KIDS (5437)  
[www.larrycaldweldds.com](http://www.larrycaldweldds.com)

**GYMBOREE** **PLAY & MUSIC**

Come see why we're the  
global leader in classes for kids.

**Art**  
Inspire creativity in visual and interactive arts.

**Music**  
Explore music through play, activity and song.

**Play & Learn**  
Nurture confidence, curiosity and physical skills.

Gymboree of Fort Bend  
The Township Center  
3340 FM 1092 (near Hwy. 6) Missouri City, TX 77459  
281.208.4302

Ask about our fabulous  
birthday parties!  
Members receive \$25 off any party package.

©2014 Gymboree Play & Music. All rights reserved. Play & Music is a registered trademark of Gymboree Play & Music. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

**FRED ASTAIRE**  
FRANCHISED DANCE STUDIO

*Fall in love with*  
**Dance**

Social and Ballroom Dancing for Couples and Singles

Town Center [www.DanceLessonsSugarland.com](http://www.DanceLessonsSugarland.com) 281.265.0644

mother's maid of honor. Matilda now has twin brothers who are almost 4 years old and a daughter of her own. She insists that having a blended family has been a blessing for her.

### The Best of Both Worlds

For the Voglers and their children, life as a blended family meant more than just getting accustomed to each others' quirks and living together. It also meant blending their two cultures, introducing each side of the family to different foods and customs. With Corey of European descent and Donna of Hispanic descent, dinnertime at the Voglers' has always consisted of many eclectic dishes. "At Christmas, I make my husband sauerkraut, and my sons love when I make homemade tortillas," says Donna.

She believes a mix of culture, religion, and family traditions can create a dynamic blend that enriches the lives of the children. Donna shares, "When you have a blended family, you get the best of both worlds." SLM

*INGRID KARAZINCIR is a Sugar Land area author, wife, and mother of two to Elise, 2, and Emily, 5.*

## 5 TIPS

### for a Successful Stepfamily

- 1 As a stepparent, be sure to take the time to bond with your new children.
- 2 Children thrive with schedules and consistency. The transition will be much smoother if everyone knows what's expected of them.
- 3 Communication is vital. Ask how you can make the children more comfortable and let them know what you need, too.
- 4 Make a special space for the children in their new home. They need a place that's all their own, so they feel comfortable.
- 5 As a newly married couple, you're leading the way, so your love for each other should shine. Enjoy date nights and keep your bond strong.

Source: Rachel Eddins, licensed family counselor



John and Allison Newman



The Newman kids



Donna and Cory Vogler



Kori, Nathan, and Andrew Vogler

Photo by Matilda Vogler

**Dermatology Associates  
of Sugar Land**

*Settle  
Only for  
the Best...*

Cosmetic Dermatology • Dermatology • Dermatologic Surgery • Laser Surgery

Medical Facials, BOTOX®, Restylane®, Juvéderm®, Radiesse®, Sculptra®  
Aesthetic, Sclerotherapy, and Chemical Peels

We accept most insurance plans for general dermatology services

Katherine Bell, MD   Edward Hurwitz, MD   Amy Wood, MD

2225 Williams Trace Blvd. #112   281-313-0006   SLDerm.com

**We See a Bright Future  
for Your Child**

**Therapy for**

- ADHD • Learning Disabilities • Reading Disabilities
- Dyslexia • Autism Spectrum Disorders

*Dr. Fong's MOVE Therapy is recognized by Dr. Phil*

With our therapy, children have shown marked improvements in reading, self-esteem and self-confidence. Studies show 80% of children with reading dysfunction have a near visual skills problem that can be treated.

Based in Sugar Land, Dr. Fong has worked with children from all over the globe and has additional training in caring for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

**Call to schedule an appointment today.**

**Dr. Edward Fong & Dr. Grace Fong**  
4427 Highway 6, Suite L • Sugarland 77478 (281) 313-1810