

When Returning Home Is The Right Choice



New home owners Gage Askegard and his fiancé Courtney Allen, along with their dog Luna, pose next to the sold sign in front of their new home.

As most people who grew up in a small town, they often times looked to the big city lights for their destiny. And after all the hype, living on your own, buying a car and maybe even purchasing that first house, some discover their destiny is where it all started, their hometown.

Gage Askegard and Courtney Allen experienced some of those things after graduating from high school and college. When it came time for the next chapter in their lives, they realized that coming back to their hometown was the best way to begin.

Gage is a 2014 Barnesville High School graduate, while Courtney graduated in 2012.

The two's early beginnings as a couple started when they were studying the same major in college. Gage was doing post-secondary education and Courtney was in her second year.

Although their educations took different directions while attending North Dakota State University, their relationship flourished. The two

are now engaged with a planned wedding date of October 6, 2018.

Courtney graduated with a bachelors degree from NDSU. After completion, she decided to earn her registered nursing degree through South Dakota State University at its Aberdeen, SD, campus. She graduated in December of 2017. After passing her boards in January, she is currently employed in the NICU at Essentia Health, Fargo.

Gage completed his studies at NDSU with a degree in computer science in the spring of 2017. He works for Pedigree Technologies out of Fargo as a software engineer.

When looking into buying a home or renting, the two came to the decision that they were tired of renting apartments, sharing walls and parking spaces. Gage and Courtney chose to buy in Barnesville as it was still close to work, much more affordable than Fargo or Moorhead, and they also had come to appreciate growing up in a small town. Much unlike some of their college friends who only knew a larger community

and didn't understand the pull of the smaller town and slower paced environment. The two purchased their new home in November 2017.

Currently, Courtney says they "are just enjoying being home together" as they were apart most of last year while she was finishing up with school.

If working, planning a wedding, graduating from college and buying a house weren't enough, Courtney and Gage also have taken on the role of pet owners.

With a little more space to run around, the couple welcomed a dog into the mix after purchasing their home. He is now four months old and his name is Luna. Luna was welcomed by their first pet Sirius, a cat whom they shared before buying their home.

One surprise they discovered after moving into the home was a box of items left in a closet by a previous owner. Now they have learned a little piece of history about their new home as they make new memories there.

Bialke Family Finds Small Town Lifestyle In Barnesville

The Bialke family decided they needed to find a place where a sense of community was important. After looking at multiple homes and towns, Daniel and Amanda Bialke found that feeling in Barnesville.

While previously living in West Fargo, the experience of a large school system for their first child wasn't the right fit. She was switching schools every year. This made it hard for her to make and keep friends. Next, Amanda and Daniel also found it difficult to make those important parent connections of her friends that they felt were just as important for them.

So the task was at hand for them to find a place close to Fargo-Moorhead that felt like home. Amanda says the minute she walked into the house they now own, it felt like home to her. The small school system was their first attraction to Barnesville. With more children starting school soon, that was a priority.

After moving to Barnesville,

the Bialke's have discovered the wonders of their new neighborhood and community. Those included great families and neighbors, nearby parks, small class sizes, and the ever so longed for sense of community to raise a family.

The couple's four children are Makenna, age 8, Kyler, age 7, Korra, age 5 and Nolan, who is now 3 years old. There was also a new addition to the household this winter, a puppy named Jasmine.

Daniel is from Buffalo, MN, and Amanda is from Delano, MN, only 10 minutes away from each other. The two finally met in Brainerd, MN, two hours from their home towns. The couple has been married since 2007.

Amanda is a registered nurse at Sanford Health, Fargo. She is passionate about her dream job, which is in labor and delivery on the weekends. This allows her to be home with the kids during the week. Daniel is employed by Signature

Landscapes, Fargo. He is currently thinking up plans for their backyard.

The kids are involved in many activities that keep them on the go. The girls enjoy dancing with dance classes at Suz Dance while Kyler loves hockey and plays in the Moorhead youth program.

Spending 10 days at Lake Geneva near Alexandria, MN, every summer on vacation is an extended family event. Daniel's family organized the camp there years ago and it is still being enjoyed by three generations. Fishing is one of the main activities for the Bialke's while at camp.

One of Daniel's favorite things about their home in Barnesville is the backyard view. It seems to be an endless field which makes him feel as if he lives in the country. Another aspect he mentioned is how they are able to see the stars at night. Not something they were able to do before in West Fargo.



Daniel and Amanda Bialke are pictured above with their family. Their daughters, who are standing left to right, are Makenna and Korra, while the couple holds their sons Kyler, left, and Nolan.



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