



# THE THOMPSONS

ENTREPRENEURS, AND  
OUTDOOR ADVENTURERS

By Heather Cherry | Photographs by Dena Koenig

Craig, Kristi, Blake (23 years old), and Grant (18 years old) live in the Heritage Creek community in Mars. They relocated to Pennsylvania from Hartsville, Ohio, in 2002. “We moved to Pennsylvania because of my job at the time—I was making sales in the area,” Craig said. “We’re so glad to be here. As a transplant from another state into the Mars community, this area has been a great place to raise a family.”

They moved to the Heritage Creek development in 2005. “When we first moved to Pennsylvania, we were at the Pointe at Adams Ridge for a while,” Craig said. “We looked into buying in the Adams Ridge community, but we ended up choosing Heritage Creek once we saw our lot. There is a lot of green space and direct access to the creek.”

“We’ve enjoyed being here ever since,” Craig added. “Heritage Creek is a nice neighborhood with plenty of amenities.”

Craig grew up in Ohio. He attended college at Ohio State University and studied mechanical engineering. Kristi studied English at Virginia Tech, earning her bachelor’s degree in 1994.

Craig and Kristi have been married for 25 years. They first met in late 1992, when Craig was working in a campus ministry in

Blacksburg, Va. “There was a period where I felt a calling to work in ministry. I was a staff member of Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU) doing ministry at Virginia Tech,” Craig said. “Kristi was a student when I met her—she is a Hokie by graduation, and I am a Hokie by affiliation.”

“We were doing some country dance lessons and I was suggested to pair up with Kristi,” Craig added. “We did that and hit it off. We started dating shortly after that—marrying in 1995.”

Together, Craig and Kristi own and operate 4th River Financial Group. They are both licensed financial advisors. Craig works with clients, while Kristi handles the back-office work. “In the early 2000s, I was unhappy with my job and wanted to do something entrepreneurial,” Craig said. “That’s when I got into financial planning. I went full time in the financial business in 2003.”

Grant currently attends Mars Area High School and is a member of the Lacrosse team. His biggest passions are cross-fit and rock climbing. Grant is planning to attend West Virginia University in the fall of 2021 to study computer science.

Blake graduated from North Greenville University in South Carolina with a degree in accounting. He currently works for Ernst and

Young in Pittsburgh. He previously attended Mars Area High School, where he was a highly decorated Lacrosse player. “Blake went on to play Lacrosse in college,” Craig said. “He is now retired.”

Collectively, the Thompsons enjoy being outdoors—they enjoy fly fishing, hiking, cross-fit, and rock climbing. “Blake and I have spent a lot of time fly fishing together. Grant fly fishes with us, but his biggest passions are cross-fit and rock climbing,” Craig said. “I love fly fishing and being outdoors. Kristi doesn’t love the outdoors as much as us—she likes to go hiking but is more of a beach person.”

Craig frequently creates videos for his YouTube channel—Wild Blue Discovery—where he makes fly fishing and adventure videos. They often take trips to fly fish throughout the United States. They’ve fished in Montana, North Carolina, Utah, New York, and West Virginia. “We also do a decent amount of fly fishing in Pennsylvania,” Craig said. “We don’t have to go out west to find nice places to fly fish. Central Pennsylvania has some great streams.”

They enjoy the mountains and frequently head out west—not just for fly fishing but to visit family. “My father is from Colorado—

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we love Colorado—and we do spend some time out there with family,” Craig said. “My great-great-grandfather on my dad’s side of the family traces back to the Wild West (Old West or American Frontier) in Durango, Colo. [Back then] Durango was a lawless town. My great-great-grandfather was trying to instill law and order when he got into a gunfight.”

“We also like to go camping as a family,” Craig added. “We’ve been to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula with a pop-up camper.”

Kristi enjoys reading, taking care of her dog, Brookie, and volunteers as the Mars High School Lacrosse game photographer. She is also a board member of the Lacrosse team. Craig also volunteers for the Mars High School Lacrosse team as the videographer.

The Thompsons attend New Community Church. Craig leads a mission team there. Blake and Grant volunteer in the youth group. They’ve attended mission trips with New Community Church—having been to China, Venezuela, and West Virginia. “Our Christian faith is important to all of us,” Craig said.



PHOTOS BY DENA KOENIG



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