

An exclusive magazine for the neighbours of Edgemont

NEIGHBOURS OF EDGEMONT

The Pierce Family All in for Halloween



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Cover Photo by Persia Anjam-Campo | Simayatology

The Pierce Family

All in for Halloween

■ By Patricia Barnes

Photos by Persia Anjam-Campo | Simayatography

For the Pierce family, Halloween isn't a simple night to put on a costume and collect some candy. It's a creative project, a family tradition and, judging by the giant skeletons, oversized spiders and elaborate homemade costumes that have appeared outside their Edgemont Village home, Halloween is a passion and an opportunity to bring their imaginations to life.



Keely and Malcon share their home with children Casper, 9, a self-described master LEGO builder who loves creating and Lily, 8, who loves camping and swimming. There's also Raya, their 7-year-old Great Dane, and Coco, their 6-year-old Miniature Schnauzer. Plus, their family circle also includes Papa John, 73, and Juju, 43. Together, they have turned Halloween into one of the highlights of their year.

Creativity has been part of Keely and Malcon's story from the beginning. The couple met while attending art school in Fort Lauderdale in 2005 and have been together ever since. Both went on to pursue creative careers: Keely studied photography and continues to bring her love of visual art into everyday life, while Malcon studied animation.

The Move to British Columbia

It was creative careers that saw the family move to California. Then, when Malcon became Artistic Director at Disney Animation Vancouver, they packed up and moved north for a new adventure. "Malcon recently directed a new Lilo & Stitch short," Keely tells me, "And it's scheduled to arrive in theatres this November."

She goes on to say, "Another BIG part of our lives is Disneyland, naturally, since we are part of the Disney animation family; it's something we love to celebrate and visit. It's really cool to see the characters you make live on through the theme parks."

When the family relocated, Edgemont became an important part of their story. New to both Canada and the Vancouver area, they spent significant time deciding where to live, with an emphasis on finding somewhere family-friendly where they could put down roots and enjoy their free time.

"We love camping and off-roading as a family," says Keely. "We wanted to be somewhere where we could build community and meet new friends. We absolutely love it."

They particularly appreciate Edgemont's local shops and the way neighbours support one another, describing it as a wonderful place to raise a family. Perhaps that helps explain why Halloween is more than elaborate decorations and clever costumes. It is also a way to foster neighbourhood connection and give back to the place they now call home.

Imagination Manifest

And it's at home in Edgemont that some of the family's most enthusiastic creative collaborations happen every Halloween. With two artists in the family and children who have grown up surrounded by creativity, the Pierces approach this time of year almost like a production: they come up with an idea, figure out how to make it work and then bring the whole thing to life.

"We love to be creative," Keely tells me. "We like to plan our costumes together, as a family."

However, these are not your last-minute, throw-something-together-from-the-closet costumes. Over the years, family members have transformed into coordinated groups inspired by favourite films, games and characters, complete with impressively constructed props and scenery.



As you can see from the cover, last year's Halloween was a celebration of Nintendo's Mario, complete with Princess Peach, Shy Guy, a four-in-one Question Block, a Piranha Plant emerging from its pipe and, of course, Mario himself. And, if you look carefully, you can see Raya makes an excellent Luigi.

The house also gets to "dress up". Giant skeletons have towered over the family, enormous skulls have lined the walkway, a huge spider has crawled across the roof, and a dramatic graveyard scene on the garage door has provided a suitably eerie backdrop for the best of photo ops. The result is part art project, part family portrait and part neighbourhood Halloween attraction.

Decorating the house has become a way to contribute to the neighbourhood's Halloween excitement. Every oversized skeleton, homemade costume and unexpected character adds a little more theatre to the experience for families walking through Edgemont Village.

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And that, for the Pierces, is a big part of the point: Halloween is more fun when everyone joins in.

Keely has noticed fewer children going door to door in recent years as alternatives such as "trunk or treat" events have become more common. She hopes families will continue making traditional trick-or-treating part of Halloween night.

"Bring back trick-or-treating!" she says with a laugh. "I would love to see this tradition stay as a key childhood memory."

At the Pierce house, at least, there is little danger of Halloween quietly disappearing. As another October approaches, neighbours can probably count on plenty of imagination, a few larger-than-life surprises and a family ready to make the occasion memorable.

After all, for the Pierces, Halloween isn't just a date on the calendar; it's a family art form.

