



It's All In The Family

As we enter the ninth week of our annual 100 days of heat and stress, also known as summer, it's time to reflect again on that age-old question, "What is it like living with a golf course superintendent?" Back by popular demand, here is yet another perspective on that topic. And who better to answer the question than those who live it, day in and day out. So to the Midwest membership, I introduce my family: Cheryl, Christopher, Kayce and Kyle. These are the people in my life who continually support me and my chosen profession. They are the ones responsible for me getting through another dreaded 100 days of summer.

My dad is great and loves his job. He is working all day supporting our family. I like my dad being the superintendent at Bartlett Hills Golf Course because we get to golf a lot. Not too many people go there at night even though it's a public course. I think it's because it's hidden. Some reasons why I don't like my dad's job are he works from 4:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and sometimes even later. He works all summer and can't go on vacations with us. Even after my dad gets home, he is so tired that we can't always play catch or practice my swing. He coaches my little league team though, and that's cool. That is what I think about my dad's job.

Kyle DeRoo
11 years old

*Our president's
children and wife
describe the
sacrifices—
and joys—
inherent to life
with a golf course
superintendent.*

My dad is a superintendent and always at work! We have one major thing in common—we both are busy all day long, he is at work planting and watering flowers, making everything perfect, and I am getting stronger at tumbling and dance. When I am home from my busy life, my favorite thing to do is go to the golf course and eat a wonderful dinner at the restaurant. Their food is great! Occasionally I golf. I am not too fond of it but I am getting better. The best part is watching my family hit really far while I sit riding around in the golf cart; that's always fun I also like to go there because they have a nicely done workshop. My brothers and I like to sit in his chair and make our dad stand. We say we have been slaving around the house ALL day and he stands there and rolls his eyes. Even though my dad and I don't see each other as much time as I wish, the times we spend together are fantastic.

Kayce DeRoo
14 years old

Kevin DeRoo, golf course superintendent or father? To me he is both, a boss and a dad. I have been working for him for four weeks now and have gotten the privilege of seeing both sides of him. I have begun to realize that he cares for that golf course of his almost as much as us. He works harder than any man on that course. Every day, he is working day and night making sure everything is perfect for the golfers the next day. If he's not working, he is at

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some meeting, as they like to call it. Really, I think it's just a bunch of guys going out golfing and having fun. It almost makes me want to be a golf course superintendent one day, almost. I don't think I would be able to handle his job. Every turn he makes, he finds another thing that has gone wrong. Some people say he may lose his temper every once in a while, but he handles everything a lot better than I would. Even though we disagree on most things, and there's almost nothing we can do together without one of us getting annoyed with the other, what he doesn't realize is I can only hope that one day I can be as good of a father and a boss that he is.

Chris DeRoo
16 years old

It was 1984 and I was a young, lovestruck woman getting ready to marry the man of my dreams. Kevin was kind, thoughtful and romantic, and promised me the world. I envisioned a little house on a hill with a white picket fence, a crisp, weedless, green lawn that was surrounded by beautiful beds of flowers in every color of the rainbow. We would sit on our porch smiling over a glass of wine watching our three adorable children running gleefully through the yard with a wagging-tailed dog barking playfully behind them. We'd wave at the neighbors as they walked by admiring the beautiful landscape of our home. Kevin wasn't studying to be a doctor or lawyer, he was making plans to be a golf course superintendent.

Now, 19 years have passed, and reality has set in. Our beautiful house on the hill is actually an ordinary house in a neighborhood of approximately 800 homes that look very much the same. The lawn, well, it's more weeds than actual grass and the flowers have been dug up and trampled by the children and dog. It's 8:00 p.m. on a Saturday in June, and I'm sitting alone on the porch, with a Diet Coke, screaming at the children who have left sports equipment strewn all over the yard. The neighbors aren't admiring our landscaping; we are in awe of theirs. Kevin, well, he's at work, checking to see if the automatic irrigation system will actually go on automatically. It doesn't. I call countless times to be sure he's safe only to hear a voice of unavailability on his answering machine. I wait. Finally, several hours later, he drags himself into the house and collapses on the couch.

The snoring gets to me soon enough and I drag him to bed. The peaceful night's sleep is interrupted at about 2:30 a.m. when the phone rings. He doesn't hear it, so I climb over him to hear the voice of the Bartlett Police Department dispatcher. Once again, the burglar alarm has been inadvertently set off. Kevin suspects it is the police themselves setting off the alarm by jiggling the doors to see if they are locked or shining their flashlights inside, thus activating the motion detectors in his maintenance shop. I wake Kevin, and off he goes again to take care of his summer home. And so each day

begins and ends very much the same way. Not quite the dream I had as a young 21-year-old.

Then one night he calls and asks me to meet him at the course. He wants to show me his new fairways. I roll my eyes, wondering what is the big deal. It's grass, that's all. But, to show my support, I go. It's late, and the golfers are gone. We chat a little and he proudly shows me his computerized irrigation system. I smile, not exactly sure why he finds so much satisfaction in it. We set off in his cart with "super" marked clearly on the front. He slowly takes me out and parks near the second tee. He turns the key to off and we sit quietly. I look around, and am amazed at the peacefulness surrounding us. The orange sun sets in the distance, leaving a soft glow on the perfect green carpet. A white moon peeks through the black treetops. It shines on a hilltop filled with flowers of every color of the rainbow. I can hear the soft trickle of water from a nearby fountain. He reaches for my hand and we talk about how lucky we are to have such a blessed life, with three great children, a home and an amazing 19-year marriage. I married a golf course superintendent. My heart fills with pride. This is the life I dreamed of.

Cheryl DeRoo



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