



Peg Kreider, center front, is surrounded by her children, from left, Lexus, Nicole, Nathan, Ashley, and Marlina

## Mother's Love Keeps Growing

**LOU ANN GOOD**

*Lancaster Farming Staff*

The home of Richard and Peg Kreider is an outstanding example of the saying that children learn to love by being loved.

"The more kids I have, the better I like it," Peg said.

In addition to three natural-born and two adopted, the Kreiders have had 21 foster children during the past 12 years — "and we want more," Peg said. "I love having kids around."

It's evident her kids also love having her around.

"She's really nice and 'carries on' with us," 8-year-old Marlina said of her mother.

Seven-year-old Lexus agreed. She's especially glad her mom takes her to soccer games.

The Kreiders' three teenagers are also vocal in expressing gratefulness for their mom.

"She's always been here for me. She's very supportive in all I do," 18-year-old Nate said.

Nicole, 15, expressed the same sentiment and added, "I can talk to her about everything."

"She's really caring and understanding whenever there's a problem," Ashley, 13, said.

Peg has always made her children a priority. She's there to see her children off to school, and there when they come home.

"I'm always available to talk. I want them always to feel free to talk with me about anything," Peg said.

For her, being a stay-at-home mom is the only way she sees this as possible. While some children don't verbalize their appreciation to having mom around, Nate did when he was in junior high school.

"I'll always remember the day he got off the bus, and said, 'thanks mom, for always being here for me,'" Peg said of the memory.

Because Nate turned 18, state law requires that he go through a police check and interview process for the family to remain a foster care home.

Although the requirement seems a bit ridiculous since Nate is a family member, the law does offer an advantage. Nate will now be counted as an adult,

which enables the Kreiders to care for more children, because only a total of six children are allowed in the home.

"We've always promised Nate a little brother. In fact, we tried to adopt a boy several times, but it has never worked out," Peg said of the frustration of many children required to be returned to emotionally unstable home environments.

Some of the foster children have been in the Kreiders' care for one to two years, before being returned to a birth parent.

The separation is heartbreaking for the Kreiders. "I often cry," Peg said of the children she grew attached to and no longer sees. "Every day I pray for every child who has ever lived with us," she said. She also prays for each of her own children before they leave for school.

From little on up, Peg always loved children. She couldn't wait until she was old enough to babysit. She's still eager to babysit for others. In fact, she works as a nanny for her next-door neighbors. When her children leave for school, Peg goes next door to care for two children — soon to be three. At noon she brings them home with her so she can do her own housework and be home for her children when they return from school.

## Plant Sale, Clinics, Auction Is May 20

**COLLEGEVILLE** (Montgomery Co.) — Master gardeners will conduct a plant sale, demonstrations, clinics, and an auction on May 20 at the Penn State Cooperative Extension Office, 1015 Bridge Rd., Collegeville, on Rt 113.

Plants from master gardeners and local nurseries will be sold at reasonable prices. Perennials, annuals, grasses, vegetables, and houseplants for sun, shade, wet, and dry areas will be sold.

Information will be available to help visitors select the right plants for their garden conditions. Master gardeners will be on hand to answer questions.

Demonstrations include color

In addition to the whole family working out at the local gym, each child is encouraged to select a sport of their choice. Track, football, soccer and gymnastic practices keep Peg busy. The family is also active in church and take a lot of camping trips.

When asked where she gets her energy, Peg credits it to growing up on the farm. She grew up on a pig farm, her husband on a dairy farm. When they first married, Richard warned his wife, "I'll tell you one thing, I'll never have any pigs."

Guess what? As a swine technician, he oversees thousands of pigs, and both he and Peg are Lancaster County 4-H Swine Club leaders. The three oldest children raise pigs for 4-H projects, and the two youngest can't wait until they are old enough to become 4-H'ers and have their own pigs.

The Kreiders also raise 12 Herefords, which they market as hormone and antibiotic-free beef.

Traditionally, the Kreiders will make their own cards for their mom on Mother's Day. But going out to eat will need to be delayed because "three kids have soccer games."

That's fine with Peg. Because there's nothing she likes better than cheering on her kids.

echoing container gardening, making a stone trough, herbal vinegars, blue bird talk, and African Violet propagation demonstration.

Children's activities include making a bird feeder, seed plantings, and flower balloons.

Horticultural displays and clinics include composting, soil testing, timely topics, and plant diagnostics.

Garden prize will be a Franklina alatamaha, a historical native tree saved from distinction by William and John Bartram.

Garden treasures auction will include author signed books, special plants, and garden gifts.

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