

Local Nanny Expert Celebrates Fifth Anniversary of Company

When Erin Krex had her baby, finding quality childcare was a huge priority. Like other new mothers, Krex's first experience left her frustrated and disappointed. "Our first nanny nearly burned the house down," she said. "But I knew there just had to be good people out there."

Undeterred, Krex not only found a new nanny but also discovered an untapped market: other like-minded parents who wanted high quality, dependable, in-home childcare. This month, her firm, Northbrook-based First Class Care, Inc., celebrates its fifth anniversary as one of Chicagoland's top-rated, full-service domestic placement agencies. In addition to placing nannies, First Class Care (firstclasscare.com) helps families find newborn care specialists, babysitters, housekeepers, house managers, personal chefs and elder care companions.

Krex attributes much of her success to her clients' high expectations. "When people come to First Class Care they expect a superior level of service, which is what sets us apart. It really comes down to trust," said Krex. "They trust us to rigorously screen candidates, to walk them, step-by-step, through the hiring process, and then stay with them."

First Class Care candidates are personally interviewed and reference-checked by licensed placement counselors. Before anyone is even hired, Krex's firm provides background checks and physicals. It's all part of the company's commitment toward creating win-win relationships.

"For many clients, our nannies become part of the family," said Krex. "Some nannies stay with families for years, not only helping busy parents with the day-to-day activities, but also creating fond memories for everyone."

Last month, Krex, and others devoted to enhancing and supporting the nanny profession, celebrated National Nanny Appreciation Week. Some families offered their jack-of-all-tradeswomen (and, in some cases, tradesmen) paid time off, gift cards to favorite restaurants and stores, and even annual memberships to the International Nanny Association. "Gifts are always appreciated," said Krex, "but one of the very best ways to demonstrate your appreciation is to say 'thank you' as often as possible."

Erin Krex, along with her husband and business partner Steve Krex, continually look for ways to support this burgeoning profession. Last year, for example, Erin helped launch the "Super Nanny Academy," which trains nannies to care for children with special needs. Collaborating with North Shore Pediatric Therapy in Glenview, the program is the first of its kind and covers many aspects of behavior: potty training, tantrums, meal times, sleeping issues, sibling rivalry, non-compliance, following directions, and other difficult situations.

"We discovered that many nannies became nervous when they saw jobs that included children with disabilities," said Krex.



"Providing a structured training program has minimized their apprehensions, helping to make their experiences more fulfilling."

Krex is relentless in her efforts to educate both the nannies she places and the families who hire them. As a board member of the International Nanny Association, and a parent herself, Krex understands firsthand the importance of open and honest communications, as well as providing domestic help that is knowledgeable, experienced, dependable, and trustworthy. She also takes advantage of various social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, to facilitate conversations about the professionalism of the industry, and to offer tips to help families navigate the exciting and challenging path of parenthood.

This month, Krex is busy preparing for Halloween. "With trick-or-treating beginning soon after the school day, parents can't always make it home on time to accompany their children, so there will be many nannies, some dressed in costume, overseeing this beloved tradition," said Krex, who offers the following five things nannies can do to help prepare for Halloween:

- 1 Suggest to the parents what their kids want to be for Halloween. After getting approval from the parents, go shopping for the costume, or assist in making it.
- 2 Decorate the house with Halloween crafts that you and the kids make together.
- 3 Create a list of safety tips to review with the kids in preparation for the day.
- 4 Have the kids map out the route they want to take for trick-or-treating and make sure the parents are okay with it.
- 5 Have a practice run in costumes to make sure the children are comfortable and that they can walk safely in them. Make it a fun game; teach the kids how to say, "Trick-or-treat," and then "Thank you!"

Contributed by Leslie Levine

Email questions and comments to editorial@whatshappeningonline.com.

Business Happenings

Smart Jewelers Opens New Store

Now located in Willow Festival Shopping Plaza, Smart Jewelers is a world-class jewelry showplace with the warmth and friendliness of a family-owned operation. The store features sterling silver jewelry inspired by designer brands and a service department that specializes in watch repair, ring sizing, stone setting, and more. They can also assist with selling gold, platinum, and silver collectibles. 936A Willow Road, Northbrook; 847-673-6000; smartjewelers.com.

Village Treasure House Celebrates Its One Millionth Dollar Donation

Village Treasure House, a consignment shop of fine home furnishings, recently donated its one millionth dollar to local nonprofit organizations serving women and families in crises. The success of the store is made

possible by the dedication of over 100 volunteers. Village Treasure House serves as a resource for those in need of selling or donating their fine home furnishings, and also as a "find" for those in need of purchasing such items at reduced prices. 1460 Paddock Drive, Northbrook; 847-832-1030; villagetreasurehouse.com.

Mia Bella October Chemo Cap Drive

Mia Bella is holding a Chemo Cap drive for the month of October. All caps will be donated to Halos of Hope. Knitters and crocheters can use any yarn and any pattern they like; please donate pieces that are soft and well-crafted. For every cap donated, a raffle ticket will be given for a chance to win a basket full of needles, yarn, and other

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