

*Hudson*

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# NEIGHBORS

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## THE JOHNSON FAMILY: Community Driven and Lending a Hand to Those in Need



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# *The Johnson Family:* **Community Driven and Lending a Hand to Those in Need**

By Allison Lund-Zalewski



*We are so fortunate to have caring and kind neighbors.*

When they are not volunteering for the community or their church, you can find the Johnson family staying active. Jamie and Jean Johnson live in the Gherty Lane subdivision and have lived in the neighborhood since September 2000. The Johnsons enjoyed their 10 years in North Hudson, but both Jamie and Jean were raised on farms, so they like the space and privacy they have in Gherty Lane. Although they have the feeling of seclusion in the woods, their home is only a quarter mile from the city limits. They can go to the downtown shops and to those on “the Hill” within five minutes. They are also minutes away from the YMCA and high school.

“We love our neighbors for being very kind and respectful. It is a multi-generational mix of young families and folks who are still original owners of their lots purchased in 1979. There are no ‘nosy neighbors’ but at the same time, there are several that we could count on to help us if we needed it,” Jamie explained.

Jamie and Jean met at a fall party of city and county law enforcement officers from Eau Claire. Jamie was an assistant district attorney in Eau Claire in September 1988 and had several law enforcement friends including Jean’s brother, Lee, who brought her to the party. In 1990, the couple was married at the Swiss Church in downtown New Glarus, Wisconsin where Jamie’s ancestors helped settle the village in 1845. They have been married for over 31 years.

Jamie attended Carthage College, located in Kenosha, Wisconsin, for his undergraduate work. He then began law school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he would go on to intern at the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the Department of Justice, graduating with honors in 1987.

After graduating law school, Jamie served as the summer assistant district attorney in Antigo, Wisconsin for Langlade County. He was then appointed by Judge Dan LaRocque to clerk for him at the Court of Appeals in Wausau, Wisconsin. Toward the end of his one-year

clerkship in Wausau, he was hired as a full-time Assistant District Attorney in Eau Claire County. It was there that Jamie gained trial experience, trying 25 jury trials in less than 21 months.

In March 1990, he was hired by Lommen, Nelson, Cole & Stageberg, PA (n/k/a Lommen Abdo, PA) to handle civil litigation disputes out of its Hudson office. Over the last 31 years, Jamie has litigated civil disputes, primarily in the areas of personal injury, real estate, and commercial litigation. Jamie has also mediated dozens of disputes between parties that may or may not have legal counsel.

Jean is a clinical psychologist, having earned her doctorate in clinical psychology in 1997. For nearly 25 years, Jean has provided therapy and counseling through her business Behavior Solutions Plus, PA.

Jamie and Jean have three grown children, Alex, Lukas, and Sarah. Alex graduated Hudson High School in 2005. She is married to Josh McCann, and they have two children, Leila, four, and Jax, three. She works as a registered nurse for Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Lukas graduated from Hudson High School in 2010 and works at Phillips Medisize in Hudson. Sarah graduated from Hudson High School in 2011. After traveling to Eastern Europe during high school, Sarah spent a gap year as a foreign exchange student in the state of Saarland, Germany before attending the University of Wisconsin-Stout in 2012. After graduating college, she returned to Europe and visited seven countries in five weeks. She now lives and works in La Crosse, Wisconsin at a financial advising and accounting firm.

Jamie and Jean have two pets, a 14-year-old black female Maltese named Bella and a 10-year-old Maine Coon cat named Tippetina who rules the house. Jean has a nine-year-old North Dakota Badlands horse, Amidon, stabled at Bellwether Farms in Troy Township.

At the age of 40, Jamie took up running and is set to run his 29th half-marathon in Ashland, Wisconsin in October. He has also run dozens of shorter races, ranging from 5K to 10 miles. Jamie and Jean enjoy working out at the YMCA where they have been members since it opened in May 1995. Jamie is a huge Badger fan and follows the basketball and football teams closely. He is also an avid fan of the Packers, Brewers, and Bucks. Jamie and Jean have enjoyed participating in a small group Bible Study with three other couples for the last 17 years. In addition to studying the Bible and sharing their personal trials and triumphs, the group engages in social activities of biking, kayaking, snow shoeing, and board games.

The Johnsons have been active members at Bethel Lutheran Church since 1996, both having served as Sunday School teachers, confirmation guides, and on the Church Council. Jamie was involved in locating, purchasing, and building Bethel's Highland campus one



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mile from the city limits in Hudson Township. He co-chaired two capital campaigns and continues to serve on the facilities planning committee. Jamie and Jean's volunteer efforts through Bethel have included two mission trips to Mississippi in 2008 and 2009 to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina, as well as a mission trip to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

In addition to volunteering at the church, Jamie has been an active member of the Hudson Daybreak Rotary Club since 2007. He is a past president of the club and has served on several committees, participated in annual fundraisers, and joined several Rotarians on a service trip to Guatemala to build stoves in impoverished areas.

Prior to joining Rotary, Jamie was a mentor/advisor in Youth in Government program through the YMCA. He also was a Hudson Booster and enjoyed coaching his children in baseball, basketball, and soccer when they were younger. Over the years Jamie has volunteered for the schools and North Hudson parent group and served on several referendum committees. In April 2013, he was elected to the Hudson School Board and is serving his eighth one-year term as president of the board.

For the last 16 years, Jamie has volunteered as the legal/government correspondent for a local Hudson cable TV show *Western Wisconsin Journal (WWJ)* and its predecessor, *POWER News*. On *WWJ*, Jamie interviews guests that include government officials, legislators, judges, partisan and non-partisan political candidates, and non-profit organizers, on topics of interest to the community. Dozens of *WWJ* segments can be viewed on You Tube.

Jean and Jamie travel to Fort Meyers, Florida every year to visit Jean's siblings. The couple look forward to the relaxation, fishing, and family time when they visit. Two years ago, the couple started a tradition of renting a cabin on a lake for a week in Sawyer County near Hayward, Wisconsin with their children and grandchildren.

The Johnsons have one message for their community: "Getting to know and care about your neighbors should be a core value of every community. We are so fortunate to have caring and kind neighbors. Thank you for many wonderful years on Gherty Lane and we look forward to many more."

If you happen to see the Johnson family volunteering at the church or at the YMCA, be sure to introduce yourself!



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