

## Merry Christmas 2010!

[Please insert your favorite Merry Christmas pleasantries here. You know, budget cuts. We're all cutting back a bit this year, so even though we still expect the same (or more) attention from you as you read our letter this year, we're providing just a bit less, hoping that you won't notice any difference.]

This year started off in full swing with our second-in-a-row January vacation to Disney World. After months of planning (and months of running for Jamie), we headed to central Florida along with Tracy's parents amid record low temperatures. In fact, many days it was warmer in Colorado than in Orlando! Fortunately, the only truly bad-weather day was the day Jamie ran the half marathon, which made Jamie quite happy. He would rather run in the snow and rain (yes, there were early-morning flurries for about 2 minutes in Disney World) than have any other "vacation" day be ruined by weather. This vacation was great! We bundled up the kids and ourselves each morning and headed out to every single one of our planned activities. In fact, the very last day was the warmest, most humid and the most miserable. Of course we would have preferred warmer weather, but we were plenty happy to have cold, dry days. Some may ask if we are going to make it three Disney vacations, three years in a row. Well, for your answer, please see the budget cuts note above.

This has been a big year for our big little boy. Besides losing his very first tooth, Andrew finished his second year of preschool in the Spring and started Kindergarten in the Fall. He is learning to read and write and count and all sorts of other important things. And, of course, he is learning all sorts of unimportant things from his classmates. Jamie has considered teaching Drew a few choice phrases to share with his class, but that might only invite retaliation from other parents, then soon the whole class is involved, and nobody likes class warfare. Drew finished up his second season of soccer this Fall, and is really getting good and having fun too. He still likes to match his Daddy in everything he does and wears, and he is growing into a very fun, smart (and quite handsome) boy. Smitty and the Imagination Movers have been all but tossed aside in favor of Captain Jack Sparrow and the Pirates of the Caribbean! He may look like he is a year or two older than he is, but inside he is still our little six-year-old boy, and there's nothing better than seeing your pirate-dressed little boy sailing the seven seas while listening to the music from the Pirates movies, or playing with your old Transformers that haven't seen the light of day in over 25 years, yet somehow were much more broken that you recall, as if some kid who used to play with them didn't take as much care as he thought he did with his toys. We would be happy if Drew would stay six years old forever.

Our little Alexia is still as cute as can be. As more and more of her personality emerges, we realize how much of it has been there since the beginning. She is a very independent, shy little girl who has no qualms about making her opinions, desires and annoyances well known to those with whom she is comfortable. Snow White and the rest of the Disney princesses have made way for kitties. She has the perfect little-girl voice to make the most cute little "meow" sounds as she either pretends to be a kitty, or is speaking for her little stuffed "Black Kitty" who was procured by chance at the Omaha Zoo a couple of years back. Lexi remains a Mommy's girl, but has her days where she not only tolerates Daddy, but is pretty nice to him too. When she is not a kitty, she is Will Turner, the pirate, and loves to play right along with her big brother, that is until she thinks she has been wronged, and then it's just all over. What a great little girl.

Brielle has always been one-of-a-kind, and she continues to grow into the most happy-go-lucky little girl that you will ever meet. She has a great little smile, the size of which is only rivaled by her





newly-acquired attitude. She can go from being a sweet little angel girl to throwing an enormous fit while screaming "I'm mad at my Daddy!" because of what seemed like a minor correction to her behavior. At some point this little attitude will surely no longer be cute, and then we're really in trouble. But, for now, we have to work hard to hide our laughter when she goes into one of her "episodes" because it really is quite cute that she gets so worked up over simply not getting her way. Brie remains as risk-averse as Evil Kenevil, which is a wonderful trait for her, but can be quite scary for her parents. When Drew taught his sisters how to do somersaults, Brie got it on the very first try, not giving even one thought to the fact that she would be tumbling over. When it's pirate time, though, our little rough-and-tumble girl turns into Elizabeth Swan. What a cutie! You just can't help but smile being around this one. What an amazing little girl.

Tracy has continued her suicide schedule this year. Over the summer she took on the role of co-coordinator in her MOPS group, she is still making more and more cakes (with her first wedding cake ever in October), she taught more cake decorating classes this year than ever, she volunteers in Drew's classroom each week, and keeps up with a bevy of other clubs, events and friendships. And, she handles all of this while also taking care of our three kids, making sure they all have clothes that fit, hair that's combed, bellies that are well-fed, and socks that match, all while still getting Drew to school on time. Some days are better than others and, because of laundry, some nights are later than others, but somehow she takes it all in stride and makes it look easy. When we're out an about, we always seem to have exactly what we need, unless Daddy packed the diaper bag. Our kids could not ask for a better Mommy for sure.

Jamie is finishing up his first year in his newly-expanded role and project at IBM. He is still very fortunate to be able to work from home, and this still works very well, even as the kids get a bit older. When Daddy's door is closed during the day, the kids know to stay away. Of course, there is still that difference between what they know and what they do, but it all works out in the end and, as a result, Jamie has the fastest "mute button" finger this side of the Mississippi. Jamie's biggest adventure this year had to be coaching the girls' soccer team. Yes, Jamie took on the task to wrangle six three-year-olds while at the same time attempting to teach them something about soccer. Some days were better than others, but there was obvious significant progress in each of the players by the end of the season, and Brie and Lexi will be playing again in the Spring, so we call that very successful.

Toby is still our living doorbell (both when there is someone at the door or not), and likes to go on short runs with Jamie. It dawned on us for the very first time this year that Toby just isn't a puppy anymore and we started buying him "senior" dog food. Reading the package, we are only several years late. Sorry Toby. Good dog. Of course, he sends his annual request for meaty bones. After all, that senior food just isn't all it's cracked up to be.

We are quite proud of our little family, and we have a lot of fun together. This is a very special time in our lives, and we are trying to make the most of every day. Some days this means having our whole family sing the pirate song "Yo Ho, Yo Ho, a Pirate's Life for Me!" while Mommy plays the piano and Daddy plays the guitar. Other days this means popping popcorn and all sitting on the couch for a special movie. And, still other days this means giving up and putting the kids to bed as early as possible in order to try again tomorrow. These are the days for our memories, and we think we will have quite a few good ones when we get to look back on them.

We hope the past year has been as memorable for you as it has been for us, and we are thankful you were there to share it. We love you all and wish you the very best for this Christmas and the coming new year!

Love,

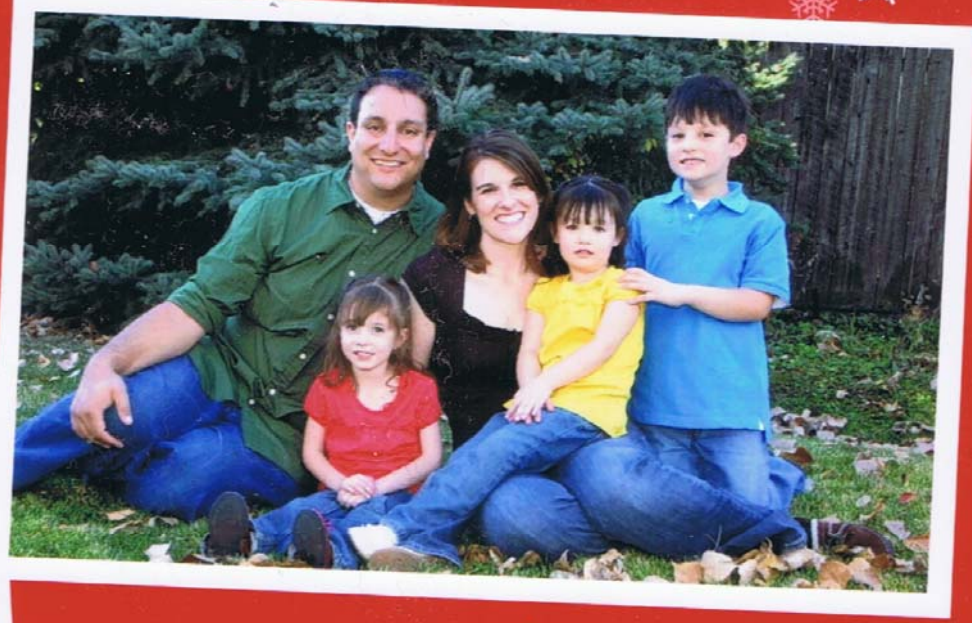
The Deba Family

Jamie, Tracy, Andrew, Alexia, Brielle and Toby too!

P.S.: As we near the end of another great year, we look forward to 2011, hoping this is the year where we hear "Mommy, Daddy, come wipe me!" for the very last time. Happy New Year, indeed.

P.P.S.: Froggy is still doing just swimmingly in his tank. We gave him a chance to tell us what to include in our annual Christmas letter for him, but he had nothing to say. Yes, you just got snubbed by a frog.





Merry Christmas 2010!  
Love, The Deba Family  
Jamie, Tracy, Drew, Lexi & Brie

