

July 2022

Neighbours of

CentrepoinTE & City View

Serving the very ❤️ of Nepean



Meet J Positive and His Family

 Best Version Media 

Photo By Frank Fenn

An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Briargreen • CentrepoinTE • City View • Ryan Farm • Saint Claire Gardens



Photos By Frank Fenn

Meet J Positive and His Family

*Spreading Positivity Through
Art to Ottawa and Beyond*

By Cassandra Plourde

What happens when you crash a 4,000+ person Christmas party? You might end up meeting the love of your life!

Mark Jamensky and Karen Faloon have been married for 28 years. They first met when Karen crashed a BNR Christmas party at the Congress Centre, and Mark asked her to dance.

"Our first real date was a skate on the Rideau Canal," says Mark. "We were married at the beautiful Unitarian Congregation on Cleary Avenue, and then had a reception and wonderful dance party at the West Block of Parliament Hill, which included 'free' fireworks since it was Victoria Day!"

A few years later, they moved to their current home in Centrepointe.

Karen was born and raised in Ottawa. She studied at Algonquin College and has had her own private hair salon since she was



Joel and his parents are all wearing 'Art By J Positive' shirts!

21-years-old. She started her own salon downtown, and later moved it to their home when pregnant with their second child. For over 10 years she has also been a practicing yoga teacher, for which she received extensive training in India.

Mark has worked in high-tech for over 30 years. He received his computer science degree from Concordia University in Montreal, which is also where he grew up. After graduation he moved to Ottawa where he worked the first 12 years of his career at BNR/Nortel. Since then he has worked to help build several successful start-up companies. Mark also has his MBA from the University of Ottawa.

He is currently working as Chief Product Officer at Diversys and is a member of the Capital Angel Network helping to foster the next generation of Ottawa technology companies.

When their son, Joel, was born in 1995, he was diagnosed with Down syndrome. The couple immediately embraced the unexpected adventure they were about to embark on.

Two years later, they had their second child, Kendra, who graduated from Carleton University and the University of Toronto and is now working as a Speech-Language Pathologist. Kendra adores her older brother.

From a young age, Karen encouraged Joel to develop his own unique artistic perspective. "His art has brought joy to all who see it, and we were encouraged to launch the Art By J Positive store in February 2022," she says.

Joel frequently participates and exhibits his pieces in two local artistic and education groups in Ottawa, BEING and DragonFly. "Both groups have been extremely supportive of Joel's artistic vision, which continues to evolve," says Karen.

Joel's unique artistic abilities emerged at a young age. "In recent years when Joel was included in group art showings, all of his original art would sell out extremely quickly," explains Mark. "This then gave us the idea to make his online art store."

In addition to his artistic endeavours, Joel also loves to cook, and he is proud to have achieved his Kitchen Steward Certificate from Algonquin College in 2017. He has worked in multiple professional kitchens and also considers cooking another form of art.

"Joel maintained a part-time job at Bridgehead's central kitchen for seven years, until COVID hit," explains Mark. "He was very proud of his job, busing across the city on his own, and now that things are relaxing again, he really wants to get back to working in a kitchen somewhere."

Joel enjoys movies and sports, and he continues to play on a special needs hockey team, the Capital City Condors, while also cheering for the Ottawa Senators in his spare time. Although everyone in the family are Ottawa Senators fans, Joel is known to be the most optimistic, assuming every year they will win the Stanley Cup!

According to his parents, Joel has also conquered his fear of heights with zip-lining and downhill skiing.

"He has been an accomplished downhill skier since he was five, and he participates in the Special Olympics as a competitor," says Mark.

"Joel has taught us all to live in the moment more, since that's where he spends most of the time," says Karen. "It is a lesson many of us can learn from him."



One of Mark and Karen's favourite family activities is when Joel leads them in an intense rock-out and dance aerobics session. "Most of these are usually after family dinner with a full stomach!"

As evident by the fact that they have remained here for 25 years, both Mark and Karen love Centrepointe and all that it has to offer. "We love the convenience and location, how there is such easy access to downtown, the bike paths, the theatre, the convenient transit and the skating in winter," says Karen. "We also have really great neighbours!"

They realized this very early on. "When we first moved into Centrepointe the stimulation program we were doing with Joel required numerous volunteers several times a day," explains Mark. "Our neighbours were initially somewhat apprehensive about the amount of household activity, however they quickly came to understand what we were doing. During this time our living and dining rooms were 100 per cent converted to a full time gym complete with monkey bars and gym mats, so ours was always the main play house for the kids on our street. It was wonderful!"

When Joel was younger Mark also encouraged practical jokes, which then came right back to him. "Joel would hide in the closet when I came home from work and scare the crap out of me!" he exclaims.

Not only does Joel's positive personality and loving sense of life come through in the art itself, but also in the names and descriptions of his pieces, which you can see on his website where he sells art prints, clothing, and accessories: artbyjpositive.com.

These are Joel's thoughts on his art:

- "Art is about life, growing up, and getting older.
- My art is very serious to me.
- I get my ideas from movies, rock and roll music, and family that I enjoy.
- When I am doing my art it feels like I am free, sometimes free falling.
- I just want a normal real life, because love is real.
- My nickname is 'J Positive', because I am a positive person.
- It makes me feel very good when people like my art."

"Joel has taught us all to live in the moment more, since that's where he spends most of the time," says Karen. "It is a lesson many of us can learn from him."

