



No portion of this article may be reproduced without  
express written permission of Style Publishing Group, LLC.  
©2007 • All rights reserved.



Style Publishing Group  
P.O. Box 1676  
Frisco, Texas 75034  
Phone: 972.335.1181  
Toll Free: 877.781.7067  
Fax: 214.722.2313

E-mail: [info@friscostyle.com](mailto:info@friscostyle.com)  
Web: [www.friscostyle.com](http://www.friscostyle.com)

**Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306**

*The Nix family ready for summer*  
photo by Chris Johnson



**THE SCHOOL YEAR IS NOW OVER** and it is time for some well-deserved rest and relaxation, right? Well, I suppose it depends on who you are and how many school age children you have. The two mothers I interviewed tell a much different story. Combined, Sharon Cox and Cathy Nix have nine children and a very busy summer schedule.

Meet the Nix family. Cathy and Don Nix have five boys: Taylor, 18; Jason, 16; Colin, 14; Jared, 13 and Corey, 9. Don is an oral surgeon and although she has many other talents, Cathy is a professed “cheerleader” for her boys. Since all of the boys are involved with the Frisco summer swimming program (FASST), their summer will be a wave of practices and meets from nearly the first day out until back to school in August! The oldest, Taylor, will be serving as both a coach and a lifeguard this summer along with making preparations to begin his studies at TCU in the fall. He will also spend two days at college orientation.

Jason will more than likely spend one week at a Christian camp and three days in a basketball tournament while Jared will spend 10 days at a National Junior Leadership Conference. Both Colin and Jared will work part time setting up surgery trays for their dad.

### Free Time?

When the kids aren’t working or swimming competitively, they will spend their “free” time hanging out with friends, swimming for fun, using the trampoline, going to the skate park and no doubt emptying mom’s pantry!

# Swimming, Soccer, & Surviving Summer

By Wendy Crooks



So how do the upcoming days compare to the school year? Believe it or not, this hectic schedule is what Cathy refers to as unstructured. During the school year, there is homework, after school activities, and work to consider. It seems that by deleting the schoolwork aspect of the day, the family has a little more time on their hands. Additionally, the swim schedules take place in the early morning hours (as early as 6:00 or 6:30am) so it frees them up to have more time for work or play in the afternoon and evenings. Cathy reports they are even able to eat more meals as a family in the evenings during the summer than they do during the school year.

When asked how she copes with the craziness of five boys, she replied, "It seems crazy to people who come in to the house, but for me, I started out with one boy and ended up with five. It was a progression so it is normal for me." She added proudly, "Of course, they bring their friends over so we always have more than just our five boys."

When does this busy schedule allow for time for house cleaning or even a time out for mom, I wondered? "When it comes to cleaning the house," she said, "the boys are really good about helping, especially if they have a list." And as far as the time outs for mom are concerned, she admitted that the majority of her time was spent "cheering the boys on." You could tell by her tone that there aren't any regrets either. Cathy is doing what is right for her family and she's happy doing it. "There's just not a lot of time for extras," she added happily.

When the boys aren't swimming, working or playing, they will spend time at the lake on their grandparent's boat.

At some point during this crazy summer, the Nix family is planning a family vacation to Destin, Florida. This might just prove to be the R & R that they need.

### Similar Song, Different Verse

Now meet the Cox family. Sharon and Michael have four daughters: Stephanie, 15; Katherine, 14; Jacqueline, 11 and Courtney, 10. Although Sharon and Michael are raising girls rather than boys like the Nix family, the similarities are amazing with regard to their busy schedules.

Since Sharon and Michael really push their girls academically,

the summer is a welcome break for all concerned. The girls get to stay up late and sleep in later than usual. During the school year, there are many sacrifices on each girl's part due to their serious soccer schedules. Sharon explained her upcoming summer as "a time when we just let them be kids. We put in a pool, basketball and soccer goals and we have a revolving door with friends over constantly. It is a very relaxing time for them."

### The Miracle of Car Pools

However, one thing you can be sure of is the summer is not without plans. The Cox girls play soccer competitively so there are practices and camps they will attend. There are also games and tournaments they will be involved in. Sharon says, "While keeping them busy during the summer is a challenge, hoping that every carpool works out is a bigger challenge." Sharon and Michael prioritize and the girls are aware of the priorities. The parents try to make it to the games and hope that they can get rides arranged if the other girls have conflicting practices.

How can this mom be in so many places at one time I wondered as I reflected on the four girls' schedules? Sharon admitted, "The biggest reason this works is we're equally involved in the kids' lives. Michael is every bit as involved as I am." And while Michael is extremely helpful, he isn't her only support. "We've been very blessed to have a very strong support system. The other parents help out with rides to practices. Also, my parents are here and very involved in the girl's lives. They have made it a point to come to them and get involved."

Even with help, I was overwhelmed and amazed at both the Nix and the Cox family activities, but these super moms make it look easy. Sharon summed it up when she laughed and said, "I can't slow down and look at the day or I would say, 'I can't do this!'"

### Soccer Vacation

The Cox family does plan on taking a summer family vacation. It doesn't sound as relaxing as lying on the beach in Destin, but I'm sure it will be enjoyable – especially if they win. You see, they plan their vacation around one of the girls' soccer tournaments. The possibilities for this summer's trip are San Diego or Oregon.

Besides the family vacation, I wondered if they ever had a chance



The Nixs (top) and the Coxs (bottom) loadin' up!  
photos by Chris Johnson

*The Cox family at home*  
photo by Chris Johnson



to all be together. Sharon said that one of the girls' favorite things to do when everyone is there is "grab their Dad and go shoot some hoops." I conjured up visions of *Father of the Bride* when Steve Martin spends good quality time shooting hoops with his daughter well, in this case, times four!

### **Date night, what's that?**

Does this busy couple have time for date night? Sharon admits it is a struggle making time for each other, but they do because they both feel it is important. The girls tease them when they snag a chance at going to the grocery store alone. They've been known to tease, "Oh boy, mom and dad are going on a date to the grocery store!"

Sharon and Michael do manage to take at least two vacations annually without children. "We try to put God first, then our marriage and then the kids." These trips help to keep them on track as a couple. Maybe that's why a trip to the grocery store can be so meaningful!

When asked about cleaning her house or eating dinner as a family, Sharon had a reply that most women can relate to. "The girls do pitch in and do their share, but we have what we call clean and grandma clean." Everyone knows that "grandma clean" means the real deal and will take longer, but regardless, the girls rise to the occasion. They also tend to eat out a lot during the summer due to their busy schedules.

"Do the kids ever get a break from activities?" I asked both moms. "What about when it rains?" I implored. They both sort of laughed saying that there were plenty of indoor facilities to accommodate their soccer and swimming practices, meets and games. They both agreed that on the off chance things were cancelled for a day, it was almost as if there was reason to celebrate. The girls might stay in their pajamas all day and rent movies and the guys would hang out with friends and play PlayStation.

The schedules are nearly set and the summer is almost here. These moms are ready to meet the challenge. Both moms seem to be thriving in what they are doing with these kids. They couldn't possibly be any busier and yet they both genuinely love what they're doing. Sharon said, "I'm thoroughly enjoying this stage of life with them." As for me, I'm tired just thinking about their summers.

*Wendy Crooks is a freelance writer living in Plano.*

**"Oh boy...  
mom and  
dad are going  
on a date to  
the grocery  
store."**

