

## Carlee Schulte & Family

### Making Milledgeville Home

Growing up in the suburbs of Atlanta has its advantages; but for Carlee Schulte, executive director of Milledgeville Main Street, it was the lure of a historical city that drew her to Milledgeville as a college freshman.

She explains: “I really fell in love with the beauty of the Georgia College campus. The buildings are charming and I loved the small town feel.”

The charm of the Georgia College (GC) campus can create the perfect environment for romance, as it did in the case of Carlee and husband Jon-Paul who first met as students. The couple married in October of 2006, and moved to Alpharetta where Carlee worked in sales at Randstad.

It only took six months for the couple to realize they both wanted to move back to a more pastoral part of Georgia. Jon-Paul, a native of nearby Madison, felt at home in Lake Country. “We realized the quality of life in Milledgeville was what we wanted,” said Carlee. “It was never even a question.”

Jon-Paul adds: “I love that Milledgeville can simultaneously feel small and big. It’s small enough to give you a sense of a tight-knit community.”

The region’s bucolic backdrop offers a quiet refuge for the Schulte family without sacrificing modern convenience. “Additionally, being a rural town, we’re surrounded by plenty of natural beauty,” said Jon-Paul. “But Milledgeville is also just big enough to have plenty of great options for family recreation—we have the best of both worlds!”

## Putting Down Roots

Making Milledgeville home came easy to the Schulte family as they settled into life in Middle Georgia. Jon-Paul found employment as a bellman at the Ritz Carlton-Reynolds, at Lake Oconee, and Carlee transferred to the local Randstad sales office.

The severe economic downturn of the late 2000s left Carlee, like so many others in our area, looking for a new career. In July of 2010, she joined Main Street as the administrative assistant to the director. After a change in leadership, Carlee served as the interim executive director for six months, then was hired fulltime in the position.

“I wanted a position within Main Street because of the growth opportunities,” said Carlee. “During the time as interim director, I had to prove to City Manager Barry Jarrett that I was capable of doing the job.” Prove herself she did, and has been working to make downtown shine ever since.

Children have now completed the Schulte family. Ethan 7, is a second grader at Creekside Elementary and loves soccer, math, and watching American Ninja Warrior. Entering the toddler years, little brother Barrett loves to eat and keeping up with his big brother.

As a young and active family, the Schultes find fun in outdoor living. Carlee has run in multiple challenging races including the Warrior Dash, the Mud Crusade, the Dirty Girl Mud Run, local 5k's and most recently the Inflatable 5K, which the entire family completed together.

The adventurous type, Jon-Paul enjoys the sport of skydiving. “The duality of skydiving is one of my favorite aspects of it,” he said. “You get to enjoy the intense and inimitable sensation of flying through the air at 120 mph followed by an immediate sense of tranquility after the parachute

deploys and you're floating peacefully through the sky and enjoying the vastness of the scenery around you."

Loving the surf and sand, the family spends summer vacations at the Ritz-Carlton on Amelia Island, Florida. "It is a week of heaven," says Carlee.

## **Making Connections**

The quickest way to make a new town feel like home is to get involved with local organizations. Carlee did just that by joining the Milledgeville Rotary Club (MRC). The club has a long and rich history in our town-over 100 years-of charitable contributions.

Per their website: Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide, who provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of the Milledgeville Rotary Club," said Carlee. "As a Rotarian, I am given the opportunity to serve my community in many different ways and I have made some great friends along the way."

Carlee was on the board of directors for two years serving as the club administration officer who is in charge of scheduling the speaker for each week's meeting.

The service projects performed by the MRC are numerous, but with pride and emotion Carlee mentions two that are close to her heart-the Christmas Basket Project for needy families and the Dictionary Project. "My son received a dictionary at an event a couple of years ago and really enjoyed looking words up to learn the meaning," she added.

Carlee, along with Jon-Paul, were also involved in coaching Ethan's soccer team. "I was pregnant with Barrett at the time in 2015, when we coached for the Old Capital Soccer League."

## Main Street Magic

Many people search for a lifetime to find what they truly love to do as a career. According to Carlee, she has found a job that is both professionally fulfilling and fun to occupy at the same time.

“There are so many aspects to the job that each day is different and there’s always going to be room for improvement and growth,” she observed.

As part of a larger team, Carlee places emphasizes on the collaborations which propel Main Street’s achievements. She states, “I feel very fortunate to work for a City Manager that encourages and challenges me to grow and look at things from different perspectives. I also have some amazing business owner’s downtown with whom I have the opportunity to partner. They are all very helpful and supportive of our mission. It’s definitely a team effort and I’d say we have a great team!”

Although extremely humble and slow to take credit for Main Street’s accolades, Carlee has proven herself more than a competent leader in our community. Barry Jarrett, city manager for Milledgeville, is quick to highlight her success story.

“Carlee has shown great enthusiasm in her position at Main Street. I have been very pleased with the job she has done,” said Jarrett. “During her time as director, Carlee has grown professionally and worked hard to garner much respect and notoriety for the City of Milledgeville. I am proud of her and her staff.”

Always the one to see prospects for improvement, Carlee looks toward the future of downtown. “Revitalization is an ongoing process that requires continuous work for success,” she said. “Moving forward, I hope to cultivate more community engagement and stakeholder collaboration to

continue to promote economic growth for the area. I see so much potential here, we have only begun our renaissance!”