

Dave and Colleen Kramer
The Perfect Team From the Ground Up
by
Brian Campbell

Colleen Kramer is not only Dave's wife, his best friend and his Marketing Manager, she is also his biggest fan. Her eyes glow as she talks about how wonderful he is and why you absolutely "have to have him as your Realtor!"

Although she admits to being biased, it is easy to see where her confidence comes from. Dave, instead of having a background in sales, took Structural Drafting and Civil Engineering Technology at Red River College. When he couldn't find work in his chosen field, Dave took a job at Earl's, where he rose to a management position within six months.

"During this time, I still had an interest in architecture; I loved drafting houses and wanted to design homes, but with the economic times in the early 90's, the construction industry was very slow," Dave said. "So out of necessity, I got into the restaurant business. But the silver lining was that I got management experience and honed my people skills during that time."

Dave ended up working at in restaurant management for 12 years, during which time he and Colleen met through mutual friends. "We were friends for years; we were best friends," Colleen said. "Then we finally started dating and got married; then we bought our own home."

"Buying our first home was an okay experience, but it rekindled my desire to get into real estate." Dave added, "I thought 'This is relational. It is not about sales, it is about connecting with people. I think I can help people.' So I told Colleen and she was a huge encouragement."

However, they were expecting their first child, so the timing wasn't right. But, unfortunately, they miscarried. "With Colleen's encouragement and our shared faith in God," Dave said, "We talked things over and she said, 'Now is the time to do it. You got to just go for it.' It was really because of her that I took the courses and got licenced."

“I always think that you can do whatever you want to do,” Colleen said. “There are no obstacles big enough to stop anyone from doing anything. So if Dave wants do real estate, what’s stopping you? So, just do it if you want to do it!”

Dave gave up his steady job complete with benefits to pursue his dream. “And, of course, while I was taking the courses, we got pregnant again,” he added with a laugh. “Within five months of me getting licenced, our first daughter was born. The pressure was on.”

“But Dave’s colleagues, especially one colleague who was mentoring him, said that she knew that Dave would be someone who would last and this would be his passion,” Colleen said.

Dave even had his first sale lined up as soon as he got his licence. “My Nanny and Grandpa, had been in their house since I was a child, and they trusted Dave to sell it for them,” Colleen said. “Dave was that kind of person that, even though he was just licenced, they trusted him to sell their home.”

“Actually, they waited for me,” Dave added with a laugh. “They were ready to sell in the summer, and they waited until September for me to get my licence. As soon as I had it, they put it up. So I had a listing my first week.”

Dave’s sister also listed with him, and soon referrals and word of mouth spread and he was off and running.

Colleen started out working with special needs students at Pembina Trails School Division and working in Home Care until their daughters Skylar (10) and Sierra (9) were born. Then she became a full time mom. She also spent a lot of time as Dave’s business advisor. “So, after 10 years of unsolicited advice, Dave finally said, ‘Ok Colleen, I’d really like you to join me’,” she said with a laugh.

Colleen’s official position is Administrative Assistant. Her actual job is Dave’s PR Manager, Marketing Coordinator, Advertising Executive, Graphic Designer, Social Media Manager, Web Master, Client Services and leader of the Dave Kramer fan club. “How could you not work with such an ethical, moral, honest, kind, hard-working and good looking guy?” Colleen said enthusiastically, not that she is biased in any way.

“Now I have more time to focus on the day to day activities, meeting with clients and showing homes,” Dave said. “Before I was doing everything myself. You have a lot of balls in the air.”

A side effect of Dave's career was that he found their home in Linden Woods. Dave said, "We wanted to live in Linden Woods, but we didn't think that it was feasible. Then this place came up and it was like it was meant to be."

"We walked in and we knew instantly," Colleen added. "There was that feeling of 'Come on in'."

Dave and Colleen already had friends in the neighbourhood and it wasn't long before they made more. They quickly became very comfortable in Linden Woods and are now very involved in their community. Colleen said, "There are all sorts of programs at the Community Centre. Our kids do Zumba there; I do Zumba there. There's skating. Dave and I really enjoy cycling, so we do the trails here; we go across into Fort Whyte. Our kids are into cycling as well."

"When we moved here, our kids were three and two, so our big thought was that we wanted to move into a family oriented neighbourhood with good schools," Dave said. "We wanted to be close to amenities, and we wanted to be close to parks and bike trails, because that is something we are passionate about. This fit everything."

"We wanted somewhere that we could plant ourselves," Colleen added.

Dave and Colleen are self-proclaimed Jets fans and celebrated with most of Winnipeg at the corner of Portage and Main when the Jets returned in 2011. They get to as many games as they can every year. Colleen said. "That's how my mother-in-law supports the Jets. By babysitting."

Dave has done a lot of his own renovations in his home, from laying hardwood flooring to ceramic tiles. "My dad is a jack of all trades and he has been in trades almost all his life," Dave said. "He taught me pretty much everything I know when it comes to renovations."

It is this ability that gives him an edge in the Real Estate business. "It is helpful when I have a buyer who is on a budget. If we go into a home that has great potential but is dated, I can talk to them and point out that it isn't that hard to change the flooring, rip the carpets up, change the light fixtures or paint the walls. Don't get overwhelmed," he said. "There are also the big issues like foundations and old electrical. I am not a master in these. For major issues you sometimes need to look to the experts. I help people by pointing out which areas in their home need to be adjusted or changed in any way to make their home more 'saleable' when listing with me."

Even though Dave doesn't consider himself an expert in home inspections, he is considered proficient enough to be featured on CJOB last March talking about getting your home ready to sell. "We didn't take ourselves too seriously and it was a lot of fun," Dave said. "Of course Colleen took it and ran with it. Told everyone she knew. She was joking around on the air as well."

Dave enjoys meeting the diverse group of home sellers and home buyers through his work. "I'm not a traditional salesperson who goes out and hammers people for business. To me it's all about making connections with people," he said. "That's what I love about this job. I'm always meeting different people who have interesting stories. Buying or selling a house is one of the single biggest decisions a person will make. Selling a home you have lived in all your life can be very difficult. That's what I love about the business is the relationships and many of my clients have turned into friends."

Colleen added, "Dave's slogan is 'navigating you home' and when translated directly, it means 'to make one's way through'. In Dave's case, he will smooth the way forward when listing your home or purchasing one. This is why you get him. He is a knowledgeable professional who you can trust, to navigate you through."

Dave said, "My main goal is to connect with people, help people and form lasting relationships. I especially want to connect with people in Linden Woods. I am passionate about my neighbourhood and I want to help people in this community."