

Amazing Dads

Written by Story by Nichole Brophy, Veronica Jones, Kavitha Sundralingam and Christine Whitton / Photographed by Chris Loomis

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They taught us how to play catch in the backyard. And they let us dance on their toes at our weddings. So on Father's Day, we want to show our dads how much they mean to us. Find out how these A-plus pops are able to make their children their priority and what they are most looking forward to on June 20.



Tom Wells

Father of Jennifer, 34; Corey, 30; Bryce, 22; Samuel, 21; Michelle, 15; Karleigh, 12; Jason, 8; and Emma, 6. Foster father of Celeste, 2. Grandfather of Nicholas, 4, and Owen, 18 months.

Jon and Kate have nothing on Tom Wells and his clan. With eight children (five of whom are adopted), one foster baby, three dogs and a horse, Wells and his wife, Holly, have their hands full—but they like it that way.

Four years ago, as president of local printing company, Heritage Graphics, Wells decided it was time for a change. To spend more time with his growing family, he took a sales job where he controls his hours. "Whenever I need to be with them, I'm with them. It makes it pretty easy now although it took a long time to get to that point."

With more time at home, Wells is able to experience the small things that make his family life special. "Every success and every smile they put on their face is special to me," he says. "My son Jason, who's autistic, makes me laugh everyday and that's a cool thing. Just having him understand and get it and smile is a special moment every day."

Jennifer, the self-proclaimed "daddy's girl," says one of her fondest memories is from her high school cheerleading competition. "I don't think there was a bigger cheerleader than my dad," she says. "We have it all on tape; he was going ballistic. It's just the funniest thing, and he was just so proud." —V.J.



Dan Harkins

Father of Danielle, 18, and James, 16

He may own movie theaters across several states, but Dan Harkins's favorite characters are not found on the big screen. Instead, they are his children, Danielle and James.

Despite being the owner of Harkins Theaters, this dad manages to find quality time for his kids. "I just make our kids the priority," he says. "Everyone seems to understand that. Luckily in our culture... children are allowed to take priority." Like their dad, both children have developed an interest in the arts (Danielle as an artist and James as a filmmaker). "I feel blessed that not only are they healthy and beautiful, but they're very smart and intelligent with outstanding values," Harkins says. And as they get older, they still adore their dear dad. "He's just so goofy," Danielle says. "He's like playing with a 5-year-old child. He always knows how to make me smile."

For Father's Day this year, Harkins is expecting some traditions to stay the same, including the exchange of homemade cards on holidays. "My son always makes his cards with a sort of tongue-in-cheek sense of humor, and my daughter always makes beautiful cards with a lot of pictures and collages from photographs." —V.J.



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Alfredo Molina

Father of Megan, 26; Derek, 25; Austin, 22; and Madison, 10

As CEO and chairman of The Molina Group, Alfredo Molina learned early on that balancing work and family wouldn't be easy—so he combined them. Alongside his wife of 28 years, Lisa, who is a fourth-generation jeweler, Molina (he is an 11th-generation Master Jeweler) built a company that has prospered for the last 30 years and provided a beautiful life for his family. "I work a half-day," Molina jokes. "I just can't tell you which 12 hours I'm on and which 12 hours I'm off."

Apart from being a businessman, Molina has learned that, as a father, one wears many hats. "A mentor, a spiritual leader and a trusted friend—an example of what they will take from in many ways." Today, with only his youngest still living at home, Molina looks forward to family Sundays when his kids visit for the day. And Megan, Molina's oldest, couldn't agree more. "Some of my best memories were on Sundays," she says. "[I remember] my two brothers and I would wake my dad up and wrestle in my parents' room. Now that I'm older and have a daughter of my own, I've come to appreciate my father even more." And for Molina, the third Sunday of this month will be extra special—it's Father's Day. —C.W.



JD Hayworth

Father of Nicole, 33; Hannah, 19; and John Micah, 16

While a life in politics requires excellence in persuasion and compromise, there is one item JD Hayworth, former congressman and candidate for United State Senate, chooses not to negotiate—time with his family. "Given the kind of life we've lived for so long, often our time together is going to the movies or hanging out and barbecuing in the backyard," says Hayworth, who, with his wife Mary, have raised three children, Nicole, Hannah and John Micah. "I am so blessed that Mary is the backyard chef and all I have to do is lug a bag of charcoal around."

The political lifestyle has been a part of the Hayworths' world for years. Their youngest, John Micah, was 13 months old when his father was sworn into congress. After his term ended in 2006, Hayworth believes "especially for the two younger kids, just knowing dad was home [in Arizona] helped them both."

Politics aside, Hayworth says fatherhood opened his eyes to how intelligent kids can be, even from a very young age. "They are instinctively clever almost from the crib onward, especially in terms of getting their way," Hayworth says. "They are not spoiled, but the rational that they use at times is amazing. Arguably, politics involves the art of persuasion. If we are using that standard, they are excellent persuaders and that has, in retrospect, really amazed me." —N.B.