

COVER STORY

By Jenna Caputo

Photos by Louis Torres Photography

Everyone seems to be running around busy non-stop these days. It's hard to escape it. With technology constantly at our fingertips and an ever-growing to-do list, some days it seems as if there is no stop in sight. But Kristin Murphy has found a simple solution to help us all keep our sanity – Get Outside.

Clifton Park has many parks and outdoor activities year round to provide the resources we need to get out and get moving. "You can hit the pause button on life for just a little while and escape into nature," says Kristin. "Our parks are great for families and offer a plentitude of non-strenuous trails, perfect for young kids."

Kristin was born in Los Angeles and moved with her family to Connecticut when she was 13. Even from a young age, she always loved to go on outings. "I credit my Dad for instilling in me my love for the outdoors. He loved to go hiking and explore wonderful places – anything from local and state parks, historic places, to rundown buildings." When in Connecticut, she would run the trails in the woods, canoe on the lake and visit the cows on the farm across the street. "As a child, rural Connecticut was like heaven on earth to me!" she remembers.

But despite her love of nature, Kristin decided to do her undergraduate degree in accounting at Castleton State College. She spent many years unhappy in her field before she decided to go back to school to get her Master of Public Health degree. "I have always been interested in health and well-being," she says. "So public health seemed like a good fit, particularly because public health is focused on community-level interventions, which



Kristin Murphy

Isn't Afraid of Things that Go Bump in the Night

means education and helping large numbers of people.”

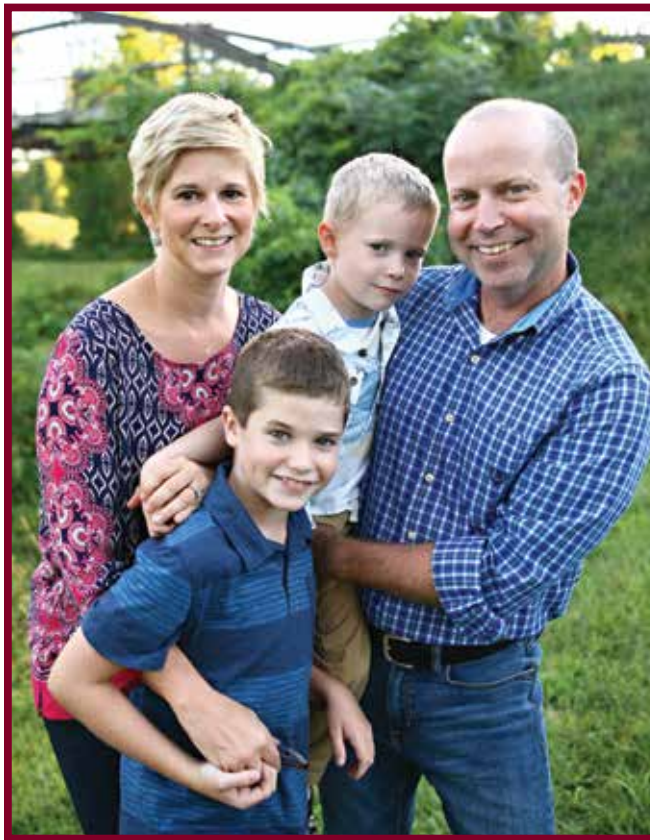
This background in public health is what eventually led to her involvement with Clifton Park’s Open Space, Trails, and Riverfront Committee.

“The built environment, environmental health and having the availability of open spaces as places to promote exercise and environmental conservation are huge focus areas in public health. I was excited to become part of the efforts to help preserve open space and to protect the beauty and natural assets of our wonderful town.” Much of the committee’s efforts focus on how to best manage the town’s current public lands as well as to make recommendations on

land acquisitions to conserve natural areas for wildlife habitat and farmland. Kristin’s role, however, is primarily to develop activities and events to bring community members to the parks to learn about some of the things that makes Clifton Park so special.

“I think that when many people think of Clifton Park, particularly those that may not live here, they think of Clifton Park Center and its wealth of retail businesses and restaurants. But our town has done a wonderful job preserving a great deal of its farmland heritage and works hard to maintain its rural components.” Currently with nine parks and preserves that include about 2000 acres of land and 20 miles of community trails, Clifton Park certainly has a lot to choose from.

Kristin is excited for the upcoming “Things that Go Bump in the Night” event on October 15th from 6-8pm. This event was their most popular last year, despite being a new addition to the schedule. This year will include some new features. Taking place at Veteran’s Memorial Park, small



groups will head out on guided walks starting at dusk. Each group will stop at designated stations to learn about various nocturnal creatures. Entertainment will be provided along the trail. Jonesville Fire Department will man a bonfire, Cub Scout Troop 45 is donating jack-o-lanterns and refreshments will also be available.

While Kristin and her husband, Joe, have lived in the Capital Region for over 20 years, they have lived in Clifton Park for the last five. They were looking for a family-friendly town with a good neighborhood for their family. They settled in Clifton Knolls and couldn’t be happier. Their family now also includes Declan, 9 and Liam, 5. Active members of St. Edwards Roman Catholic Church, their family enjoys participating in neighborhood and town activities whenever they are able. Self-proclaimed foodies, they support the local food culture while also taking advantage of the available free music and arts events. Kristin also enjoys history and tries to learn the stories associated with the places in the area she has visited. “It makes you

appreciate where you live that much more and makes the area feel even more special!” explains Kristin.

The boys both enjoy sports. Declan participates in recreational and travel baseball and is involved in Scouts. Liam is in gymnastics and looks forward to joining the Scouts in the future as well. The family has also recently welcomed a new pet to their home – a juvenile ball python snake named Burrito, after the kids’ favorite meal.

Kristin is happy to have finally found her place both in her career and in the Capital Region. “What I enjoy most about being on the Open Space Committee is planning events that will showcase our beautiful parks with the hope

that more people will come out and enjoy nature and become more active. You can walk, run, snowshoe, even cross country ski on the miles of trails our parks have to offer. Another thing I enjoy about planning events with the Committee is that we really try to integrate other local businesses and community members into our events whenever possible. It’s not just our natural spaces that make our town unique, but the business owners and residents as well.”

And perhaps that “pause button” on life is really a pause button for the noise of life. Because perhaps, when we walk out into nature, that’s when life really begins.

For more information on the Open Space committee or Things that Go Bump in the Night, visit <http://www.cliftonpark.org/townhall/open-space-trails-and-riverfront-advisory-committee> ■

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