

The Schmidts' Folk Victorian farmhouse they are remodeling just north of Kearney.



Birds of a feather flock together." The well-known proverb, while traditionally means people who have similar ideas or values tend to stick together, for the Schmidts it holds a much deeper meaning.

Roger and Jennifer Schmidt own Birds of a Feather Home Concepts and Design, which focuses on interior/exterior painting, small remodeling projects and home staging.

"We named the company after Jennifer's dad Vic's favorite saying "birds of a feather flock together." He passed away almost 10 years ago so it's in honor of him," Roger said.

The business is a family affair with their four children even helping, gaining hands-on experience on what it takes to run a successful business as well as the skills involved.

The Schmidts are remodeling a Folk Victorian farmhouse on a eight-acre property just north of Kearney, off of 33 Hwy.

"The kids are very involved and are learning how to fix plumbing and a myriad of other things. Jennifer's dad was always building and fixing things."

They plan to finish the house remodel as soon as possible.

"We plan on having a large office to meet with clients and installing a paint booth next door to our office for clients cabinetry. We would love to expand our business and help as many people as possible make their homes beautiful and inviting," Jennifer said. "We love what we do and hope to include the kids more each year as they get older."

It's no surprise then that Schmidts consider their family motto to be "Teamwork makes the dream work."

"We took a huge leap of faith taking our business full time, but it has been amazing," Jennifer said. "We involve the kids as much as we can so they can understand what hard work and determination will get you."

"Family is everything to us," she continued. "There is no greater feeling than when all of us are under one roof. Family means that you support each other through thick and thin."

Roger, 46, and Jennifer, 44, met at Missouri State University. They have been together almost 26 years and married for 20 years.

Jennifer, born in Detroit, Mich., moved to Kearney with her family when she was two years old. Roger is originally from Blue Springs, Mo.

Their children are Victoria, 18, Isabella, 17, Carter, 15, and Archer, 12. The Schmidts find Kearney to be an idyllic place to raise their family.

"The schools are small enough that we are always aware of everything going on in the classroom and out of the classroom. It has been great that our kids have had many of the same teachers that Jennifer had growing up," he said. "It's a great connection."

Victoria is a freshman in college at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, pursuing a degree in vocal performance. Singing is definitely more than just a hobby for Victoria as she been singing professionally since she was 9.

Isabella, a junior at Kearney High School, is on the swim team. She swims freestyle individually and in relays.

"She is looking to study math or possibly science thanks to her favorite teacher Mr. Niles," Jennifer said.

Carter, a freshman at Kearney Junior High, was a left-tackle on the freshman football team this past season. He also plays basketball and throws shot-put and discus in track. Carter is interested in playing football in college and studying agriculture.

Archer is in sixth grade at Kearney Middle School. Archer enjoys playing flag football and basketball. While he enjoys sports, his thoroughly enjoys acting. He has been in "A Christmas Carol" at the KC Rep and "The Music Man" at the high school.

Their schedule is hectic, like all working parents with active kids, but they try to make family time a priority, squeezing in vacations when they can.

"We have a very crazy schedule with work and kids activities so when we are all together, we enjoy going out to dinner or to the movies," Jennifer said. "Being self-employed, we don't get to take a lot of vacations but our favorite is probably to Colorado to go skiing."

Finding balance personally and professionally is a concept the Schmidts are instilling in their children. Balance is the ultimate goal for many people; the Schmidts are doing what they can do to help their children define what success means to them individually.

"The most important thing we can teach our children is to have a strong work ethic," Jennifer said. "We feel that it is important for our kids to have responsibilities beyond school and sports. In life, there is a lot to keep track of and juggle. Balance and follow through are essential for a successful life." **I-35**