

Get to Know ... Kevin and Dawn Landers

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Kevin and Dawn Landers are high school sweethearts from Griffin, Ga., who eventually married and now have five children, ranging in age from 16 – 28. Kevin Landers first came to Jacksonville in 1988 when he was in the Navy and attached to Carrier Air Wing 20 in aviation maintenance. He moved away and worked as an air traffic controller before getting out of the military and getting a job with JP Morgan Chase in Louisiana. Dawn operated a child day care for 13 years, but found it difficult to maintain with the geographic moves required by the military.

Kevin never forgot about the Jacksonville area and the couple was pleased that they were able to transfer back to the area with JP Morgan Chase. While looking for something to do together as a couple, they settled on purchasing a Kona Ice franchise and now operate in their territory of Baymeadows, Deerwood, Greenland and South Mandarin.

Q: What was appealing to you about operating a Kona Ice truck?

A: We saw them in Louisiana first and thought it was a great idea, but the timing wasn't right. Then, a few years later in our neighborhood here, we saw an ice cream truck and wondered what we could do that was better than that. We recalled the Kona Ice truck from Louisiana. We purchased our franchise in April 2018.

Q: What is a typical day like?

A: Dawn: I mostly run the truck. The business is seasonal, but at least here in Florida our season is longer than some states. I keep the truck clean, load the ice and hit the road. I visit daycares, schools and some neighborhoods pretty much six days a week. We can set up appointments and corporate routes in advance. We also are fortunate to be a sponsor for Mandarin Athletic Association, which allows us to be at Greenland Park for flag and tackle football games.

Q: Tell us about Kona Ice's reputation for philanthropy.

A: Kona Ice overall has given more than \$60 million back to neighborhood schools, organizations and teams since its inception in 2007. So far, we have given back \$3,500. It's not a large number, but we look forward to it growing. This is an important part of the business to us. We are always looking for ways to develop relationships with non profit organizations and schools to help with their fundraisers. We offer 20 percent of our sales at their event to the organization.

Q: What is your favorite part of the business?

A: When we started, it was initially all about the numbers ... could we make a profit? But we have learned that while that is important, what it comes down to is having fun and giving back to the community. We like to meet our neighbors and make people happy. I remember being in the pouring rain at a church's fall festival and it was life changing to realize all the people there were out to support us as we were trying to support them. We think the numbers will take care of themselves.