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# Neighbours of Terwillegar Dr.

An exclusive neighbourhood magazine serving the residents of Windermere, Cameron Heights, Wolf Willow, Country Club, Donsdale, Wedgewood, MacLaggart, McGrath and parts of Ambleside



Cover photo by  
Bill Mbachem, Artistic Creations

*Bringing People Together*

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*Life  
by Design*

Meet  
**Karla Billey**

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by Design**  
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BY DAKOTA BARBER

Photos by  
Bill Meachem, Artistic Creations

"I think my destiny as a designer was laid out for me at an early age," smiles Karla Billey. "I started my design career at the age of 5 when I received a sewing machine that stitched with glue and an Easy Bake Oven for Christmas from my grandparents."

As Karla got a little older, she would frequently be found rearranging her room and organizing it.

"I think I was doing it was on a weekly basis for a while," laughs Karla. "My mom loved it as I was always clearing my room in order to rearrange it!"

As time moved on, Karla started designing clothes for her Barbie doll.

"It was a hand me down from an aunt," remembers Karla. "I used the red net bags from onions, tape, thread, paper, and anything else I could get my hands on."

As a teen, Karla designed her ninth-grade graduation dress as well as her sister's!

"I went on to design our grade 12 graduation gowns as well," adds Karla. "The colours selected were daring at the time, there was nothing else like them at any of the proms or graduations. We stood out from the rest!"

Reflecting back, Karla smiles and can't

believe the two of them actually wore them.

"I love my sister for being brave and wearing what I created for her," says Karla.

Karla began her university education at the University of Alberta in the Faculty of Arts.

"In my second year, I transferred into home economics majoring in clothing and textiles," remembers Karla. "While taking all of the residential design courses offered at the time, my career path started to become clearer."

Karla graduated with first class standing with a Bachelor of Science in home economics and has now been in the design industry for over two decades.

"During my first design job as a visual merchandiser and furniture buyer, I travelled to Danbury, Connecticut for the annual buying trips," explains Karla. "I was fortunate to stay afterwards in New York City for a few days each time and take in the sights and experience the city!"

A wealth of knowledge and a confidence in her career direction wasn't the only thing a university education brought to Karla... she also met her husband!

"Brent and I met at a local nightclub back in the day," says Karla. "We coincidentally ran into each other a month later on Whyte Avenue and have been together ever since!"

Karla and Brent had an old-fashioned small town wedding in Boyle, Alberta where her grandparents lived. They wanted to bring the celebration to them, as they weren't keen on travelling into the city.

"Our lives and careers became rooted in Edmonton where we continued to enjoy living and being part of the community," says Karla. "Since then, we have been fortunate to have many opportunities to travel to different parts of the world."

Although they have travelled to many amazing places, their 20th-anniversary trip stands out for the couple.



"It was a cruise on a small tall ship from Istanbul to Athens, weaving through Turkey and the Greek Islands in the Aegean," remembers Karla. "So much history, beautiful pristine ruins and stunning sites."

The travel experiences Karla and her husband have shared have greatly contributed to her knowledge of different cultures.

"Travel inspires much of my design work. I enjoy using various colours and textures to create one of a kind designs."

After a number of years experiencing the design business, Karla made the decision to start a design firm with another interior designer.

"After 10 years of successful business, my partner and I decided to part ways," says Karla. "I followed my dream of having my own design studio, which brings me to where I am today with Karla Billey Design!"

For many years, Karla felt fortunate to be able to give back to the design community by teaching in the Residential Interiors Design Program at the University of Alberta.

"I enjoyed teaching as well as learning new ideas from the students," adds Karla.

Continuous education has been an important part of Karla's life.

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"I continue to take courses to understand the creation and manufacturing of products, art, ceramics, textiles, and furniture to continue my growth as a professional interior designer," explains Karla. "I recently took a pottery class after being inspired by an international artist's studio in Los Angeles and how they created their sculptures using the pottery wheel."

Karla and Brent spend a lot of time enjoying our city's vast offerings.

"Edmonton is such a beautiful city," smiles Karla Biley. "We had a dog of 18 years who recently passed, but our lives with him allowed us to enjoy the outdoors in the Edmonton River Valley parks, a truly amazing aspect of Edmonton's landscape."

The pair also loves exploring new coffee shops and restaurant haunts.

"It is exciting to watch Edmonton develop into a world-class city," says Karla. "We're enjoying all it has to offer from the food scene, the sports, and the arts."

Karla has a particular soft spot for the arts and has been an avid supporter of the ballet community for many years.

"My husband and I believe that part of being in a community involves giving back; we support a number of charities in the city," smiles Karla. "Edmonton really is our home!"

**Do you know a neighbour who has a story to share?**

Nominate your neighbour to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at [dbarber@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:dbarber@bestversionmedia.com).

A living room with a stone wall background. A large, dark wood console table with horizontal slats is positioned against the wall. A flat-screen television is mounted on the wall above the console. To the left, there is a modern orange armchair and a grey sofa. A large, white, dome-shaped pendant light hangs from the ceiling. The floor is dark wood. In the foreground, a laptop and some papers are on a dark surface.

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