

Alumni Focus

Mark and Andrea Koop Quick facts:

Kids names/Ages: Shadrach – 5; Lincoln – 3; Cadence – 2

Years you were at NBC: 99-01; 02-03; (Mark also 03-04)

When you were married: September 29, 2001

Who was interested in the other first: Mark

BBQ or Oven: BBQ

Favorite thing to do with your kids: Go for walks

Coffee or tea: Mark coffee; Andrea likes both

J: Andrea, thanks for letting me take a few moments of your time. Do you already have big plans for the summer, traveling or otherwise, or are you going to be just taking it easy a bit and staying around Nipawin?

A: For the most part, we'll be relaxing here, but we are planning to go to Jenny(Out)'s wedding in July, and visit some family and friends in Alberta.

J: Mark's been on staff at NBC now for a couple of years. Before that you were in Three Hills and before that...well, I don't even think I can remember. So you've moved around a lot, your children were each born in different places – has moving so often taught you anything interesting, or has it just given you a desire to stay in one place for a while?

A: It has just highlighted that contentment isn't found in where you are. There are good people everywhere you go. I personally still really enjoy moving.

J: I'm sure it doesn't seem like very long ago when you were the students yourself. Did you have any staff you especially came to appreciate or that had lasting impact on you during those years, and now that you are wearing those same "staff shoes", how do you see your own places in discipling, mentoring, or even just interacting with the student body?

A: I appreciated the Audettes a lot, especially right after Shadrach was born. Janice was quite a blessing to me. My own place in the students lives is still somewhat nebulous in my mind. As an unmarried student, I always felt slightly awkward around the staff wives, so that in turn has made me more concerned about how the students might view my interactions with them. I am trying to overcome this hesitation, and I love to have students over and interact whenever possible. Last year I was able to play soccer with the girls team, which was great!

J: Aside from life on NBC campus I know you're involved with a home church in Nipawin. What kind of things have you found yourself a part of there, and do you think there is significance or importance to having those other relationships outside of the college?

A: We attend the Nipawin Alliance Church, and are involved in a variety of things. I help in the nursery, and Mark and I are both involved in the music there. I am currently doing an internship there, which opens the door to women's ministry opportunities. Being involved in the local church is critical for us. NBC can seem like a world apart, so it's especially important to get out of the "bubble". How can we train people to live in the world and be a part of the local church if it's not something we do ourselves? I need the body of Christ-to be strengthened and encouraged and to offer what God has given me for the building up of the Church. They are my family. "Church" can also be an avenue through which we are able to show Christ's love to the world.

J: For yourself, I know you spend a majority of your time at home with the kids. What have been some of the rewards or challenges of this full-time job, and what other current or future aspirations do you have as the kids continue to get older?

A: That is a loaded question. My children are the joy and bane of my existence. There is no better feeling than a big hug followed by, "I love you Mom!" Life can be so relaxing! That being said, I never knew how selfish I was until I had kids. There are the normal physical struggles, "Please stop peeing on the floor" and also the discipline struggles: "Was that disrespectful?" Personally, I am, unfortunately, very quick to anger. What an opportunity for character development.

I am currently enrolled in Seminary at Briercrest, hoping to get my M.A. in Theological Studies (Old Testament). I plan to start learning Hebrew soon. The end goal of this would be to, one day, teach at a Bible College. I love history, and would love, very specifically, to teach the correlation of world and biblical history.

J: Mark and you have been married for almost 8 years now. I know in many people's eyes you have both been blessed incredibly over that time. I'm also sure there have been times of discouragement or challenge, and that you've learned a lot. How do you see God working in your marriage today, and how might you challenge other couples in their marriages, whether they are just starting out or already into their golden years?

A: At present, it seems like God is working in our marriage individually. For me, in my selfishness (see question 5), it's trying to be unselfish. This ties in to what I would challenge other couples to. If I claim to love Mark (insert your spouse here), I need to get

rid of my expectations of him, and be willing to do what I need to do, regardless of how he responds or helps, or does not help, as the case may be. My love and therefore my actions should not be dependent on him at all.

Another things I have noticed recently: if I confront Mark about something I see as a problem, say perhaps...the lack of help in the kitchen... :-), I find it is poorly motivated. I want his help because if he loved me, he would help. It's not fair for me to do all that work! But that shouldn't be my motivation at all! If I confront him about anything, it should be out of concern for his development of Christ-like character. I would challenge anyone married to be concerned about the growth of Christ-like character in his/her spouse. It will, perhaps, help squash petty grievances, and produce the same character development in oneself.

Don't take your spouse for granted. You never know how long you'll be blessed in this way!