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### Safer at Home with SNC's Timmer Family

St. Norbert College

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Jack '21, Jennifer (College Advancement), Mike and Max '24 Timmer: Online for now, and the pups want in on the act!

# Safer at Home With SNC’s Timmer Family

The silverware drawer. The trampoline. The tearful meltdown. These are a few things the Mike and Jennifer Timmer family undoubtedly will remember years from now when they look back on how the coronavirus crisis hit home.

The Safer-at-Home order has hit this SNC household in Allouez, Wis., in several different ways:

- Jennifer is adapting to remote work. Her student-centered projects as SNC’s assistant director of annual giving have been altered dramatically.
- Mike’s travel-heavy sales position was eliminated just as the crisis began to take a toll on the nation’s economy. He is beginning a new sales management job in a time of uncertainty, without the chance to meet his colleagues.
- Jackson Timmer ’21 is missing the camaraderie of SNC campus life and adapting to remote learning.
- Max Timmer ’24 is a senior at Notre Dame Academy and an incoming first-year at SNC. He is coping with the loss of much-anticipated milestones, traditions and celebrations.
- Mackenzie Timmer is a dance instructor who lives on her own. She only can teach via Zoom.

“I love that the boys are home and I get to see them every day. That part is great,” says Jennifer. “The challenging part is the unknown.”

## The silverware drawer

The Timmers discovered early into the Safer-at-Home order that they needed their own dedicated spaces. “We all get our coffee or whatever it is, and we scatter around 9 a.m.,” Jennifer says. “Mike takes his laptop to the basement, I go to the home office, the boys are in their bedrooms.”

“We are fortunate that we all have our own space,” says Mike. “We finished part of the basement several years ago, so I’m able to hide down there.”

Jennifer says she is not a “stay-at-home” kind of person, but rather a planner and a doer. This makes their current situation a challenge the entire family can feel. “I have reorganized the laundry, reorganized every drawer,” she says. “They’re all mad at me because I moved the silverware to a different drawer. It’s been a month, and they’re still not over it!”

Now, Jennifer has no more spaces to tidy up, but a new clutter problem has arisen: bags and bags of unwanted items she wants to donate.

## The trampoline

The family has made it a priority to stay active now that sports, activities and the kids’ part-time jobs are on hold. Jennifer insists on daily walks with Mike, even when he’s not in the mood – a routine he says has helped them keep their sanity. To help the boys stay active, Jennifer shocked herself by agreeing the family could get a trampoline.

“I can’t stress enough how I have never, ever, ever wanted a trampoline,” she says. “For the majority of Max’s 18 years, he has begged for one. I always said no.” But thanks to the coronavirus, now the family has one. “They are so freaking happy,” she says. “The boys have a combined age of 39, [but] they’re out there on this trampoline.”



## Central Role

As assistant director of annual giving, Jennifer Timmer and her colleagues on the college advancement team are based in Main Hall. This vital division is responsible for college fundraising as well as alumni and parent relations.



## About Our Contributor

Trisha (Whitkanack) Lawless ’96 works as manager of communications for Riley Children’s Foundation in Indianapolis, and previously spent 15 years as a television news reporter and anchor. She relates well to the subject matter in this article: Lawless and her husband, Ben, have been working from home since mid-March and have five children ages 10-17 who are doing schoolwork remotely.

## Also in This Issue

This article first appeared in the May 2020 issue of Parents of St. Norbert College. Other features in this edition included:

**A Commencement for the Ages**



The tears

The Timmers are deeply grateful to have good health during this crisis, and relieved that Mike’s unemployment situation was short-lived. Their biggest sense of grief comes from all the high school traditions Max is missing during his senior year, from prom to student government awards ceremonies to graduation.

“The other day, I kind of lost it,” says Jennifer. “I probably cried for about two hours. In student government, they have an awards ceremony every year. Max received a leadership award, and he had to give his speech to the student body from his room. That’s the one thing I would have liked to have seen live. That’s what got me – watching him give his speech in his bedroom.”

While Max says it has been tough to have so many senior year experiences taken away, he is doing his best to push through with strong academic performance. And he’s looking forward to attending SNC in the fall. “The first-semester experience on campus will be key for me,” says Max. “But if it can’t happen, I’ll keep adapting to online classes the best I can and still get my first semester done.”

Jackson says his professors at SNC did a good job adapting their classes to an online format. “I had one class where we had a Google hangout for every class time,” he says. “For another class, the professor posted materials and we had a once-a-week check-in. Other classes posted video lectures and put assignments online – I liked the openness of that.”

The lessons learned

When the Timmers look back at this period decades from now, they likely will remember the silverware drawer, the trampoline and the tears. They’ll also remember how this crisis created new strength and deeper gratitude.

“The loss of life can’t be understated,” says Mike. “I’ll remember being trapped at home, but feel fortunate that that’s all it was for us, nothing more than that.”

For Max and others in the Notre Dame Academy Class of 2020, this experience has been a lesson in resilience and flexibility. “I was trying to console Max and all our senior friends,” says Jennifer. “In 20 years, this is going to stand out. This is going to show them what they can and can’t handle.”

May 14, 2020

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