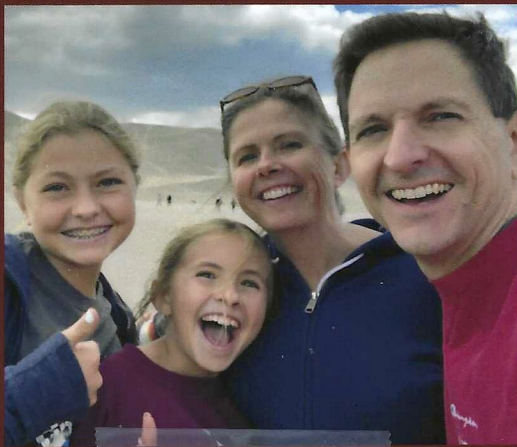
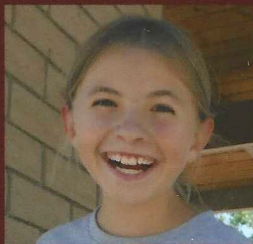


# MERRY CHRISTMAS



THE CICERO FAMILY  
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LOVE, THE CICERO FAMILY  
John, Jennifer, Kaitlyn, and Aubrey





Greetings, friends and family! If you're reading this, well, we won't hold it against you.

2023 was excellent compared to the last few years. No COVID restrictions, no deaths in the family, no major medical issues, no onions on John's cheeseburgers...the list goes on. Looking at the world with a sense of gratitude continues to allow us to see the good side of things. We're grateful to live in Colorado Springs, which has an excellent balance of big-city amenities and small-town friendliness. We're grateful for the family-like atmosphere of the many people that attend the Front Range Challenge Tour bowling tournaments

that John helps to run. We're grateful for the ever-expanding audiences and wonderful members of the Woodland Park Wind Symphony, in which Jen and Kaitlyn both play (French horn and trumpet, respectively). We're grateful for the character-building and the sense of community at 3T Martial Arts (Aubrey's karate dojo).

Aubrey, 10, broke a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick board and is now a blue belt in karate. She is part of the leadership team and helps teach the lower ranks how to channel their inner Daniel-san. She loves acting and, despite her small size, knocked it out of the park portraying Ms. Trunchbull in *Matilda*. Aubrey also was selected for a solo in the church Christmas program!

Every year, we imagine that selling Girl Scout cookies is intended to teach the girls about entrepreneurship and interacting with people. But we're learning that the primary purpose is to make parents grateful that they don't have to stand outside in blizzards *all* the time. For cryin' out loud, can we move cookie-selling season to August?

Kaitlyn, 14, also loves acting and was an orphan in a semi-professional production of *Annie Jr.* She is becoming renowned for her singing ability, performing a solo of O Holy Night with the 70+ piece Woodland Park Wind Symphony backing her. We hope she becomes renowned for obeying the speed limit, given that her driver's permit is less than a year away! She picked up the ukulele this year, and two months later was the vocal soloist for the "Ukuladies" group in a performance for the Women's Dessert event.

John still works at Entegris and is happy to be in a hybrid manager/engineer position. It's a challenging but very rewarding job. He is going on five years of bowling two-handed and is starting to look like he knows what he's doing. We went to Reno for Nationals, stopping on the way at the hidden gem known as Craters of the Moon National Monument (bucket list!). As we entered a Nevada rest area on a hot July day, we noticed something peculiar about the picnic tables, the walls, the ground... *everything* seemed to be *moving*. Thousands of two-inch long insects! Look up "Mormon Crickets" if you'd like to learn that enough of these critters smashed under car tires can make the roads dangerously slick.



Jen, the master coordinator of the house, took the family to Costa Rica this summer. A week in the rainforest *during the rainy season* and it only rained once for half an hour, while Colorado was getting pounded by downpours every day! The highlight of the trip was a night spent in a treehouse in the rainforest, 80 feet off the ground, listening to howler monkeys and trusting that the bullet ants wouldn't find their way into our beds. The lowlight of the trip was a near-death experience when Aubrey slipped off a rope swing, slammed into the rocks underneath, then tumbled to the water 15 feet further down! As our hearts skipped multiple beats, she popped right up and swam to safety with barely a scratch on her. She attributes much of her injury avoidance to God. And breakfall training in karate. Probably a combination of both.

We also backpacked Rocky Mountain National Park on a frigid day with relentless mosquitoes. At least it only took two days for our shoes to dry out after we got home. Our spring was highlighted by a family reunion to Jen's side in Kansas. Finally, in September, 300+ Dodge Vipers made their way to Colorado Springs for a National Viper Event...and *we* got to be the lead car, heading up a mile-long train of rumbling snakes for a couple of events! Scenic drives to Pikes Peak, Cripple Creek, and Royal Gorge, track racing and autocross (in which Jen won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the women's division!), and entertainment were enjoyed by all.

Memorable quotes from 2023:

John: "I guess we could get a new car, but the question is why?"

Jen: "Because we're on the back of a tow truck."

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John: "Do you girls know what years your parents were born?"

Aubrey: "1778?" (very funny.)

May your Christmas season be magical and your heart filled with gratitude. Let's keep this momentum going into 2024! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**John, Jennifer, Kaitlyn, and Aubrey**