

NORTH VALPO

NEIGHBORS

SEPTEMBER 2025

CHEFS AROUND THE TABLE
FLOORING EXPERT
SCHOOL BUS HISTORY
WHAT'S IN YOUR
DRYER VENT?

Inside

POWERED BY
BVM
BEST VERSION MEDIA

Living Young, Loving Family

Brian and Carmen Hammerski

Cover photo by Angie Januchowski, Aspen Studios



Photo by Angie Januchowski, Aspen Studios

Living Young, Loving Family *Brian and Carmen Hamerski*

■ BY CHERYL WOOTEN-WILCOX



Carmen and Brian love to dance!

When Brian and Carmen Hamerski packed up their life in Arizona and moved to Valparaiso last summer, it wasn't for a change of scenery, career, or weather—it was for love. Not just their love for each other, but for two little people who instantly became the center of their world: their twin grandchildren, Ash and Juniper.

"We could have had a luxurious adult life in Arizona or we could be an influence in our grandchildren's lives," says Carmen. "We chose the latter. My living room is full of kids' toys. My priorities are simply to be with my grandchildren. You never know what tomorrow's going to bring. That's why we're here."

Brian, 65, and Carmen, 68, now live in the Woods of the Winding Creek subdivision on a seven-acre forested lot that they purchased sight unseen—relying only on photos and videos. "That was a huge risk," says Carmen, "but the risk paid off and we love our new home in Valparaiso."

The couple's days are filled with babysitting, playdates, and adventures with the twins. They often pick them up from daycare, head to the park, and explore the outdoors together. "I'm basically living it for the first time being a grandparent," Brian says. He's already named future woodland walking paths on their property Ash Crossing and Juniper Path.

ROOTS AND ROADS TRAVELED

Brian grew up in Winona, Minnesota, spending much of his childhood at his grandmother's house. "She got me interested in the outdoors and gardening," he says. "My parents aren't outdoorsy people, but grandma was. She taught me to cook, can, pickle, and all the essential things for self-sufficiency."

After earning a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and radio frequency communication from the University of Minnesota, he landed a job with Hughes Aircraft in California—where the company paid for him to earn a master's degree at the University of Southern California. His career spanned aerospace and satellite design, and he eventually retired from Boeing at age 55.

Carmen was born in Rosario, Argentina, moving to the U.S. with her parents in 1971 and becoming a naturalized citizen in 1978. After earning her litigation paralegal certification from UCLA and a bachelor's degree in technical management from DeVry University, she worked in the legal field before a life-changing esthetician visit transformed her career path. "After more than two decades of problem skin... my confidence grew and I was amazed! I decided that I really wanted to improve people's skin and their confidence too."

Over the past three decades, she's owned salons, spas, and esthetics clinics; trained professionals; appeared in magazines and on radio; and worked with celebrity clients. She was even the lead esthetician for The Biggest Loser Resort in Malibu. Today, she runs her own medical-grade skincare line. "Carmenique Beauty is a labor of love and it's my beauty legacy," she says. Now



Fun with the grandkids never ends.

she's introducing it to the Midwest, offering free consultations and samples to those curious about her products (www.carmeniquebeauty.com).

FROM A HOSPITAL CAFETERIA TO "I DO"

Their love story began in a California hospital cafeteria—Brian there for his stepson's migraine treatment, Carmen there for her father's final days with leukemia. Carmen, never shy, struck up a conversation, offering neurofeedback therapy for his stepson. A phone call for an appointment turned into long conversations, a movie date, and eventually marriage in 2014.

A LIFE OF SERVICE

Community involvement has been a shared theme in their marriage. In Arizona, they both served on the Community Emergency Response Team through the local fire department. Brian, an FCC-licensed HAM radio operator since age 15, provided communications for an annual mountain bike race and was named Volunteer of the Year in 2020.

Now in Valparaiso, they've already helped host a neighborhood Safety Day, complete with fire trucks and first responders for the kids. Carmen is a Valparaiso Chamber Ambassador and together, they love helping their community and planning activities for their neighborhood HOA.

Brian also plans to use his radio expertise here as well, possibly volunteering with the Liberty Township Volunteer Fire Department in a communications role. Additionally, every quarter, he participates in national preparedness

exercises from his home HAM radio. "They invent a scenario, and the job is to get a message from one station to another which could be across the country," he explains. "It's about testing your ability to get messages out under emergency power. I think many people are unaware that if all communication goes down, whether it's from a natural disaster or war, HAM radios will work but cell phone towers won't."

PASSIONS THAT KEEP THEM YOUNG

Carmen's 32-year martial arts career has earned her black and gold belts, training in everything from Tae Kwon Do to Krav Maga. In 2020, she switched focus to ballroom dancing. "It's the number one sport for slowing cognitive decline... It also improves balance and is great exercise." She and Brian take lessons, perform in showcases, and each have their favorite dances—hers the rhumba and east coast swing, his the Viennese waltz.

Brian's love for gardening comes directly from his grandmother's influence, and he's eager to create a pollinator habitat for Carmen's beloved butterflies, where they can teach their grandchildren about the ecosystem.

LOVING THEIR NEW HOME

"When we first came here and saw the cute Little Libraries and roadside produce stands, I thought, if this was in California, all those things would be stolen by now!" Carmen says with a laugh. They treasure the peace and quiet of their wooded lot, the friendly neighbors, and the small-town feel paired with nearby conveniences. They've already discovered favorite restaurants—Don



Brian and Carmen with Christopher, Ciara, Ash and Juniper Wylie.



Carmen speaking on radio KFNX in Phoenix, Arizona about her Carmenique skin care line.



Quijote, Industrial Revolution, and Tomato Bar Pizza—and enjoy exploring local gardens and walking downtown.

Their two cockapoos, Princess and Roxy, round out their home life, each with their own distinct personalities.

LIVING YOUNG

Carmen puts it simply: “Even though we’re seniors, we don’t feel like seniors. We are old young people—old in age but young in spirit! And we want to inspire people. You don’t stop dancing because you get old, you get old because you stop dancing.”

For the Hamerskis, that philosophy shows in every choice they’ve made—from picking up roots to be near family, to jumping into community life in a brand-new city, to embracing passions that keep them moving and connecting.

They left Arizona not to slow down, but to be more present—more present for family dinners, giggles in the park, bedtime stories, and memories in the making. Because for Brian and Carmen Hamerski, living young is all about living close—to each other, to their passions, and most of all, to the little ones who make every day worth the dance.

DO YOU KNOW A NEIGHBOR WHO HAS A STORY TO SHARE?

NOMINATE YOUR NEIGHBOR TO BE FEATURED IN ONE OF OUR UPCOMING ISSUES! CONTACT US AT CWILCOX@BESTVERSIONMEDIA.COM.



IN STOCK CABINETS

	GEORGETOWN WHITE 20' "L" Kitchen: \$2,299		JAMESTOWN MAPLE SANDSTONE 20' "L" Kitchen: \$2,699
	JAMESTOWN MAPLE SLATE 20' "L" Kitchen: \$2,699		LANCASTER SEA SALT 20' "L" Kitchen: \$3,699
	LANCASTER MAPLE BISCOTTI 20' "L" Kitchen: \$3,699	VIEW OUR IN STOCK CABINET BROCHURE 	

BOOK A DESIGN APPOINTMENT TODAY!

Need help designing your dream kitchen or bath?

Schedule an appointment with one of our Kitchen & Bath specialists!



Scan with your Camera!



STOP IN AND VISIT US IN VALPARAISO, TODAY!

Phone: 219.465.8898

schillings.com/valpo

2202 Laporte Ave.
Valparaiso, IN 46383

