

MEET THE

Fortun FAMILY



rockstar residents

Submitted by **Kate Fortun** • **Stephanie Axtell Photography**

While living in Cleveland, OH, where Kate and Chad Fortun met, the Fortuns traveled several times to the coast of the Carolinas to escape the Midwest's long and punishing winters. It was on these trips that they started dreaming about living in a climate where they would normally choose to vacation.

Before the Fortuns would call the Carolinas home, their adventures would take them from coast to coast. The journey begins in Cleveland where Kate worked as a speech and language pathologist and Chad as a physical therapist. Kate had recently finished her graduate work at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), and Chad was busy with a private physical therapy practice. As former athletes, they met while playing in various sporting leagues around the area. Chad had always thought about returning to medical school and made the commitment soon after the couple started dating. They were fortunate to stay in Cleveland, near Kate's family, for medical school and orthopedic surgery residency at Case Western Reserve University. The couple married in 2006 and welcomed Dylan in 2008 and Elayna in 2010. After spending their entire lives in the Midwest, the couple was excited for the next step in their adventure that would take them to Los Angeles, California for Chad's fellowship year of training at Southern California Orthopaedic Institute. It was here that the couple fell in love with the sunny temperate climate and coastal living. As the job search began, the couple felt themselves drawn to similar climates. When Wilmington popped up on Chad's job hunt, the couple grew excited about the possibilities.

"Our first visit to Wilmington was in the spring of 2014, and the weather was chilly and rainy," Kate remembered, "but I walked over a dune on a visit to Wrightsville Beach and knew this is where we needed to raise our family." Outside of Chad's new associates at Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Specialists, the Fortuns had no connections in Wilmington. Kate said, "We were house-hunting from across the country, so we felt so fortunate to find a home and land in a neighborhood that we love. Everyone was so welcoming."

The neighborhood they now call home is off Middle Sound Loop near Ogden Elementary where the Fortuns' two children, Dylan and Elayna, attend school. Kate now serves as the president of Ogden's PTA and volunteers in the classroom. Outside of the school, Kate has obtained her North Carolina state license and sees clients who need speech therapy privately in their homes. Chad continues to stay busy with his growing orthopedic surgery practice at Carolina Sports Medicine. He feels fortunate to have found such a great group and enjoys seeing patients of all ages and needs. Having a background in physical therapy affords him a unique perspective as a surgeon allowing him to uniquely understand the non-operative and operative needs of all his patients.

After living in Wilmington for three years, the Fortuns were excited to look for a club. They joined Porter's Neck Country Club in the summer of 2018 primarily as a way for Chad to golf more regularly. Over the last year, PNCC has become so much more to them. Kate, a former college volleyball player, started her "tennis career" about a year-and-a-half ago and loves the new sport. Both she and Chad have recently joined their first USTA leagues. They love the new friendships they have made on the tennis courts.

The Fortuns' kids are a constant source of entertainment and transportation needs. Elayna (9) is loving her new swim team with the PNCC Pirates. She also works on piano, basketball, and to her mother's delight, her volleyball skills. Dylan (10) is very busy with his rec and travel baseball and basketball teams but loves when he can join Chad on the golf course.

Life is very busy for the Fortuns, but every time Kate and Chad drive into Porters Neck Plantation, they find themselves appreciating its beauty and start to relax with the assurance that they are taking a break and about to spend time doing what they love, often with other members they have grown to call teammates and friends.