

August 3, 2017

Dear Dan Austin and Carol Austin,

We just finished our Yellowstone family adventure. This was my family's third trip with Austin Adventures, having done the Yellowstone trip in 2010 and Costa Rica in 2012. I brought a total of 15 of my extended family on this Yellowstone excursion as a custom trip. In our group were me, my sister, our husbands, and 11 of our "kids & cousins" ages 10-22. One of the children, Melissa, age 15, is high functioning autistic.

I am writing this letter to tell you why I planned this trip, and how wonderful your staff are who made my dream come true! I had a life threatening operation in 2015 and came very close to dying. At the time, I was 46 and was reminded how precious life is. I decided that I would take my kids back to a National Park, and celebrate life and the outdoors. I gave them three choices - Yellowstone, Grand Canyon or Yosemite. I also told them I would invite my three sisters and all of their kids and some relatives from Germany and that I would pay for anyone who was available to come. That is how our group of 15 was formed. My kids loved their trip with Austin Adventures to Yellowstone in 2010 so much that they chose to visit it again, as they wanted to relive their trip and share it with their cousins.

Our guides were Andy, Peter and Jonathan. From the very beginning they were amazing and immediately connected with all of the members of our party. They figured out the relationships among the kids and parents, and also what everyone's preferences were. We had vegetarians, teenagers, relatively fit folks and also some 10 year olds that had to go a little slower. They accommodated everyone seamlessly and made everyone feel like royalty the entire trip.

While we were all family, and everyone was very excited to be together, we had some other very cool things going on. First, for my niece Melissa this was the trip of a lifetime. She participated in every activity and was overjoyed zip-lining and white water-rafting. She even overcame any anxiety she had about horseback riding. In addition, because Melissa was so well taken care of, my sister Tori and her husband Russel also got to be on vacation. That is something as parents of a daughter with special needs is very rare. Her brothers Micheal and John also had a great time, bonding with the cousins who are their age. Micheal and my son Patrick were roommates all week, while my daughter Michelle shared a room with Melissa and John. John was a hiking pro while Michael and Patrick got to captain our whitewater rafting boat!

I brought my niece and nephew Gretchen and Lars over from Germany, as they had lived with me for each of their turns in 10th grade (and Gretchen was on our Costa Rica trip). They are like my children and I was so excited to have them be with my kids again (their cousins) and have them experience such a beautiful part of America. Ulrich joined our group from Germany, Gretchen's boyfriend, and it was literally his first visit to the USA. Suffice to say, he has left with

an unbelievable impression of the country, thanks to our guides and the geography on this beautiful trip. And, Lars and Gretchen got to do a lot of "firsts" - such as white water rafting and horseback riding. But, mostly they loved the trust walk!

Barry is another cousin. He is 18 and this was his first true vacation. He has not stopped smiling from ear to ear since we arrived. He has continuously said this was a trip of a lifetime and he wanted to be able to relive every minute of it in his mind later. He also got to bond with so many of his cousins he rarely gets to see, and is leaving with very strong bonds with his family, and some sage advice on life he received from Jonathan, Andy and Peter.

Phil, my oldest, is leaving for college in 2 weeks. This will be a big change for our family to have him gone, and so this trip was a great way for us to bond as a family before he moves out. He was overjoyed to do so many outdoor activities with his cousins, and many many memories were formed by he and his siblings. He especially loved getting to go to Chico Hot Springs again. He even got the fly-fishing bug on the last morning from Jonathan and Andy! Jared is my second oldest, and now tallest at 6 feet, and his favorite was the white water rafting - where the 8 teens had one boat and attacked the parent boat...suffice to say - they won! Michelle, my only daughter, loved hanging with all her bros and cousins and was fearless for zip-lining, whitewater rafting and the horseback riding. Patrick, my youngest, is now 10 and was only 3 on our first visit in 2010. Despite being so young, he remembered his first visit, but really got to do major hikes and activities this time, that he could not do last time, such as the horseback ride and zip-lining.

For my husband, Matt and I, it was a dream come true to have 15 of our closest family members spend 6 days together and enjoy an amazing place on earth, while doing so many amazing things, with such amazing guides. By the end of the trip the guides were like family members and we shared countless hours talking in the vans and at meals or during activities. They taught us about the landscape, the history of the park, the animals and other interesting facts about the things we were doing. They were always calm and did a great job of making our vacation truly memorable.

I am the head of Human Resources for a Fortune 500 Company and have worked in this role for 10 years, out of 27 years of working in HR. I hire and develop employees for a living. I must say, you are so lucky to have these three employees representing your Company and handling your customers/travelers. They were incredibly professional, warm and engaging and very organized. They worked as a team and did a great job of playing to each of my family's personality, preferences and interests. They were patient, kind and calm under pressure.

I just want to thank you again and offer this letter as a commendation for the job well done by Peter, Jonathan and Andy. We cannot wait for our next adventure!

All the best,

Kristin and Matt