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NEIGHBORS

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A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE
AND COMMUNITY:
THE STORY OF

ROBERT AND IRINA PAVLOVIC

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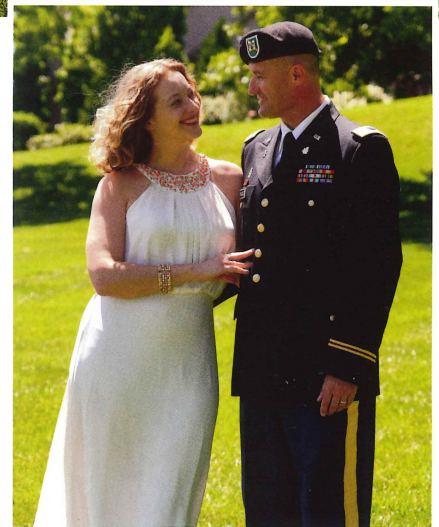
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As Robert Pavlovic and his wife, Irina Kobzeva-Pavlovic, celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary this fall, their story stands as a testament to resilience, optimism, and the power of community. Originally from Bosnia, Robert's journey to the United States was fraught with challenges that tested his spirit but never broke it. Robert, a Croatian from Bosnia, fled to Germany during the Balkan conflict. His hometown of Stranjani was devastated by the war, leaving him with no home to return to. After spending a few years in Germany, Robert applied for visas at several embassies, and the U.S. was the first to offer him permanent residency. He arrived in Mobile, AL, and spent his entire savings of \$76 on a Greyhound bus ticket to Kansas City, where family friends, the Baltic Family, resided. His journey to the American heartland marked the beginning of a new chapter.

Irina, originally from Russia, came to America as an exchange student. She stayed with the Faris/Hibarger family in Weston, who became like a second family to her. After earning a Gold Medal diploma in Russia, she returned to the U.S. for college, studying International Business and Psychology at Park University in Parkville, MO. It was there, amidst a diverse group of international students, that Robert and Irina met in 2001.

Their courtship was filled with vibrant cultural exchanges and late-night conversations with friends from around the world. Irina later earned a Master's in Public Administration from Park University, where she





also taught Public Affairs and ran youth programs like Model UN. Robert graduated in 2004 with degrees in History and Graphic Design, but his career path took a different turn. Enlisting in the U.S. Army right after graduation, Robert served as a Cargo Specialist in the Transportation Corps. Following a three-year active duty stint in Virginia Beach, VA, he and Irina returned to Kansas City. Robert continued his service in the Army Reserves and is now a captain in the 418th Civil Affairs Battalion, having been deployed twice in recent years. Today, Robert serves as a Community Interaction Officer with the Kansas City Police Department, where he connects with the community, provides safety training, and resolves disputes. Irina, with her extensive background in marketing and nonprofit administration, teaches International Management and International Relations at various universities.

Their daughter, Arianna, shares their zest for life. At 11, she is already an accomplished basketball player and swimmer, speaks three languages, and is active in the Girl Scouts. Arianna's love for the arts is evident in her participation in hip-hop, drama, and playing the piano and viola, as well as her frequent visits to cultural events with her parents.



The family's kitten, Millie, adds joy and laughter to their home with her playful antics. Robert's passion for running has been a lifelong endeavor. He was a state champion in Germany and qualified for Nationals with Park University's track and field team. Recently, he completed a marathon in Springfield, IL. His love for sports extends to watching football, basketball, and soccer, and the family eagerly anticipates the World Cup coming to Kansas City. Robert's linguistic talents are remarkable. Fluent in six

languages, he picked up German while living in Lubeck and learned Russian through a combination of classes and eavesdropping on Irina's phone conversations. His language skills have made him invaluable to the Police Department and various community programs.

The Pavlovic family is deeply involved in Kansas City's international community. They sponsor international military students at Fort Leavenworth and have supported numerous global education and cultural initiatives. Irina's leadership roles in organizations like the Greater Kansas City People to People Council and the Sister Cities Association reflect their commitment to fostering international understanding.

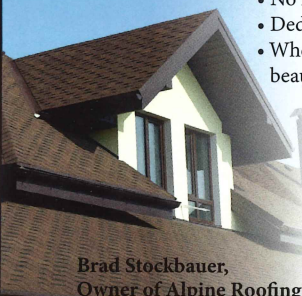


Their travels have taken them to 39 states and 46 countries, making them true global citizens. They have a wealth of stories, including a memorable episode in Germany where multiple translations were needed to buy a SIM card.

Living in the OakHill subdivision since 2015, they appreciate the community's welcoming spirit, the excellent Staley School District, and the proximity to the new airport. They enjoy the neighborhood's greenery, parks, and the camaraderie of their neighbors. Robert and Irina's journey is one of overcoming adversity, embracing diversity, and building a life rooted in community and love. Their story is an inspiration to all who have the pleasure of knowing them. ■

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