

Family Portraits

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A soft-spoken young man with a ready smile, Trevor Sadler lives in a nontraditional family in Philadelphia. At 12, going on 13 in April, he lives with his mother, author Kati Gray-Sadler, her partner Karen Young, his cousin Geleté, two cats and a dog.

Here's what his mother (friends call her Jazzy) says about Trevor: "He's my absolute best friend. Quite a gifted young man, he's amazingly sensitive for any person, never mind a young boy. He gets it and has gotten it from the time he could walk. He's not aware of differences in people, and it's not something he was taught; he just came out that way.

He was born into a heterosexual environment; I was married to his father at the time and when I became

self-aware and found my identity and all those wonderful things, when I sat down to have the talk with him, he said, 'Oh Mom. It's no big deal. What difference does it make?' I wrote a piece in one of my books called 'Love Has No Gender' that was dedicated to him, because with all of our wisdom and education and experience, we were struggling to understand what this kid had in his heart and his head all along, that it didn't matter. Because of the laws of Pennsylvania, I am considered a single parent, but my heart says that I am committed to my life partner of four years, Karen, and we co-parent him as well as my nephew, whom we took guardianship of in 2006."

PGN: So Trevor, tell me about your family.

TS: I live with my 10-year-old cousin and my moms. I also have an older sister, Krystal, and an older brother, Julius, but they don't live here. I have two cats and a dog named Bella; she's a Chihuahua/Pomeranian mix, black with blond hair underneath and a little bit of white.

PGN: What's it like growing up in a nontraditional family?

TS: I don't really pay that much attention to it. I don't really think of it like that.

PGN: Do kids at school ever say anything about it?

TS: I don't necessarily say anything, but just because I don't think it matters. There are a lot of nontraditional families in my school, but I just think it's not an issue.

PGN: I know that you go to Mountain Meadow summer camp, which is for kids with GLBT families. What advice do you give kids who are struggling with their families?

TS: (Laughing) I'm not really one to give advice. Camp is for fun. We talk about our families sometimes, but mostly we just have fun there.

PGN: So what's your favorite game?

TS: I really like roller coasters, so my favorite game is the Roller Coaster Tycoon video game.

PGN: Favorite music?

TS: I like Jill Scott. She's a really nice singer.

PGN: She's known for her poetic lyrics. Are you a poetry fan?

TS: Yes, I like to write poetry. We did a poetry event at school where all the parents were at a café and we read our poetry out loud. I did two of them.

PGN: Anything you like to collect?

TS: I have a collection of clowns. Collectible clowns, like porcelain ones. I used to collect snow globes. I had one of Center City, but I tried to bring it in for show and tell and I broke it. I still have one of two kids sitting in a chair and a merry-go-round.

PGN: If you could be any animal, what would you like to be?

TS: I guess I'd be a cat, so I could be free.

PGN: Favorite movie part?

TS: I like the end of the movie "Cars," when they have the big race scene!

PGN: Ever win any awards?

TS: I won best break-dancer once at a party and I won best smile at Mountain Meadow.

PGN: Ever been in the hospital?

TS: I'm allergic to shellfish, so I went to the hospital for that and once I got bit by a mosquito and had a reaction to that. And then three years ago, I got hit by a truck. Not an 18-wheeler, but more like an SUV. I was walking home from school and it hit me turning the corner and broke my shoulder. I was only a block away from home. I have a bump on my shoulder because it didn't heal correctly, which was my fault. As I said, I like to play video games and I couldn't raise my arm to move the joystick, so I kept taking the sling off to play and it healed funny.

PGN: Favorite flower?

TS: Sunflowers, 'cause they're big and bloomy and yellow and I like how it's kind of furry in the brown part and I like to rub it. It's really nice ... and they smell good.

PGN: The farthest place you've been to?

TS: Well, when I was in my mom's stomach I went to London, but outside the womb, I've been to the Bahamas, which I really liked.

PGN: Favorite Halloween costume?

TS: The Grim Reaper — I've worn it three times. I'm not into leprechauns or fairytale-type costumes.

PGN: Do you get involved in politics?

TS: I like studying it in history and I was interested when [Sen. John] Kerry was running against [President] Bush. I personally wanted Kerry to win, but I'm too young to vote. We had a mock election at our school and I took part, but that doesn't count. My mom had a Kerry sign in our yard.

PGN: Favorite subject in school?

TS: Science! I love the way you can break down something into its smallest part and feel the power of it, like an atom. But you wouldn't want to split an atom! That would be pretty bad!

PGN: What's the coolest project you've done in science class?

TS: We did a report on renewable energy sources. I wanted to invent something, but my teacher said my idea was too fictional, so I had to do something more practical.

PGN: Do you know what you want to be when you grow up?

TS: Yes, I want to own a huge entertainment company. I like to see people's faces when they accomplish something and when they make other people feel good. Like when I make something for my mom, the part I like best is when I see her happy face.

PGN: What's something your friends would be surprised to know?

TS: I have a strange fascination with classical music. I like symphonies. It's weird because I'm really into techno music.

PGN: What does your mother do that embarrasses you?

TS: When she sings out loud in the car. Bad songs.

PGN: What super power would you choose and why?

TS: The power of telekinetics. That way I wouldn't have to get up to do chores and things, I could just move objects with my mind. And if someone was about to get hurt or something, I could stop it.

PGN: If you were president, what would you change?

TS: Lower taxes! And find a way to get more money to nonprofit organizations.

PGN: What gay-rights issues bother you?

TS: All discrimination. It's everywhere. I hate it when someone says, "I can't be paired with her, she's a girl," or "I don't want to be his partner, he's a boy!" Or if a girl says, "I

like you” to another girl and everyone goes, “Ewww!” like it’s a bad thing. Or if a boy says something to another boy, they get all bent out of shape. Why don’t they just say, “I’m not interested.” They don’t have to go, “Oh my God, disgusting!” People react like that all the time in movies, in cartoons and on TV. It’s not right.

PGN: Anything else that bothers you?

TS: I really love animals and I hate to see them chained up or in cages. I don’t even like to see dogs on a leash; I wish they could all be free.