

When Kimberly Hahn was a little girl she dreamed of having a big family one day. “I have always loved children and when I was really young I said I was going to have eight children. I was close!” says Hahn laughing.

# Eleven plus one

*Kimberly Hahn uses logic and lots of love to raise her 11 children*

by Rebecca Seymour



**T**he 39-year-old Oconomowoc resident is mom to 11 children—six boys and five girls, ranging in ages from 4 to 22. “I started young—I was a teenage mom. My gift for my seventeenth birthday was a baby boy,” admits Hahn.

A love for children and her strong faith put Hahn on a path other women in her family also chose to follow. Her mom was the second oldest of nine children, and two aunts had 10 children each.

“I loved going to my aunt’s farm when I was little because she always had a new baby. My sisters called me the ‘baby hog,’” adds Hahn. “I’m just a sucker for chubby cheeks, and thankfully all my babies had chubby cheeks.”

Growing up in Big Bend, Hahn moved to the Lake Country area after getting married at age 18. “My husband and I made a decision to let God plan our family. People were pressuring me to stop having children, but I needed to trust God’s will for what *He* wanted for me. Looking back, I would choose to have them all again,” she says.

## **New beginnings**

After 18 years of marriage, Hahn divorced her husband in 2007. “Slowly, over time I realized my husband was an alcoholic. Because I was not educated in the area of addiction, I really believed him whenever he told me he was going to stop and I was blinded by it,” she says.

After years of counseling, reconciliation and relapse, Hahn says she had to do something to change a situation that was destroying her family. “Raising my children in an alcoholic home was like being in a cocoon. A cocoon is dark and cramped and no fun, but when you struggle and finally get out, it’s worth it to fly and be free,” says the single mom.

Hahn admits it was difficult at first. “My children had a lot of anger and I was recovering from 18 years of being married to an alcoholic. We were emotionally raw. But this was the beginning of a new life and a brand new opportunity. My children and I finally felt empowered to choose the life we wanted to live,” Hahn says.

Today, eight of Hahn’s children live full-time with her, while her three oldest are living on their own, working and attending college.

“As a mom I have made every mistake in the book, but I’ve been blessed with 11 children—I get to try and try again,” says Hahn. “My deep faith played a huge role in keeping me strong, especially during the darkest hours. I don’t know where I would be without my strong faith in God, my family and friends, counseling and Love and Logic.”

Kimberly Hahn

## Love and Logic

Hahn heard about the Love and Logic parenting classes from her counselor in 2005 and decided to take the seven-week seminar.

“The whole Love and Logic philosophy has been such a beautiful thing. It’s helped me with all my relationships, and it really equipped me to get through the last two years of my marriage,” says Hahn.

Taking better care of herself and also taking partial ownership of a dysfunctional marriage were priorities on Hahn’s to-do list. “One of the coping skills of an addict is refusing to take responsibility—my husband and I modeled that for our kids for 18 years. I had to face up to the role I had in getting us into this—I had to take responsibility first. That was the obstacle we had to overcome and I couldn’t have done that without Love and Logic,” she admits.

Hahn says the seminar also taught her about two types of parenting styles—the helicopter parent and the drill sergeant.

“The helicopter parent hovers and rescues and the drill sergeant paralyzes the child by barking orders and doing all the thinking. I was a drill sergeant—I was tired and overwhelmed and I was yelling a lot. And that wasn’t working,” she says.

“Now I tell my kids I’m not here to control everything they do. Instead I give them choices. Sometimes they’ll make the wrong choices and that’s how they learn,” says Hahn. “Our family is the furthest thing from perfect, but now we’re using skills that cultivate relationships where before we were destroying them. I hear my older kids using Love and Logic on the little ones. I love that.”

Today Hahn is an independent facilitator for Love and Logic and teaches several seven-week sessions each year. She has also been invited to be the special speaker for programs sponsored by area churches and organizations, including Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS).

“After taking the course I wanted more. I feel the best way to really learn something is to teach it. Teaching Love and Logic recharges my batteries,” she says.

Hahn says she uses examples from her own experiences to help teach her class. Participants discover early on that they’re not alone on this challenging journey called parenting.

“Love and Logic is taught through storytelling. Whatever I can bring to the table to help someone else—I’ll bring it. My kids have told me it’s okay to tell our story because it can help other people. I’m so proud of them for that—they have come so far,” she says.

## A day in the life

The sound of several alarm clocks can be heard as the Hahn household gets a jump on the morning before school. “Everyone is responsible to get themselves out of bed and ready for school, except for my real little ones,” says Hahn.

All kids are out the door between 7 and 8 a.m. Then Hahn takes her 4-year-old daughter to daycare and goes to work cleaning houses until late afternoon.

“There is never a dull day in the Hahn home,” says Kelsey Hahn, 17. She is the oldest child in the house and wants to

major in pediatric nursing as a college freshman next year.

“I love children and I love being around my family. I never feel alone—we’re all so close and we all have each other’s back. I’m super busy with work and school, but I also want to be here for my family. It’s a big responsibility because I want to be a role model for my younger brothers and sisters. I don’t take that lightly,” says Kelsey.

Every day after school, Hahn’s children know they have to do their chores and homework. Chores are written out and taped inside the broom closet door.

“I couldn’t do my life if my kids were not responsible members of the household. They know I expect them to contribute to the best of their ability according to their age. We all help each other out and everyone pitches in,” says Hahn. “You know the saying, ‘many hands make light work.’ Well, we have many hands.”

The Hahn children also know if they are respectful and contribute to the household, they’ll be first in line for extracurricular activities, says Hahn. “My rule is the activities have to be linked to their school so they can go directly from school to practice or rehearsal. Older kids play sports with younger kids so they are ready for organized sports by the time they hit school. My kids are very resourceful and committed to making it all work,” says Hahn.

Maci, 12, played a dwarf in Nature Hill Intermediate School’s recent production of *Rumpelstiltskin*. “I like being in plays and I want to be an actress when I grow up. My family calls me ‘the drama queen,’” she says with a laugh.

Maci admits it can get a little hectic in her house sometimes, but it’s all worth it and everything always seems to work out. “My family is special because there’s so much love. We love spending time together and I always have someone to talk to. My mom is always there when I need to talk to her. If I need privacy or if it’s too loud to do my homework, I just go up to my room,” she says.

Before going to bed each night, the Hahn children spend special time together reading. “It’s really neat because the older kids will read to the younger ones,” says Hahn. “Every night I try to tuck them in and give them each a kiss good-night. We’re not perfect and we make mistakes, but I just want my kids to know that I love them no matter what.” ●

## Love and Logic seminars

**Love and Logic facilitator, Kimberly Hahn, will present two, one-night seminars from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Fridays, Jan. 21 and 28, at Crosspoint Community Church, W380 N6931 N. Lake Rd. in Oconomowoc.**

The cost for each seminar is \$15 per person and \$25 per couple. Register in advance for both seminars and the cost is \$25 per person and \$40 per couple. Registration is due two weeks in advance. For information and to register, e-mail Hahn at [kimpluseleven@gmail.com](mailto:kimpluseleven@gmail.com) or send your check, made payable to Kimberly Hahn, P.O. Box 464, Oconomowoc, WI 53066.



## More on Love and Logic

Founded in 1977 by Jim Fay and Foster W. Cline, M.D., Love and Logic seminars, books, CDs, and DVDs offer practical tools and techniques that help adults achieve respectful, healthy relationships with their children.

According to its web site, the Love and Logic philosophy works because the program “uses humor, hope, and empathy to build up the adult/child relationship, it emphasizes respect and dignity for both children and adults, it provides real limits in

a loving way and it teaches consequences and healthy decision-making.”

The Parenting With Love and Logic seminar offers an approach to raising children that provides loving support from parents while at the same time expecting kids to be respectful, responsible and accountable for their actions.

For more information, visit the Love and Logic web site at [www.loveandlogic.com](http://www.loveandlogic.com).