

Meet the Young family: 3 generations thriving together at ASU

Students, parents, grandparents take advantage of all the university has to offer

By Mary Beth Faller, ASU News
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This fall semester at Arizona State University, siblings Sienna and Grayson Young both call the Tempe campus home.

So do their parents.

And so do their grandparents.

Three generations of the Young family are thriving at ASU: Students Sienna and Grayson live at [Barrett, The Honors College](#); their parents, Kirstin and Jeff Young, and their grandparents, Ann and Jeff Crabtree, live at [Mirabella at ASU](#).

“This is the only place that I know of that everyone in our family can be together and pursue everything they want to pursue,” Kirstin Young said.

Last year, Grayson Young, a second-year chemical engineering major, was the first to arrive in Tempe.

The family had moved from the Seattle area to southern California years ago, thinking that the teenagers might choose one of the top universities in the area, and Grayson did apply to several.

“And then I looked at them and said, ‘Nope, ASU is better,’” Grayson said.

Jeff Young was happy his son chose ASU.

“The thing that really stood out is the philosophy of being measured by who they include instead of exclude, and how different that is from every other school we saw, which is, ‘We want everyone to apply so we can reject all of you and we will look really good.’ And that’s for rankings,” he said.

“And that really rubbed me the wrong way.”

Kirstin Young was happy that her son wouldn't have to navigate the restrictions at the public California universities, where admitted students can be rejected from some overcrowded majors and discouraged from changing majors.

"ASU is glorious for that because how are you supposed to know when you're getting out of high school what you want to do with your life?

"At ASU, all you have to do is ask and people will say, 'Let's figure out how that can happen.'"

After dropping Grayson off for his first year, the Youngs wanted to check out Mirabella as a possible home for Kirstin's parents.

"Kirstin and I stayed in town for that week, nursing our separation anxiety while Grayson was off to Barrett camp," said Jeff, who retired from his career as a software engineering manager last fall.

They were so impressed by the tour that they decided to move to Mirabella as well.

"It's just absolutely such a different kind of retirement community. You get to do anything and everything you want to do," Kirstin said.

At first, Grayson thought the idea was funny.

"I was like, 'You want to live on campus in a retirement place and take classes? OK that sounds like your dream, but keep dreaming,'" he said.

"And then I was surprised to learn it was actually happening. And now everyone's here and it seems pretty cool to me."

In January, Ann and Jim Crabtree moved into Mirabella while Jeff and Kirstin Young stayed in California through the spring while Sienna finished high school.

The Youngs were fully prepared to support Sienna in her choice of any university, and she was very interested in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but she selected ASU — despite hating the heat.

"This is exactly where I want to be and I love ASU so much but I can't stand the weather, so I really was considering other places," she said.

"It did have an impact that my family was all here, but that's not why I chose ASU."

Sienna is double-majoring in physics and music learning and teaching.

"For the last 10 years I've been a violinist. I love it and I love teaching it. I really want to do that," she said.

"And over the past two years, I started taking high school physics classes and loved every second of that and I thought, 'I don't have to pick. I can do both.'"

"And one of the things that made me choose ASU is that they will support me doing both."

Both the Young children are pursuing undergraduate research.

“You can do that from your first semester at ASU, which is uncommon,” said Sienna, who plans to join the Society of Physics Students.

Grayson, a chemical engineering major, has been working with a PhD student on a research project. He also decided to add a minor in popular music, which is based at the Downtown Phoenix campus, and is happy that he was permitted to exceed the 19-credit limit for the fall semester.

“My dad is actually going to do the minor with me and we’ll do those classes together downtown,” he said.

Jeff has jumped into lifelong learning, joining the ukulele and guitar orchestra at Mirabella in addition to the popular music course.

The family has been enjoying impromptu get-togethers and Grayson likes to bring friends to visit Mirabella as a break from the dining hall.

Sienna is happy as well.

“My parents leave me alone just enough for this to work incredibly well. They’re happy to let me do my own thing. But whenever I want them, I can hang out with them and the dogs,” she said.

Kirstin said that Mirabella at ASU took a huge weight off her shoulders.

“As my parents age and need more help, I know they’re in a place where they can have what they need and be taken care of. And we are two floors below them, so available to them,” said Kirstin, who said that now she’ll have time to pursue her own interests.

Mirabella residents have access to ASU’s sporting events, recreation facilities, cultural events, libraries and courses.

“Jeff was saying, ‘I need to live another 150 years to take all the classes I want to take,’” Kirstin said.

“That is why someone my age would want to move here.”

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Three generations of the Young family call ASU home. From left: Grandparents Jim and Ann Crabtree, parents Jeff and Kirstin Young, and children Sienna and Grayson Young. The two older generations live at Mirabella at ASU in Tempe and the siblings live at Barrett, The Honors College on the Tempe campus. Photo by Samantha Chow/ASU

Gallery



Sienna Young (left) got help moving into the Barrett, The Honors College residential hall on the Tempe campus last month from her family, including her mother, Kirstin, her brother, Grayson, and her father, Jeff.



ASU student Sienna Young (right) spends time with her grandfather, Jim Crabtree, in his apartment at Mirabella at ASU in Tempe.



Jeff Young was glad his children, Grayson (at left) and Sienna chose ASU because he was disheartened by the admissions policies of the public universities in California, where the family lived before moving to Tempe. Now the whole family — three generations of them — call the Tempe campus home.