



# TOP RECRUIT

Portraits of Texas A&M University rings, paintings of the Texas A&M campus, and other Aggie memorabilia decorate the walls of the Kohls' home. One trip to the warm and welcoming residence and it's clear, Kayla Kohls-Rathmann grew up rooting for the other team. Now she has found herself recruiting for the used-to-be rival.

In 2006, Rathmann found herself not only rooting for Texas Tech, but also working for them in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Dean's Office.

"I chose to apply for the position in the Dean's Office to help with recruiting because I wanted to work with young people and make a difference," she says.

In fall 2007, Kevin Pond, former chair of animal and food sciences department, hired Rathmann to her current position, coordinator of student and alumni programs in the Department of Animal and Food Sciences.

"Kayla was also able to take a more personal interest with the students," Pond says.

Rathmann is a one-of-a-kind recruiter according to Pond. She is able to have one-on-one visits with potential students, contact them on Facebook, develop personal relationships with them and help them in any way she can. She is directly responsible for over 400 students visiting campus each year for events and programs she oversees. Some of these programs include the Texas Tech judging camps, state 4-H officer training, and the Southern Stockman livestock judging contest for junior college students. In total she has a hand in bringing almost 5,000 students to campus each year through various programs she is involved with. In 2012 that number will increase. Rathmann was instrumental in bringing the 2012 4-H Round-Up to Texas Tech, something traditionally held at her alma mater.

Not only does Rathmann help recruit and expose students to opportunities at Texas Tech but she also plays an important role in student's lives once they enroll. Many of these students utilize her open-door policy well into and beyond their college careers.

"It feels good to know that students can come to me, to be that person that's there for them," she says. "They become a part of your life."

Students are, to no surprise, Rathmann's favorite, and most important, part about her job. While she says the students are a part of her life, she has also become a part of some of theirs.

Landi Campbell, Texas Tech alumna with a bachelor's degree in animal science and a master's degree in agricultural communications, is proof of Rathmann's commitment to the students.

"Everything from my class schedule, to my resume, to life, it didn't matter, Kayla would help," Campbell says. "Even my mom calls Kayla."

"Kayla gets students here, she keeps them here, helps them find jobs, and then she is still there for them after graduation," Pond says.

Not only does Rathmann play a supporting role in the lives of students but she is a mom to Kinlee Ryan, a bouncing, blonde-haired, blue-eyed, two-year old. In addition to recruiting, and being a mom, Rathmann teaches senior seminar, is the Block and Bridle Club adviser, helps fundraise for judging teams, finds internships for students, and organizes banquets.

Rathmann has dedicated herself to the students of Texas Tech and while being an Aggie may run in her blood, it's obvious her passion is for the Red Raiders. **T**

Kirby Carpenter | Kiowa, Colorado

