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TJ Colaiezzi

CHESTER COUNTY
TECH ENTREPRENEUR AND FAMILY MAN



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The Colaiezzi Family (from left to right: TJ, Nicolette, Gia and Kristen)

Cover Photo by
Kristin Ann Photography



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CHESTER COUNTY TECH ENTREPRENEUR AND FAMILY MAN

By Laura Di Giovine Photography by Kristin Ann Photography

TJ Colaiezzi has made quite a name for himself in the Philadelphia area. He started off in the fitness industry and worked his way up to founder and CEO of a highly successful company, LifeBrand. He and his wife Kristen have two daughters, Gia, age six, and Nicolette, age two and a half. They are very excited to welcome their third baby girl this November.

TJ went into the workforce right after graduating from Springfield High School in Delaware County. He spent a couple of months in college first, but then decided he wanted to figure things out on his own. He says that while it wasn't easy to tell his father, who was a college professor, he stood by his son's choice. TJ started out as a janitor at LA Fitness, but moved into sales soon after and by age 23 was district VP of sales and marketing. He stayed with LA Fitness for 14 years and then spent five years at Crunch Fitness. TJ says, "I loved the fitness industry and was able to meet incredible people, and I learned firsthand about the power of building and maintaining positive relationships. In fact, many of the relationships that I built over the years have carried over into my business at LifeBrand."

TJ explains that LifeBrand uses AI-powered technology to confidentially perform social media health checks with the ability to quickly detect and delete potentially harmful posts. He says, "When I was working in the fitness industry, I was looking at candidates' social media during the hiring process because I felt that it was too important not to. Our HR director explained that doing so posed compliance issues so I

set out to find technology to solve that problem. When nothing existed in the space, I came up with the idea for LifeBrand."

"I loved the idea of creating a product that was not limited by geography, which is why this technology in particular was so exciting to me," TJ continues. "I saw the potential and on April 24, 2018, when our oldest daughter was only three and Kristen was pregnant with Nicolette, I left my well-paying and stable job (on good terms) to start LifeBrand." TJ knew it was a risky move, but he felt it was the right time and opportunity to provide for his family, and Kristen has been an incredibly supportive partner during the entire journey.

On an exciting note, LifeBrand has formed a partnership with the Eagles and Phillies (which is perfect, since TJ is a die-hard Philadelphia sports fan!) He's been thrilled to work with the creative partners at both teams and former Eagles star Trent Cole recently signed on as a new brand ambassador for the company.

TJ adds, "It's also created an opportunity for other sports teams to knock on our door because they're interested in leveraging our technology as well. By the end of the summer, we expect to have numerous professional sports teams using our technology."

TJ is quick to praise Philadelphia for supporting his company. He says that while the technology has global reach and an international headcount, LifeBrand has always felt like a local Philadelphia start up. The city of Philadelphia and the sports teams





*TJ and Mike Quick, sports radio broadcaster and former Philadelphia Eagle.
Photo courtesy of the Colaiezzis family*

have really embraced the company, and LifeBrand has found much of their talent from the local area.

Winning the StartEngine Pitch Competition

A huge boost for LifeBrand came when Kevin O'Leary of Shark Tank fame named the tech company the winner of a pitch competition hosted by StartEngine last fall. TJ says that he almost didn't fill out the application but is so glad he did, as it

ended up being one of the most exciting experiences of his life. He didn't hear anything at first and then received notice that LifeBrand was one of 15-20 finalists. After a panel Zoom interview, he received word that they were in the top five candidates.

He recalls, "Dress rehearsal was a day or two before the live pitch, so I could see the other presenters who all had great tech; it was fierce competition. When it was my turn to pitch, I felt very comfortable. I knew my numbers; I answered questions in the correct manner. When Kevin O'Leary announced that we had won, it was such a euphoric moment! To have spent two and half years dedicating my life to this and investing every dime we had, and then receiving his endorsement on this platform was such an incredible moment for all of our family, friends and supporters. It was that a-ha moment, and incredible validation at such an early stage. Kevin O'Leary then went on to appear on Yahoo! Finance and talked about the product saying 'I just loved this deal....I totally see the opportunity for what this could be, and how important it is, and how I want to use it in my business.' He gave us confidence and helped bring us new clients and investors. From that pitch competition, we've been riding a rocket ship ever since." In fact, TJ was recently named an Entrepreneur of The Year® 2021 Greater Philadelphia Award finalist.

LifeBrand's office space was originally in Ardmore, but they soon outgrew the shared work space and began looking for new headquarters. "I fell in love with West Chester's charm, downtown feel and felt that being in a college town was an added bonus," TJ said. "I wanted a place that had a good feel, walkability, community, and access to restaurants and a social scene so employees could walk around, grab a sandwich, go to lunch, or happy hour."

TJ is grateful for the opportunity that LifeBrand has given him to travel and meet some amazing people. He's had a lot of fun meeting with players and owners and even people he's looked up to as a kid, such as Mike Quick, who is now on their advisory board and whom TJ considers a friend.

But, TJ's favorite part of the job is contributing to someone's professional life in a way that improves their personal life. "I find that extremely rewarding," TJ says. "We have three of our associates getting married this year, and watching everyone grow professionally as their families grow is such an incredible experience. We have a family friendly office where it's not uncommon to see kids and even dogs running around."

Family and Life in Chester County

Kristen and TJ met at a gym that he used to own. TJ recalls, "Kristen was

a member and a personal training client, and she and her friend would work out together often. Coincidentally, her friend and my coworker started dating around the same time that we did—now more than eight years later, we're all happily married with almost six kids between our two families! We still enjoy spending time with them and making new memories together."

Kristen and TJ got married this past January at their home in a beautiful and intimate ceremony and reception attended by their closest family members. TJ says, "Kristen did an incredible job transforming our home into a picture-perfect wedding venue and she looked straight out of a fairy tale! It was one of the best days of my life."

The Colaiezzis love going to the shore (they recently bought a house in Ocean City, NJ) and they enjoy taking quick weekend trips. They've lived in Thornbury Township right near Cheyney University since 2018 and they absolutely love it. TJ says, "We won't ever leave! We're so fortunate to live in a beautiful new development with lots of young families. It's such a great place to raise a family and our girls are always outside playing and having fun with their neighbors."

TJ grew up in Delaware County, but has always loved the beauty and open space in Chester County. He and his family live near a nature preserve and go on walks there a few times a week. Their daughter Gia just finished up Kindergarten at Penn Wood Elementary School and takes dance lessons and plays soccer. Both Gia and Nicolette take swim lessons, and the family enjoys spending time with their one-year-old rescue dog, Callie.



Gia and Nicolette with their dog Callie. Photo courtesy of the Colaiezzis family

To those wanting to start their own business, TJ says the most important thing is finding balance. He notes that starting a business is harder than you think, especially with a family, but even when it sounds like every sign points to giving up, keep going.

Good advice from a great businessman. TJ looks forward to seeing *East Bradford Neighbors'* readers in the community and he says, "For anyone interested in a tour of our headquarters, I'd love to show you around the next time you're downtown."

For more about LifeBrand, visit www.lifebrand.life.

Calling all East Bradford families! Do you have an interesting story to share? Nominate yourself or your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at ldigiovine@bestversionmedia.com.