



## LIVING THE “Major League” DREAM

As a physical therapist and athletic trainer for the Chicago White Sox, University of Mary alum Brett Walker has a baseball fan’s dream job.

“First and foremost, I love being around the game of baseball,” he said. “I get to sit in the best seat in every stadium—the dugout.”

Walker, who grew up in Culbertson, MT—population 900—has an important role in preparing his White Sox team members for game day.

“Professionally, being a part of an all-encompassing medical team made up of internists, orthopedic surgeons, psychologists, athletic trainers, strength coaches, physical therapists, massage therapists, and chiropractors is a very challenging venture,” he said.

“Learning from all of those individuals and developing an understanding of their thoughts and beliefs is key to building a unified front that is cutting edge and empowers the athletes to feel good about what they are doing off the field so that they can be at their best on the field.”

Walker’s duties include soft tissue work, dry needling, manipulation, stretching, strengthening, field coverage and analyzing athlete injury profiles for the draft or during free agency.

“I also read new research on techniques on physical therapy, athletic training, and strength and conditioning,” he said.

Walker had always planned to go to physical therapy school, but at the University of Mary he started out with Exercise Science.

“I was able to get into PT school a little early, so I ended up graduating in 2003 with a Bachelor’s of University Studies with an emphasis on rehabilitative care,” he said.

In 2004, Walker followed in the footsteps of his sister [Karmen Walker, ’00] and graduated with a master’s in physical therapy.

Nine years later in 2013, he received his bachelor’s in athletic training.

After graduation, Walker’s career took him to Wentachee, WA, where he worked at an orthopedic outpatient clinic for four years. When he decided to complete a sports physical therapy residency in Boise, ID, he and his wife, Nichole [Seaver] ’05, moved back to Montana and settled in Great Falls, where he worked at Benefis Health Systems.

In those years, he said, “I realized that I needed more experience in baseball in order to pursue the dream of being hired by a professional team.

“So while we lived in Great Falls, I volunteered for the Great Falls Voyagers, a minor league affiliate of the Chicago White Sox. I then started my athletic training degree and secured internships with the White Sox, Diamondbacks, and Twins.”

In November of 2013, Walker was offered a rehabilitation job with the White Sox and he and his family moved to Litchfield Park, AZ. In March of 2015, he received a phone call from Minor League Farm Director Buddy Bell, offering him a position in Chicago with the major league club.

“Five days later, I was on the field being announced for our home opener,” he said.

Of his relationships with the team, Walker says, “I work hard to build a positive and trusting relationship, understanding that we are working toward a common goal.”

Walker said his time at the University of Mary provided him with the tools he needed to succeed as a physical therapist and athletic trainer.



*“My personal goal is to build a life with those I love and strive to be the best father, husband, and community member by providing a good example of humility, patience, integrity, work ethic, and respect.”*

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“The professors and Benedictine Sisters helped develop and foster my passion for lifelong learning and also taught me the importance of being an active member within the community. I left the University of Mary with a better understanding of who I am, why my faith is so important, and how I can use my values to impact others.”

To today’s students, Walker would say, “It is important to have a goal and take small steps in order to achieve it.

“I have failed more times than I have succeeded. However, failure provides an opportunity to improve. Sometimes it might mean taking a step back financially or professionally in order to allow more growth in the end. Nonetheless, be prepared for long hours and find a way to balance professional and personal life.”

Walker’s goal is to maintain a positive attitude “no matter what,” he said.

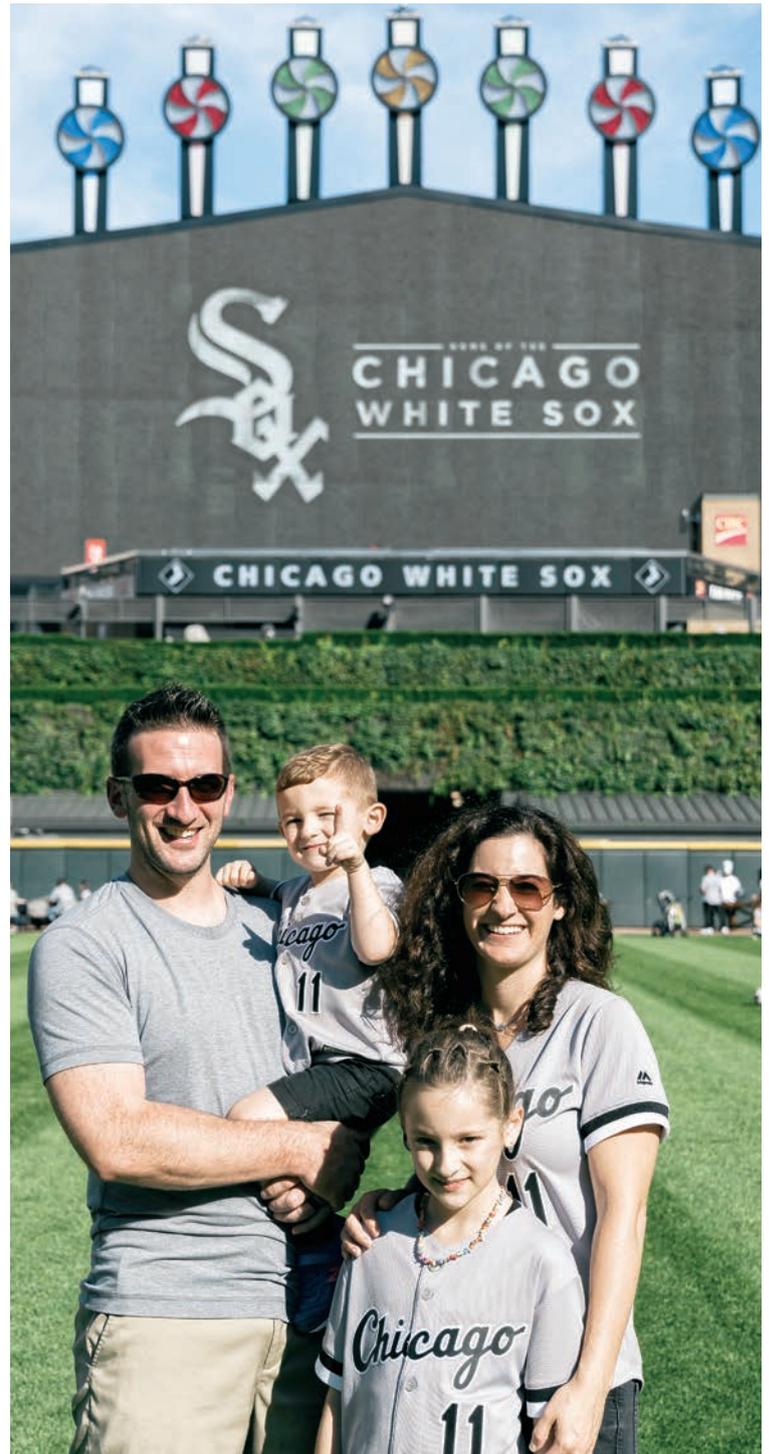
In his personal life, Walker says his family comes first.

“In the offseason, I make a point of dropping off and picking up my kids from school. I try to do pretty much all activities that I can with them. I enjoy reading to our youngest and putting both of the kids to bed every night.”

He says he and Nichole try to go grocery shopping, read, and work out together.

“During the season, I am on the road about 15 days out of every month,” he said. “Nichole and the kids try to make one trip with me every month depending on the schedule. When we are playing at home, I work hard to be dad from the moment the kids wake up until I have to leave for work at about noon. Sometimes work will interfere with my family life but my wife and kids have been very understanding and allowed me to chase this dream.”

The Walkers have been married almost 13 years. Their children, Mia, 9, and Declan, 3, attend St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School in Avondale, AZ.



*Brett Walker, '03, '04, '13 is a Physical Therapist/Athletic Trainer with the Chicago White Sox.*

“The school is amazing and allows us to homeschool Mia while we are living in Chicago. There is a lot of traveling with my job and it allows Nichole and I to teach the kids many real-life learning experiences.”

As Walker looks to the future, “my personal goal is to build a life with those I love and strive to be the best father, husband, and community member by providing a good example of humility, patience, integrity, work ethic, and respect.”