

Matt Lobe • Associate Editor

The Gallifant Dynasty

Gavin Gallifant begins to turn over the reigns of National Environmental Solutions to his son, Jeraush, and daughter, Kera.

Half of the employees of Peoria, Ariz.-based National Environmental Solutions (NES) are Gallifants. That's a good thing for co-owners Gavin and Irlyn Gallifant, who caught a bit of the wine-making bug while honeymooning in Italy. At least Gavin is well positioned to begin turning over the company reigns to family: his son, Jeraush, and daughters, Kera and Jenna.

Like all great wines, Gavin and Irlyn's transition plans will take some time to reach fruition, but the Gallifants realize this and have realistic expectations.

Jeraush works in the field as a technician, Jenna does the data entry, and Kera, business development director, helps grow the operation and run the administrative side of the business.

"We're very united. At the same time, we have a clear separation of duties that helps NES leverage our individual strengths," Jeraush says. "I'm out doing the manual labor, which I love. Dad is running the overall business, which he does best. And Kera, who's extremely organized, keeps the office running smoothly day-to-day, while also bringing in new business."

Head butting doesn't happen often — and when it does, it usually results in change-driven growth for all, Kera notes.

"We usually agree on everything — but not *always*," Kera says. "Dad's been his own boss for years, so he's very used to doing things his way — the way it's been done for 20-plus years. Sometimes Dad digs his nails in and fights change, but *we* are working on it."

NES specializes in municipal, industrial, office/commercial and residential integrated pest management (IPM) programs. "We've been providing green pest management since 1988 — 20 years before it was cool to be green," Gavin adds.

Jeraush began working for NES when he was 13 years old, tackling data entry and dead animal pickup for two years before entering high school. During high school, he typically worked 40 to 50 hours per week for NES. Gavin noticed Jeraush's great work ethic and offered him a full-time, salaried position after high school.

"I always loved working for the family business, and doing the work, so I figured, 'Why not?'" Jeraush explains. "Working for NES, with family, gives me a real sense of satisfaction. Plus, we make pretty good livings helping solve people's problems."



Jeraush (above), and Gavin and Kera (adjacent) celebrate on her wedding day in May, 2011.

"I asked Jeraush if he pictured himself taking over NES one day," Gavin adds. "Thankfully, Jeraush was very receptive to the idea. So was I — but I made it clear that he had to *earn* it first."

From that point on, Gavin was constantly quizzing Jeraush, out in the field, with hypothetical questions. Jeraush credits this method of teaching as the catalyst to his improved problem-solving skills. Gavin also showed Jeraush how to gain and grow a loyal customer base.

"Dad taught me it's *always* about the customer," Jeraush adds. "He taught me to go the extra mile, every time, when dealing with customers."

Kera worked for her dad from the time she was in elementary school until she graduated high school, but then pursued a college degree.

"I wanted to break away," Kera recalls. "I didn't want to just be absorbed into the family business because it was easy. I wanted to figure things out my own way. Maybe it was stubborn, teenage thinking, but it seemed reasonable at the time."

After graduating college and trying her turn in Corporate America, Kera returned to the family business in February 2010.

"I'm so happy to be back," she adds. "Not only do I get to see my family more, but I get to really be a part of something and put all of those business classes to good use." **pmp**

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