



# PARTY FOR A PRINCESS

By Jane Grau  
Photographs by Chris Edwards



*A winning bid at a charity auction casts lucky four-year-old Kailey Beuerlein (daughter of Denver Broncos quarterback Steve Beuerlein) at the center of a magnificent birthday party just right for a budding princess. Writer Jane Grau, who has taught the art of writing children's literature, casts a fairy-tale enchantment as she chronicles the event. If you have a little princess with an upcoming birthday, you'll be inspired by these imaginative ideas!*



Above, Birthday girl Kailey (right) and pal Greyson sparkle like royals. Left, clockwise starting at top right: Abbey, listens to storyteller Miss Melissa weave a personalized fairy tale about her friend. Andrea declares the gourmet-prepared French fries and chicken fingers . . . yummy! Daddy Steve assists the ladies. Face painting completes Princess Pauline's attire. Balloon crowns and creatures are fashioned by Princess Danielle as guests arrive. The pink-and-green theme goes from balloons to ribbon sashes on chairs to cakes and roses.

AT KAILEY BEUERLEIN'S FAIRY-TALE BIRTHDAY PARTY THERE WERE RED, BLUE, AND YELLOW dragons, but they didn't breathe fire or swash mighty tails. They were, instead, made out of balloons. Real dragons, you see, might scare four-year-olds. And this was a day to be filled with nothing scary, but with enough sparkle and fluff to make any princess happy forever after.

The magic began when the king and queen of the kingdom, Kristen and Steve Beuerlein (formerly of the Carolina Panthers) won a children's birthday party from Pixie Lane Presents at a Palm Night auction for The Family Center.

Well before the festivities began, clever wizards from Pixie Lane visited the princess and her family. The wizards collected the family's favorite colors, songs, and activities to take back to a secret workshop. There, they wove them into a never-to-be-forgotten celebration under the guidance of Head Wizard Angela Gala of Rogers & Gala Creative





Partners. Into each ear, Gala whispered the ancient secret of great parties: “Leave nothing undecorated! Let happiness reign!”

Kailey invited twelve friends and their beautiful mommies-in-waiting to the Beuerleins’ modern-day castle in Ballantyne. The royal princes, six-year-old Taylor and three-year-old Jacob, were invited, too, but when they heard about all the pink stuff that would be there, they decided to just watch.

On the enchanted day last June, giant swirly lollipops in flowerpots lined the path to

waved a magic wand and changed their ordinary sundresses into floaty lilac, peach, or white tutus trimmed in feather boas and glittery sequins. Danielle painted their cheeks with butterflies, one of Kailey’s favorite things, and gave them all fun creatures made out of balloons. Then she sat them in a circle on the floor and told a story about another princess who’d been turned into a white dove. It so happened that the white dove, that didn’t mind at all being petted by little girls in tutus, was right there with them in that room.



**Above,** tiered miniature cakes are placed on glass plates crossed with two colors of ribbon, fastened with hot glue. **Left,** gourmet caterer Porcupine Provisions took over the kitchen, turning out fried chicken fingers and delicious fries. Pink monogrammed hats, rimmed and crowned with white fur, sit at each place setting. Drinks are Shirley Temples (a combination of ginger ale and grenadine, a syrup from pomegranates), served in polka-dot glasses with beribboned swizzle sticks.

the castle. After knock-knock-knocking on the Beuerleins’ oaken door, the little guests entered a grand hall. Grown-up Princess Danielle led them up a winding stairway to Kailey’s room high in the tower, where she

The dove, a very calming influence on occasions such as these, cooed good-bye as they all skittered like barefoot fairies through the castle, across its Old World stone floors and past grand tapestries to a wide rear balcony with a curved balustrade overlooking the kingdom. Aqua and pink balloons tossed in the wind. Lush bouquets of pink peonies and mauve roses crowned the party table—a grown-up touch, explained Blossom Wizard Mignon Hooper of Charlotte’s Garden, that foretells of the romance the future holds for pretty princesses. Plush bunnies and bears, dressed in their best party clothes, looked on





in wonder as the curly-haired, brown-eyed, no-front-teeth birthday girl took her place in a just-right chair at the table.

Kailey placed her very own tiara on her head and bid each child take a ribbon-tied seat marked with a pointy, feather-trimmed princess hat, a noisemaker, and monogrammed linen napkins (another grown-up touch).

Then, as is the privilege of all princesses, she bestowed on them beaded name bracelets to go with their loveliest ball gowns.

In the castle's kitchen, Porcupine Provisions'

Leslie Schlernitzauer stirred exotic potions in black cauldrons with a stick used by wizards since before time began. Poof! A menu fit for a royal birthday gala: ice cream cones stuffed with homemade French fries, chicken tenders, and carrot sticks. "Nothing strange here, and definitely nothing green," said Schlernitzauer.

Cocktails, stirred with magic-wand swizzle sticks and named after The Most Wonderful Princess of All, Shirley Temple, arrived in polka-dotted glasses. The mommies munched on cucumber cups filled with lobster



Above, on a balcony overlooking the Ballantyne golf course, the luncheon is about to begin. Big sashes of pink ribbon festoon the chairs, and at the end, the guest of honor's chair is draped with feather boas and a big cluster of fragrant peonies. Left, at each place setting is a white linen napkin monogrammed with a scrolling P (for princess, of course), a pink box tied with blue satin ribbon holding a beaded name bracelet, and a feathered noisemaker. Stuffed animals (with lots of bows), low flower arrangements of pink roses and peonies nestled into feathers, and layers of pink organza complete the fairy tale setting.

salad and gorgonzola-walnut-arugula finger sandwiches served on a mirrored tray.

With a flare of trumpets (not really), a roving storyteller named Miss Melissa, who carries legends far and wide, arrived to give the girls a break from the endless pageantry (such are the rigors of royalty). As they settled quietly on the living room carpet, she regaled them with tales of the much-loved Princess Kailey, who was indeed afraid of dragons, but who loved to sing "Sunshine on My Shoulders" at bedtime with King Steve.






Kailey laughed and cried when she discovered that the storyteller knew how much her dad loved her. P.S.: The King, who was listening, was himself about to bust with joy!

As you know, it is a custom in the kingdom to create a birthday cake so spectacular that royal rivals everywhere will throw themselves on the floor and kick and scream until their mommies order every baker in the land to make a better one or be sent to the dungeon without their suppers. Well, let it be known that Princess Kailey's cake will never



Professional storyteller Melissa Nethery, dressed in court attire, captures everyone's attention with merry words and a thoughtful story, presented in a gentle style.

be outdone. Instead of one silly old cake, Kailey got twelve teeny-tiny, two-tiered castles decorated with proper medieval (but totally edible) crenellations, tracings, and butterflies in pink and aqua. And to remind her of how special four-year-olds are, Heather Gibbs, the Wizard Baker at Cake Designs, gave Kailey's cake an extra tier!

Except for Cinderella, who left her glass slipper on the castle steps for the prince to find, no one ever knows what happens to the other guests when the clock chimes four in the afternoon. Here's what Kailey's did: The mommies-in-waiting, who were invited for just this purpose, gathered up all the bracelets and hats and wilted fairy wings and carried them to gilded (not really) SUVs waiting in the driveway to take them home. In the manner of all dutiful princesses, Kailey waved good-bye to all her friends and, when the sun went down that day, laid her sleepy head on royal pillows and dreamed sweet dreams. 

*Jane Grau, a Charlotte freelance writer, comes from a large family and enjoys frequent visits with her many siblings and their children. Her own two granddaughters have inspired many a princess moment.*

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