

## Your Tour Leaders



Two Tour Leaders have been leading Special Journeys tours since the first tours in 2004. Together they have led over 350 vacations! The two Tour Leaders are Lexi and Tom Mann, a couple who have been married for over 20 years.

One or both of these individuals lead the vacation for every trip. Their passion is serving individuals with disabilities and they love travel and giving our travelers the opportunity to see the world. What they have learned in their many years of leading tours is that the “Smiles Say It All.”™

### Lexi Mann, Founder & President

She has traveled to 5 continents, visited 44 countries, and sailed on 36 cruises. So she has been around the world quite a bit!

Lexi has a master's degree in Christian Spirituality from Creighton University. She has over 25 years of experience in the special needs field including experience in workshops, group homes, and sheltered living environments. The idea for Special Journeys came from a combination of Lexi's love of serving special needs individuals and her desire to travel.

Lexi's favorite cruise: “The Baltic cruise where we saw Copenhagen with its famous mermaid statue and Saint Petersburg Russia with its amazing, historic sights and palaces.”

Lexi's favorite driving trip: “One of our horseback riding experiences, when I was able to assist a traveler who used a wheelchair and was unable to walk; he was able to enjoy his very first horseback ride. On this trip, everyone also enjoyed painting pumpkins for Halloween with their Travel Companions.”

Lexi's favorite flight trip: “Hawaii where we enjoyed a luau and swimming with dolphins.”



Another of her memorable vacations was leading a cruise trip with an individual who has used a wheelchair her entire life. This traveler had always dreamed of taking a cruise, and on this cruise she was able to float in the air with the on-board skydiving simulator.

Lexi also deeply enjoyed going to Branson and enjoying a private “Elvis” concert at our hotel. Just before we arrived, Branson suffered extensive damage from a tornado so we brought the concert to the travelers! Many of the travelers on this trip still talk about how Elvis sang to them at the hotel; we all sang together and the ladies all ended up with a scarf given to them by the “King”!

## Tom Mann, Director of Operations

Tom has been to 4 continents, visited 39 countries, and sailed on 24 cruises.

He has an honors degree in business and computer systems from the Milwaukee School of Engineering. Tom has a law degree and is a licensed Nebraska attorney. Tom practiced as an estate planning attorney for many years before moving to Nebraska. He has 18 years of experience in the field leading vacations.

Tom's favorite cruise: "Our Greek cruise where we saw the original venue of the Olympic games. I raced down the running track pushing a wheelchair and we beat the other travelers in a little race! I also remember the incredible islands we stopped at and even a farm tour where we tasted fresh honey."



Tom's favorite driving trip: "Our Arctic Circle vacation where we drove the Dalton highway from Fairbanks Alaska to Prudhoe bay (Deadhorse) Alaska. This 414-mile stretch of gravel and dirt runs through some of Alaska's most remote wilderness. It even travels over the Brooks mountain range and crosses the Arctic Circle. We saw bears, moose, and musk ox among the amazing scenery. Because the guide book said that skunks don't live in the Arctic Circle I brought the official Special Journeys skunk for photos. At night when it wasn't cloudy we could see the Aurora borealis. Perhaps our most scenic trip ever!"

Tom's favorite flight trip: "Hawaii where we enjoyed touring wonderful gardens, and I had the opportunity to drive the amazing Hana highway with its waterfalls, ocean views, and the super twisty turny road! I loved the fresh fruit and wonderful new tastes. Many travelers on this trip may remember that I found a huge snail on a tour and tried to convince all of the travelers that I was going to eat it."