

June and Malcolm Harding spent their life savings on their first home, and thought they were set for life. But just over a year later, June handed the keys back to the estate agent. Since then they've also sold most of their furniture. (1) _____

What started as a way to stop Kelly being bored in the summer holiday has become the focus of all their lives. She won her first competition after only 10 weeks of skating lessons. Soon after, Kelly's coach left Britain for Canada and her parting words changed the Harding's lives for ever. "Find the money to keep Kelly on the ice," she urged. "She'll go all the way to the top." From then on, there was no question — whatever it cost to make Kelly a winner, they'd find a way.

(2) _____ "I started skating when I was 10," — June said. "I saved all the money I could for lessons by doing errands for neighbours. But Mum and Dad were poor and when Mum saved to buy me boots, Dad said that it was a mere waste. I never skated again. I wasn't going to let that happen to Kelly." They had to take Kelly out of school so she could practise more. As she was still only fourteen, they had to guarantee the local authorities she'd continue her studies until she was seventeen. (3) _____

"I worked out we only got £ 500 for £ 5,000 worth of furniture — but at least it paid for some more lessons," said June. "The only things we kept were the TV and video because we can never afford to go out. Luckily, our new accommodation is furnished. We took our car off the road because we can't afford to run it. We haven't had a phone for four months, or a holiday in six years." (4) _____

Despite being permanently poor, June and Malcolm have no doubt they're doing the right thing. "Just seeing Kelly on the ice, smiling and happy, makes it all worthwhile," her father said. "Even if she doesn't make it she'll have had the opportunity thousands of girls haven't."

Kelly, now seventeen, was placed 13th in last year's junior championship and has won nearly thirty competitions so far. "I know I'm very lucky," she admits. (5) _____ Her coach, a former British champion, is convinced she'll go far. "I think she'll make the Olympic squad," she said. "Kelly is an exceptional girl — gifted and very hardworking."

(6) _____ It's unlikely that her mum will ever see her win, though, because she gets too nervous to watch. "People think we're mad giving up everything," continues June, "but we believe in our daughter... I'd do it all over again tomorrow."

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- 1 — That meant the added cost of a private tutor at £ 140 a month.
- 2 — However, all these sacrifices have not been enough.
- 3 — June has her own reasons for wanting Kelly's success.
- 4 — All to give their daughter Kelly the chance to become a world champion ice-skater.

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