



Hello!

We are Jesse and Lily - together since 2012, married since 2015, and now hoping to bring a child into our little family. We haven't made the decision to pursue adoption lightly, nor do we expect that you will.

We heard something in an adoption training that has remained in our minds: a birth parent would not give their child to our family, they would give our family to their child. Because we are committed to an open adoption, we will always be your family as well. Our relationship with you may grow and change over the years, but it will always be in support of our child.

We hope you consider this book a labor of our love. We can only imagine how challenging this moment might be for you, so we did our best to show our genuine selves and how a child will fit into our lives. We're honored to be part of your journey, and we promise to always treat you, our child, and their adoption story with respect and love.

Thank you for reading. We are holding you in our hearts.





About Us

We met at a cookout in July 2012 and it was love at first sight. We bonded over our shared Peace Corps experiences, values, sense of adventure, and sense of humor. We went hiking, ate pizza, went square dancing, and traveled ground the US.

In 2014, we moved together to Baltimore, Maryland, where we got married and bought a home. Lily became a pediatric nurse and Jesse grew his career in adult education with the local government.

These days, we are still hiking, eating pizza, square dancing, and traveling together. We're also making pasta from scratch, gardening, and going to baseball games. We're looking forward to sharing our love and our lives with a little one.



Sailing in North Carolina



Garden museum in Vermont



Parade in New York City

Random Facts

- Jesse has been skydiving once. He's fine with never doing it again.
- Jesse's first ever memory is of Bert and Ernie on Sesame Street.
- Jesse can play the piano, guitar, drums, and saxophone.
- Jesse is an adventurous eater but he draws the line at eating insects.
- Jesse's family name was originally Rodriguez, but it was changed in 1940.



Parmesan cheese factory tour





Visiting Austin

At a friend's wedding



- Lily worked as a birth doula while she was in nursing school.
- Lily spent two weeks at sleepaway camp when she was 7 years old.
- Lily was in acapella singing groups during high school and college.
- Lily hates raw tomatoes but loves to eat tomato sauce (and pizza!)
- Lily's one and only tattoo is of Fibi, her dog, who sadly passed away in 2022.

STARTED WERE FROM A HERE SEED

School nurse



Animal lover

Lily

I am dedicated to taking care of others and staying true to myself, two principles modeled by my amazing grandmothers Eda and Margot. For as long as I can remember, I have loved being around animals, children, and the outdoors.

It's important to me that every day I work to make someone else's day a little better. I recharge my emotional batteries by spending time outside. I love to plan vacations that involve outdoor activities with my dearest friends and family.

I grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, where we now live. I'm the oldest of three siblings. My mom is Polish and my dad is German (I have US and German citizenship!). English is my first language and I'm **fluent in Spanish**.

I was raised in the Jewish faith with some Catholic traditions sprinkled in. I'm not a religious person, but I hold onto the values that religion instilled in me, particularly kindness and justice.

I'm excited to laugh together with our child, to find joy in small moments, and to teach them to care for themselves and about others.



Nature lover



Bike rider

Loves to laugh

About Lily (according to Jesse)

Typically the smartest person in a room full of people



Beautiful, like an Italian Renaissance painting



Driven and dedicated to her values and relationships



Connects so easily with others—it's amazing to watch!



Music lover



Outdoorsman

Jesse

I was raised to act with integrity. When I had chores to do on a Saturday, I made sure they were done before seeing my friends. When I wanted to buy something, I saved money until I could afford it. My upbringing helped me develop self-respect, kindness, and strength.

As an adult, even when times are tough, I try to have fun and look forward to what's next while still being responsible.

My goal is to support my family, my community, and myself.

Working for the Baltimore City government in adult education and training, I focus on projects like incorporating AI into government operations and increasing awareness around public health and safety. My favorite part of the job is the positive impact I am making in our community.

Some other things I'd like you to know about me are that I love dogs, I love sitting in the sunshine, I'm creative (especially musically), and I find comfort in spending time at home with my family.



World traveler



Dog lover

About Jesse (according to Lily)

Truly cares about others and is always willing to help



Open to new ideas and fresh perspectives



Funny, creative, AND handsome

Both of my grandmothers loved his "kind eyes"





Pets

During the early months of the COVID pandemic, we decided that we could use another animal friend. Bruce arrived to our home as a scared little puppy, but he has come a long way! Our dog Fibi showed Bruce how to be a good dog before she passed away. Now, Bruce spends his days lounging on his many dog beds and chasing squirrels.



The best way to describe Teddy and Bruce's relationship is that they're frenemies. Once a day they playfully chase each other around the house. Otherwise they either ignore each other entirely or snuggle up together in a sunbeam.

Teddy and Bruce have spent time with babies and children, including our nephews and niece, and they behaved beautifully! We will make sure to introduce our child slowly and positively to the pets (and vice versa) so that we have a peaceful home that's safe for everyone.

In 2014, our neighbor fostered kittens and we immediately decided we needed one for ourselves. Lily's grandmother Eda recommended we pick Teddy, the bravest kitten. He isn't a great hunter (you should see him try to catch a moth), but he loves to snuggle. He still wows us from time to time with his cuteness.

Lily in our pink bathroom

Jesse building our planters

Home

Our house is a classic rowhome (townhouse) built in the 1950s. There have only been two previous owners, and both families raised children here!

We have three bedrooms upstairs, the smallest is used as Jesse's home office. Also upstairs is the main bathroom, which still has the amazing original pink tile and tub. Our living room, dining room, and kitchen are on the first floor. We have a finished basement, complete with the den, the laundry room, and a full bathroom.

Our front yard has a beautiful garden filled with native plants, and our fenced-in backyard has raised beds full of flowers, plants, and blueberries.

We have put lots of time and effort into making our home **a welcoming**, **cozy place for us all**. This is our first home together and it will always hold a place in our hearts, no matter where the future takes us.



Our living room



Our first picture as homeowners



Our front yard in the springtime

Our neighborhood is the main reason we purchased our house: living side by side are families with young children, multi-generational families, young professionals, and senior citizens, of all races and nationalities. We're grateful to have such a diverse group of neighbors who have become friends and even a support system.



Our bouse



Elementary school & playground

Our Community

The local elementary school is only a block away, atop a hill overlooking the neighborhood. They have an amazing playground that's open to the public. We think it's really cool that the school's signs are in English, Spanish, and Nepali!

The local park's basketball courts are almost always full, and there's a cricket field set up next to the baseball field. We can walk down our street to the gym... or to the ice cream shop next door to the gym, depending on how we're feeling.

Family

Between us, we have 2 nieces, 2 nephews, 3 siblings, 6 parents, 1 grandmother, and countless cousins, aunts, and uncles. Jesse's family lives in St. Augustine, FL and Lily's family lives in Baltimore, Washington DC, and New York City. Lily's mom and stepdad live only one mile away from us!



With Jesse's grandma (She's over 100!)



Jesse and his brother (not twins)



Lily with her brother and sister

We cherish time with our families and see them throughout the year, no matter the distance. They are all excited to welcome a new child to our family. When we told Lily's 17-year-old sister that we're hoping to adopt, she said, "I'm so excited about the possibility of a new baby in our family! I would love to play with them and watch them grow up!" Jesse's older brother told us he can't wait to go boating and exploring with his new niece/nephew.



Lily's extended family



Jesse's family



Lily's family

Walking with Abbey, a dear friend from college

Friends

Our friends are our chosen family. Some live in Baltimore and others live across the world - as far as Nepal. We met some of our closest friends while serving in the Peace Corps, Lily in the Dominican Republic and Jesse in Bulgaria. We cherish our friends from childhood and college years, too. It's not always easy to make friends as adults, but we each are committed to nurturing friendships new and old.

Many of our friends have babies and young children, some have teenagers, and some don't have any kids. We are lucky to have such kind, intelligent people in our lives, and we know that they will all be **amazing role models** for our child!



Camping with Doug, a good friend from the neighborhood



On vacation in Vermont with Evan and Cari



Hiking with Esperanza and Rob

Family road trip (minus the cat)

On weeknights, we cook dinner and take long walks with our dog Bruce. On weekends, we meet up with friends and family at the farmers market or go to local parks for hikes or bike rides. We're excited to sample fruits and veggies at the market with our child, and to explore parks and learn about nature together.

Everyday Life

Even when work is busy, we make it a priority to spend time together every day. Sometimes that means watching British mystery TV shows while curled up together on the couch. Other times, Lily works on craft projects or reads books while Jesse plays music or catches up on pro basketball. Someday Lily will use her crafting skills to decorate our child's room, and Jesse will play lullabies on the piano for our child.



Orioles baseball game with friends



Playing in the snow

There are lots of restaurants and coffee shops near our house - some places even know our regular orders! They are all very family-friendly, so it will be fun for us to walk over together for a little treat. We're big Orioles fans and go to at least one game a month during baseball season. We can't wait to buy our child their first Orioles shirt!

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Some of our postcard collection

Traditions

We are a blended family - Lily was raised Jewish and Jesse was raised Catholic. While we aren't religious now, we love to celebrate almost anything. We're looking forward to **adding new traditions** to our lives that come from our child's birth family and culture. Some of our own family traditions are:

Polish food on Christmas Eve
Homemade birthday cakes
Sending (and getting!) postcards
Summer vacation in Vermont
Annual New Years cards
BBQ turkey on Thanksgiving
Lighting candles & eating latkes at Hanukkah



Our first Christmas tree together



Teddy enjoying last year's tree



Last night of Hanukkah



Homemade carrot birthday cake

Our holiday cards over the years

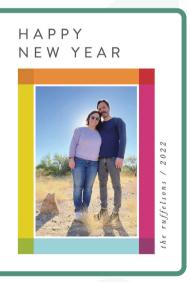


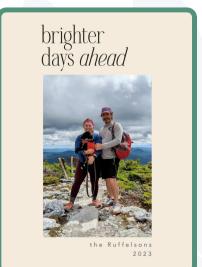




oops...
we forgot
to make
one for the
2019/2020
holiday
season









Rome, Italy, December 2019

Travel

We love to experience cultures that are new to us. Traveling has helped us to appreciate all that we have and to be open to adventure. Jesse enjoys sampling all the local delicacies, and Lily can never pass down an opportunity to hablar en español or pick up a new language.

Even though our trips will look very different as a family of three, we are looking forward to exploring the world together!



Vermont, July 2024



Somewhere in Iceland September 2016



Niagara Falls, July 2019



Valladolid, Mexico December 2023

Between the two of us

we've visited...

37 states (plus Washington DC):

Alabama Alaska Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Delaware Florida Georgia Illinois Indiana Kansas Louisiana Maine Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri

Nevada **New Hampshire New Jersey New Mexico** New York North Carolina Oregon Pennsylvania Rhode Island South Carolina Tennessee Texas Utah Vermont Virginia Washington West Virginia Wyoming

25 countries:

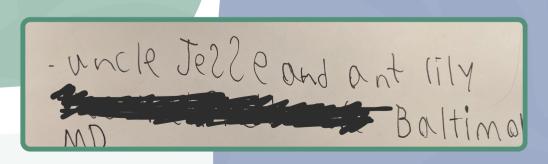
Argentina
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
Chile
China
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic

Finland
France
Germany
Iceland
Italy
Jordan
Kosovo
Macedonia
Mexico

Mongolia
Pakistan
Poland
Russia
Serbia
Spain
United Kingdom
Uruguay

Places we hope to explore as a family of three:

Chicago
Mexico City
Quebec
Hawaii
Oregon
New Mexico
Germany
Scotland
Peru



Parenthood

We're lucky to have so many wonderful children in our lives, and we're ready for one of our own. We're looking forward to nurturing our child's unique potential and to having fun together. We will make sure our child experiences joy and love every day, and we will model and teach the values of integrity and acceptance.



Our niece and nephew's first train ride



Orioles game with friend's daughter



Playground with friend's son



Out to dinner with Lily's sister



Playing with best friend's son



Hiking with our oldest nephew



Being silly with friend's son



Boating with our youngest nephew

Adoption

For as long as we've been together, we've dreamed of experiencing the joys and challenges of parenthood. We imagined creating a beautiful blended family by having biological children and adopting children.

After five years of unsuccessful fertility treatment (during which we also educated ourselves about adoption), we decided to stop treatment and focus on adopting. We took a year to process our emotions and grieve our losses, knowing we could not begin the adoption process until our hearts and minds were fully ready.

Though our path to parenthood has not been the straight line we originally anticipated, we're grateful that the path has led us here. Our relationship has been strengthened by this journey, and so has our commitment to supporting and loving our child and their story.



We're excited to meet our future child, to develop a relationship with their birth family, and to learn and grow together over the years.

Our Promise to You

We've had a lot of time to consider our commitment to parenthood, and to accept that in many ways it is a great unknown. The unknown can be scary, and it can also lead to beautiful things.

We recognize and respect how monumental this decision will be for you. We can't see into the future, but we promise that we will always:

- Center our child in our decisions
- Ensure that our child knows they are loved by so many people, including you
- Respectfully incorporate your culture and traditions into our lives
- · Keep communicating with you, even when life gets hectic
- Support our child in becoming their best self
- Be honest with our child and with you
- Surround our child with loving family and friends
- Hold space in our hearts and minds for you

Thank you for taking the time to learn about us - we would love to learn more about you.

Sending love and light from our hearts to yours.

