

Mike & Jessica

Dear Expectant Parent(s),

How to begin a letter that could lead to a lifelong connection? We are so excited to be a part of the open adoption process, and so grateful that you are taking the time to learn about us. We have been together since 2005 and married since 2009. We live in Madison, Wisconsin, with a large community of loving family, friends, and our dogs.

We both work in education (in Madison schools and the University of Wisconsin-Madison) and are active leaders of our communities through volunteer work and social justice advocacy. We are committed to the open adoption process and building a relationship with you and your family.



About us

We met in 2001, working together on our college newspaper. In 2005, our friendship became something more and we began dating. After marrying in 2009, we settled in Madison, where we eventually bought our home in a quiet neighborhood near many beautiful parks. We have four cuddly dogs who love children and work as therapy dogs in schools and other organizations.

We have a supportive, fun, loving relationship in which we strive for equal roles and strong communication.



Meet Jess!

Born: January 21, 1982

Ethnicity: White

Religion: Agnostic

Education: Bachelor's degree in journalism,
master's degree in Human-Computer Interaction

Career: User experience and digital accessibility
(making technology equal for people with
disabilities)

Hobbies: Cooking, house projects, gardening,
traveling

Favorite foods: Pho, tacos, pasta, Greek food,
Ukrainian food



Meet Mike!

Born: September 22, 1982

Ethnicity: Black / Vietnamese

Religion: Catholic

Education: Bachelor's degree in Political Science,
Master's degree in Education Leadership

Career: President, Madison Teachers Inc (teachers'
union); Special Education teacher

Hobbies: Cooking, sports, movies, traveling

Favorite food: Pho, Barbeque, Burgers, Egg rolls



Family



We both come from resilient families. Mike was born on the North side of Milwaukee to Leon (a Black veteran) and Phuong Jones (a Vietnamese refugee). They taught his two sisters and him to always roll with the punches and never give up on their dreams.



Jessica grew up outside of Madison to parents who both grew up in abusive households. They built a safe, loving, and tight-knit family life for her and her two brothers and broke the cycle of abuse.



We are both very close to our families, and since we started the adoption process, they have been amazing and supportive. Your child would be enthusiastically welcomed by two grandmothers, one grandfather (Mike's father passed away in 2012), and many aunts, uncles, and cousins who cannot wait to have a new family member!



Our Dogs



We are the loving owners of four cuddly, goofy dogs.

Molly is our oldest, a Golden Retriever. Benny is the second-oldest, a Rottweiler/Lab mix. Both dogs are certified therapy dogs who go to work with Mike and work with children in schools who've experienced trauma.



At the beginning of the pandemic, we adopted Cleo, a German Shepherd mix. In spring 2021, we fostered and ended up adopting Bruce, another Rottweiler mix. In the future, they will be trained enough to become therapy dogs as well.



All four dogs love children and have been around newborns, toddlers, and all ages up to eighteen. They are so excited to give their attention and protection to a child who'll join the pack!



Childcare Plans

We are deeply aware of how critical the first months we spend as parents with a new baby are. We plan to wait at least 6 months before finding daycare. Jess has a stable, flexible job at which she has saved enough paid time off to spend 4 or more months at home, full time. After taking leave, she will be able to return to work part time and work from home to make the transition as smooth as possible. Mike's job is also flexible, and he also has the option to work from home.

In addition, Jess's mother, Mary, who works in K-12 education, has agreed and is excited to provide support and early childcare to help us be home with the child as long as we possibly can before seeking childcare.

If we do seek childcare, we have several high-quality options in Madison, including a nationally known preschool program at UW-Madison and a Montessori preschool only a few blocks from our house.



Race and Diversity

As an interracial couple, we are particularly sensitive to the complex dynamics of being a person of color in this world. Being Black and Vietnamese, Mike grew up in a multiracial household with cultures that differed greatly at times. Jessica was raised in a mostly white small town, but her parents made a point of having conversations about race and gender throughout her childhood.

Our intention to live as an anti-racist family is backed up by our actions. Mike led the charge to bring "Black Lives Matter in Schools" to all Madison schools and is a leader within his school to facilitate student-powered discussions around race. He is also a proud member of the Black Educators Network and his work has been recognized by the 100 Black Men of Madison.

Jessica is a past vice president of the Madison chapter of the National Organization of Women and is a campus leader for the Women in Technology community group. She continues to educate herself on anti-racist practices, and attends training on anti-racist parenting. She is also active in civil rights groups like the Human Rights Campaign and Planned Parenthood support.

It's our intent to build a partnership with you and your child to honor, learn, and grow in your family's culture and traditions. And we hope that as a child grows into themselves, they can feel the pride of multiple cultures, heritages, and experiences. We cannot predict a child's future, but we know that providing them with our love and support will help brighten their path and journey.



Open Adoption



Since we've started this process, we've always hoped to have an open relationship with our child's birth family.

We are committed to keeping in touch in whatever ways feel right to you, whether that is over text, social media, and/or shared events. If you choose, we look forward to celebrating birthdays together, graduations throughout the child's life, and events in your life that you want to share with your child.

In other words, we want to be as transparent as possible so the you always feel connected to your child.

Religion

Jessica was raised Catholic but is currently agnostic. She values empathy, curiosity, kindness, respect, and listening to and believing others' experiences, and tries to center these values in her relationships, work, activism, and family life.

Mike grew up in the Catholic Church, but has family connections to the Southern Baptist Church. He is a Godfather to his niece and takes that responsibility seriously.

We are hoping to raise a child in a way that exposes them to multiple faiths and viewpoints. We are excited to help them discover their own spiritual journey.



Photos



Thank You



Thank you for learning about us, our families, our dogs, and our aspirations to create a safe and loving home for a child. We are excited to grow our family and we know we can build a strong and loving partnership with you if you entrust us with your child. Above all, we hope you are receiving the love and support you deserve, no matter your path on this journey.

Jessica and Mike