

MARK AND BRANT

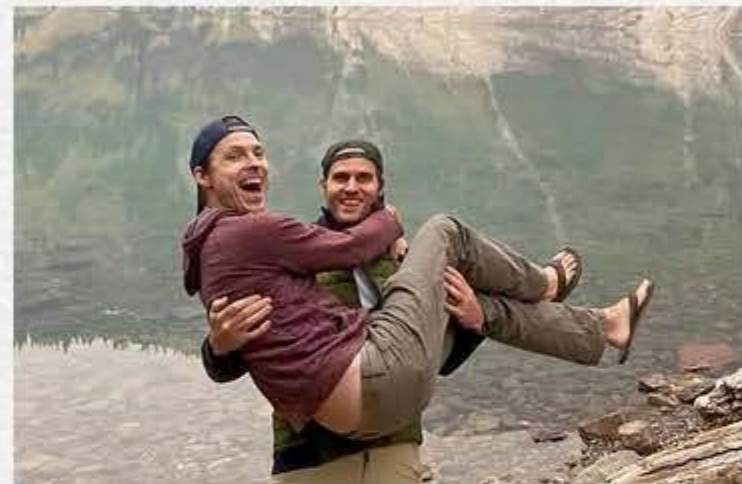


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**IT'S GREAT TO
MEET YOU!**

We're Mark and Brant and we look
forward to getting to know you!

(Mark is holding Brant in the top
photo)



OUR STORY

We met online while we were both completing residency training at the same hospital in Vancouver, Washington.

As we are both self-professed science nerds, we levitated towards careers in healthcare as they allow us to both provide compassionate care for our patients and continuously learn -- since modern medicine and the science behind it constantly changes.

Before meeting online, we had never seen each other at work but soon found ourselves looking for reasons to bump into each-other at the hospital, whether it was an early morning coffee break or attending the same education sessions.

We quickly found more and more things we had in common and were passionate about, and the rest is history!



Mark's family



Brant's family



ABOUT MARK

THINGS THAT EXCITE ME:

- Travel
- Exploring Portland and the Pacific Northwest
- Outdoor activities (hiking, backpacking, kayaking, paddle boarding)
- Gardening
- Canning fruit and veggies from the garden
- Trying new things (newest hobby is sailing on the Columbia River)



FUN FACTS ABOUT MARK



- I grew up in the countryside outside the small town of Muenster, Texas

- I'm the youngest of seven siblings (see baby version of me to the left) and we have 17 nieces and nephews on my side of the family

- I've worked many jobs to make my way through college and beyond. Some of the more random jobs include driving buses on my college campus, repairing boots and trampolines at my dad's store, and being an NFL stadium security guard!

- I taught English in Costa Rica for half a year after college (would've gladly stayed longer but ran out of money!)



PROFESSION:

I am a hospital pharmacist. I work with nurses, physicians, and other hospital staff to provide care for admitted patients. I also provide medication counseling and other services for discharged patients to ensure a smooth transition from hospital to home.

MARK'S STORY

I grew up in a small, Catholic town in Texas called Muenster. All of my parents and grandparents grew up there as well. It is a very tight-knit community where most people trace their ancestry to the German settlers that founded the town in the late 1800s. I went to Pre-K through 12th grade with the same 20 classmates (including a few cousins) at the Catholic school my family had attended for generations.



Looking back, it was a very unique childhood experience. Growing up, I didn't think twice about running into multiple relatives on a daily basis, whether it was at school, the local grocery store, or at a church event. It definitely had an impact on me to value the importance of finding community wherever you eventually call home.



Fast forward a decade after high school and I had completed undergraduate and professional schooling in Texas to become a pharmacist. Sprinkled throughout that time were multiple jobs and volunteer opportunities, including being a biochemistry lab technician, English teacher in Costa Rica, and a junior high and high school mathematics teacher. I eventually settled on hospital pharmacy as I enjoy my interactions with both patients and healthcare workers; and I also love the science behind modern medicines.



MARK'S STORY

As far as my move to the Pacific Northwest, I had always been drawn to the mountains and the beauty that comes with it. Growing up, our vacations were roadtrips within and outside of Texas. Whenever we would drive to New Mexico or Colorado, I was always happiest when I saw the faintest outlines of mountains. Even though I've lived here for six years, I still have to pinch myself when we go on a day trip or overnight camping trip into the mountains or the coast, something I never could have done on a whim in Texas.



Although none of my family lives in the Portland metro area, we all love to travel! Brant and I go to Texas and Indiana about 3-4 times a year and we often have family travel to visit us. We also go to places such as Montana (where one of my sisters lives), Florida, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands amongst other places to vacation with family.

ABOUT BRANT

THINGS THAT EXCITE ME:

- Learning languages
- Crafts (sewing, painting, building furniture)
- Silly dancing
- Hiking, river floats, skiing
- Games with friends
- Reading or listening to audiobooks



PROFESSION:

I am a family physician. Whether they feel sick or healthy, I work with patients to develop treatment plans to help them feel better or stay well. This can be hard work but very satisfying. Another passion of mine is helping patients who are most vulnerable and providing a safe space to receive care. I practice telehealth, manage care for patients who are transitioning their gender, and I'm a primary care physician for patients with HIV.

FUN FACTS ABOUT BRANT



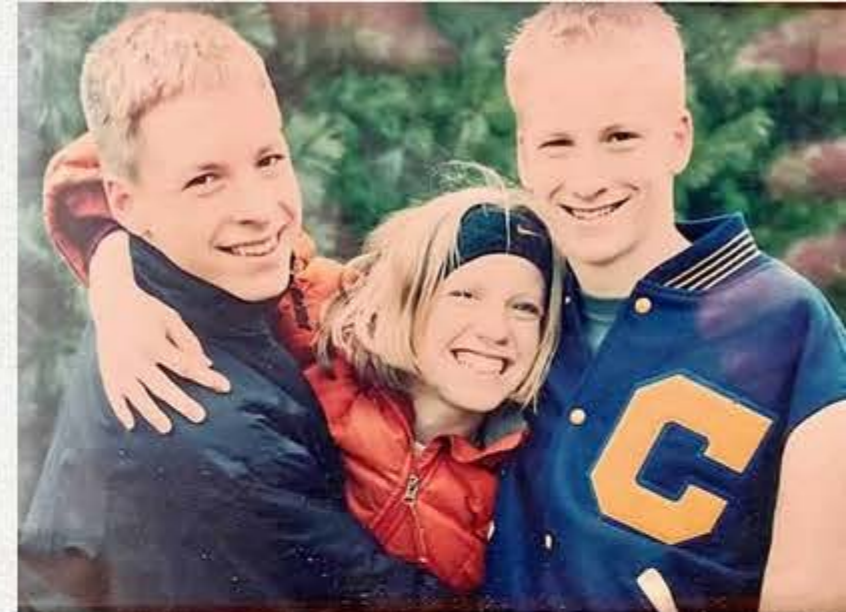
- While I was a family medicine resident, I delivered 60 babies.
- In my down time, I like to write sci-fi stories
- I was in a children's choir growing up, and was lucky enough to sing on stage with Celine Dion, and with the traveling cast of Broadway's Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.
- I love music! I learned how to play the piano as a child, then retaught myself how to play as a teenager. I was also the lead singer of my youth group's band in high school.
- In my first job, I was a teachers aid for a summer school for children with special needs. Before medical school, I worked as a health officer at a summer camp, a patient transporter at a hospital and as an administrative assistant for the law school at Boston College.
- I love designing buildings and dreaming about ways to improve the modern neighborhood. If I wasn't in medicine, I would want to be an architect or city planner.
- I enjoy sewing and have made most of the pillowcases, curtains, and cushions in our home (see one of my hoodie creations to the left!)

BRANT'S STORY

I grew up in Carmel, Indiana, one of the suburbs of Indianapolis, with my parents and two siblings, a twin brother and older sister. We spent a lot of our childhood playing in the woods in our neighborhood, collecting wildlife from a local stream to take home. My brother and I even dug out a pond in our backyard for a turtle we found! Some fond memories I have include visits with extended family where we would learn how to play a family favorite card game, Rook, by sitting on the laps of older family members and choosing which card to play for them.

For spring breaks my family would drive to Panama City Beach, Florida where we would build epic sandcastles and jump in the waves or body surf for a week. In the summertime, I helped my mom and dad plan road trips, figuring out routes, which hotels to stay in and what sights to see along the way. We had lobster in Maine, went up the Empire State Building, and drove through Death Valley in California.

My siblings and I were very active, and our parents wanted to make sure we had every opportunity to try new experiences and find community. We participated in everything from the arts like choir, musical theater, learning musical instruments like piano and the trumpet to sports like soccer, baseball, football. In high school I ran cross country and track, and took pottery and photography classes.





BRANT'S STORY

Early in high school, I decided to pursue a medical career since I've always enjoyed science and helping people. I went to college at Anderson University in my parent's hometown, received a master's degree in Boston, and then went to medical school in South Florida. I was ready to escape the heat and find another beautiful part of the country and get a well-rounded education in family medicine, so I was thrilled when I learned I would complete my training in Vancouver, Washington.

Since moving here, I've made lifelong friends, and after meeting Mark and going on so many adventures together, I have found that I couldn't be more excited to call the PNW my home and grow our family together in this beautiful place.



HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD

We bought our century-old home when COVID started in early 2020, so we thankfully had plenty of projects to keep us busy during the shutdowns. We've touched nearly every part of our home and had the most fun completely gutting and renovating the kitchen and living room to make it our unique sanctuary. This has led us to often dream about experiencing this special space with children of our own.

Our house sits on half an acre of land with most of the lot in our backyard. After work and on the weekends, we truly enjoy unwinding in the backyard and have done many things to make it our own. Amongst other things, we've built a hammock station under one of our towering cedar trees, two fishponds connected by a bubbling stream, a firepit, and multiple flower and vegetable beds. We love our backyard so much we decided to get married in it in the summer of 2021 with a hundred of our closest family and friends!

Outside our home, we live on a quiet dead-end street with multiple other families with children. We love walking our dog, Shiner, to the nearby elementary school in the evenings where children come to play on the playground, neighbors play with dogs off-leash, and local pickleball groups are often playing tournaments. Other evenings, we walk or bike to the nearby trail system that follows a scenic creek with multiple trailheads connected to our neighborhood.



Our favorite COVID quarantine past time activities were home renovation projects!





HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

We both love the holidays and have lasting memories and traditions from our childhoods. We always travel either to Texas, Indiana, or both around Thanksgiving and/or Christmas. We also enjoy hosting "Friendsgiving" with our local friends at our home every year.

We have started traditions here since moving to the PNW. We go every year with our closest friends to cut down a Christmas tree in the National Forest. More than just cutting a tree, we turn it into a day full of exploration, snow fun, laughter, and warm drinks. One of Brant's favorite Christmas memories were homemade sugar cookies, which we have continued making with our friends. Mark was raised Catholic and often attended midnight Christmas Eve service with carols. We now attend the same service (if in Portland) at the local cathedral to listen to beautiful music and service.

Mark's extended family has an annual gathering at a compound in Texas, either over Memorial Day or 4th of July that we are usually able to attend. The last gathering we went to had over 100 of Mark's relatives attend the 3 day event!



FRIENDS AND FAMILY EVENTS

With our Montana family, we have started the tradition of going to Leavenworth, Washington during the Christmas season, and spending a magical weekend in the mountains.

For the last seven years some Portland friends of ours have taken turns hosting a dinner party, where we all pick a recipe to bring. We cook together, then taste test, and vote to see who's dish was the favorite.

We do a TV show and puzzle night once a week with friends. It started with Game of Thrones, but morphed into watching Survivor and other reality shows.



FUR BABIES



As you may guess, we dearly love our dog (Shiner) and cat (Butters). They both weigh around 20 pounds, are black, and 9-10 years old.

Sometimes it's hard to tell which one is brushing your legs or arms, as they both love to cuddle and let you know they are nearby!



While Shiner is known to explore and camp with us all over the PNW, Butters is the king of the house and keeps a watchful eye on all things happening both inside and outside our home!



DREAMS FOR OUR CHILD



We love to dream about the little things we hope to experience with children of our own, whether that is board games in the living room, playing in the back yard, or camping on a whim in the nearby mountains. To us, these small moments may be the biggest and most lasting memories for us and our children.

However, we also vow to provide the "big" things. We vow to provide our child with every educational and extracurricular opportunity they want to pursue. We vow to always respect them and to be open with them in regards to their origin story. But, most importantly, we vow to provide them with unconditional love and guidance throughout childhood and beyond.

WHY OPEN ADOPTION?

We truly believe an open adoption will provide the best opportunities for our child and all parents involved, both adoptive and birth. By nurturing this open adoption, our child will have access to so many vital parts of their lives that otherwise would have been hidden, including their birth relatives, traditions, and culture amongst others.

Although we cannot read the future, we vow to seek a welcoming relationship with the birth parents with the hope of building that relationship throughout our child's younger years and beyond. We are in this for the long haul and hope you will consider us during this part of your journey.

