



MARC AND KARINA



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HELLO...

We are Marc and Karina -
We are both nurses who live in the
Seattle area - and we love what we
do. We are excited to be starting
our journey to parenting together
and believe that open adoption is
the right option for us to grow our
family. Let us tell you a little bit
about ourselves and the life we
hope to offer a child.

OUR STORY...

We met in 2014 at a party neither of us wanted to attend and married in 2019 by the beach. We are opposites in many ways - for example, Karina is an extrovert to Marc's introversion. Marc jokes it keeps him from having to talk at parties.

On our first date Marc bewitched Karina with his engaging storytelling and love of caregiving - revealing that Karina is easily moved to tears. She doesn't recommend crying on a first date but this time it worked. Over the years we have grown together, shared many jokes and some more tears. When Karina went back to school for nursing Marc was with her every step of the way.

We both live with mental health issues. This is something we share with the people in our lives as an act of vulnerability and to fight against stigma. We know that good community and healthcare can allow people with mental health challenges to live full and loving lives. Both diagnosed with type 2 bipolar disorder, we have been engaged in successful treatment for many years. This affects us each differently, but we work together to find balance and a beautiful life together. Our experiences have helped shape our professional lives as we follow our strengths and passion to help people on their worst days.



We have always prioritized our time together even when our work schedules don't line up as often as we would like. We also encourage each other to "fly solo" and do things we each enjoy - Marc's gaming group or Karina's crafting. We support individual growth as well as our time together.

Despite having different tastes, we love to spend time together doing the things we love. We have been taking weekly dance lessons as a date night and have graduated from stepping on each other's toes to spinning around the dance floor.

We've also learned even more about each other's musical taste; it turns out Marc likes the Tango and Karina likes the Hustle. Most importantly we have learned that even doing something poorly together can be fun.

We both love food and getting out of the house to explore our city one bite at a time. Marc finds the best barbecue and Karina finds the best sushi. Our favorite place to be together is near the Pacific Ocean. There is just something magical about the roar of the ocean and the sand in our toes.

ABOUT KARINA...

I was born by Waikiki Beach in Hawaii and have lived as close to the water as possible ever since. My happy place is where there is fresh sea air. I grew up close to my immediate and extended family. At one point there were five cousins enrolled at the same elementary school! I also have a little brother, who is way taller than me now.

My stepdaughter Lauren is the coolest kiddo I know - I have been blessed to have her in my life! I am close to my nieces and sister-in-law and try to see the family whenever I can. It has been a delight watching Lauren and my nieces grow up.

My parents are a big support, and we are active in each other's lives. I am also blessed to have a chosen family of long-time childhood friends whom I have known since early elementary school.



Lauren and Karina



My best memories take place near the water - from learning to sail to looking for sand dollars the week of our wedding. I am a huge ocean nerd and still try to get a closer look in every tide pool. My favorite books take place at sea and favorite songs are about the water.

I have worked in pediatric nursing for more than 6 years and focused the entire time on children's mental and emotional health. My favorite quote from a mentor is "your brain is a part of your body and should be treated like it." Children should be given support when they struggle and kindness as they grow. Nursing allows me to combine my love of science and people. I have worked at multiple levels of healthcare, starting as a nursing assistant when I met Marc, before going back to school to become a nurse.



Karina and friends



One of my biggest childhood challenges was working through school with two learning disabilities. I learned that not everyone cares about how hard you work but are strictly focused on results. They look at education as an accomplishment and not a process. I spent a lot of time feeling inferior to my peers because I had to ask for help with things that seemed so easy for others. I had a hard time learning to read and write, and with my ADHD just sitting still in class to pay attention was rough.

These things shaped my path to children's mental health in a way. I see growth and development as things to be nurtured into being. Isolation holds kids, and grown-ups, back. I value compassionate interactions more than almost anything else. I want to help kids find joy and resiliency.

Karina Fun Facts:

- was a Girl Scout from elementary through high school and earned her silver award
- completed an overnight fundraising walk for Suicide Prevention with her best friend of 25+ years
- loves marine biology and once was the sea otter mascot at the Seattle Aquarium
- loves to read and to finish a book in one sitting
- favorite food is Macaroni and Cheese - and never follows the recipe.

ABOUT MARC...

Father, husband, gamer, nurse, motorcycle enthusiast, football fanatic, metalhead. Those are just a few of the things that define who I am.

Born in Boston, my family moved to Orlando when I was 3. I spent most of my childhood there with my large family. With 2 older sisters and 2 younger brothers as well as some cousins always around - there was never a quiet moment in the house.



Marc and co-worker

After high school, I set off and spent 4 years traveling the country and finding out just who I was. Returning to Florida, I began my path in healthcare. My best memory of nursing school had nothing to do with school - just after graduation, my daughter Lauren was born. I eventually became an Emergency Department Nurse.

While I have worked in other areas of the hospital, my heart will always be there, and I keep finding my way back to the ER.



Marc and Lauren

Having Lauren in my life has shown me how to look at little things with new eyes, and to treasure some of the day-to-day things that had seemed routine. Lauren is proof that even when things go sideways, wonderful can come out of it. Lauren has had the opportunity to fly and visit often throughout her life, and when she has not been able to, I have traveled to visit her and my family back in Florida. On Karina's and my last trip to see Lauren, we walked along the beach hunting for shark teeth. As she is a teenager, we of course had to stop at a curio shop for her to buy oddities for room decorations.



Lauren and Marc



Marc's family



I moved to Seattle in 2011 and have spent time since then learning about the city and surrounding areas. I love the city - doing underground haunted ghost tours, hiking the nearby trails, boating on South Lake Union, getting to see the Seahawks win games in their home stadium, going to concerts at WaMu theater. I have even had the chance to hang out with video and tabletop game creators at local boardgame clubs.

More recently I was selected for the opportunity to train with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) in disaster management. I have spent several weeks in the last few years learning teamwork and crisis response. With my peers - and one of my best friends - we are working to prepare our hospital for when the worst happens and to help our communities afterwards.



Karina, Lauren and Marc



Marc, Lauren and his best friend

MARC'S FUN FACTS:

- was a Boy Scout and earned his Eagle Scout
- did a road trip from Tucson to Anchorage in 72 hours with his best friend
- was once a Disney cast member
- favorite memory of reading is swapping chapters of Harry Potter with his daughter.
- is a certified FEMA trainer



ABOUT CERBERUS...

Our family includes one big black dog named Cerberus, "Cerbie" for short. Cerbie is a cuddler whose favorite place at home is on the couch. He loves to make new friends, though he is shy at first. We love to take him to the beach with us where he likes to sniff the water and run away from the waves.

Cerbie thinks he is a lap dog despite his size, and he needs to know where everyone is at bedtime before settling down. He is wonderfully protective and great with kids once he knows they are "part of the pack". We work with an amazing trainer who is excited to teach him new big brother skills.



Cerbie's Fun Facts:

- loves to play at doggy camp where he is working on badges
- best friend is his trainer
- loves to dress for the occasion - gotta have a snazzy bandana
- can't read but likes to lay on the couch with humans when they do
- favorite food is carrots, no really!

OUR HOME...

We love that our home is in a diverse neighborhood tucked into the big, exciting city. Thankfully, our home is close to both of our workplaces so we can spend more time as a family than commuting. We are across the street from a large park where we like to walk the dog and he likes to play at the playground. Karina enjoys knowing her coworkers are our neighbors and their kids are in our community schools.



Marc's bat cave

Community is important to us which is why we host an annual barbecue for our block. Karina loves to be in the kitchen making comfort foods and re-creating healthier versions of childhood favorites like Spaghetti O's. We have a balcony where she tries, and sometimes succeeds, growing herbs and veggies. Marc's barbecue is also there where he grills all summer and even in the December snow.

Marc's favorite place in the house is his bat-cave, the converted garage that is home to his motorcycle and our game room. Karina loves her office where she has her book collection, a comfy chair for reading and room to do her crafting.



Karina's office

FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

We are blessed with messy, loving families as well as found families of close friends. Karina's friends have seen her through every life stage as they grew up together. Marc's friends have seen him through the worst days, hurricanes and COVID-19. Our friends and family are excited and supportive of our dream to grow our family through open adoption.



Marc and Karina with family



Karina and her mom

Karina's work colleagues and family cooking



We have had thoughtful conversations with our family and friends about open adoption and their place in our child's life. Our hope is to welcome our child and their birth family into a loving community.



Marc with family and the Thanksgiving bird



Marc and his brother playing Jenga

TRADITIONS...



We love the winter holidays - especially Halloween. That love goes back to childhood. Halloween parties are the perfect time to dress up and play! We work hard to make our costumes as accurate and fun as possible.



Karina's family have many traditions with the winter holidays. She bakes a German Christmas bread called Stollen that has been made in the family for 100+ years.



Best of all, we love ringing in the new year with a romantic date including great food and dancing.

Marc and Karina with their new niece



DREAMS FOR OUR CHILD...

In our family, compassion is the most important value - compassion for others and self. We hope to instill and support personal integrity, emotional intelligence, and an endless sense of curiosity.

Children deserve every opportunity to explore themselves, their identity, and their environment. An open adoption will provide our child with the chance to know their whole story enriched with the traditions of their whole family.

We look forward to sharing nature, exploring art, and engaging in community. We plan to seek out places of wonder in the natural world and moments of inter-connectedness in a bustling city.

We both love the written word and want to share the magic of storytelling through libraries, theaters, movies, and campfire tales. The opportunity to learn comes in many places outside a traditional classroom - we plan to take advantage of that. Most importantly, we believe that the "work of childhood" is play.



Building a dream for our child...

OUR OPEN ADOPTION ASPIRATIONS...

We hope to center our child's sense of self in their whole story. To do this we dream about celebrating their joys with their birth family. We want to promote a sense of security through inter-connected and open-hearted relationships between us and our child's birth family. Remaining flexible to meet the needs of all involved is something we are deeply committed to. Clear communication is essential to supporting this relationship and we are committed to do that. Further, it is something we prioritize together and with the people who share our lives. We hope to extend that to our child's birth family.

