



**OUR  
FAMILY**



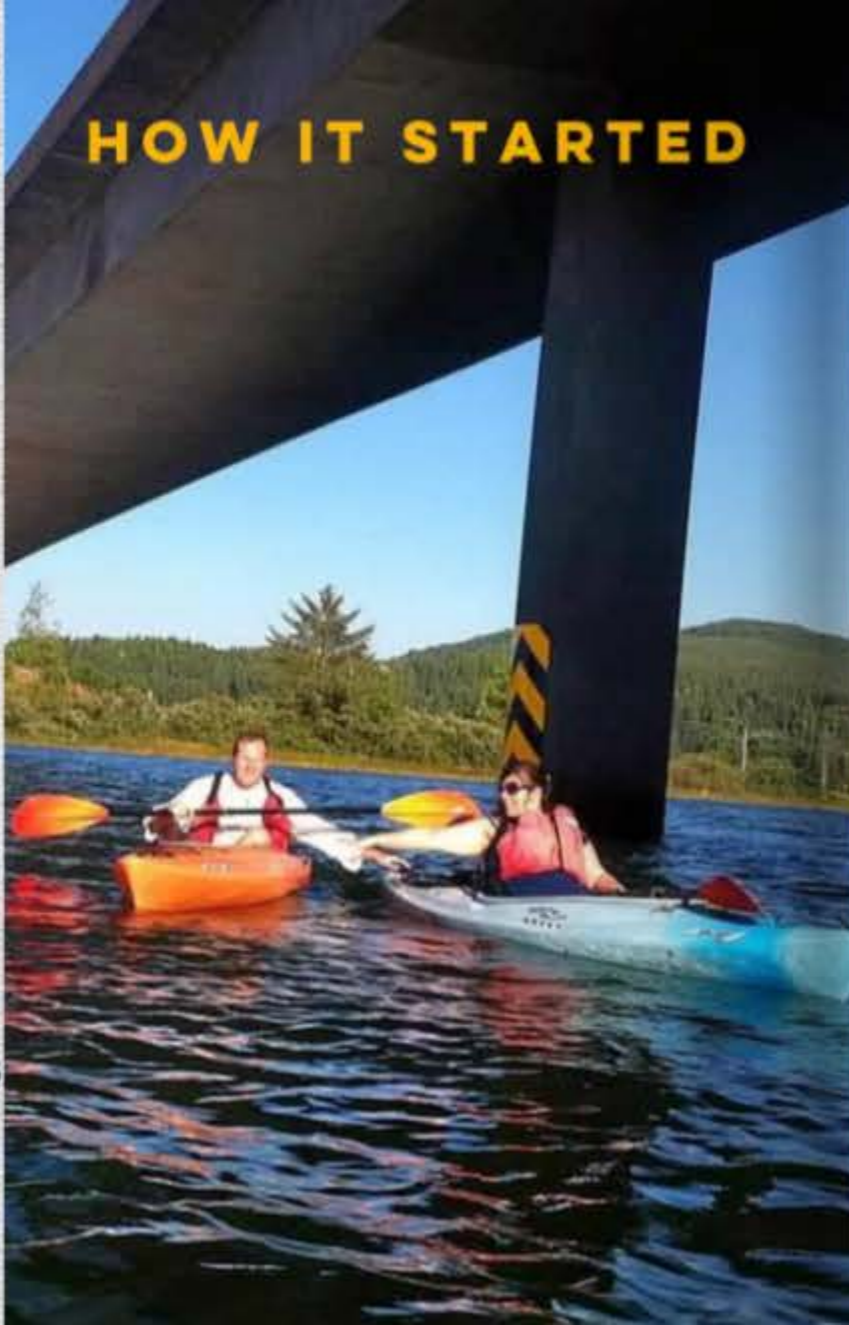
## LEAH, NATHAN, AND BELLE

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our family!



## HOW IT STARTED

We met on the internet before it was a normal way to meet. Leah was in Oklahoma and Nathan in Florida. We talked on the phone for hours every day for 4 months and found we had similar dreams for a life filled with family, music, art, faith, and adventure. We both felt as if we had known each other all our lives. After falling in love over the phone, Nathan moved to Oklahoma to be with Leah. Shortly after, Leah followed her career back to Florida and Nathan moved half way across the country again for her. Weeks later, joined by a small gathering of family and friends, we were married on the same beach where Nathan proposed. After two more moves, we settled in Oregon where we found a place that supported our need to be in the outdoors and connected to the arts and community. We have grown more in love with every passing year of our now 16 year long romance.





## HOW IT'S GOING

We have been living and adventuring in Oregon for 12 years. Five years ago, we moved to a quaint historic suburb. After struggling with infertility for many years, and making plans to adopt, we were surprised to discover Leah was pregnant with Belle. Leah stayed home with Belle and when the pandemic hit Nathan switched to remote work. We were grateful for our cozy home and lovely community as it was an ideal place to be quarantined. When Belle was two, she started asking for playdates everyday, so to fulfill her need for connection we found a preschool that she loves. With Belle in school, Leah started to paint again. Nathan and Leah work next door to each other in offices we rent from the church we attend in our neighborhood. Work is a short walk from home, so we eat lunch as a family every day after Mom picks Belle up from school. After lunch, Mom and Belle make crafts, do chores, go on playdates, and go foraging and hiking. When Dad gets home, we all hang out, cook dinner, and then start bedtime. On weekends, we explore the amazing nature Oregon has to offer, spend time with family and friends, go to church (most Sundays), and relax with family movies, story time, and naps.







**HI! I'M LEAH.**

Nice to meet you. I see myself as a gardener of life. All things we do in life are cumulative, they are tended to little by little with love and care and over time they grow. I see my art practice this way. I build my relationships this way. I approach motherhood this way. Life, for me is sweetest when I am learning and growing, and when I am loving and nurturing the gifts in my life.





## LEAH'S STORY

I was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. It was a diverse and beautiful place to be, but not without its challenges. My family life was tumultuous. My baby brother is seven years younger than me, so my sister and I helped raise him as we were mostly raised by a single mom. My freshman year of high school I found the stability that my family could not provide in church. At my high school I was not cool at all, but as a youth group leader at church I had a new identity. I got very involved and even did overseas missions.



I went to university at a conservative religious school to study art. It was there that I realized how unhealthy the religious culture was that I had been raised in. I began to find my own definitions of faith, love, and connection. I had a band in college that I was very serious about, but it didn't last after graduation. I spent years trying to find work I could do with an art degree and eventually became the manager of a Starbucks. This experience and the support of Nathan (whom I had recently married) revealed that I needed to find my creative path. For the past 15 years I have created art and built a regular studio practice and small art business. My two closest friends live in town and we have been friends since our teenage years. My marriage to Nathan and my sisterhood with my friends has made me the person I am today. I have an actual garden in our front yard and spend my energy building relationships with our family, friends, and neighbors.







## WHAT NATHAN SAYS ABOUT LEAH

She has a beautiful smile.  
She makes friends with everyone she meets.  
She pushes me out of my comfort zone to pursue new adventures.  
She has a lovely singing voice.  
She writes wonderful songs.  
She is a great mom.  
She has a passion for creating art and beautiful things in the world.  
She has a great love for her family and friends.

## LEAH'S FUN FACTS

She has a smart and quick sense of humor that helps her navigate life as a neurodivergent mom. She loves plant identification, is a self-proclaimed "bird nerd", and is building an apothecary from plants she has foraged and grown in the garden. She has traveled to Mexico, The Philippines, Venezuela, Kenya, and Scotland. She watches too much TV and has too many house plants....and is ok with that. She loves water, is a good swimmer, and wishes she had more time to kayak. She sings all the time and likes to make up silly songs about her day. She has written, recorded, and performed music in a band and as a solo artist. She made a documentary about street performers. In high school, she designed a flag for the state of California to commemorate children who suffered violent crimes. She is a community builder and outspoken about body positivity.







**HI! I'M NATHAN.**



I am a patient, peristent, and passionate person who loves to see others flourish and pursue what they love.

As a husband and a father I want to help create a space where everyone in the family can grow into who they want to be.

I love to share the things I love and participate with others in what they love.

I am a thinker, tinkerer, and problem solver.



## NATHAN'S STORY

I grew up in South Florida in a small beach town. We would go to the beach multiple times a week and we very much lived a Florida lifestyle with my dad cooking fish that he caught on a weekly basis. I started skateboarding as a kid and have held on to that passion to this day. I have also always loved music. I played sax in school, played in punk bands as a teenager, and have always loved underground music in many forms including indie, hip hop, hardcore, and metal. While much of my childhood was happy and healthy, we did experience some difficult times as my dad battled drug addiction. Thankfully, we made it through those times.

After high school I moved away to college. During this time, my mom got sick with cancer and passed away. This was very difficult for me and I ended up dropping out of school. After working in construction for a number of years, I went back and finished school to become a teacher. After working as a teacher for a few years, I made another change and eventually ended up learning computer programming which is what I do today.

I really love being a husband and father and truly enjoy spending family time together. Seeing the joy on our child's face as she experiences new things is magical.

In my limited spare time, I meet up with my friends to skateboard. It gives me life to maintain this passion I have had since childhood.







## WHAT LEAH SAYS ABOUT NATHAN

Nathan is highly intelligent and compassionate. He is loyal and honest to a fault. He is handsome, talented, and humble. I have never known anyone to hold onto their beliefs so passionately while also having an open and curious mind the way he does. I love it when he laughs so hard it is actually silent. He is an amazing father and partner and I love doing life with him even when it gets mundane. I can see the boy he was and the old man he will be. There is no other man I respect more than Nathan and I am grateful for him every day.

## NATHAN'S FUN FACTS

- He is punny (lots of good dad jokes) and loves to have deep conversations and debates.
- He has been a skater since age 11 and recently put together an older dude skate crew.
- He likes games, especially cards.
- He is a tinkerer and good handyman.
- He played in multiple punk, hardcore, and indie bands.
- He loves to camp, hike, fish, and forage.
- He likes to research things.
- He loves to find new music to listen to.
- He loves to make pizza.





## HI!!! I'M BELLE.

Belle is the most extroverted person I know. She makes friends wherever we go and is all about togetherness with friends and family. She is tenacious and brave. Her expressive face and deep feelings give her an endearing intensity and make her a good communicator. She is kind, funny, and smart. We watch her find ways to be generous and helpful daily. Her imagination and creativity are endless. She is good at most physical things she tries and likes to find new ways to challenge herself, whether it's climbing, scooting, or learning to skate with Dad. Like Mom and Dad, she is drawn to the water and loves to go for dips in lakes, rivers, and oceans. Her sweetness melts our hearts and her love of life is inspiring.





## OUR SWEET HENRY



We can't forget Henry!!! He is the best family dog we could ask for. He is calm, except for when people first come in the house, then he is all excitement and wiggles. He cuddles us on the couch when we chill and we can bring him on any outdoor adventure. He gets along with all dogs and is great with kids. When we take him to the park Mom helps kids that aren't familiar with dogs to learn safe dog rules with Henry. He is in touch with the emotional vibe of the family and is there with a hug if we're feeling down. Yes, he gives hugs! He is a love sponge that will take all the pets you can dish out.





## OUR HOME AND COMMUNITY

In fall, we open the curtains in the morning to watch the fog roll in from the river weaving its way through the evergreen covered hills on the other side. Our home is charming and cozy with warm blankets and good smells. It is filled with light from large windows, crafts, toys, music, plants, and cooking. In summer, we bike or drive to the river to swim and hike, we walk a block up to the city pool for a swim with neighbors, or walk to the library for books (we fill a giant bag) and a romp in the splash pad. We love to garden and hang out in the front yard. Belle climbs and swings from our pink dogwood tree she named Papa-Tata when she was one. Mom and Dad have porch time with drinks, conversation, and a wave to passersby. Mom and Belle like to cuddle in a blanket and watch the sunrise or listen to the rain on the porch. Our neighborhood is filled with young families, many of whom we are close friends with, and we have many playdates at nearby parks and holidays together in our homes. Our church community has a diverse array of beliefs and is filled with kind genuine people, many of which are older, so Belle has many adopted grandparents to love and dote on her. Leah's two best friends of 25 years live close by. We are each other's chosen family and our children call us Aunties and each other "cousin friends". We celebrate life together and help each other wherever there is need.



HARVEST TIME



COUSIN FRIENDS



UNCLE DAN



COZY FORT



COUCH CHILL



BABY FRIENDS



BEST FRIENDS



COOKING!



AUNTIE C



FIXING BIKES



AUNTIE ABBY



TRICK OR TREAT



BELLE'S 3RD BIRTHDAY



EGG HUNT IN THE PARK



# FAMILY

Grandpa and Vovo (Nathan's dad and stepmom) live in Florida. They are kind and loving grandparents who like to spoil their grandkids just a little. Aunt Melissa (Nathan's sister) lives in Georgia with her family. She is funny and practical, she never misses a birthday and the cards are always silly. Uncle Drew is super fun and full of laughter and music. Cousin Carl is adorable, smart and funny, and is 9 months to the day younger than Belle. We all meet up for Christmas in Florida at grandpa and Vovo's house when we can and stay in touch with zoom. Grandpa and Aunt Melissa flew out to meet Belle when she was born. Grandma (Leah's mom) lives in Nevada and likes to visit in the spring. In her 70's, she is still zesty and full of life. We do regular facetimes to connect. Uncle Alex (Leah's brother) and his family live close by. Uncle Alex is kind, gentle, and super smart. Auntie Brittany is thoughtful, loving, and organized. Cousin Icarus is 9. He is funny, intelligent and tenderhearted. Cousin Ayanna is 6. She is vibrant, wild, and sweet. We are lucky to get to spend most holidays and weekends with them.



UNCLE ALEX & MOM



AUNT BRITTANY FUN



COUSIN HIKE



COX'S & HUGON'S



AUNT MELISSA



VOVO & GRANDPA



PATTY RIVER TIME



MELISSA HIKE



GRANDMA FUN



## FAMILY TRADITIONS

### Cold Months:

- We make crafty Halloween & winter decorations.
- Visit a pumpkin patch with the Pattys (mom's brother's family).
- Trick or Treat in our neighborhood with friends.
- Thanksgiving mom cooks with Uncle Alex while Dad and Auntie Brittany hang with the kids.
- Trip to Mt. Hood to find a Christmas tree and play in the snow.
- Host a winter solstice party.
- Travel to see family or if we stay home Christmas morning pancake breakfast at church and have the Pattys over for dinner & gifts.

### Warm Months:

- Host Easter brunch and do an egg hunt in the park across the street with friends and family.
- Plant the summer garden with Mom.
- Stay at a mountain cabin for family time and last of the snow days.
- Camping trips, outdoor music, foraging.
- All day beach trips.
- Swimming in the river by our house and lakes on Mt Hood. Hiking to waterfalls near and far.
- Learning skate stuff with Dad.
- Celebrating Belle's birthday (and Henry's).



THANKSGIVING



WINTER WATERFALL



GARDEN IN SPRING



FIRST CONCERT



BLACKBERRY FORAGING



FIXING SKATEBOARDS



FAMILY PAWPATROL



CAMPING AT THE BEACH



## DREAMS FOR OUR CHILD

Our dreams for them are to live a fulfilling life overflowing with love and connection. From their first breaths there are inklings of who children are, and as we parents give them the tools they need to explore their world at every stage of development, they shine. We celebrate the individuals our kids are and parent to their specific needs. We want to guide our children through education and healthy boundaries and also give them the freedom to make mistakes and figure things out. We believe that you cannot love a child too much and you can also challenge them in ways that create self esteem and self actualization. We have woven a supporting community who will love our children their whole lives and be there for them in ways we may not be able to. Fun, exploration, self expression, and structure are all elements of the nurturing home we provide for our kids. We can't wait to meet our child and start the journey of discovering and loving who they are and how they will change and shape our family.



## OPEN ADOPTION ASPIRATIONS

We desire open adoption for our family for two reasons. First is the emotional wellbeing of our child and second the respect and efficacy of the birth family. We hope that our child's first family will want to be connected to our family and that everyone can feel they are in a safe and trusting relationship. We hope that our personal connection to the first family will be warm, free of judgement, and that we can have open and honest communication. The circle of who loves our child can't be too large and we hope that their first family will always know they are a part of that circle. We look forward to getting to know you just as we look forward to knowing our child.





THANK YOU!!!

We greatly appreciate the time you have taken to get to know us, and we hope for the chance to get to know our child's birth family as well!

