



Polly & Jacob





HELLO



We're Polly and Jacob!
Here is our story...



We both grew up in Olympia, WA. We became friends after high school, and started dating in 2014. The first year of our relationship was long distance—with Polly in California and Jacob in Hawaii. In 2015, Jacob moved to California, where we lived until moving to Tacoma, WA in 2021, where we live today.

Our relationship is built on a foundation of trust and respect, and includes daily laughter, shared morning coffee, and evening crossword puzzles.

Together, we like to have adventures, both big and small. We like to travel, take walks, play games and watch live sports and theater. We spend a lot of time with our family, which was one of the main reasons we moved back to Washington after several years away.



I'm Polly!

Here's a little bit about me:

- * I was my high school mascot (Go Bears!).
- * My family has our own (very dorky) language, primarily used to discuss matters of gifts and Santa Claus in front of the young children who haven't learned to translate it yet.
- * I studied abroad during college in Granada, Spain and majored in Spanish.
- * My extended family takes an annual trip to the beach where we have a "talent" show, mostly-friendly card game tournaments, and build sand castles.
- * I was a nanny for years, and still keep in touch with the families and children I cared for (one example top left).
- * I love dressing up for Halloween and making my own costumes- and usually Jacob's. (Example in bottom right.)
- * I love singing and grew up in choirs and performing in musicals and plays. As an adult, I joined a women's choir that sings at the bedside of the sick and dying.
- * I love animals (see opposite page) and was raised with dogs, cats, rabbits and chickens.

Polly's Story

I was born in Colorado, but grew up in Washington state. I grew up with my older brother, and half brother, and when my mom remarried when I was in high school, I inherited four new siblings and a stepdad I consider to be one of my parents today. I have a broad network of extended family that I spend a lot of time with. My family has grown through marriages, adoptions, births, and through Jacob's family becoming my own, through our relationship.

I am very close to my mom and grew up very close to my grandmother who passed away at 94. They both had significant influences on who I am today, instilling in me a deep appreciation for learning, curiosity, and caring for one another.



With my mom, during one of our family beach trips



With Gram on her 90th birthday



The 'next generation' of cousins at the beach



My siblings and step siblings in new shirts on Christmas morning



A past Halloween costume



Women's March in Oakland, CA



Jacob and I hiking with my stepdad and brother

In college at the University of Portland, I studied Politics and Spanish. My parents raised me to be passionate about the environment and taught me to speak up for what I believe in. My mom was a teacher and my dad was a chef. In our house growing up there was also a strong value placed on the arts and we were given a lot of space to develop our creativity.

For the last eight years, I have worked at a tech company, as a program manager. I help software developers execute engineering projects. I don't get to be very artistic at work, so I use my creative energy elsewhere, baking desserts for special occasions (some shown below), sewing quilts for new nieces and nephews, and making cards for friends. In my spare time, I love seeing live performances— whether professional standup comedy, a young cousin's choir concert or something in between, I love live theater.

As I have gotten older, and life and relationships have become both richer and more complicated, I have increasingly come to appreciate the importance of having an open mind and heart, and looking for the best in people and situations.





I'm Jacob

Some fun facts about me:

- * I have many party tricks (like folding a kitchen towel into a chicken, or catching a flying dollop of whipped cream midair).
- * I love to bake pumpkin pie, and am always looking for new recipes to try.
- * I love live music, especially punk bands from the 90s.
- * I enjoy woodworking projects, and have built a lot of the furniture that we use in our home.
- * I studied abroad in Limerick, Ireland in college.
- * I play rugby in the local adult league.
- * I like to play trivia.



Jacob's Story

I grew up in Olympia, Washington, and have spent most of my life in the Pacific Northwest. There was a small stint on Maui, and then a few years in California. Northwest or not, it was always apparently near the Pacific, except for one semester in college that I spent studying abroad in Limerick, Ireland.

I grew up with my mom, dad, and older brother. We would see extended family on special occasions, but no one else lived in Washington state. I grew up with, can you believe it, zero cousins. My dad, one of two, and my mom, one of four, were the only ones of their siblings to have children. Even though there was no other close family around, the neighborhood felt like family; so much so that we would keep toothbrushes at our friends' houses. The adults would often have one another over for dinners, and we all had keys to each other's houses.



Testing out our new tent in our Berkeley apartment living room



Holding my niece in her peak chubby cheek phase



Exploring the California coast

My brother and I are about 20 months apart, but only one grade apart in school. Aside from typical sibling in-fighting in our early adolescence, we were always good friends and have remained so as adults. Our neighborhood was also full of kids our age, some of whom I still keep in close contact with. We always had someone to play with and some place to go.

I like to be active and enjoy playing sports, though I don't always strive to maintain a high level of competition. I just like to have fun. I like being able to pick up a ball and play catch with someone, or even just throw it against a wall. I currently play rugby for the local Tacoma men's team. I also played in Olympia and Portland and found it to be an amazing place to develop new friendships and to find a new community. If someone wants to teach me a new sport, I'm always glad to learn.

I work as a carpenter, which allows me to remain active. I find a lot of joy in building and seeing the physical creation of something. I look forward to someday passing this appreciation for creating something to my child and one day hope they let me build them a treehouse.



A few years ago, my family started a yearly tradition of taking professional, mostly ridiculous, family photos. This is a sampling of the collection.

Our relationship

Something Jacob appreciates about Polly...

One of the things I love about Polly is her ability to always make you feel comfortable and welcome. Whether it was being introduced to her social circle when I first moved to the Bay Area, or to her incredibly large (by comparison) extended family, I have always felt accepted and at ease around her.

Something Polly appreciates about Jacob...

He is always a good sport, up for anything. On our 6th anniversary, I surprised him with an adventure day: a 16-mile urban hike across San Francisco. I was worried about the length, but never worried about how Jacob would react. As soon as I told him the plan, he was all in. Watching him approach life with this attitude has made me be more that way too.



Departing for a wedding in India



Jacob blowing out candles on his 30th birthday cake



Picking out our pumpkins for carving

How we spend time together



Jacob in our first glass-blowing lesson



Meal we made in Indian cooking class



Our favorite bull on our SF scavenger hunt

On an average day... Jacob usually leaves for work before Polly starts her work from home. After work, we eat dinner together. We take turns cooking meals, and enjoy trying out new recipes, and restaurants. In the evenings, we often watch a show together (we like comedies and game shows), or play cards. Jacob also often practices guitar or works out in the evenings, and Polly works on a project or reads. In the summer, when it stays lighter longer, we like to get out for a walk or have a drink or popsicle in the yard.

For a fun day out, we often plan exploratory walks in new neighborhoods, or take a class or tour. Some of our favorites have been: learning glass blowing, an Indian cooking class, and a self-designed scavenger hunt to find the Lunar New Year bulls all around San Francisco.

We are looking forward to finding new types of family time once we have a child: barbecues or game nights with their birth family, looking for crabs and shells on Puget Sound beaches, and lots more backyard popsicles.



Graveside celebration for what would have been Gram's 100th

Friends and family

Personal relationships are very important to us. We feel so fortunate to have integrated our separate families together as one. We hope our child's birth family will feel welcomed and celebrated the same way we felt when joining each other's family.

We both have dear friends who we have known since childhood, as well as newer close friends made through school and adulthood. Our friends are part of our broader family circle.



2021 pumpkin-carving with siblings



Our niece at her first baseball game



Meeting our friends' new baby for the first time

Travel



Camping trip in California



Visiting Polly's sister and brother-in-law who live in Cuba



Sight-seeing in India

We both enjoy travel, and see it as a wonderful way to experience new things, and better understand the world. We each chose to study abroad during college, and have been fortunate to take trips and experience new places together. Both of us are looking forward to sharing travel experiences with our child, both close to and far away from home.



Hosting Jacob's brother and sister-in-law on a visit



Polly with a friend in Thailand

Our home and neighborhood



2021-2022 was our first year in our home in Tacoma, and so each season brought something new. We are learning to garden, and in the summer had our first home-grown carrots and even a tiny watermelon! The winter brought our first time decorating the house for Christmas, and baking holiday cookies, as well as our first snow.

Our neighborhood has a lot of young families and a lot of old trees, and is within walking distance to great parks and restaurants. We chose this house knowing it could be where we start to grow our family, with a great room for a nursery and enough space for having company.



Traditions



Many of our family traditions revolve around holidays. For Halloween, we carve pumpkins and roast the seeds. For Easter, we dye eggs. Polly's mom has made special Christmas stockings for each person in the family. Most unique is Jacob's family tradition of painting a shamrock in their street each St. Patrick's Day. The neighbors come over to help, and it is followed by a shared meal. It is well known in the community, and a reference point for explaining to locals where he grew up.

This year, we started a new tradition of hosting both of our families for a day-after-Thanksgiving meal, since each family has a separate tradition on Thanksgiving Day. The traditions that have lasted are those that bring our families and neighborhoods together, usually over a shared meal. Both Jacob and Polly grew up in families that embraced the spirit of 'there's always room for one more!' We are looking forward to forming new traditions with our child and their birth family, that will be special and unique for all of us.



Dreams for our child

We have many dreams for our child. First and foremost is that they grow up with a strong sense of belonging, and know that they are loved and accepted and celebrated for who they are. We want to provide them an environment where they can make mistakes and try new things.

We will celebrate their joys and support them through their hardships.

We will expose them to new experiences and cultures through travel and adventure, and hope that they have large and diverse group of people to learn from and rely on. We hope that they will grow up with a strong sense of compassion, and a respect for the differences that make each of us unique.

We dream that our child will grow up to have a strong sense of self, a good sense of humor, and a kind heart. That they will be a good friend to others. And that they will be openly curious and find joy in exploring all that this world has to offer.

We are excited to teach our child new things, and also to be taught new things by them.



Open adoption aspirations

We know that open adoption can take many forms. We will foster an environment of openness, where our child knows that they can always express themselves with us, without fear. However ours ends up looking, we want our child to feel comfortable asking us hard questions, and feeling their emotions as they come.

We are hopeful that our child will be able have meaningful connections to their birth family, and see pieces of themselves reflected there. Both of us have experience with building families that transcend biology. We know that as adoptive parents we will be forever connected to our child's first family, and we hope that their birth family will always feel welcomed and included as family.

At age 12, Polly witnessed the international adoption of a cousin. It was a profound experience that led her to want to pursue parenting through adoption. When we talked about how to build our family, Jacob was excited about the prospect of growing our family through adoption. In addition to the joy that Polly's family experienced welcoming the new baby, and the thriving, loving environment she has grown up in, the nature of the international adoption meant that she has little access to information about her origins. This is what initially led us to choose the path of open adoption, so that, where possible, we can help provide our child with the puzzle pieces that help make them who they are. The more we have learned about open adoption, the more we see it as the right path for us and our future child.

We promise that regardless of what our specific adoption constellation looks like, it will be founded on deep respect and open-mindedness, and space for us all in our child's life.





Thank you for reading!