



MICHAEL AND STEPHANIE



SFLY051114-347



*Hello!*

Our names are Stephanie and Michael (and pictured with us is our dog Phoebe). Thank you for spending a few moments of your time getting to know us better.

*A Few Photos of Us...*





## *Our first date...*

Mike invited me to a Sounders game after meeting me at a mutual friend's birthday party. Of course, I was running late, and in my haste accidentally knocked the side-mirror off my passenger door when parking. Too embarrassed to admit it at that time, I acted completely shocked after Mike walked me back to the car at the end of the evening. It was years before I admitted this to him, and we still laugh about it today.

 Our first photo together



Many years and many date nights later, we've found so many things in common, and that keep us happily together. We love attending concerts, UW football games, soccer matches, traveling, trivia nights, hosting our friends for bonfires, eating pizza, and spending time at our family beach houses on the Washington coast and in the Okanagan region of British Columbia.



*In October 2015, We Got Married*

We also met in October (2011) and got engaged in October (2014).  
It's our favorite month!





A few things Steph loves about Mike

1. He makes me laugh and gets my deadpan sense of humor.
2. He is the best adventure buddy.
3. He is extremely calm, kind, and has a seemingly endless amount of patience (luckily for me, ahem, see first date story).
4. He makes me feel complete, balanced, and at ease.
5. His generosity of spirit is contagious. He goes out of his way to help those he loves without question. If you needed help moving in the pouring rain in January into a 9th floor walk-up, he would do it no hesitation.
6. He's curious - he's always reading and telling me interesting things, adding new places to our travel list, and learning how to fix something around our house.



A few things Mike loves about Steph

1. She is the most empathetic person on earth. She understands my highs and lows and knows how to make me feel better.
2. She helps me grow when I'm too comfortable in my own shell. She's the extrovert to my introvert.
3. She's the most fun person I know.
4. She brings passion and energy to our lives, whereas I'm very even keeled about things.
5. That we can trust each other completely as partners and advocate for each other.
6. That she knows exactly how to take care of and nurture both me and Phoebe.



## About Stephanie...

- I'm the middle child of three sisters.
- I love traveling, and I studied abroad in Rome in college.
- Currently, I'm studying for a Master's Degree in mental health counseling.
- I'm often caught quoting random bits from my favorite movies and shows (the Office, Gilmore Girls, and Jerry Maguire are a few go-tos).
- I start every day with coffee - it is mandatory.
- Reading, crafting, and being outside (especially near the ocean) bring me peace.
- I love Harry Potter (and was officially sorted into Gryffindor by the real sorting hat)!

Me in Bali - 2017



Phoebe joining me in class





Steph, her mom Laurie, her dad Mark, older sister Jamie, and little sis Kelsie



## Growing Up Steph...

Growing up I was a goofy, precocious kid. I have always loved singing, telling stories, and making people laugh. We were lucky enough to have a lake house where we spent the summers water skiing, fishing, play badminton, and picking berries. During the school year, I was very active playing soccer, taking piano lessons, and memorizing the words to every Disney song. My mom is one of 8 kids, so we always had lots of family around. I have struggled with anxiety my whole life, and several members of my extended family have suffered from mental health issues. I spent some time in therapy as an early teen (in addition to most of my adult life), which is part of why I am back in school in pursuit of becoming a therapist myself. My immediate family all live near us, so we luckily get to see a lot of them. We also love to travel together as often as we can.



This is my contact photo in Mike's phone...





## About Mike...

- I'm a dual citizen of the United States and Poland.
- I've visited 43 countries and 6 continents.
- I LOVE soccer; so much so that I attended the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and the 2012 European Championships in Poland and Ukraine.
- I rafted the Colorado river through the Grand Canyon. It was 205 miles over 8 days.
- I've worked for the same employer for over 14 years. I'm loyal that way.
- I have a 5 generation photo (see opposite page).
- Somehow, I equally likes rap, country, and oldies music.
- I'm a tall dude, 6'4".

5 generations in one photo! (Yep, that's me as a baby with my great-great grandma holding me)

Me, my dad Adam, and my brother Matty, on a rafting trip through the Grand Canyon.





## *Growing up Mike...*

As much as Stephanie was the goofy, precocious kid, I was the introverted, old soul. I was (and am) a shy kid, but I blossom as you get to know me.

My favorite part of the day was either watching cartoons with my dad, playing some kind of sport in the yard with my little brother, or the latest video game. Even as a little kid though, I loved to travel, and was always looking forward to the next trip.

My best friends from my childhood are pretty much still the same best friends that I have today, and I still chat with either my mom or dad most every day.

130 meters down into the Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland!



Me, my dad Adam, my mom Theresa, my little sis Katy, and Matty in Rome





## Home Sweet Home

Our neighborhood is filled with families, kids, and lots of dogs! Stephanie's best friend since age 10, also named Stephanie, lives 2 blocks away with her husband and baby. Mike's brother and sister-in-law are a 10 minute walk, and his parents are a 5 minute drive.

We love hanging in our backyard, throwing the ball for Phoebe, and going for walks - can usually spy views of either Mt. Rainier or the ocean!



## And Homes Away from Home...

When we're not home, you're likely to find us either on the Washington coast or visiting the Okanagan region in British Columbia. Mike's family has properties at both, so we vacation there as time allows. Both provide really different experiences from Seattle, and we find it both a good place to recharge and to spend time with family.

## Phoebe Doo



Our girl is a sweet, fluffy 5-year-old Labradoodle. She loves being chased, joining our work meetings, and lounging in the sun. She has lots of practice around kids already, and is ready to share the limelight.



## Traditions

Our longest running traditions are family-centered around the holidays. We have a 12 course meal for Christmas Eve (look it up! it's a Polish tradition called "wigilia"), and we have the best sticky buns on earth each Christmas morning. We're usually watching the fireworks from Long Beach, WA on the fourth of July, and unless you've been there - you've never seen anything like it.

We also have season tickets to the University of Washington Husky football games - and we usually get to at least one game by boat!

But our favorite traditions are the common, everyday ones: walking Phoebe after a long day of work, finding time to watch Netflix on the couch together, getting together with friends over a beer at a local brewery, and nights out to dinner at our favorite Italian restaurant.

On our way to a Husky game!



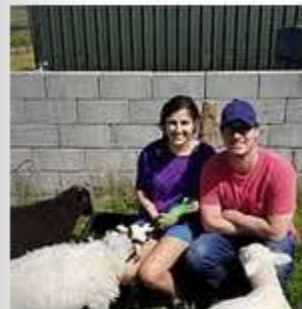
# On the Road Again...



We're both travelers. We were introduced to each other over it as a shared value, and have already literally circled the world together. From New Zealand to Bali to Rome to Buenos Aires.

We can't wait to share our love of new experiences with a child.

We stayed on a sheep farm in Dingle, Ireland



In Krakow, Poland



(Smiling nicely, but what you can't see here is that it was 100 degrees with 100% humidity!)

We do an annual trip to our family beach house with these best friends - Haley, Vince, & Isla.



### A Few of Our Friends...

We feel so lucky to be surrounded by such great friends. We love having dinner together, traveling, spending weekends at the beach house, wine tasting, making s'mores, touring Christmas lights, football games, and celebrating life's biggest moments together.

We trust these people with all of our being, and can't stress enough how positive of an influence they'll be on family life.



Steph's best friend from high school, Torie

Some of Mike's best buds  
Matty, Mike, Steve, Brian, Matt, Aubin



Steph's best friend since age 10, Steph



# Family...



We are family people. We are close with our parents and siblings, and they've been so supportive of our journey thus far. They are very open minded and welcoming people, and they're all ready to support us in this next chapter of our lives. They're as ready to welcome new family as we are, and are our biggest champions.

Brothers - Mike, Matty, & Dixon  
Cousins - Phoebs, Hammie, & Benson



All Steph's cousins on her mom's side

## *Hopes for Our Child...*

We don't have any preconceived plans for our child; no expectations or certain ideals we expect them to meet. We just want our kiddo to feel heard, loved, encouraged, and accepted for who they are no matter what.

We also want them to understand that although we may be their parents, we are not the only important people in their life that love them. They have another mother and father that created them and want the very best for them as well. We want to ensure our child feels supported as they work through all the feelings that may arise regarding their adoption. This support will likely look different as our child grows, but we will be very transparent, answer any questions we can, and make sure they know they can come to us with anything.



Kids seem to so easily remind you not to take life too seriously, that fun can be had anywhere at anytime, and the what matters in life is usually the little, everyday things. We have a lot of love to give, and are so excited to have the chance to bring a child into our lives to love, care for, teach, root for, and help mold to become the type of human that will bring kindness into the world.

## *Open Adoption Aspirations...*

As hopeful first time adoptive parents, we can't pretend that we are 100% sure of what to expect with this kind of relationship. But here's what we can promise: respect, honesty, and transparency.

We hope that our child's birth family comes as open-minded and curious about this process as we are, and that they're willing to navigate a relationship with us that will very likely transition and grow over time. We hope that we can be friends, and that we can make them feel like you're always welcome in the lives of our side of this new family when they want to be present.

We hope that they can feel free to be their authentic self with us, and that they can trust us to be the last people on earth to judge them.

We hope that they will trust us to always take the best care of this child, and always put them first.