



**BRIDGET, GRETA & JOE**

hello



We are grateful you're here and interested to learn about us. We hope this book might spark an opportunity to learn more about you and build our family through open adoption.

Our family values curiosity, nature, inclusivity, love and empathy. Through this book we hope to share more about how we live these values.

## Joe & Bridget: Our Story



Missoula, MT 2011



October 2018

We met as graduate students at the University of Montana in 2010. We didn't expect to fall in love, since Bridget was committed to moving to Ethiopia for a 2-year service with the US Peace Corps. Our connection endured, despite the distance, and by the time we were reunited in 2013 and living back in Montana we knew that our life journey would be spent together.

After graduation we moved to West Virginia when Joe got his dream job working as a cartographer. Living on the east coast helped us build a stronger foundation as a couple. We navigated new jobs, friends, interests and travels together. After three years, we started to formulate a plan to return west to be closer to family. Unexpectedly, we discovered that we were pregnant! With only 7 months notice, this surprising news motivated us to prioritize and realize the future we were hoping for. Bridget got a great job near her family and made the move back to Oregon while Joe resolved how to move us 3,000 miles back home and negotiate working remotely. Miraculously, 6-weeks before our due date Joe arrived in Oregon and we took time to settle in together.

Our daughter Greta was born in June 2018 and she has been our best adventure yet! She is a very independent and confident child and we learn so much from her each day.



Tigray, Ethiopia 2013



Ithaca, NY 2013



San Blas Islands, Panama 2014



Redmond, OR April 2018



Our engagement 2017



Teotihuacan, Mexico 2017



## Our Wedding



We got married the summer of 2019 in the company of our family and friends under the canopy of an old growth forest in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Alongside our most beloved people we celebrated by eating delicious Indian food, dancing to live music against the backdrop of a beautiful Douglas-fir trees and maidenhair ferns. Our commitment that day remains steadfast: that we will always value and cherish each other as individuals through whatever life brings our way.



## Meet Bridget

I grew up in southern Idaho with my older brother and a menagerie of pets. My parents divorced when I was three, so I learned at a young age how to adapt to change and cultivate my own community and family. Through connections with neighbors, friends and with teachers at school I built a network of love and support that helped me pursue my interests and be successful in my own way. As an adult I have maintained close relationships with many people from my childhood, and also my biological family who now all live in Oregon 30-minutes from me.

As a kid I loved listening to music and going to concerts, playing soccer, writing in my journal, and being with animals. Only in my adulthood did I develop a passion for outdoor recreation and traveling. My favorite childhood memories are trips to the Oregon coast, playing with my pets and spending time with my grandparents and cousins.



My grandma meeting Greco for the first time



Bridget and her mom



Bridget with Joe's family



Bridget with mom's family



Bridget and her dad



### Fun Facts about Bridget

I learned to speak Spanish, English and Ethiopian languages: Amharic and Oromiifa

As a kid I had a pet potbelly pig named "Wiggy"

Food is my love language and I love hosting friends and family.

I love new adventures and obscure hobbies like paragliding, scuba diving and skjoring with my dogs

## Meet Joe

I grew up in Minnesota with a thick mid-midwestern accent and a fear of spicy foods. I moved to Montana in my early 20s to become a ski bum, and enjoyed several years of working at ski resorts and skiing and hiking around the Rocky Mountains. Seasonal jobs measuring trees and working as a fire lookout eventually led me to pursuing a degree in Geography, and later becoming a cartographer (map maker). I love spending time on snow, in the forests, and recreating favorite recipes by adding new spices. I've since lost my accent and trained my taste buds to tolerate some of the wildest cuisine but still yearn for a walleye fish fry from my parents kitchen back home.



### Fun Facts about Joe

I've skied every month of the year and had a stretch of 20 months in a row.

I have a large vinyl music collection and love seeing live music.

I worked a summer in a fire lookout and spotted dozens of wildfires.

I've visited four continents and hope to journey to the remaining three someday.

Country westerns are my favorite movie genre.



# Meet Greta



At 4 years old Greta has developed a reputation for being fearless about her love of animals, passion for discovering new playgrounds, and is a pasta connoisseur. She is very adaptable, a great traveler and has great confidence knowing what she wants.

Greta goes to a preschool with 9 other students and 2 teachers. Each week they take several field trips to parks, gardens, the library and other places around town. She has many friends her age but also enjoys time by herself playing games, reading, dressing up and coloring.

Greta is very excited to become a big sister and is often demonstrating how gentle and helpful she will be by using her baby dolls and role playing. She has shared that she is excited to have a sibling to play with, paint with, push on the swing, snuggle with and have a sleep over with every night.



## Fun Facts about Greta

Greta learned to ski at 2.5 years old.

Greta loves camping and stargazing.

Unicorns, Pegasus, horses, donkeys and kittens are her favorite animals.

Her favorite food is sauerkraut



## Ayuba & Sula



We have 2 dogs: Ayuba and Sula. Ayuba is an older border collie/shepherd mix who likes to fetch, eat and go for walks off leash. Sula is a young mixed breed dog who loves to run, play with other dogs and follow her nose. Our dogs love children and are especially gentle and patient with Greta. Their favorite activities are trips to the beach, playing fetch and watching Greta spill food.

## Family & Friends



Many of our family members live within a 40-minute drive including Bridget's mom, dad, stepmom, and brother. We see them several times a month and they also help watch Greta on occasion. Most of Joe's family lives in Minnesota and we visit them at least 1-2 times a year. Joe's parents visit several times a year to be with their granddaughter. We also have cousins that we visit in Washington, California and North Carolina that we visit with on occasion. Many of our cousins have young children and it is so fun to see all the cousins together.

Friends and family are important to us and give us a great sense of security and connection. Many of our friends we consider family. We value their individuality and what we learn from their unique lived experiences.



Visiting family in Minnesota



Minnesota cousins hanging out



Dinner with our friends from Ethiopia



Bike trailer rides with friends



Auntie Julie and Greta



## Our Community

We live in small town that is a short distance from our neighborhood and only a 30-minute drive to a few larger bustling metropolitan towns. We love our community because it is snuggled into the mountains and gives us great access to go hiking biking and camping. We live 20 minutes from the local ski hill and spend a lot of time there during the winter.

In addition to being active, our town is also very community and art-centered. We love going to see live music, art shows and other events in town. We chose to live here because the schools are amazing with lots of great educational opportunities, outdoor parks, and programs for the students to explore new interests. We are well integrated into our community with a strong network of friends and through our participation in different community events such as holiday parades, exercise groups, library events, community supported agriculture and parks and recreation.



Photos from top to bottom: Greta at the museum with her grandparents, walking in the woods next to our neighborhood playing at the park with friends, enjoying the town splash pad.

## Our Home

We live in a quiet neighborhood tucked into the pine trees. Our neighborhood has a swimming pool, playground and is adjacent to the national forest where we go on walks and bike rides in the trees several days a week. We know many of our neighbors including several families whose children Greta is friends with. We live just over 1-mile to the elementary school and look forward to riding bikes to drop off and pick up Greta from school. We love where we live and have built a home that is welcoming to our friends and family. It is important us that our family and home is a place where others feel valued, loved and safe.



Photos from top to bottom: Greta, Nana and Sula cuddling in the living room, Greta's bedroom, Greta's own ski hill Joe builds each winter, swimming at the neighborhood pool.

## Family Weekends



Photos in clockwise order: Camping trips to the lake with friends, visits to the beach sleepovers with friends, backpacking, camping with the dogs, beach lounging with Ayuba.

## Family Traditions



Photos in clockwise order: Christmas tree cutting, boat rides on Minnesota lakes, spring mushroom hunting, annual National Park visits and family ski trips.



We strive to raise our children to have confidence to pursue their curiosity, joy and always be authentic to themselves. Together as a family we encourage new experiences as a means to learn more about ourselves and enhance our relationships. As parents we hope to not only teach our children, but offer humility in what we might learn from them and together as a family. We want our children to know unconditional love and to value themselves as a global citizen.



## Our Adoption Aspirations

We value Open Adoption because we believe honesty, transparency and authenticity are essential to developing a strong sense of self and building a family foundation. We are committed to raising children who feel valued and secure in their love for themselves and from those who surround them. We hope for an open adoption that includes frequent contact with our child's first family. Our family is strengthened by the network of friends and family that enrich our lives in big and small ways, and we see open adoption as part of this journey.

