



Elsa & Linden

Hello! We are Elsa & Linden.



We live in Seattle, and enjoy exploring the wonders of the Pacific Northwest together.



We love spending time outdoors on bikes and skis,



and we share a birthday on April 18!

Thanks for visiting to learn a little more about us!



## Our Relationship Story



We met at Dartmouth College in 2004. Linden was friends with Elsa's older brother, and soon his friends became her friends. We first bonded when we realized we had the same birthday! We hosted a shared birthday party that year and some sparks flew, but in the spring Linden graduated and moved to Seattle while Elsa finished out her three more years of college in New Hampshire.



Three years later, Elsa headed west to Seattle and we reconnected in the mountains. Over time, we became each other's #1 trip partner, and together explored the west by foot, bike and ski, until one fateful day in Olympic National Park when Linden proposed!



We were married on a windswept hillside in Vermont in 2014 surrounded by all of our family and friends. Our wedding went down in history for the wildest dance party, and it's a day we will never forget.



Since that day, we've walked hand in hand through life together, supporting each other through cancer, infertility, and career changes, and continuing to celebrate our partnership with trips to the mountains, travels across the world, projects around the house, and evenings snuggled up on the couch.





Linden brings thoughtfulness, patience, and compassion to our relationship. He always puts others first, and is generous with his time, his attention, and his heart. He's the first to jump out of the tent to make coffee in the morning, is an incredible breakfast cook, and keeps our bikes and our house well maintained. He leaves little love notes for Elsa around the house, and is always scheming up new adventures around town and in the mountains for us to do together.



Elsa brings energy, determination, and a nurturing heart to our relationship. She loves fully, and fiercely protects and cares for those in her circle of friends and family. She expresses her love through cooking culinary feasts, tending to the house and garden, and dreaming up new ways to celebrate our love by planning mystery date nights and writing long heartfelt letters for all of our relationship anniversaries.



Together we form a balance of spunk and calm, heart and head. We love and support each other unconditionally. It works.







## All About Elsa

I'm a 4th and 5th grade teacher in a public elementary school in our neighborhood and I LOVE my job. Kids are so much fun. Every day, I get to engage in the meaningful work of helping students explore their passions and curiosities and guiding them toward accomplishing big goals -- all while fostering compassionate relationships with them and their families.

In my free time, I love biking, hiking, trail running, and skiing. At home, I enjoy cooking, reading, gardening, cleaning (yes really!), and spending time with family and friends.



## Fun Facts About Elsa

I love baking pies! So much so that I baked pies for all of my students on Pi Day (3.14) and willingly got pie-ed in the face by a student who memorized 50 digits of Pi!

I was a competitive cross country ski racer, and in college I helped my team win the NCAA national championship! After winning, we went to the White House to meet the president!

I LOVE ice cream and eat it (almost) daily. My favorite flavor is anything with chocolate.

I can play the bagpipes, albeit poorly.





## Elsa's Childhood and Family



I was raised in a tight-knit family in rural Vermont. Our parents instilled the values of independence, hard work, and community in us from a young age. Together as a family, we tended big vegetable gardens, read books in front of the woodstove, and gathered with friends and family for summer barbeques and winter bonfires.



Although we are now spread out across the country, this connection to family is still very strong and we get together several times a year and have weekly phone and zoom calls. My sister recently had a baby, and this new addition to our family has brought us all so much joy.

## Elsa's Values and Passions



### Work Hard

My competitive ski racing in my early years taught me the importance of hard work and determination, which I now apply to my career, my hobbies, and my relationships.



### Care for Others

I recharge with time spent baking cookies with my niece and nephew, writing letters to elderly relatives, or advocating for my students and their families. I believe that together we are better.



### Protect the Planet

Nature inspires me, energizes me, and challenges me, and I want to be able to share its wonders with a future generation. One of my many environmental missions is to find and dispose of mylar balloons that go floating away and end up polluting our wilderness areas.



### Empower Youth

Our children are our future. I want to inspire them to be compassionate leaders and support them as they chase their dreams and accomplish big things.





## All About Linden

I am a product design engineer and enjoy using my skillset to improve the lives of people around the world and close to home. Much of my career has been dedicated to developing new global sanitation and water treatment technologies.

My happy place is outside, whether that's a remote alpine lake or burritos on the beach. I also enjoy time at home tinkering in the garage or satisfying my seemingly endless curiosity by reading obscure Wikipedia pages.



## Fun Facts About Linden

1. I volunteer weekly at a tutoring center for students from local subsidized housing.
2. I used to be a sponsored mountain bike racer, but now I like going slower around town or on the local trails.
3. I've been skiing every month except August and September.
4. I play the banjo, but my only performances are for our annual birthday duet.
5. Although I no longer live in Wisconsin, I still love cheese!





## Linden's Childhood and Family

In many ways, I had an ideal childhood and hope to repeat the same selfless and supportive way my parents raised me. Growing up in Wisconsin, my parents made sure I had opportunities to explore and allowed me to pursue my own interests. I have fond memories of hiking in national parks and fishing in Wisconsin lakes.

My older brother lives nearby and now has a family with two kids of his own. Being an uncle has allowed me to tap into my inner child that remains strong within me.



## Linden's Values and Passions



Self-improvement: I continually push myself to do better and explore what's possible.



Helping out: It makes my day to make others' day.



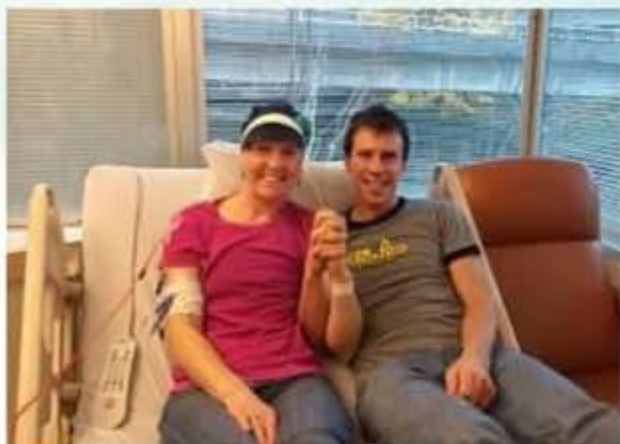
Being kind: I try to treat the people and living things around me with compassion and respect.



Having fun: I try to not take myself too seriously and enjoy the small moments.



## Learning and Growing through Hardships



Just three weeks after getting home from our wedding, Elsa went to her annual doctor's visit and a few days later had received a diagnosis of breast cancer. We were completely overwhelmed contemplating the journey ahead. But our connections near and far immediately jumped into action. Elsa's folks flew out to Seattle to help us wade through the countless appointments, and messages from friends and families poured in as fast as the flowers and meals appeared on our porch. After moving past the initial shock of diagnosis, we adopted the motto of serenity and strength and together we worked through months of surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments. Through it all, we felt the strength of our community. Our closest friends and relatives sat with us through long chemo infusions. Our niece and nephew brought silliness and smiles, friends shared both compassion and good cheer, and eventually we resurfaced as a stronger couple, with more conviction about the importance of life, love, happiness, and the power of community.



## Our Inspirations: People Who Have Shaped Our Lives



Welcome others: Our 'West Coast mom' is always so welcoming and whips together a feast if we're visiting or even if we're just passing through.



Be tenacious: Within one of the nicest people, you'll meet a fighting spirit. Linden's aunt has overcome many life challenges to remain at the forefront of her field in molecular biology.



Stay positive: Faced with a life-altering medical diagnosis, our college friend smiles and laughs through every experience.



Speak up: Elsa's aunt is a head-strong and outspoken woman who has been an advocate for immigrants and people with disabilities.



Live it up: Even if it's raining in the mountains, our 'West Coast dad' is having the most fun of anyone around.



Do your best: Elsa's dad thinks through every detail of a project to make sure it comes out right.



## Our Home & Neighborhood



We love our home! We live in a beautifully restored 1917 Craftsman house in a quiet neighborhood of Seattle. Our home is cozy and comfortable with enough room for visitors and kids. Our backyard is filled with flowers, vegetable gardens, a fire pit and patio, and some open play space. Our yard and garage back up against an alley that is the community gathering space for our neighborhood. Kids zip past on bikes, neighbors linger to converse about gardening techniques or local events, and we meet up for an annual summer Alley Cue barbeque to connect with our neighbors and meet and welcome new ones. Our home has been an oasis for us through the pandemic, and now that the world is opening back up, we have loved hosting friends, neighbors, and family and sharing our special part of the world with those dearest to us.



Our neighborhood is just up the hill from the Puget Sound, so we are very connected to the water in our day-to-day lives. Linden built a bike trailer for our paddle boards so that we can zip down the hill, launch them from the local beach, and enjoy a sunset on the water together. Our community is also very outdoors focused, and we enjoy gathering with neighbors for the annual New Year's Day polar plunge, browsing the produce at the farmer's market, and running into Elsa's current and former students and their families on the trails of our local park.





## Traditions and Celebrations



We share a birthday on April 18! Every year, we host a joint birthday party on the beach for our friends and use dried-out Christmas trees as our birthday candles. We then serenade them (and everyone within earshot!) with our banjo-bagpipe duet!



We host an annual 'Pie Off' baking competition for all of our friends. Being crowned the 'Best in Show' is a coveted title that earns you an embossed pie spatula and bragging rights!



We spend every Thanksgiving, and many other holidays and weekends, with our West Coast 'family' who are the parents of one of Linden's college buddies who we love dearly.



Second only to our birthday, Christmas is a favorite holiday. Every year we plan a ski trip into the mountains to find the perfect tree. After chopping it down, Linden skis it out, and Elsa's homemade skier angel is placed on top.



Snow in Seattle only comes a couple of times a winter so it's a much anticipated event! After the flakes fall, we take to the streets, parks, and sidewalks on old scratched-up skis to celebrate the wonders of winter in the city!



## Dreams for our Child

We have brought heart and intention into helping raise our nieces and nephew (pictured below) and we want to instill these same values as parents.



Be compassionate.



Love and respect the natural world.



Be brave and do hard things.



Be a lifelong learner.



Be curious and stay connected.



Have fun!

## Aspirations for Open Adoption

We believe in open adoption because of the value we place on family. We hope to develop a trusting partnership with our child's birth family, and together support our child with love, encouragement, and care.

We want to ensure that our child's birth family feels respected, valued, and included. We hope that they feel welcome in our home, and that they develop a strong relationship with both our family and most importantly with their child, and that they feel the impact they have made in their child's growth into a successful, compassionate, and thoughtful person.

Our goal is that our child feels unconditionally loved, and that they feel the openness in their adoption extends to all realms: the ability to ask any questions about their adoption and have those stories readily shared and valued, the encouragement to develop a strong and trusting relationship with their birth family, and the acceptance that allows them to process their feelings about their adoption as they form their own identity. We look forward to building a family together with our child's birth family.

