



Stephanie  
&  
Mike



Start a capture



**Hi there!**

**We're Stephanie & Mike.**

**Thank you for taking the time  
to learn a little about us.**

**We're excited to grow our  
family through open adoption.**

# Our Story

In early 2017, we were introduced to each other online by a mutual friend while playing a game of Overwatch. We became quick friends and gaming partners and bonded over our mutual love of the Bioshock series and Renaissance Faires.



\*Visiting the Mo-Pop Museum during Mike's first trip to Seattle.

By summer 2017, friendship had turned to flirting and daily long-distance video calls. Finally, Mike took a chance and flew out from Minnesota to Washington to see if we'd get along as well in person.



From the moment we met at the airport, we hit it off instantly. Due to the distance between us, we could only fly out and visit one another every 3-5 months. After two years of sad goodbyes and airport trips, Mike sold his home in Minnesota and moved in with Stephanie in Washington.

One year later, on our three-year anniversary, Stephanie proposed.

November 7th, 2021



We got married four years to the day of our very first meeting in Sea-Tac airport in 2017. Our parents and a small group of friends joined us in celebrating.

## Meet: Stephanie



Occupation  
Child Play Therapist

### Hobbies/Interests

- Crochet & Craft Arts
- Video Games
- Queer Culture
- Cats!



### Fun Facts

- I studied Japanese for 5 years.
- I grew up near the beach in Southern California.
- I've loved art in all forms since childhood.
- I have 9 tattoos.
- I've cared for many types of pets - cats, dogs, fish, cows, horses, donkeys, and hamsters.
- My favorite video game is Bioshock.
- My favorite food is pizza.

\*Wearing a beanie crochet project (2021)



\*Petting a deer in Nara, Japan (2012)





\*I was a very 'serious' baby.

My life's story so far is a tricky one to try and summarize, but I suppose my early years could be best described by the phrase: difficult circumstances make for the most interesting people. As a child of divorce with one parent newly sober, childhood was a tricky experience for me.

Despite the challenges, I excelled early on in academics and quickly developed a love for language, art, and history. I recall being one of the only children getting in trouble for reading too much during class, rather than not enough. As my creativity grew, so did a strange list of medical challenges that doctors couldn't seem to place. From severe fatigue to joint dislocations, I struggled to enjoy the day-to-day joys of childhood.



\*My first Renaissance Faire (17 years old, 2009)

Through friends, I eventually discovered a passion for fantasy and all things nerdy. My love for Japanese animation and comics turned into a love for the language, which led me to apply to a college that allowed me to study abroad in Hachioji, Japan. My six-month stay there was incredible and gave me a true appreciation for life outside of the little bubble I had grown up in.

It was also in college that I was finally able to live out and proud as a pansexual person (meaning, attracted to all genders). While I experienced some pushback from family, I'm happy to say that today I am surrounded by a strong and loving support network. My mom continues to be my biggest cheerleader, no matter how old I get.

All through high school and college, my health and chronic pain continued to worsen without any answers. Shortly after graduating college, I left California for the Emerald State of Washington. I worked as a barista for a few years and finally got set up with a decent medical care team.

I was diagnosed with hypermobile Ehler's Danlos Syndrome in 2016. While I have made significant improvements in my health through specialist care and physical therapy, I have been counseled strongly by my doctors to not have biological children. Thus, my interest in adoption started!

I had the opportunity to study adoption systems at length while pursuing my Master's in Social Work in 2017-2018. After working as a crisis family therapist for a year post-grad, I transitioned to outpatient therapy and landed in my current group practice. Today, I specialize in working with children with attachment disruptions, Autism & ADHD, and adoption histories. I can't think of a single job I'd rather be doing.

In my free time, you can find me crocheting, absorbing as much nerdy media as I can, playing video games, spoiling my god-daughter, and hanging out with my cats.



\*Performing with my college's Okinawan dance club (22 years old, 2014)



\*Celebrating my birthday at a local drag show with close friends (and my future husband!). (27 years old, 2019)



In 2019, I got to be my best friend's maid of honor. Three years later, Mike and I celebrated her daughter's first birthday as her god-parents!



Some recent art projects:



## What Mike loves about Stephanie:



"From the moment I first met Stephanie, I could tell what an amazingly large heart she has. She's one of the most caring, kind and compassionate people I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. In her day to day, the way Stephanie interacts with friends, family, and the world at large is genuine, and from a place of love. She has the ability to look past the bruised and broken spots and embrace the beauty in all things. She's a fountain that continues to fill the cups of those around her with optimism, positivity, and her infectious smile."

"I'm grateful every day to be paired with such a supportive and loving partner."

# Meet: Mike



## Occupation

Retired/Homemaker

## Hobbies/Interests

- Woodworking
- Video Games
- Art in All Forms

## Fun Facts

- I attended Burning Man eleven different times between 2000-2012.
- As a child, my family ran an in-home ferret rescue.
- I was a semi-professional fire performer and instructor for about fifteen years.
- In high school, I placed 4th at the International Science and Engineering Fair for chemistry - twice.
- At 17, I received a personal commendation from the President of the United States for my work in environmental science.



\*My father and I at the wedding.



\*Teaching my niece how to safely use a power sander.



\*Exploring the forests in Issaquah.



Some recent art projects:





I would describe myself first as a jack of all trades, master of none. I grew up in the lower east side of St. Paul, Minnesota as the youngest in a family of five with limited resources. In learning how to make do with what we had, I developed a love and affinity for self-taught learning. I learned from a young age that you never know if you can do something unless you try.

As a result, I tried everything! From science competitions to outdoorsmanship to swing dance, I wanted to learn a lot about a little and a little about a lot. Alas, by the time I graduated college with a business degree, I felt burnt out on academia and turned my interests outside of the sciences.

I recall hearing about the Burning Man festival for the first time in '96, after a lifetime interest in art that I hadn't really pursued. When I was old enough, I attended my first burn in the year 2000. To say it changed my life is an understatement. The freeform exchange of ideas and total sense of community was something I hadn't experienced before. It was something I felt I had been missing in my life.



I spent the next 10-15 years forging amazing friendships and learning how to develop a chosen family. Burning Man was also my first exposure to fire performing, which quickly became a huge passion in my life. This hobby led me to instructing others in fire spinning and having the opportunity to volunteer as medical/EMT personnel for several different retreats around the country.

Life has changed considerably for me since my days spinning fire for music videos and traveling cross-country. These days, I find joy in pursuing other forms of art and spoiling my cats as often as possible. While I still keep in contact with many of the amazing friends and community members from my more adventurous years, I prefer a quieter and slower pace as I enjoy retirement.

As Stephanie and I look forward to adopting a child, I find myself most excited for the opportunity to pass on all of the experience and knowledge I've spent my life accumulating. I hope to foster a love for learning and teach my children the skills to seek out their own passions and identities.



\*Fire fleshing at a photoshoot with my performance troupe.



\*Volunteering as a medic during a fire performing retreat.



## What Stephanie loves about Mike:



"Anyone would be hard-pressed to find a more open, honest, and genuine person than Mike. From the moment you meet him, you are getting 100% authenticity.

I have also yet to find anyone with a bigger heart and drive to care for his family and community. When we first started dating, every friend of his I met had at least one story of how Mike managed to save their day and keep things from falling apart. From emergency electrical work for a friend to hand painting every tiny prop for his niece's birthday parties, he truly puts his all into showing up for his loved ones.

He is incredibly intelligent, a clear communicator, and a treasure to get to spend my day-to-day life with. I can't wait to see him be a father and get to pour all of that love, attention, and care into a child."

## Meet: the Fur Babies!



Panther

- Age: 4 years
- Adopted: October 2018
- The snuggliest cat you'll ever meet.
- Nicknamed "best boy".
- Loves string and treats.



Gus

- Age: 2 years
- Adopted: Sept. 2020
- Timid, gentle, and loving.
- Nicknamed "floofy boot".
- Loves belly rubs.



Violet

- Age: 2 years
- Adopted: Sept. 2020
- Has many opinions.
- Nicknamed "scream girl".
- Loves talking with her humans.

# Our Home & Neighborhood



We currently rent a split-story three-bedroom home in Snohomish County. The neighborhood is quiet and has plenty of parks, shops, and early education programs nearby. We hope to move closer to Stephanie's work within the next year or two to reduce her commute and have more time at home.

Sometime in the future, we hope to move to Mike's home state of Minnesota, where we have a large group of friends and family waiting to reconnect with us. We're not quite done with Washington yet, though, and expect to be here for at least a few more years. We plan to stay connected to Washington and our friends (and goddaughter!) and hope to visit often.



As is typical of cat owners, we have lots of cat-themed art around the house.



\* One of our art-themed date nights!



Every holiday season, Stephanie sets a personal goal to one-up her holiday decorating from the previous year.



\* Flowers in our backyard

# Our Favorite Traditions



Whenever possible, we try to travel and see our families in California and Minnesota, especially during the winter holidays.

Stephanie's mom is particularly a fan of going all-out on decorations and corny family traditions for Christmas. Both Susan and her husband, Geoff, are so excited to celebrate with grandkids someday soon.



\*Celebrating Stephanie's 30th birthday in a high-tech yurt near Mt. Rainier.



\*Mike is forever committed to taking the most awkward photos he can. Think it's too embarrassing? Not for him!

We're also fans of finding the best local spots to eat. Stephanie is a big lover of Japanese food and dim sum, whereas Mike prefers fresh game meat and BBQ. If the restaurant has a nerdy theme to it, even better!



\*We make an effort to attend our local Renaissance Faire every year!



\*Meeting our god-daughter for the first time. We try to spend as much time with our close friends as we're able.

## Aspirations for our Children



Both of us are firm believers that one should never stop learning. We hope to pass on to our children a love and passion for knowledge, asking questions, and exploring the world around them. We cherish the opportunity to foster excitement for life and the freedom to explore their own identity.

We will strive to provide a home environment that is calm, consistent, and supportive of a child, whatever their unique needs might be. It is critical to both of us that any child we are fortunate enough to care for is surrounded by warmth, unconditional love, and acceptance. We look forward to providing the kind of home that will allow a child to grow and blossom into their most authentic self.

## Aspirations for Open Adoption



When we first began discussing adoption, we knew right away that we had to put in every effort to center the care and needs of the child above all else. For us, that meant pursuing open adoption. When we adopt a child, we understand that we are adopting all of them -- that means their first family, too.

We hope to honor any child we are fortunate enough to care for by involving their first family as much as we're able. We understand that it will always be in a child's best interest to maintain connections to who they are and where they're from. As hopeful adoptive parents, we treasure the opportunity to support those connections.

