

Hello brave mother-to-be,

One of our favorite sayings is, "No mud, no lotus flower," which means that the messy, muddy parts of life go hand in hand with the beautiful parts.

We are reminded of that saying as we think about you working through tough choices for the sake of your child, in the midst of what is likely a challenging time. We don't know you (yet!), but we are in awe of your courage and your love. Whatever choice you make, we wish you the very best. And, if you believe that our family may be the right fit for the future you envision for your child, we can't wait to meet you, to give you a hug, and, just maybe, come together to grow something beautiful.



About us. We met in 2012 and knew very soon that we had found our life partners. A little more than a year later, we got married in a barn, accompanied by amazing bluegrass music and our closest friends and family. A few years later, Clare gave birth to our daughter, Ella, who is now five, and is curious, kind, and, frankly, hilarious! Clare is a stay-at-home parent (and currently a homeschooling mom) to Ella and also works from home part-time, figuring out how to strengthen programs for children and families. Ace is a former teacher who also works from home as a consultant, working to improve schools. We live in West Virginia, where we moved to raise our daughter near family; Clare's parents live in town, and Ace's parents live nearby.

Why adoption. We want to adopt because our family has lots of love to give, and we know that adoption, while not always easy, can be a beautiful way to build a family. Clare's sister, Maura, was adopted, and she is the world's best aunt! We are lucky to be family with Maura, and we want to welcome a new person into our family through the same way Maura joined ours..

Our lives. Our house is overflowing with children's books, art supplies, musical instruments, and board games! Every night, we eat dinner as a family and share "roses and thorns" (ups and downs from the day). We make lots of puns, come up with silly dances, and have tea parties with Ella's stuffed animals. You'll often find us outside, whether playing tag at the playground down the street from our house, or exploring a new hike. We prioritize family, community, and service to others, and we do our best to pass these values on to our daughter. Oh, and we try not to take ourselves too seriously! :)

Thank you for considering our family. We would be thrilled to establish an open relationship with you, in whatever form you are most comfortable, if that is something that you want; it would be a gift to our family to be in relationship with you. If so, we can't wait to meet you!

Warmly,
Ace and Clare



Our family today

How we met (by Clare)



Nine years ago, on a cold January night, still getting over a recent break-up, I dragged myself out of the house to attend a lecture, at the invitation of a friend. There, I met Ace, who was also invited by that same friend.

I was immediately struck by Ace's kindness, smarts, and free-flowing, joyous laugh; I fell for him instantly. There was also something about him that seemed familiar, although I couldn't put my finger on it

Later that evening, as everyone talked over Thai food, it dawned on me. A few days previously, I had messaged Ace on an online dating app! So I asked him out - in person this time. It was the best move I've ever made.

Clare's childhood

Clare grew up in West Virginia in a loving and tight-knit family. When she was seven, her family adopted her sister, Maura. Clare's brother, Phil was born a year later. She had a happy childhood filled with books, family, and friends.



Clare with her parents, Kathy and Chuck.



Clare with her new little sister, Maura. Clare was so excited to become a big sister!



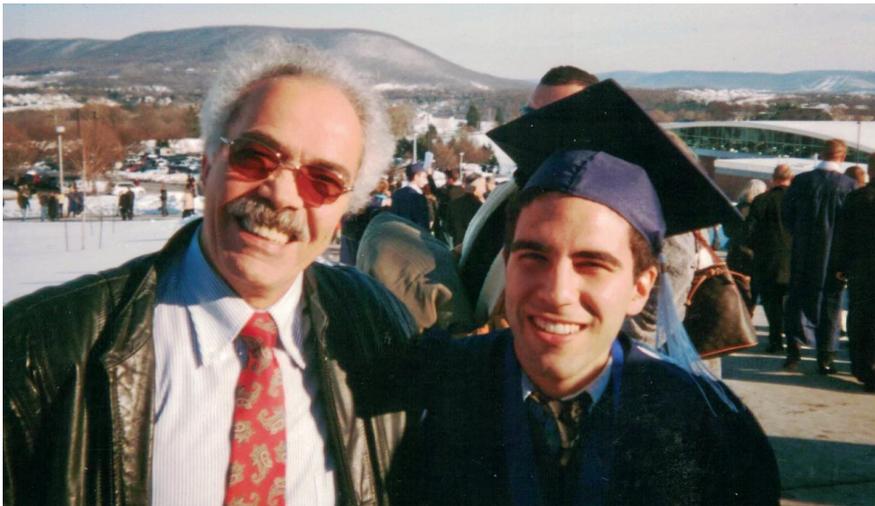
Snow day! Playing on the front lawn with siblings Maura and Phil.

Ace's childhood



Ace was born in Iran. When he was eight, his family immigrated to the US because his parents wanted him and his brother, Arash, to have better opportunities in life. (His full name is Ahsan, but other kids called him "Ace," and it stuck.) Ace's parents, Parvin and Abdi, are incredibly courageous and strong people!

Ace's extended family at a wedding in Iran (top left). Ace with his father at his college graduation (bottom left) and with his mother at Christmas (bottom right).



About Clare (by Ace)

Friends joke that if you're at a party or gathering and there's somebody new, you want to introduce them to Clare first to make them feel comfortable. That's because when Clare is talking to you, you are the only one that matters. You can't get far into a conversation with her without feeling her genuine kindness, attentiveness, humility, and curiosity. I could write chapters about Clare's many wonderful qualities, but the best way to summarize them all is that they are all applied through a lens of love. That's really what makes her such a gift as a mother, wife, daughter, sister, and friend.



A few of Clare's favorite things: Playground visits with Ella (left), quality time with Ace (center), and traveling to new places with her mom (in a boat on the Amazon River) (right).



Clare loves planning adventures for the family. This is Clare and Ella at the top of a giant climbing gym at a children's museum.



About Ace (by Clare)

Ace is an exceptional person. He's exceptionally kind, always checking in on friends who are having a hard time. He's exceptionally wise, grounded in the things that really matter. And he's exceptionally resilient, able to bounce back from challenges with grace and determination. He's wholeheartedly and passionately dedicated to being a father; so much so, that people often remark on what an outstanding parent he is. (He's one of those parents that gets on the floor and plays and helps Ella work through emotions.) And he's very, very funny.

One of the reasons that I want to adopt is that I want another child to be able to have Ace as a parent. He truly has a remarkable spirit: tenderhearted, warm, and joyous. I'm grateful every single day that Ella and I get to journey through life with him at our side.



Left hand page (from top left): Making slime (and a mess!); volunteering in Haiti; sledding with Ella in our backyard; and giving hugs in Haiti. This page: Hiking with Ella in a state forest near our home.



**Our early
life together**

Above: Our wedding was one of the happiest days of our lives - we couldn't believe our luck to have found one another! Below: Two years later, our daughter, Ella, was born, bringing even more richness into our lives.





About Ella (by Ace)

Ella is a kind, creative young girl who loves pretend games, puns, books, baking, and being silly.

There are over 10 stuffed animals in her room, all with their own names and personalities, ready for a surprise “birthday party.”

Ella's the first to notice when somebody's not doing well and tries her best to cheer them up.

She can't wait to become a big sister!

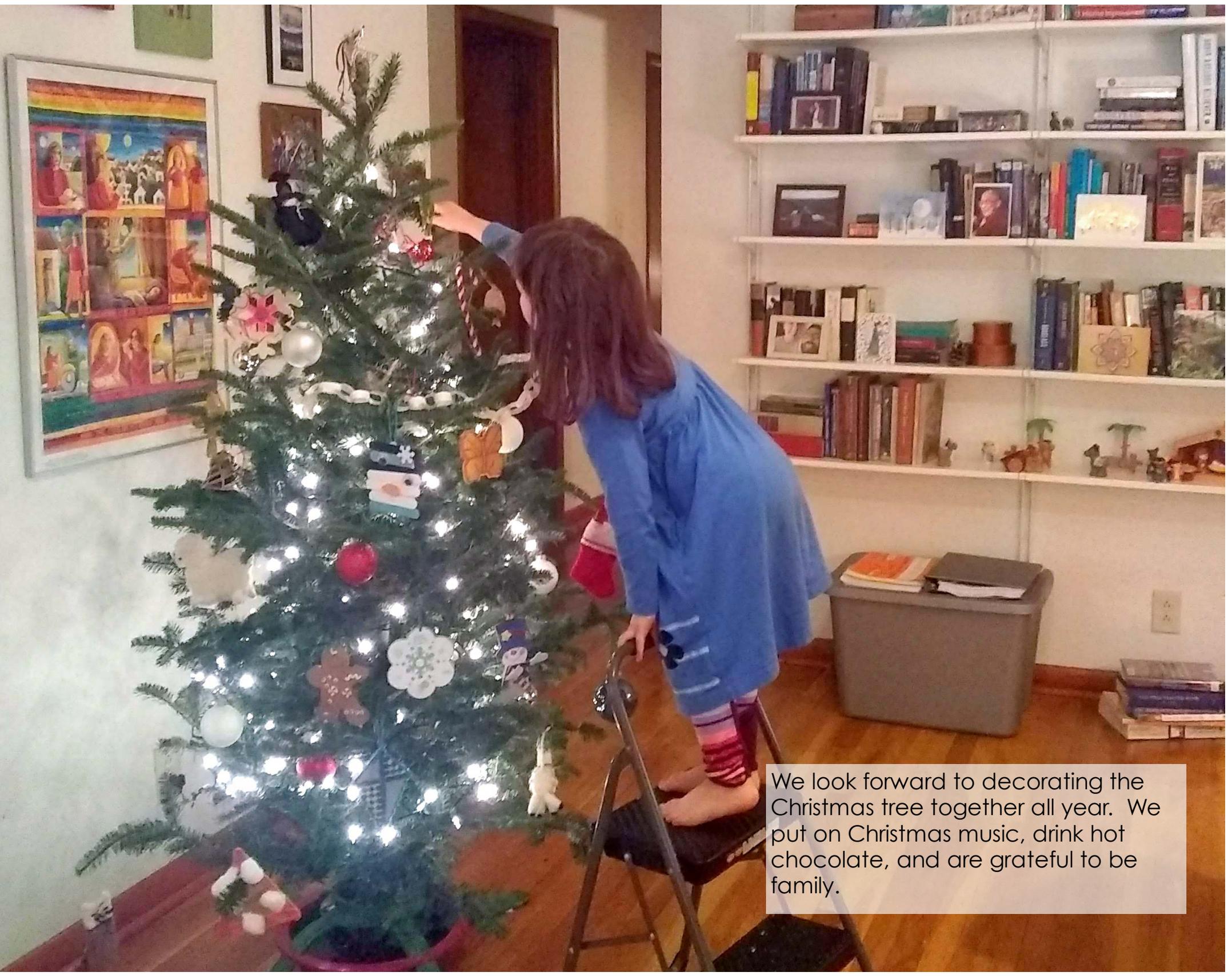
Photo: Ella being a silly billy (with a pot for a hat and a tupperware for a shoe).

Our family traditions

We have LOTS of family traditions. There's the silly dance we do when someone has a success. The family hike we go on each week in the summer. The old spiral notebook in which we write 10 things we're grateful for each Thanksgiving. The special cake we make for each person's birthday (birthday boy/girl's choice). We could go on and on. Life's better when you celebrate it together! We love each other unconditionally, and we don't take ourselves too seriously :)



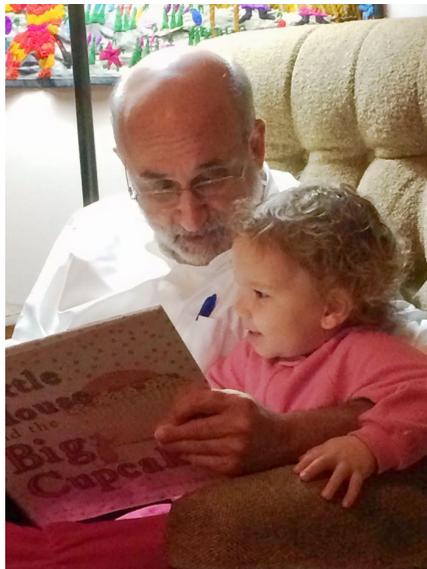
"Cow cake" for Ella's birthday (top left). Carving a jack-o'-lantern on Halloween (bottom right).



We look forward to decorating the Christmas tree together all year. We put on Christmas music, drink hot chocolate, and are grateful to be family.



Clare's extended family



Children in this family are blessed with wonderful grandparents on both sides. Clare's parents, Chuck and Kathy (shown on this page), live in town, regularly take care of Ella, and are excited for a new grandson or granddaughter!

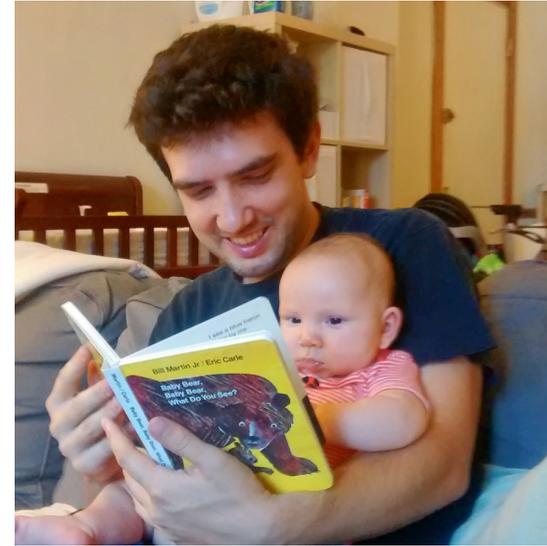




Clare's sister, Maura, lives in Europe, but we see her every Sunday night for Zoom family dinner. She is amazing with children, and she and Ella (pictured here together) have a very special relationship.



Clare's brother, Phil, and his wife, Ashley, have an adorable little boy named Diego. We see them every Sunday night for Zoom family dinner!



Phil with Ella (top right). All other photos are of Phil and Ashley with Diego.



Ace's extended family



We're lucky to live close to family. Ace's parents, Parvin and Abdi, and Ace's brother, Arash, and his family live just an hour and a half away, so we are able to visit them often.

From left to right: Grandma Parvin and Grandpa Abdi and Parvin reading to Ella.



Arash and his wife, Alicia, have three great kids - Leeann, Matthew, and Lizzie. A new child in our family will be lucky to have wonderful cousins on both sides!

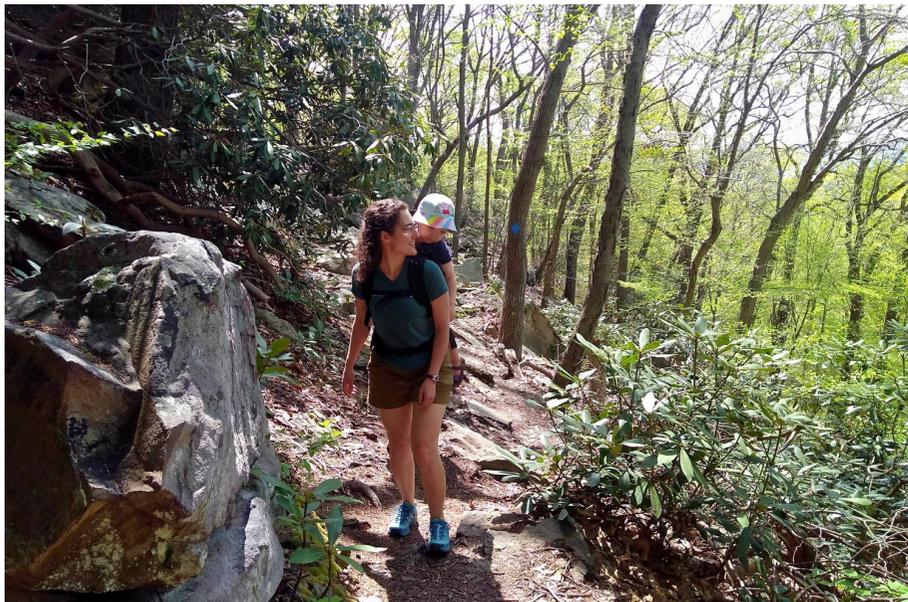
Alicia with Leeann and Lizzie (top left). At Lizzie's performance of Aladdin (she was the sultan) (top right). The kids at Christmas (bottom right).



Friends and church community

We're also lucky to have dear friends who are like family, and to be members of a loving church community.

Ella as an angel in the (very informal!) church Christmas pageant (top right), "Aunt" Kate (bottom left), and "Aunt" Julie (bottom right).



Our home and neighborhood



Our home this winter. It's not fancy, but it sure is comfortable and loving. Nice backyard surrounded by nature, lots of space for tea parties and five great playgrounds within a 10 minute walk or drive.



Inside the house, we cook, we laugh,
we read, we have fun! Life is too short
not to enjoy its simple pleasures.

Ace and Ella (and panda) baking cookies (top left). Ella at the playground a block from our house (top right). Storytime for the stuffed animals (bottom right). A rail trail running distance from our house (bottom left).



Thank you!



We want you to know that if you choose to place your baby with us, we promise to honor your love and sacrifice by being the very best parents that we possibly can be. We will love your little one unconditionally.

We're grateful that you've read this far, and that you may be considering us.

We know you still likely have a lot of questions about us, and we're happy to answer them. We'd love to also learn more about you (if that's of interest). Please reach out to us if you would like to talk or we can answer anything else.

Love,
Clare and Ace

FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

Father's name: Ahsan ("Ace")

Occupation: Consultant working to improve schools

Education: B.A. from Penn State, Master's Degree from University of California, Berkeley

Religion: Christian

Date of birth: March 6, 1982

Hair color: Brown

Eye color: Brown

Height: 5 ft

Mother's name: Clare

Occupation: Researcher focused on children and families

Education: B.A. from Yale, Master's Degree from University of Minnesota

Religion: Christian

Date of birth: July 1, 1981

Hair color: Brown

Eye color: Brown

Height: 5 ft, 6 in

Date of marriage: October 26, 2013

Children: We have one biological child, Ella (age 5). She is curious, kind, and frankly, hilarious! Some of her favorite things are silly poetry, snuggling on the couch, and good puns.

Interests and hobbies: Our family loves exploring new hikes, listening to live music, and volunteering together. Ace is an active citizen, frequently organizing events and initiatives to help make our community a better place, and is learning to play the fiddle. Clare enjoys reading non-fiction, running on the rail trail near our house, and planning our next family adventure. She's part of our church's leadership team, helping to facilitate the church's giving and community service activities.

Home: We live in a cozy home on a leafy street, surrounded by the type of neighbors who stop by just to drop off a loaf of bread. There's a stream running behind our house, a playground down the street, and we often see deer and rabbits in our backyard.

Why adoption: We want to adopt because our family has lots of love to give, and we know that adoption, while not always easy, is a beautiful way to build a family.

Openness to birthparents: We would be thrilled to establish an open relationship with you, in whatever form you are most comfortable. If that is something that you are open to, we think it would be a gift to our family to be in relationship with you.

Childcare plans: We are lucky, in that both of our jobs are flexible, and Clare's job is part-time, allowing her to be a part-time at-home parent. In addition, Clare's parents live in town and will take care of a new baby one day a week.

Mixbook
PHOTO CO.