Matt + Emily

About Us

Matt was divorced with a five-year-old daughter and not really looking to get involved again when we met up with friends. On our first date we went to see local groups sing Christmas carols, and on our second date we went to his company Christmas party.

We do things a little differently than a lot of people. We've learned to be flexible and spontaneous, and that just because you can't have the vacation or the party that you originally wanted doesn't mean you can't have fun. The second the weather is warm enough we are outside – summer is probably our favorite season. This summer we've just been spending most of the time at the pool but we've also used those days off to go on long bike rides and canoe. This summer Matt and Isla have taken an interest in gardening and we've been enjoying the vegetables that they have managed to grow. In our house the TV is rarely on, the only video games we play on rainy days are Dance Dance Revolution and Rock Band, and we have family dinner every night we can.

ABOUT Emily
(written by Matt)

One night when we were dating Emily said to me, "Matt, I like you, and I like your kid." That's when I knew we were going to be together for a very long time. Isla, my daughter, is 10 and her and Emily are thick as thieves, usually plotting on how to talk me into a Target or half-price books run or creating something in the basement. Emily has a ton of hobbies which include sewing, knitting and embroidery. We share a love for golf and DIY. Emily is a really good cook who enjoys cooking from scratch but to this day she simply cannot make rice. I'm still not sure if it's true because in five years she still hasn't had it turn out or if she is simply in the midst of a really long term practical joke.

Emily teaches engineering and coaches swimming at a high school, so she is the first person people in the neighborhood come to if they cannot figure a tech problem or their 4 year old needs swim lessons. This summer she taught our neighbor to swim in his pool next door, now he will simply show up at our door looking for snacks or just to have a conversation because he likes "Miss Emily".

ABOUT Matt
(written by Emily)

I could write more words than you would care to read about my husband, but the main thing you need to know is how much he loves and cares for his family. In his list of priorities he always puts himself last, and every time Isla goes back to her mom's house he asks me if I thought he did enough for her. My answer is always that she gets exactly what she needs from him. He makes the most of his time with us. He has already said he doesn't care what it takes, he plans to do whatever he has to to be as engaged with our next child as he is with our last - as he's bullheaded enough for me to believe him. He is more active and engaged than most any dad you'll ever meet and is one of the few dad volunteers that regularly show up at Isla's school.

Emily's brother and his wife live nearby with their daughter and have a boy on the way!

Our cousins in Chicago love to come and visit

Our whole neighborhood went to dinner and buried one of the dads in the sand!

Our Family + Friends

We choose to surround ourselves with positive, supportive, and kind people. Most of Emily's family lives locally. Matt's family lives a short drive away and visit regularly. When our families get together the cousins get rowdy and always have a good time.

In our house we really believe that friends are the family you get to choose yourself. Matt has friends from college and work that he chats with regularly. Emily has some close friends that she met in her knitting group that she has been meeting with for more than 10 years. Since the pandemic we meet on Zoom.

Our best friends are really our neighbors. When quarantine began, we decided we would quarantine together. We were already spending so much time together it seemed silly to separate the kids when we were all home. In the mornings the kids would do their lessons while the adults worked and we would coordinate outside breaks for the kids. The dads cleared out an empty lot for daily bonfires, roasting marshmallows and planting grass for the kids to play volleyball and soccer. We organized an Easter egg hunt and a block party for just our street. We had been friends before but this was the point where we really became a community.

Emily's brother and his wife have 3 children in Chicago

Emily's dad and stepmom live nearby as does her brother and step-sister and their families

Neighborhood first annual Easter egg hunt!

Emily and Isla with cousin Lydia

Emily's mom and stepdad split their time between their local house and their Florida house!

Matt's parents and their families live a short drive away

Our Home

Shortly after we married Matt found a quiet, isolated, peaceful street to build our forever home on. It took nearly another year before we would be able to call our new house home. We never realized how much community would mean to us and we're thankful that we lucked in to the neighborhood we found. When Isla is here she is never bored – there is always someone to play with or something to do. It's the kind of place that if you get the urge to bake some cookies and find yourself without butter, you can text a neighbor and they will give you their garage code and tell you to help yourself. When we find ourselves needing child care, someone always volunteers to help out.

FUN FACTS ABOUT US

1. We're active in sports.
2. We're dog people.
3. On Friday nights in the winter we like to watch 80's movies and order pizza.
4. Emily's mom has a house in Florida where we get away for family vacations.
5. In the fall bonfires and s'mores are must haves.
6. We would most likely literally die if we didn't have a pool to go to in the summer.
7. We're no strangers to DIY and plan to make more improvements to our forever home.
8. Every year we go ice skating as a family on New Year's Day.
9. We like to cook.
10. We consider ourselves "makers".

Dear birth mom,

Hi, I'm Isla and I'm 10 years old. I will help change the diapers, feed it bottles, and keep him or her entertained. We have a great neighborhood and it is safe and secure. I will also support the child. I love our neighborhood because the neighbors are kind, nice, loving, understanding, fun, helpful, generous, say no when they need to, and lots more nice things. For my birthday we had a big inflatable slip and slide, it was so fun the adults went down it, literally all of them.

Love,
Isla

Dear Birthmother,

We both understand it is a difficult decision for you, but we have to admit that adoption has actually been a very easy decision for us. When we met, we had no idea that years would pass before we would become more permanent fixtures in each other's lives. Now that we're here we know what we want and we can see our future with clarity. We've had a blast raising Matt's biological daughter from his first marriage and we strongly believe that our family is incomplete. Matt is the dad that organizes baseball games and injuring his shoulder throwing kids in the pool. Emily is there to give everyone a snack, say no when it needs to be said, and negotiate toddler arguments.

One thing Matt said when we got together is that we would never be bored – and he was definitely right. Like this summer we impulsively rented a giant inflatable slip and slide and the entire neighborhood spent the weekend ruining our front lawn. Or last summer on our vacation in Florida rain threatened to ruin our beach day. We checked the weather radar and opted to drive south along the coast to get to the other side of the storm. When we got to our destination we discovered the cutest little town and enjoyed dining outside. Whether the rain be literal or figurative, we refuse to let it spoil our day.

One thing you can count on from us is our unwavering support for your birth child. Whether it be football or theater, we will always be the parents volunteering behind the scenes and bragging whenever we can. We want you to know that you can trust us to always do our best for your child.

Sincerely,

Emily + Matt

why adoption?

Before we got married we discussed kids and whether or not we wanted to have more. From that first conversation we were adamant that we wanted to have at least one more child. Emily had never had a child but has always loved kids and wanted to be a mother. Matt was excited to become a dad when Isla made her appearance and he still names it as the best decision he has ever made. From these very first conversations we had always considered adoption as an option for us. Both of us have some health issues that would have made getting pregnant challenging if not impossible so we knew ahead of time that there would be obstacles. We tried a few fertility treatments that were unsuccessful before we realized that adoption is not just an option, but something we were meant to do. When we told our families our plans we were met with unwavering support and encouragement that this was absolutely the right decision for us as a family. Isla asks pretty much weekly what our status is in this process and is just as excited for what is to come as we are.

Building Blocks Adoption Service Inc.