

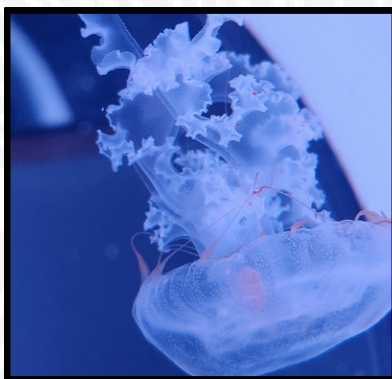


AJ & LEN

...AND ARCHER, ARROW,
BOW, & ROSALIA!



AJ SPEAKS FILIPINO



LEN SPEAKS HAWAIIAN &
JAPANESE

HELLO | ALOHA | KUMUSTA | KONNICHIWA

We sincerely want to thank you for this opportunity to introduce ourselves. We believe the love a mother has for her child is unconditional and everlasting - therefore, we greatly admire what we imagine is selflessness, courage, and strength on your part for considering placing your child for adoption.

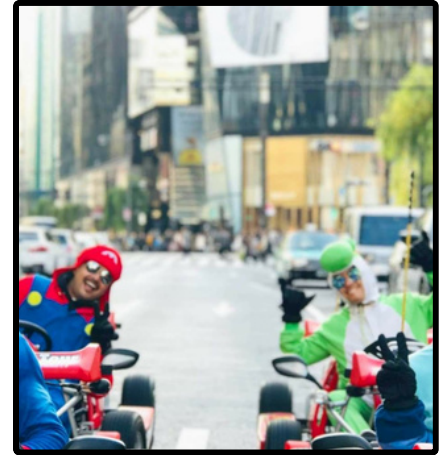
If you select us, please know we'll consider you your child's only Mother and that they will grow up knowing you made this decision out of unconditional love. We can assure you that we will nurture, support, and encourage your child to dream, set goals, and strive for whatever makes them happy.

We hope you will see the love, dedication, and respect we have for one another and can find peace and comfort in seeing how much of that we have to give to your child.



IN A NUTSHELL

We enjoy spontaneity and exploring in unique ways that are uniquely ours. When we visited Japan, we wanted the trip to be as authentic as possible. We rented apartments through Airbnb, made soba noodles from scratch with a local chef, hiked the Iwatayama Park and fed snow monkeys, navigated public transportation, and even drove go-karts through the busy streets of Tokyo in Mario & Yoshi costumes!



You'll often find us in the kitchen as chef and sous chef practicing garden-to-table cooking from veggies grown in our backyard, putting our own twist on new recipes. We recently had a bountiful harvest of Berkeley tie-dye tomatoes and thought it would be a great idea to make roasted salsa for the first time. We made A LOT - twenty-five tomatoes' worth - that we shared with our neighbors and friends. It was DELICIOUS! Everyone kept asking for the recipe!

We grew up immersed in our cultures and we are intentional about understanding our roots. It's so empowering for us to wear cultural attire like Japanese yukatas and Aloha shirts, and we were recently even photographed wearing Filipino barongs on a mini red carpet! The celebration was for the 20th anniversary of the first Filipino American film released theatrically nationwide. We beamed with pride (and blushed from compliments) knowing how meaningful this event was. Your child will be encouraged to learn more about their own heritage while respecting and appreciating the cultures of others.



BECOMING A COUPLE



We first met over 9 years ago at a festival in San Francisco. **Our friend groups were randomly beside each other** and AJ noticed one of Len's friends had a Chicago Cubs tattoo on her leg. He struck up a conversation and that's when Len caught his eye. We started talking and immediately felt a connection given our similar upbringings. We ended up dating long-distance for the next few months while Len taught summer school back in Hawai'i. That time apart helped us build and strengthen our foundation and resilience as a couple as we truly got to know one another on deeper levels.

We're a team through and through. We pride ourselves on our equal partnership in decision-making and household & life duties while practicing open and honest communication and mutual respect. One silver lining of the pandemic was how much closer we became. We lived and worked 24/7 in our then, 1-bed/bath apartment for 6+ months with limited outside contact. This made us intentional about discovering fun games or trying new recipes while also giving one another space. It was also a great reminder to **pause, breathe, and find joy and gratitude** each and every day.



We've been working to **grow our family** and knew it would be **through adoption**. Several of our friends are adoptive parents and Len's grandfather and AJ's best friend were both adopted as newborns. We've been certified for foster-to-adopt for the past year, which has included completing 18 hours of trainings. This process inspired us to pursue adoption in this way as we're so excited and ready now to become parents. We look forward to learning how our paths have brought us together with you.

ABOUT AJ

by Len



AJ is by far **the most thoughtful and loving person I know**. In 2014, I spent the entire Summer teaching in Hawai'i. AJ and I spent that summer conversing through phone calls, texts, and FaceTime chats. I remember talking to him about my Interior design style and how much I appreciated naturalistic design, incorporating organic materials into spaces, connecting the indoor and outdoor spaces. On August 1, 2014, I returned from Hawai'i to San Francisco to find him waiting outside my doorstep with a dozen white roses. Every Friday since, no matter what, he never hesitates to buy me flowers to incorporate into our home/design.

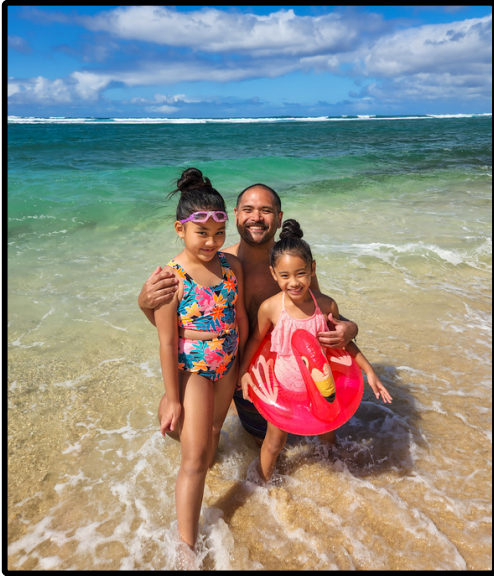
He is definitely the more **extroverted** one in our relationship. This is apparent through **his love of dance**. Whether it's hip hop, traditional Filipino, or attempting to breakdance in the family room with his brother, he does it all with joy in his eyes. I remember the first time I saw him perform at the SF Pride festival in front of hundreds of people. There were about 20 group members dancing, but my eyes were glued on him; his facial expressions, movement, swag, and energy were so infectious that it energized the crowd. I was in awe and so very proud. Your child will be free to express themselves and have our full support for their passions.



AJ inspires people to be their authentic selves. He currently volunteers as the global lead of the Asian & Pacific Islander employee resource group for his company. Last year, he organized a virtual event, the Pacific Islander Creatives Showcase, for their 20+ global offices. The event was created to amplify underrepresented voices around the world through song, dance, and literature. I saw him working tirelessly to create an hour-long platform to amplify artists and the diversity across the company. Employees were saying how special it was to see their cultures represented in many ways. Your child will always be encouraged to use their voice, celebrate their individuality, and be inclusive and uplifting of others.

ABOUT LEN

by AJ



One of Len's greatest strengths is how **engaging and magnetic he is with kids**. His teaching background has shaped him into the most nurturing, attentive, and most importantly, patient people when working with his students or connecting with our nieces and nephews. One favorite memory was from our last trip visiting his family in Hawai'i. We spent the day at the beach and while several family members were relaxing in the sun, Len spent the entire time with his nieces exploring tide pools and combing the shoreline. He even taught them how to find and handle live sea cucumbers!

Len grew up in Hawai'i and has a vast **knowledge of nature** and a **deep love for all living things**. His grandmother taught him how to nurture many different plants and I love how he lights up when he's able to successfully grow flowers native to Hawai'i here in the Bay, bringing a little aloha to our home. We both love white peaches and a couple years ago, had a bunch that were so tasty. Len researched how to germinate the peach pit and now, several years later, we have a thriving tree that will hopefully bear fruit soon. Your child will grow up with an appreciation for nature.



Len is one of the most **artistic, creative, and resourceful** go-getters. He has a **passion for interior architecture** and design, having studied it for a few years, and is always thinking of ways to make our home gorgeous. Recently, he completely repaired our deteriorating shed door. We were contemplating having to buy a new one, but Len's ingenuity inspired him to secure the glass panels, fix the doorknob, and apply a pop of yellow paint to bring it back to life, all within a few hours!

OUR LIVES TOGETHER



Music is a huge part of our lives! AJ plays piano, did show choir and musicals throughout high school, and actively performs with a hip hop dance company. Len dances hula and toured with the *Honolulu Boy Choir* (and even performed with Dolly Parton!) growing up. During our first trip together to visit Len's family in Hawai'i, while sitting around the dinner table, they took out the ukelele and Len and his parents had a *kanikapila* (impromptu jam session). It was so wonderful hearing them harmonize to "Makalapua," one of Len's late grandmother's favorite Hawaiian songs.

Our obsession with food means we also **work hard to stay healthy and active**. One of our biggest achievements was finishing the Chicago Marathon. We both grew up husky and asthmatic (far from your typical runner) and we trained for months prior. We ran the first 18 miles of the race at a great pace, but unfortunately hit a wall after taking a bathroom break. We felt like our ankles were shattered and were on the brink of tears at times, but we took our time to push through and triumphantly crossed that finish line together.



One of our most favorite things to do is host gatherings with our loved ones. From birthday potlucks to BBQ pool parties, Friendsgiving to White Elephant gift exchanges, game nights and karaoke sessions, we love sharing our home with friends and family. One of our favorite memories was a **karaoke performance of Tina Turner's "Proud Mary"** by 3 of our friends, complete with backup vocalists and choreo. Your child will be surrounded by a community overflowing with love, support, and lots of belly laughs!

OUR PETS

We both grew up with various pets. Besides our three pups, we also have Len's school of mesmerizing neon tetras and AJ's bucket list-beauty, Rosalia the South American Sea Nettle. We rescued each of our dogs and work to give them a loving and nurturing home. Arrow joined our team most recently. She was rescued from a puppy mill with over 150 dogs housed in a duplex. We cannot imagine the terrible conditions she survived given the horrors we were told, but are grateful that she loves every human she meets despite everything she's been through.



Our pets fill our home with so much **energy, playfulness, joy, and unconditional love** and in return we give them treats, toys, unlimited belly scratches, new costumes to try on (which they're *mostly* cooperative for), and new places to explore. One of our funniest memories was with Bow, our rescued retired show dog. We took this stoic little tank to the beach the day after he joined our family, and within seconds of taking off his leash, he bolted across the sand chasing birds at a surprising 'lightning speed.' He was so happy and we were cracking up running after this little guy.

Our doggos are **great with children**. Arrow is a playful and youthful love bug who wants to be their closest pal, and the other two are older chill male dogs who enjoy sitting nearby (aka sleeping) when kids are over. When we babysat our friend's son, our eldest dog Archer, who is 50% beagle and 110% self-appointed watch dog, constantly laid beside him while he slept.



FAMILY | OHANA | PAMILYA | KAZOKU

If you choose us, your child will grow up with **16 cousins**, 32 aunties & uncles, and 7 grandparents and honorary grandparents.



Our families love to laugh, host large gatherings with delicious/too much food, and especially love to play board games. A regular occurrence at family gatherings is **staying up late playing Settlers of Catan**. One year, we and AJ's sister and brother-in-law both had morning flights to catch, but when it hit 3am and 10 of us were still in competition mode, we pushed through til dawn. It's debatable who won (due to the delirium), but we all had a blast!

We are intentional about **making experiential memories together** and are known as the "Funcles." On our last visit to Hawai'i, we spent a full day with Len's nieces taking them all over O'ahu. Our first stop was *Kids City*, an indoor playground, with VIP access! We jumped on trampolines into a foam pit, played basketball, scaled climbing walls, dressed up in different career uniforms, and even drove bumper cars! We then ate lunch at *California Pizza Kitchen* and picked up shells at the beach. We ended the day at Len and his brother's favorite childhood spot, *Waiola Shave Ice*, where the girls chose their custom flavor combos and toppings.



Our families are **super supportive** and we are grateful for our local and chosen family here in the Bay Area. Len's uncle lives in San Francisco and is super generous and our biggest cheerleader. AJ's aunt (who helped raise him) and uncle live 10 min away and have taught us invaluable lessons on home repairs and share life advice. When we first moved into our home, AJ's aunt prepared a huge spread so we wouldn't have to worry about food the first few days. Your child will grow up surrounded by family and friends who will always be there for them.

TRADITIONS

We both lived in San Francisco for over a decade and love its eccentricity, namely, dressing up in costumes! What better time to do so than Halloween? We love to get into the *spirit* (see what we did there?), and one of our favorite costume memories was last year's adventure *Under the Sea* with the pups. **It was hilarious watching chaos unfold** as Archer/Flounder kept trying to escape his costume, Arrow/Ariel kept trying to eat her luxurious red wig, and all dogs + AJ/Scuttle were confused as Len tried to direct the photoshoot behind a giant Ursula mask. Your child will have the freedom to explore and try on different personas to find what speaks to them.



Before flying out to a snowy Chicagoland for Christmas, we celebrate by choosing our own silvertip fir and decking the tree and all the halls with meaningful ornaments, including some we made ourselves. At the height of COVID, **we crafted our own *paróls* (Filipino lanterns)**. We spent 4 hours over Zoom with AJ's family learning tips from his parents on how to shape the star with bamboo sticks and fluff the tissue paper tails. We love hanging these up every year as it reminds us of AJ's parents' nostalgia of seeing lanterns line the streets of their provinces. We can't wait to learn about your traditions that we can carry on with your child.

We are so grateful to celebrate **New Year's Eve in Hawai'i**. This holiday is one of the biggest, filled with huge family gatherings, *ono* (delicious) food spreads, and households launching fireworks across the islands as we reflect and look to the year ahead. Each New Year's Day, Len's Mom will make *ozoni* or **Japanese mochi soup which we eat for good luck before heading to the beach**. Len recently started making the soup, consulting with his Mom to match the flavors and textures, so he can carry on this generations-old recipe to honor his Japanese heritage.



HOME & NEIGHBORHOOD



We live in a single-story home atop a hill on a **street filled with diverse families**. Your child will have their own bedroom and bathroom with plenty of spaces to play, learn, and explore both indoors and outdoors. One of our favorite parts of our home is our tranquil and spacious backyard. We spend a lot of time there enjoying the scenic view and brilliant sunsets, gardening and doing yard work, grilling at all times of the year, and making custom pies in our pizza oven. We also love to blow up our inflatable pool for our pups, our friends' kids and, let's be honest, ourselves, to cool down during the summer heat.

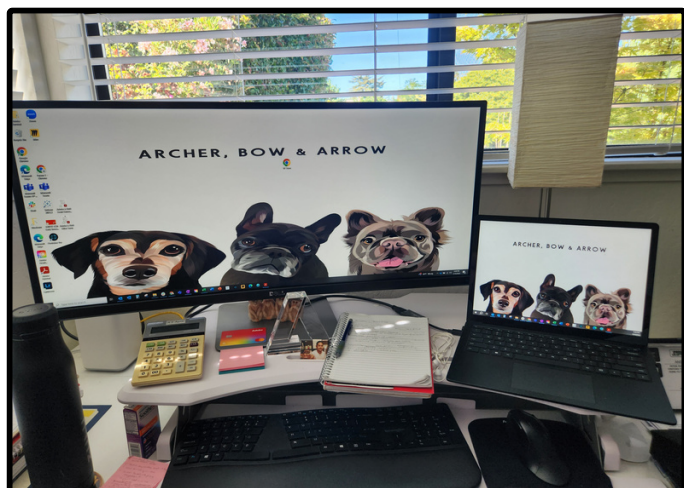
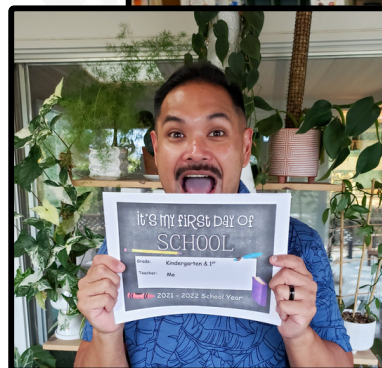
Our neighborhood of working-class families is **centrally located to family-friendly spots** like our neighborhood park, U-Pick fruit farms, a drive-in movie theater, diverse cuisines, *Chuck E. Cheese*, and theme parks. We especially love to explore new hiking trails around the Bay. Once on a trail, we came across a herd of cows with one of AJ's best friends. We played a game of who could be the most stealth and ninja-like without setting off a *Lion King*-like stampede. We ended up laughing so loudly the entire time and the cows could have cared less!



We are so grateful to be a short drive from San Francisco where we love to **explore museums, try new cuisines, and watch musicals**. One of our favorite places to visit is the *California Academy of Sciences*, where we most recently took our nephew. On his visit, he traveled to the canopy of an indoor rainforest where butterflies fluttered all around, came face-to-face with an albino alligator named Claude, and was captivated by the beauty swimming deep within the Philippine Sea. Your child will be immersed in experiences that spark wonder, discovery, and fun.

WEEKDAYS

Len is an elementary Special Education Teacher (aka one of the most patient people ever). While he loves teaching, he is so ready to be a **stay-at-home Dad** for your child. There will be plenty of story time, creative expression (aka impromptu singing and dancing), custom (& likely super cute) lunch bento boxes, indoor & outdoor exploration and adventure, and non-stop curiosity and learning.



AJ taps into his creative outlet daily in his career as a marketer for a tech company. He is grateful to be able to **work from home** at least three days a week with more **flexibility** as needed, and is always home for dinner even when he commutes from the office. He'll be present for your child's key milestones and will spend lots of quality time with them every day.

We love wrapping up our day by sharing one positive thing that happened to **practice gratitude** and re-center ourselves. We also **eat dinner together at the table** without our phones to unplug and be present together. A recent memorable positive we shared was when we rejoiced that it was Friday (this happens often!) because it was an especially difficult week for us both, and we were grateful to shut off 'work mode' and unwind together. Your child will grow up in a humble and mindful home spending quality time as a family daily.



THANK YOU | MAHALO | SALAMAT | ARIGATO

Thank you for taking the time to get to know a little about us.

If we are fortunate enough to be chosen as your child's adoptive parents, please know they will be raised in a stable home filled with laughter & care, surrounded by a diverse community, adventure, creativity, and most of all, unconditional love and support.

We will always be open with your child about their adoption story, and they will grow up understanding the sacrifice you are considering right now. We'll ALWAYS remind them how much they've been, and are loved... even before they were born... by you, their Mother. **We look forward to staying in touch with you over the years.**

Hope to hear from you soon.

Len & AJ



A RECIPE FOR YOU

by Len's Mom



Mochiko Chicken is a popular Hawaiian dish of chicken battered in mochiko flour and deep-fried! It's crunchy, sweet, and salty. When we visit my 'Ohana (family) in Hawai'i, this is one of the dishes on our request list for my Mom to make!

Mochiko chicken
5lbs. chicken thighs

1/2 cup mochiko 1/2 cup cornstarch
1/2 cup sugar 1/2 cup shoyu
1/2 cup green onions 1 tsp. salt
1 tsp crushed garlic 4 eggs

Mix all ingredients. Marinate. Deep fry



MADE WITH
LOVE | ALOHA | PAGMAMAHAL | 愛AI
by AJ & Len