

Thomas and Jessica



And McKinley and Rowdy too



Hello

Thank you for taking the time to learn about us. We can't imagine what this process is like for you. We believe this must be a very difficult decision and one we consider very brave. We look forward to telling your child how much you love them. If chosen, we promise to help your child explore every opportunity they desire. We wish you a calm and peaceful time through this journey.



About Us

We are lucky to live in an area full of beautiful local and state parks, near skiing, and beaches, too; so, **many activities we enjoy draw us outdoors**. Early in the spring, we decided to get out and enjoy the beautiful sunny day. We grabbed our tennis shoes, the dogs, some water and hopped in the car to head for a nearby hiking trail. The trails were a bit wet and Jessica slipped; Thomas rushed to help and found Jessica laughing and covered in mud! Your child will play in parks and explore the outdoors.



We love board games! In fact, Some of our favorite memories are staying up late with Jessica's brother and cousins, trying to do the impossible; beat Thomas at Monopoly. Years ago, Thomas played games weekly at a local game store. There he made lifelong friends. Now we meet monthly, share a meal (we always make homemade ice cream for dessert), and play games together. Last time we got together we played a game called *Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza*. It is a very silly game where at times you mimic a narwhal, a gopher, or a gorilla beating on its chest, and others you attempt to slap the stack of cards first. We got really competitive and by the end our hands stung and our ribs hurt from laughing!

We enjoy learning about other cultures. Thomas has loved giraffes since he was a kid. Every time we visit someplace new, we visit a local artisan shop or outdoor market and try to find a giraffe keepsake. While visiting Italy we found one of our favorites while visiting a glass blowing shop. The families there have been blowing glass for generations and it was amazing watching them craft elaborate items from glass shards. The small giraffe sculpture has long, thin, delicate, glass legs that even have a small indent where the knees would bend. After seeing the process, it's hard to believe artisans can include so much detail on such a small surface. Your child will explore and experience new and different places and people.



About Jessica by Thomas

Jessica loves arts and crafts. Whether she's scrapbooking or making greeting cards, I joke that she loves gluing paper to other paper. Whenever we're together with family and we wonder where Jessica is, the answer is usually "At the kids table making art." Recently we babysat our friend's daughter Sylvia and had a few different activities planned. However, Jessica and Sylvia got really into painting. Jessica took out construction paper and washable acrylic paints and they spent the night folding paper in half, putting small globs of paint on one half, then refolding the paper, smooshing all the paint globs together, to create what looked like inkblots. Sylvia couldn't get enough! Your child will be able to uniquely express themselves with skills based creativity.



Jessica loves kids, which led her to become a teacher. Recently, Jessica got a new student from Ukraine that doesn't speak English. Jessica has been able to use technology to translate their conversations and help them communicate. The student has enjoyed teaching Jessica words in Ukrainian such as "ladybug" and "hello", but they also get a good laugh when technology doesn't translate well and are thankful for body language! She is so patient and kind with her students, even when things aren't working properly. She gets so animated when telling stories of the day's events.

Jessica loves spending time in her flower garden, it's something she used to do with her dad as a kid. Quite often during the summer I find her outside digging in the dirt and making sure her plants are getting enough water and sunlight. She loves trading plants with our friends and recently began growing a small garden with unusual veggies for us to try, as a result. This summer she attempted to grow what's called a "Toothache Plant" that when chewed, can ease a toothache. Unfortunately, she went out of town and hadn't transplanted it outside yet, so it withered in the dining room window. Although slightly disappointed, she laughed and said, "I guess water would have helped?" Next year, she hopes to plant some multi-colored corn to use for popcorn.



About Thomas by Jessica

Thomas has a great sense of humor. He is not afraid to be goofy, make silly jokes, and play with the kids in his life. Because of this, Thomas has always been the favorite uncle. Once when we got tons of snow, he took our niece and nephew out to sled down our hill. Thomas waited near the bottom of the hill and the kids came barreling toward him, knocking him completely over. He jumped back up and yelled, "Strike!" Although our nieces and nephews are older now, they frequently call to ask if Uncle Tommy will organize a game night, or play video games with them.



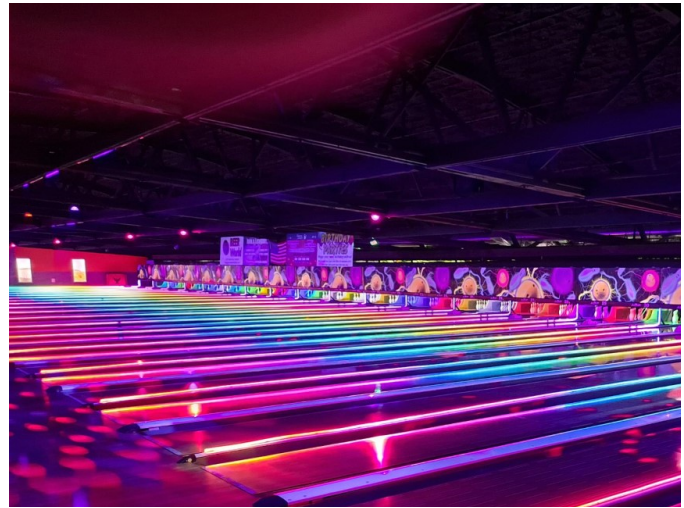
Thomas loves a good puzzle. His mom says as a kid he was always interested in how things work, so it wasn't uncommon for him to take things apart and reassemble them. If he's not sure how something works, he researches and finds the answers. One day, our fridge sprung a leak and Thomas discovered the ice maker connector was broken. Water was everywhere and I thought we'd have to buy a new fridge. Within the hour, he had cleaned the mess and ordered a replacement part. The fridge was like new by the end of the week, but the floor on the other hand, took a little more time to recover!

Thomas isn't afraid to try new things. In high school, he played the saxophone, football, golf, and tried welding and automotive classes. In college, he played Ultimate Frisbee and even worked construction for a while. Prior to COVID, Thomas took an Improv class. He enjoyed it so much that he wanted to take the higher level class, which meant auditioning. He gave it a shot and made it! This meant he had to perform in front of an audience. It was fun to see his creative side on stage. He and two other performers played a game called *Three Headed Story*, where each person adds to a story, but they can only speak if they are seated on the "talking stool." By the end, they were nearly knocking each other off of the stool and Thomas almost ended up on the ground! The audience cracked up as they foolishly shoved each other out of the way on stage. Your child will always be encouraged to pursue their passions.



Becoming a Couple

Although we met in high school, **we disagree about how we met.** Jessica believes we met at a basketball game, while Thomas thinks we met at a dance. On one of our first dates we went Cosmic Bowling. During the game Thomas tried to give Jessica her first kiss, but she was too focused on the game and turned her head to see if it was her turn to bowl and missed it. Thomas was crushed! Jessica learned about this later from a friend that saw the whole thing happen. Luckily a little later while taking Jessica home, our first kiss happened.



We attended college together, where we dated on and off. Although we loved attending activities hosted by our university (when we weren't working), like traveling comedians, and dance shows, **our favorite memories are of the annual tree lighting ceremony.** Jessica's freshman year we attended the tree lighting with her entire dormitory hall. We bundled up, got hot cocoa from the coffee shop, and watched as the 123 foot tree was lit up with Christmas lights. We cheered loudly when they lit the tree, and even sang Christmas carols as the marching band played its tunes. This was one of the most well attended events at the university each year. A few years after graduating, we finally got married!

We decided when we got married that adoption was going to be a part of our family story, so we were surprised a couple of years later when we learned that Jessica was pregnant. Nonetheless, we were excited to start our family. Unfortunately, our beautiful boy was stillborn. This experience taught us resiliency and drew us closer together. We have had the great pleasure of encountering adoption in our lives, when **our friend Allie adopted her son, Chance, from China almost six years ago. Getting to see their family relationship grow and change has been one of the most joyous experiences.** We have learned that biology doesn't create a family, love does. We are hopeful to grow our family through adoption and are hopeful to experience this journey with you.



Pets

We both grew up with pets. Thomas had dogs and cats, but Jessica only had cats and fish and always wanted a dog. We knew when we got married that we would definitely bring a dog into our family. Not long after, we found McKinley and rescued him from a local shelter when he was about three months old. He was so tiny the day we brought him home that he couldn't see out of the car window, while riding in Jessica's lap. As McKinley got older, we realized he needed a buddy. We returned to the same shelter and found Rowdy. Actually, Rowdy found us. He wasn't treated very well for the first few months of his life, so when we arrived the director of the shelter, was surprised at how he approached us. He walked right up to us and allowed us to pet him. Soon he was crawling in Jessica's lap. The director said he was normally slow to approach new people, because he wasn't sure he could trust them. We knew right then, that he was coming home with us!



McKinley is a sweet, but lazy dog; however, the moment you say the word “walk” he perks right up. Rowdy is a sweet, snuggly dog, but still has lots of puppy energy. He loves pets, running and playing fetch, and getting his teeth brushed. In fact, each night, **Rowdy rests his head on the bathroom counter and waits patiently for us to brush his teeth.** After we're done, he heads to bed. One time while talking to Thomas, I held my toothbrush down in front of me and Rowdy licked my toothbrush!

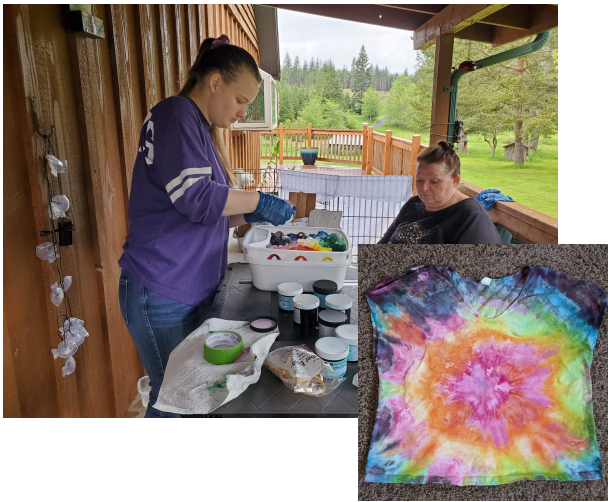
Our boys are sweet with kids. Rowdy loves having someone run and play with him so he loves it when our friends bring their daughter, Sylvia, over. They run around and wear each other out. McKinley is just a chill boy, who loves getting affection and when he has enough will slink off to sleep on our bed. When Sylvia was little, McKinley worried when she cried. He was sure to let a human know she needed help, by coming and poking us with his nose, then walking back over to where she was laying, to lay down next to her, as if to say, “it's ok Sylvia.”



Family

If you choose us, your child will grow up with three grandparents, 5 aunts and uncles, and **4 cousins** with a new cousin on the way!

Our family loves to play games. Sometimes game play is **quite competitive**, while other times it's **downright silly**, and it's **always loud!** Some games we have enjoyed together include *Chutes and ladders*, *Candyland*, and *Unstable Unicorns* (our niece's favorite). Recently we learned of a new game called *Monikers* which is a team game that ends in a round of *Charades*. Watching our friends and family try to act and get their team to guess "100 duck sized horses" without talking ended in hysterical laughter. Our brother-in-law, Rick, tucked his hands into his armpits imitating a bird's wings and began waddling around the room, flapping his wings like a chicken! Your child will have the freedom to be silly and express their creativity.



Our family is all about kids. Thomas's mom is very creative and loves teaching her grandchildren how to draw, paint and sew. Recently, she learned about ice tie dye and taught our nieces. They each brought a few items to dye, a couple of dresses, a denim jacket, and even some panels of fabric for quilting. After drying, they enjoyed unwrapping their colorful creations. They all turned out beautifully and colorfully unique. They had so much fun, they've already begun organizing another dye party.

Our family is so close, we even travel together. Once a year we try to plan a big trip with family. One year we went on a snowy vacation to a little Christmas town where there was a sledding hill right outside of our door. Our niece and nephew convinced Thomas to help make a jump they could sled off of. After about 15 minutes of moving and packing snow **they were able to jump a couple of inches off the ground!** They squealed with excitement the entire ride down! When they were done sledding the kids helped Thomas make hot cocoa for the family. Your child will grow up able to explore new adventures while having meaningful family time.



Family Traditions

At **Thanksgiving**, we usually get together with about 15-20 extended family and **play card and board games**. An annual favorite is *Pinochle*, especially double deck. When Thomas and his brother Jeff get to play as a team, things get goofy! As the dealer deals cards, both lay their cards face down on the table. They jokingly comment that if they get equal numbers of both red and blue cards that they will have a great hand and will bet high. One time it even worked (so they say), because they Shot the Moon! To this day, they still claim it's all because they sorted the cards at the beginning.



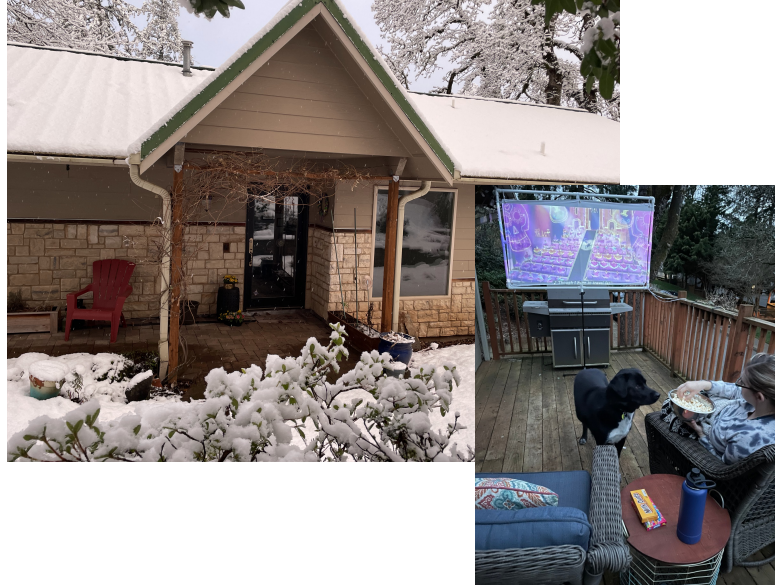
Our sister-in-law is Norwegian and her family has made lefse for generations. They were excited to share their traditions and culture with us. Now **each year, we make lefse together** and we enjoy it at Thanksgiving and Christmas with butter and sugar. One year, we accidentally cracked the kitchen counter from the heat of the lefse griddle! We were all astonished at the long narrow crack it left. Lesson learned! We are much more careful now. We look forward to learning about your favorite traditions so we can include them in our gatherings with your child.

Each December we have a family reunion with all of our extended family, second cousins and great aunts and uncles. The young children exchange gifts with each other, and the adults have their own **White Elephant gift exchange**. The White Elephant gift exchange always starts with a debate on what the rules are and are inevitably different each year. One of the most sought after gifts for several years, has been a puzzle toy that often has scratch cards, money, or a giftcard in it. Two years ago, almost every participant possessed the gift at some point during the game, each of us excited to go home with something useful. Things got competitive and loud! At the last minute, Thomas' brother made one last exchange and won it, as the rest of us collectively groaned in disappointment.



Home and Neighborhood

Our home is in a friendly neighborhood. We enjoy spending quality time as a family outside on our deck in the spring and summer and inside our spacious living room in the fall and winter. Last summer we had a **movie night out on the deck**, bringing pillows, popcorn, and candy for the show. Beforehand, we made a special trip to the store so we could each pick our favorite box of candy (Sour Patch Kids for Jessica and Peanut M&Ms for Thomas), just like they serve at the movies. The feature film was Coco, it was a cute movie and we had such a good time relaxing in the comfort of our own lounge chairs under the stars.



We live in a suburban neighborhood in Oregon with **8 parks within 2 miles of our home**. We love taking the dogs to these parks and letting them run around. We recently attended a Holiday Light Festival at a nearby park with some friends. We had hot chocolate and listened to the bell choir as we walked through the light displays. Afterwards, we went on a scavenger hunt hosted by local small businesses. We excitedly zipped, from place to place, but were most excited to stop in a new family owned bakery. We got a chocolatey treat and talked to the sweet family for a bit. Your child will grow up experiencing community events with friends all around the neighborhood.

Our community has a children's museum with 20 hands-on exhibits and an outdoor discovery area, it's less than 10 minutes from our home! One of the coolest rooms at the museum is the Bubble Room, where you can enclose yourself inside of a giant bubble! When Jessica nannied for our niece and nephew, they would spend forever in there making giant bubbles. Sometimes bribery was the only thing that enticed them to leave. Making a bubble around yourself is actually very difficult. One time, after many unsuccessful attempts **Jessica successfully enclosed herself and our nephew in the bubble**. They left feeling quite accomplished!



Our Weekdays

Jessica is an elementary school teacher and currently teaches fourth and fifth grades. She works at a school close to home and is home by 4:00 PM everyday. She has **summers off** and your child would spend a lot of time with her on summer adventures. She will also receive **extended time off to bond with your child.**



Thomas **works from home** as a Systems Engineer from home and his hours are **flexible** and **predictable**, so he will be able to attend appointments, school activities and will prioritize your child. He will also receive 90 days of paid leave to bond with your child. When we go back to work, Grandma will care for your baby in our home.

We enjoy **taking the dogs for a walk** through our neighborhood **each night**. During our walks, we talk about our day and decompress. Normally we walk the same route nightly, but the other night we decided to walk the opposite direction to see the beautiful Christmas light displays on the other end of the street where all of the houses decorate for the holidays. The house on the corner had several inflatable yard ornaments and the wind had blown over poor Rudolph, so before crossing back over the road Thomas hopped into action and stood him back on his feet. Your child will have daily quality time with family.





Thank You

Thank you for allowing us to share our lives in the pages of this book. We really appreciate you taking the time to consider us as potential adoptive parents for your child. Your child will always know the sacrifice you made for them. **We look forward to maintaining a level of contact** that you are comfortable with throughout the years.

Thomas & Jessica



Family Recipe

Lefse

Ingredients

5 pounds Russet potatoes
1/2 cup sweet cream
1 tsp salt
3 tablespoons butter, melted
1 tablespoon white sugar
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Directions

1. Cook potatoes in skins (without salt)
2. Peel and rice with hot.
3. Add cream, salt and butter and mix well
4. Cool overnight in refrigerator (Do not cover)
5. Add 1 cup flour to 3 cups potatoes and roll into balls (1/3 cup in size)
6. Sprinkle flour on rolling pin and roll out balls until thin and bake on lefse grill
7. When taking off grill, stack up on damp towel
8. Then take each one and lay flat, then turn over before folding
9. Use bread board under hot lefse
10. Spread butter over lefse and sprinkle with sugar. Roll up and serve



Notes

