

Cassie & Paul



with
Archie , Poppy & Zelda



Hello

We want to thank you for taking the time to learn about us. Words can't express how grateful we are that you would consider us as the adoptive parents of your child.

While we can't begin to understand how difficult this time might be for you, we want you to know how incredibly brave and strong we think you are. We imagine this isn't an easy decision, and we admire you for the courage we feel you must have for considering adoption.

We hope the pages that follow give you insight into who we are and will help you with your decision. We thank you for considering us and wish you the best of luck on your journey.



About Us

One of the interests we discovered early on together was cooking. One of our first times cooking together we decided to make a lasagna. Neither of us had done anything this extensive before, and that should have been telling. We started with the sauce, chopping and grating ingredients, making a thickener, and then reducing it. What we didn't realize is that this would be an hours-long process, not including cooking the meat, assembling the lasagna, and putting it in the oven. By the time it came out of the oven, it was ten o'clock at night, we were starving, and Cassie's small kitchen apartment was a mess. It wasn't bad, but it definitely wasn't worth the eightish hours it took to make! Now, a much simpler lasagna recipe is a regular meal in our house.



We enjoy gardening. Both of us grew up growing some sort of vegetables in the summers. We had talked about starting our own, and finally went for it last summer. Since last summer, we've expanded our garden by adding some new plants and growing herbs. We have one tomato that is trying to compete with our maple tree for the largest plant in the front yard! It has many budding tomatoes and we're looking forward to putting them to good use in our favorite dishes, and moving into our next adventure; canning & pickling.



We love spending time at the zoo. We recently decided to get a membership to our zoo so we could visit more often. Cassie's sister works at the zoo in their education department and she gives us early notice on big events there. Using that insider information, last year Cassie and her friend, along with her friend's children, were able to visit right when the baby tiger cubs made their public debut! The cubs were very eager to explore their new habitat, much to the surprise and delight of the guests and the zoo staff.

At one point, one of the cubs ventured a bit too close to the viewing glass for mom's comfort, so she picked him up and took him out of view for a time out! Your child will spend many wonderful days at the zoo.



Cassie



Cassie **spends a good chunk of her free time with a book in her hand.** Her first distinct reading memory is of *Little House in the Big Woods*. Recently one of her favorite authors, Mary Higgins Clark, released a new book. Cassie was particularly excited about this one since the author passed away in 2020 and Cassie has missed reading new books from her. This one had been started before her passing, and finished up by another author. It was as good as Cassie expected, with one of those twists Mary Higgins Clark was always famous for. Your child will be encouraged to explore their world through the magic of books.



Though she hasn't always been the best cook, Cassie has always had **an interest in baking.** She regularly practices her baking skills, starting out with family favorites like banana bread and moved into her grandmother's cookie recipes. Recently, she has really gotten into bread making and has had great success. We would love to learn some of your favorite recipes to include in your child's life.



Cassie **enjoys working out,** doing strength training and yoga. Recently during a workout one of the blocks was two exercises with the repetitions decreasing each round from 10 to 1. The class had five minutes to get as far down as they could. One of the class members commented that it wasn't possible. Cassie saw this as a challenge. She got all the way through, sweat dripping and out of breath, with about 25 seconds to spare! Members of the second group were so impressed and inspired, that three of them also finished all the reps in the five minute time, including the guy who said it couldn't be done!

Paul

Whether it is card games, board games, or video games (his favorite), **he is a gaming junkie**. One of our nephews was recently introduced to the video game Minecraft. Paul, also loving Minecraft, joined in and they were able to voice-chat over the internet while playing. Our nephew was so excited to be playing with someone other than just his dad. Paul happily followed him around in the game while being shown everything our nephew had made or found. You could hear Paul saying “oh cool!” and “you made that yourself? That’s awesome!” while they spent hours of quality time.

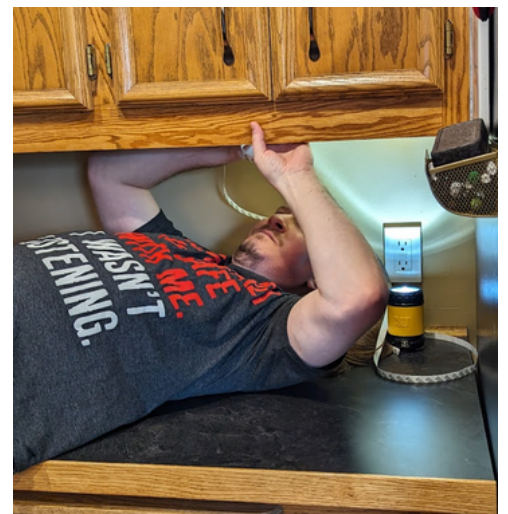


Paul wrestled from a young age, all the way through college. While **he may be an armchair wrestler now, his love of the sport has never waned**. For his birthday, Cassie surprised him with tickets and a planned trip to the Division III wrestling national tournament. He was ecstatic, and talked about how much he was looking forward to it every day until we went. While his alma mater didn’t win the national title, they still placed highly, with several earning all-american honors. It was still a great tournament for the team, and fun to watch! Your child will have the opportunity to pursue whatever interests them.



Paul has always been a **“fix it himself first” kind of person**.

When Cassie wanted new light fixtures on the front of the house, he was happy to install new ones, on the condition that he could get color changing light bulbs to go in them. Thankfully it wasn’t as complicated as we thought it might have been. Cassie’s arms got sore from holding the light fixtures up while Paul connected the wires and fastened them down. He got it done and now we are able to change the color of our front lights at least once a month to coordinate with the season or holiday.

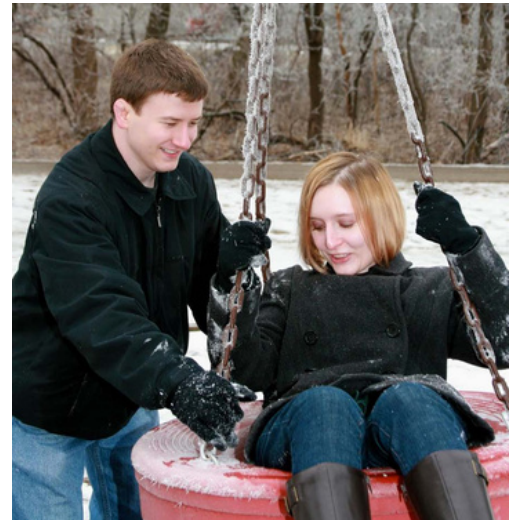


Becoming a Couple

We officially met through college friends. Cassie's roommate from college, whom she was living with at the time, was dating Paul's college roommate. One year, Cassie and her roommate hosted a Christmas party for a bunch of friends. Having seen her before Paul was looking forward to having a chance to speak with her more at the party. Unfortunately, a group board game made getting to know Cassie very awkward. We continued spending time together in our group. Cassie's suspicion that Paul was interested became more evident when Paul invited her to his place for a Super Bowl party. However, Cassie began to have doubts when Paul barely paid any attention to her for the first half of a party. Her worries were for nothing, as Paul finally sat next to her for the game and we spent more time talking than watching. Our relationship was sealed when Paul called Cassie a few days later and asked her for a date.



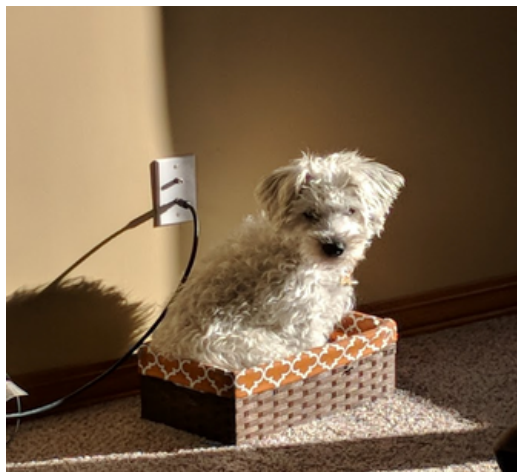
Our paths intertwined so many times before we finally connected through our roommates. Paul had been a high school wrestler and remembered a young high school girl working with the athletic trainer who taped up his thumb after an injury. As it turns out, that was Cassie! Another time while going through old photos, we came across one of Cassie at her college job working at the front desk at the dormitory. Paul recognized Cassie as the one who helped him get back into his friend's residence hall. We knew each other before we even realized it! Paul still thinks that Cassie must have thought he was cute back when she let him into the dorm. Why else would she have done it?



We always knew we wanted to expand our family. After years of trying, including fertility treatments and procedures, we were told that it was unlikely that we would be able to have a child on our own. This was not easy to hear. We exhausted our treatment options and were told that continuing was highly unlikely to result in a baby. **We then spoke with several adoptive parents, and realized that adoption was the path we were meant to be on.** Here we are, and we are hopeful to join you on your journey.

Archie, Poppy & Zelda

We both grew up with dogs, and love and cherish our furry friends. After a year of marriage, we grew our family to three, with our schnoodle (mini poodle/mini schnauzer mix) Archie. A couple years later, after getting a house of our own, we needed another furry friend, so we got Teddy, our first Bernese Mountain Dog. He kept us smiling through the ups and downs of life but he died unexpectedly in July 2024. We all miss him in our own ways, even Archie. A chance meeting with a nearby breeder led us to add Poppy and Zelda to our family over Labor Day weekend of 2024. We weren't sure about taking on a new furry family member so soon, much less two, but we knew we had more than enough love and patience to welcome both girls into our family so we brought them home.



Sometimes we think that Archie is part-cat, because **he loves sunning himself so much**. In warm weather he's often laid out on the back deck catching as many rays as he can. In the winter, he will find the sliver of sunlight that makes it through the front windows. He follows the sun around the house to the various windows it's coming through at any given time of day. We joke that he's our own furry sundial! One winter day, he was pulling every toy out of his little wicker toy box, then just sat in the box! He found the only bit of sun coming through the windows at that time of day was on the box, and made sure he didn't miss any of it.

As puppies, Poppy & Zelda have shown very different personalities. **Despite their differences, both girls love people, including several small children** they have met in our neighborhood. They have been very gentle during these encounters. Poppy was initially the more spunky one, but has started to mellow and become more affectionate. She is still more independent and definitely the throw-herself-into-a-situation-and-figure-it-out-later personality. She is also incredibly smart, which has made early and consistent training a must with her! Zelda is more timid and cautious, but falls in love with humans very quickly. At home she is the trouble maker and always trying to start up a game, whether Archie and Poppy are interested or not! She will do anything to keep herself awake so she doesn't miss anything.



Family

*If you choose us, your child will grow up with 4 grandparents, 16 aunts and uncles, and **20 cousins**.*



Our family **loves animals, especially dogs**. On Thanksgiving watching the National Dog Show has become an annual tradition. Someone is always keeping watch for their favorite breeds and calling out when they are on the screen, like football plays in a game. Everyone rushes in from whatever room they're in, oohing and ahing at the screen and making noises at the dogs on the television, telling them that they are 'such good dogs' (as if the dogs can hear them). The race from different rooms to see which dog is on has lessened now that we have the ability to pause the show.



Our family **can be competitive**. At holiday gatherings with Paul's family, everyone brings a wrapped gift for a gift exchange game. Once all the gifts have been doled out with everyone having at least one, the gifts are unwrapped and shown to everyone. That's when a timer is set for about five minutes where everyone tries to roll doubles with dice. This round can get very intense because now when a person rolls double, they can trade what they have for someone else's gift. Some get sneaky in trying to hide what they have behind their leg in an effort to keep it from getting stolen, while others have used this game as a way to give away things from their own homes. This is how our Christmas village acquired a museum and bed and breakfast building. Cassie was particularly excited to get these, since she has always wanted to build a Christmas village like the one a neighbor had when she was growing up.



We **love playing games**. Paul's friend Eric and his wife get so competitive with each other, we have had to switch to playing mostly collaborative games with them where we are all working together. Most of the games we play have been introduced to us by Paul's college friend Caleb and his wife. We then share those games with our other friend groups. Cassie took one of the games, *Bohnanza!*, to a gathering with her girlfriends recently and it was a huge hit. They all got very competitive and started forming alliances with and against each other. Now it is a must do at any of her girls' nights. Your child will have a support system who is always ready to play.

Traditions

We heard about **the Jack O'Lantern Spectacular at the zoo** and decided to try it. Each year has a theme with the pumpkins displaying carvings that show off the theme. Last year's theme was the library, and every carving had a famous book or story carved on it. This theme really struck a chord with Cassie, given her love of books and that she had just started working at the library. Some of our favorite ones were Aslan from the Chronicles of Narnia, Charlie Brown and the Great Pumpkin, Edgar Allan Poe, and our favorite that graced the entrance, the Headless Horseman from the Legend of Sleepy Hollow. We were so enthralled when we left that Paul said he couldn't wait to go back. Cassie responded, "Looks like we've got another yearly tradition".



The Minnesota Reinassiance Festival holds a special place in our hearts, as Paul proposed to Cassie there. Now it is a tradition for us to attend every year to visit the fairy garden where he sat down on a bench and asked Cassie the big question. One year we invited Cassie's sister and her husband to come with us. Cassie's sister was so enamored with the pottery tent, specifically the pig pen full of piggy banks. Instead of saying piggy banks for sale, it advertised **"rescuing" a piggy bank**. Cassie's sister couldn't resist and rescued one for herself. Cassie laughed as her sister excitedly yelled through the crowd, "look at him! he's so cute!" as she waited in line to "rescue" her piggy.



Carrying on her grandmother's tradition, **Cassie, her sister and her mom bake Christmas cookies each year**. They even use the same recipes her grandmother used. As a way to stay connected during the pandemic, they held a socially distanced cookie exchange. They chatted together to coordinate who wanted to make what, and made enough so they could split amongst themselves. Cassie went a bit overboard and had so many cookies that we ended up giving packages to other friends and family so we weren't still eating Christmas cookies in February! We look forward to learning about your traditions to include in our gatherings as well as our everyday cooking for your child.



Home & Neighborhood



Our favorite part of our Minnesota home, or at least the place where we spend the most time, is our open living, kitchen, and dining area. There are windows throughout these rooms, which lets in lots of natural light so most days we don't even have to turn on any lights. Cassie loves watching the birds come and go from the feeders and the bird bath. During dinner recently, Paul saw a big brown something flying around out the front window. He noticed it landed on the roof across the street and when he got up to see what it was, he saw **it was a bald eagle!** We paused dinner, grabbed our phones, and sat outside for a good fifteen minutes just watching and marveling at him before he flew away.

Whether in the fenced backyard enjoying meals, taking care of the flowers and vegetable gardens, or just relaxing, getting outside is a regular part of our routine. We frequent the multitude of nearby trails and parks nearby on a daily basis. **The network of trails and parks has been a great way to network with our neighbors.** We met many of them on our walks and now often stop for chats about everything from our dogs to Paul's passion for wrestling, which we found out one of our neighbors also shares. Your child will have daily opportunities to explore the neighborhood and play at the many playgrounds and parks close by.



Minnesota is full of **state and county parks** near and far where we have spent time **hiking, ice fishing, and** most recently, **camping.** Last summer we traveled to Gooseberry Falls State Park in the very northern part of the state to camp for two days. The first night Cassie was 'eaten alive' by the very aggressive mosquitos. We coated her with calamine/anti itch cream and after breakfast cooked over a campfire, we visited the visitor center to take in some of the history surrounding the falls before hiking to see the falls themselves. There are five sets of falls, which make for a lot of time in nature. On our way down we hiked along the shore of Lake Superior for some beautiful views (and a cooling breeze) before returning to our campsite for a well earned meal.

Weekdays

Paul works in software consulting and is lucky to **work from home** full-time. His schedule can be **flexible** which allows him to occasionally work earlier or later if needed. He is able to step out of the bedroom we converted into a home office to chat with Cassie and take care of the dogs. He is also able to help out with small chores during the day as well as help prepare meals and run errands.



Cassie currently works **part-time** as a media clerk at a nearby elementary school. Her job allows her to be home most afternoons to take care of chores, spend time with our puppies, and Paul. It also gives her time to do things she enjoys like reading or puttering with our plants. She has **extended school breaks** and **summers off**, which will allow her to spend every summer uninterrupted with your child.



After eating dinner together each night, we enjoy settling in to watch a show together. Like many of our dinner recipes, we cycle through our favorite shows so when we decide to watch something new, it has to be something pretty good for us to be willing to give it a go. Recently we added "Only Murders in the Building" to our repertoire. Cassie had heard good reviews of the show and is a fan of Steve Martin and Martin Short. We sat down one evening and gave it a try and we were hooked by the second episode. We watched the whole first season in just a few days! What was just as exciting was the fact that Paul couldn't guess the ending, which is a rarity! Your child will have quality family time every day.



With Gratitude

We want to thank you once more for taking the time to learn about us. We hope our book has answered your questions and given you a picture of who we are, and what your child's life would be like with us. It is our **hope to share updates and photos of your child's life** as they grow. We wish you all the best through your journey.

Paul
+
Pamie

