

# Nicki + Sam

and Ruby





# Hello!



## **Thank you for taking the time to read our book and learn about our little family.**

Our journey to this moment has been filled with many emotions, and because of that, we would never pretend to know exactly what you are feeling right now. We think it takes a strong and compassionate heart to consider the route of adoption, and we are honored you are considering us.

Our daughter, Ruby, was a surprise blessing, but when it came time to grow our family again, we faced unexpected challenges. With

each step, we held onto hope that this would be the time it worked—but the universe had other plans for us!

No matter what you decide, we want you to know that we support you and your choice for you and your child. If you choose us, please know we are committed to walking this journey with you. Whether that is sharing photos or updates, we would love to have an ongoing relationship with you.



# our Story



The story of how we met didn't come with dramatic music or a slow-motion moment; it was just two people meeting the way a lot of others do... on **Tinder**. True to our Midwestern roots, our first date was at a BBQ restaurant. Sam felt that Nicki asked the real questions; the kind that go beyond small talk. Nicki, on the other hand, quickly realized there was a lot more to Sam than first impressions might suggest. But if you'd asked her at the end of that date what she thought would happen next, she'd have told you she'd pretty much written off the possibility of a second one. He seemed quiet, polite, and maybe not all that interested as they said goodbye in the parking lot. Turns out, she was wrong! She was surprised when he reached out to see her again.

At the time, Sam worked in restaurants, so we squeezed in weekend brunches and dinners whenever his schedule allowed. A few months in, we decided to take a short trip together. After some bike rides, museum visits, great meals, and strolls through a charming historic downtown, we decided we didn't completely drive each other crazy, so we took that as a good sign!

Just after our first Christmas and New Year's Eve together, we got a beautiful surprise pregnancy! A few months later, when COVID shut everything down, including Sam's restaurant, the world slowed to a halt. But in that stillness, we found something special: time. Time to prepare, to dream, and to grow closer as we waited for our daughter's arrival. Her birth became the bright spot in a dark season and bonded us in ways we'll always treasure.

While we're not married, we've been in a committed relationship for nearly seven years and choose each other and our family every single day.







**Silly photos are  
our Favorite!!**





# Hey, I'm Nicki



## A FEW FAVORITES:

**Attending baseball  
games with Sam**

**Sharing Costco's divine  
chocolate cupcakes  
with Ruby**

**The peaceful stillness  
that comes with  
falling snow**

**Summers in Colorado**

**Snuggles with Ruby**

**Reading**

I grew up in a small town about 45 minutes from a major Midwestern city, where everyone knew everyone and Friday night football was practically a religion. My sister, who's 10 and a half years older, was like a second mom—minus the authority, plus the fun—and we've always been incredibly close. My childhood was pure small-town Americana: high school football on Friday nights (I was the geek in the marching band waving and flipping the flags around), Homecoming parades taken too seriously, bonfires, biking across town, afternoons in the woods, late night reading, and summers at the pool. My hometown helped shape the person and parent I am today, and I hope my children will have the opportunity to create similar experiences and memories where we live.

**While I loved growing up in my hometown, traveling cracked my world wide open.** My high school Spanish teacher organized a trip to Mexico, and my dad, sister, and I went, and I was hooked. New landscapes, different people, the history, and the food. How do you go back to small-town life after that? I've been to 11 countries since, and every time I cross one off my list, I know it will never be enough. I'm





endlessly curious about places, people, and everything that makes them unique. I hope to instill this hunger for travel in our children, so they can learn about life beyond the small environment we live in.

**This same curiosity is why I love reading.** Books have always been my passport to different worlds. I majored in English Literature in college because, well, what better excuse to read all day? The catch, of course, is that unless you want to be a teacher, I didn't, an English Lit degree doesn't exactly lend itself to an obvious career path. But analyzing characters' motives, their quirks, their messy human flaws appealed to me in ways that pointed me toward my career.

**That's how I landed where I am now as a high school counselor, and I know it is where I'm meant to be.**

My job is a mash-up of everything: one minute I'm helping a kid figure out college applications or financial aid, the next I'm walking someone through a fight with their parents or sitting with them through grief. It's messy, unpredictable, and sometimes flat-out exhausting, but it's also deeply human. What other job lets you look a person in the eye and say, "You matter," and actually mean it? Becoming a counselor was one of the most defining decisions of my life. The bonus of working in a school setting is that our children and I will share school breaks and summers, which we fill with adventures to new places or playing at the pool together.



# Hi, I'm Sam

I grew up just outside a small Midwestern “city,” with a big yard, lots of woods, a creek, and a little pond out back—a perfect place to run, explore, and imagine. As a result, most of my childhood was spent outside running around in the woods with our dog and friends. We had lots of family nearby and got together often, whether it was for a big occasion or just because. Family has always been a huge part of my life, and that hasn’t changed. These two aspects of my childhood- the outdoors and proximity to family- shaped me into who I am today. It influences how I parent, and what I want to share with my children.



## A FEW FAVORITES:

**Spending time with family**

**Being outdoors and enjoying nature**

**Pizza**

**Telling dad jokes – the cheesier, the better**

**Being creative, whether it's in the kitchen,  
building something, or sketching**

**Cooking weekend breakfasts**







**I've always loved sports, being outdoors, and exploring new places.** There's a certain thrill and challenge in competition and physical activity, and I'm constantly inspired by new experiences. Before selling my motorcycle last year, I had ridden through 17 states, visited 32 in total, and traveled to 9 different countries. I'm equally inspired by the beauty of the natural world and the creativity of the built one. I love hiking and camping just as much as admiring architecture and cityscapes, and I can't wait to take my kids camping some day. Sunsets and sunrises are beautiful everywhere, but I've always had a fondness for the moon and stars; they remind me of a song my grandma used to sing. I sing this same song to Ruby, and I hope to sing it to her sibling one day.

**During the COVID pandemic, I transitioned from a career in the restaurant industry to a position as a commercial real estate appraiser for our county.** In this position, I'm able to draw on my background in construction and architecture while providing a greater work life balance and the opportunity to be more present for my family. This wasn't possible when I worked in the restaurant industry. I take great pride in my work as an appraiser and deeply value the time I have to support Nicki and our children as we grow together as a family.





# meet our daughter Ruby



**Ruby is a 5-year-old bursting with endless energy!** She has wanted a sibling since she first understood the idea, and we often catch her practicing her “big sister” skills with her dolls. She loves books—especially now that she has her very own library card—and is the social butterfly of our household, making friends everywhere she goes. Truly, she’s a ball of sunshine and giggles. We teach her that our family is a team: while Momma and Dada are usually the captains, Ruby sometimes gets the chance to lead (though she’d happily be captain all the time!). She has changed our lives in the most wonderful way! She cannot wait to be a big sister, and we can already envision hours of dress-up in our future.







## She Loves

- Costco chocolate cupcakes
- Gabby's Dollhouse, Ghost-Spider, and Bluey
- Giggles
- Tooting on her parents
- Helping and playing with younger kids
- Books





# Making Memories

(family traditions)



## First Day of School Tradition:

Every year on Nicki's first day of school, she and Ruby celebrate with an after-school ice cream date. Someday, when it's Ruby's first day of school, they'll carry on that same tradition together.



## Fall & Holiday Fun:

The fall season kicks off with visits to pumpkin patches, apple picking, and making apple butter (and apple everything). After Thanksgiving's full bellies, we head out to find the perfect live Christmas tree—while Sam wisely stays quiet as Nicki and Ruby examine every tree in sight. Twinkling lights bring so much joy to our home!





### **Christmas Morning:**

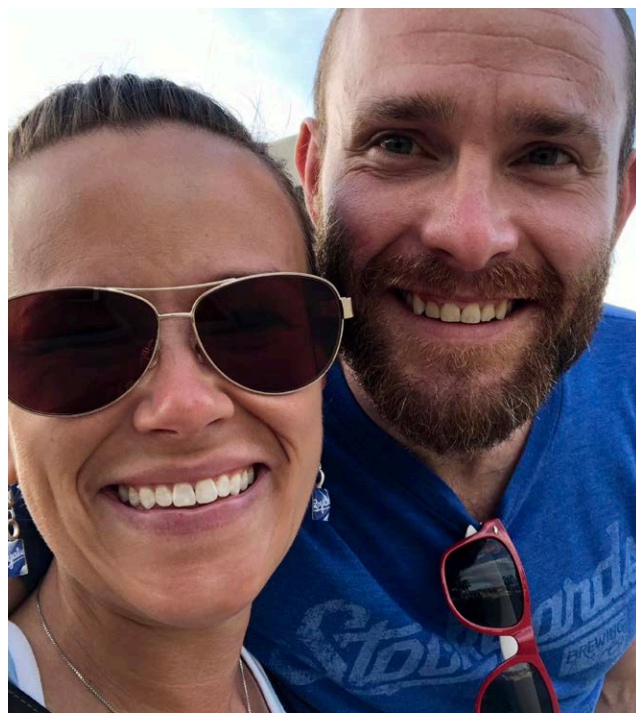
Christmas means lots of family time, but Christmas morning is always spent at home, waiting to see if Santa and his reindeer enjoyed the treats Ruby left out. Our home is always open to anyone who wants to join us that afternoon.

### **Summer Gatherings:**

Both sides of our family host large summer get-togethers, and we usually spend a couple of weeks in Colorado enjoying time with family, fresh mountain air, and plenty of laughter.



# Together is our Favorite place to be



## What Nicki loves best about Sam

Sam has this uncanny knack for seeing things from a completely different angle than I ever would. His patience defines him, and it's what allows him to really look at a person and truly listen. And let's be honest, how many people do you know who actually stop and give someone their full attention? He does. Every time. He makes people feel seen. He's also the kind of person who would give you the shirt off his back- probably before you even realized you needed it. I also love that we're total nerds together watching Marvel marathons, Star Wars opening weekends, you name it. But the thing I love most about him? Watching him be Ruby's dad. He was simply meant for the role of Dad. From day one, it seemed to come naturally to him. He'd take the early morning shift, sitting with her before the sun was up, chatting about the birds outside the window, or making up ridiculous rhyming poems on the spot. How could my heart not melt watching that? In many ways, Sam is a big kid himself, which is perfect for Ruby. And let's be honest, when you're raising a strong-willed, sassy child (who may or may not get it from her mother), that kind of patience is essential.



# What Sam loves best about Nicki

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She has a beautiful smile, bright eyes, and a cute nose to match. I love that she's easy to talk to, yet more interested in meaningful conversations than superficial ones—the kind that really help you get to know someone. Family and friendships are extremely important to her, and she values the quality of those relationships far more than the quantity. She's compassionate, caring, and deeply empathetic. Like me, she loves to travel and explore, and she's well-spoken, well-read, and able to hold a conversation about almost anything.

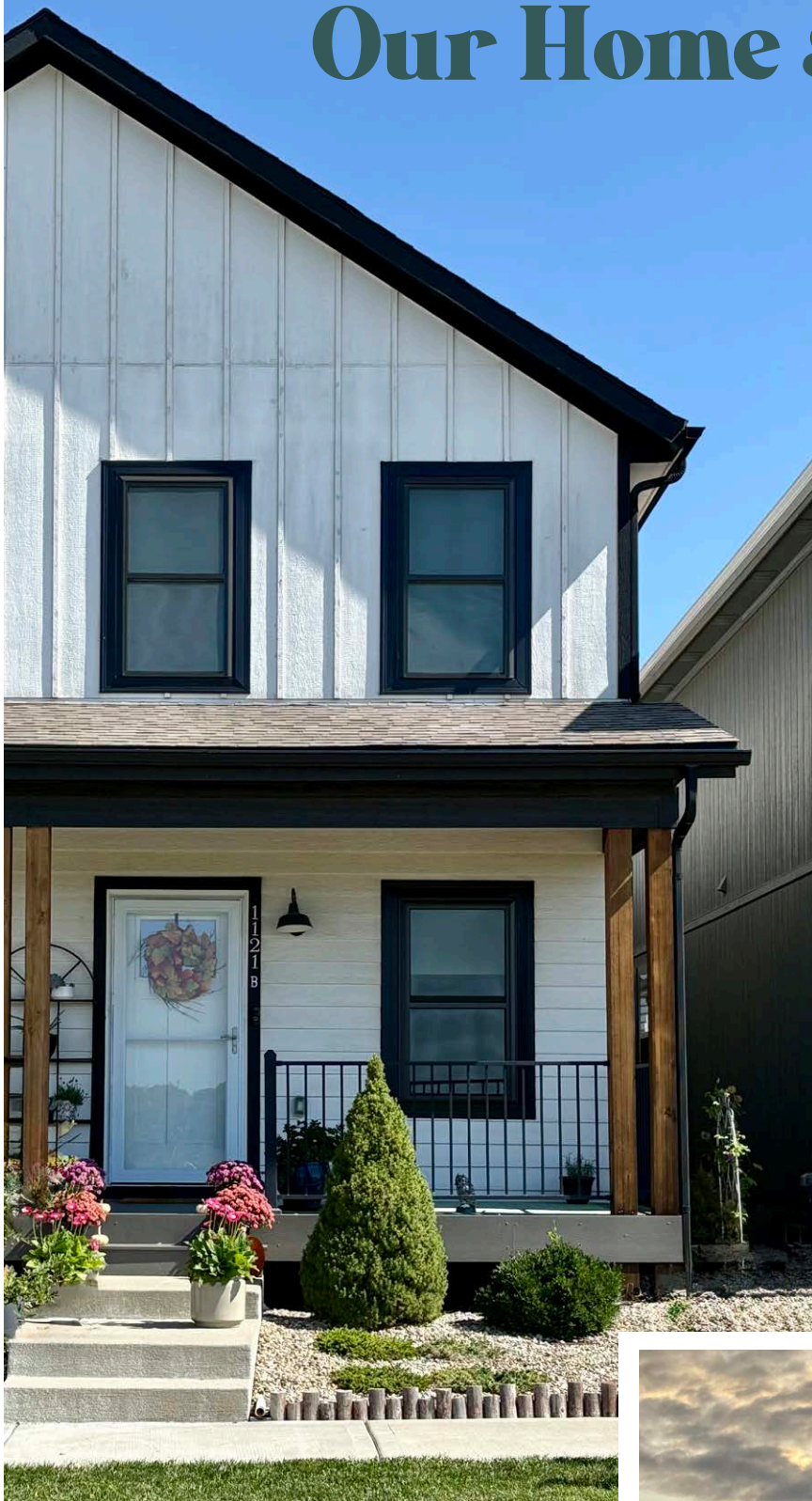
Good health is a priority for her—not just through cooking and eating well, but also by treating herself with self-respect. I love how she wants to raise our daughter to be self-aware, confident, compassionate, independent, and strong. And she's funny too. Her quick wit and dry sense of humor always make me laugh, and her laugh and smile never fail to make me smile in return.





# Our Home & Community

We live about 25 minutes from a big city, which means we can easily pop in for museums, fun festivals, or a night out at a new restaurant. At the same time, our neighborhood feels like it's tucked away in the country. Out our front door is an open field with beautiful sunsets, just to the left is a tree farm, and we have our own sledding hills which are hours of fun in the winter. It's the best of both worlds!



**The view  
from our  
front door!**







Our community is big on celebrating just about everything. For example, we have our own Easter Egg Hunt each year in the neighborhood green space where kids can love on the sweetest baby chicks and bunnies while dashing about to find candy filled eggs. The green space also has a stage for bands, potlucks, and holiday gatherings, and serves for plenty of imaginary play for the neighborhood kids. It is filled with young children which is ideal for our family. We love evening walks around the neighborhood, while Ruby zips around on her scooter or bike leaving us in her dust. We picked this neighborhood, because it would be idyllic for our children and everything it could offer them.





I have one older sister, Michelle, who is 10 and a half years older, and we share an incredibly close bond. We even worked at the same school for 15 years, see each other often, and talk almost daily. I'm also very close to my dad, Mike, and feel lucky to have him in my life, along with his long-time partner, Janis. One of our greatest blessings is that we all live within 20 minutes of each other. My niece Katelyn and her husband, Jeff, live about an hour away and visit monthly, which Ruby loves. They're expecting their

first child soon, and Ruby can't wait for her new cousin. Beyond that, I have a wonderful extended family across the country, and we gather at least once a year. We don't get to see each other as often as we'd like, but when we are together, it's effortless—we simply pick up right where we left off. Our time is filled with laughter, games, stories, and the joy of simply being together. My family is thrilled that we're growing our family, and I can't wait to see them surround our second child with their love and support.





# Sam's Family



My sister and I were lucky to grow up with lots of immediate and extended family nearby, and we often got to see those who didn't live as close—think family road trips or giving up your bed to sleep on the couch when someone came to visit. We still have an annual potluck family reunion, as well as a weeklong get-together each summer. There are also holidays, birthdays, weekend lunches, and plenty of “just because we can” occasions. Sometimes there are a lot of us, and sometimes just a few, but there's always love and good home-cooked food. My sister and her husband have three kids,

and we've always been close. She was influential in where I went to college, and for a while, my sister and I even lived next door to each other while we were both still in college. Our daughter adores her cousins, and we spend as much time with them as we can. My parents are divorced, but they both still live in my hometown, just a couple of hours away. They frequently visit to stay the night, attend our daughter's events or performances, or simply share a meal with us. We talk often, they always show up when needed, and are excited about another grandkid to spoil.





# Why we hope to adopt

Parenthood took us by surprise, and it's been the most incredible adventure. We knew early on that we wanted to grow our family, but even with fertility treatments, another pregnancy just wasn't meant to be. Adoption had always been in our hearts—Nicki has long been drawn to the idea of supporting another woman through such a meaningful journey, and Sam has cousins who joined their families through adoption. What started as a possibility gradually became the path that felt right for us.



**Thank you**  
for getting to know us a little!



**Wishing you all the best, no matter  
where this journey leads you.**

*Warmly,  
Nicki & Sam*