



Mike, Henry, and Elaine

Dear Birth Parents,

We have never met you, but we understand that you are making a difficult decision. We hope that you are able to find the support and love that you need as you face this challenge.

We are Mike and Elaine. We met in 2004 and have built a strong relationship filled with love, laughter, and a deep commitment to each other. We are incredibly fortunate to have a son—Henry—and would love to grow our family through adoption. Henry is also very eager to have a brother or sister.

On the pages that follow, we have included a lot of information about our family in the hopes that you will get to know us. We have shared details about who we are, the incredible blessing that Henry is to us, and the joy we share each day in our lives.

We hope it will give you a sense of how deeply we value the importance of family and how much we look forward to sharing our lives with another child.

We have thought carefully about the profound and lifelong connection between a child and their birth parents. We look forward to finding ways to honor and cherish that connection with you.



Our Wedding



Our wedding day

We met about ten years ago and were married in 2008 at a local county farm. We were excited to be surrounded by our family and friends as we took this important step in deepening our relationship. During the ceremony, our parents and siblings shared stories about us before we made our vows.



With our parents



(Left) Elaine with Danielle, Anne, and Maria, three friends from graduate school. They have collaborated on many art projects together.

(Below) Mike with his friend Abib. They met when both were hiking in Patagonia. They have since hiked together many times.

We were thrilled that so many of our closest friends were able to join us at our wedding. In addition to being there to offer their love and support, we were so pleased when different friends offered to design our invitations, provide the music for the ceremony, and even make our wedding cake.



One of the reasons that we chose this location for our wedding was that we hoped to be able to return there in the future. We take an annual trip there with Henry. We love being able to picnic on the grounds and see the farm animals.



Becoming Parents



Henry (a few weeks old)

We are so blessed to be parents. Having Henry in our lives has brought us such deep joy as we have watched him learn to walk, talk, grow, and take on new challenges. We are incredibly happy to offer Henry guidance and love as he learns how to navigate the world. Each day is a surprise—he always teaches us something new with how he understands the world.



We knew that having a child would be a life-changing experience, but neither of us imagined just how rewarding being a parent would be nor how it would enable us to deepen our commitment to each other.



Our profound love for being parents has led us to adoption. We would love to have a second child, and we have learned that it is not biologically possible. Once we realized this, we began to investigate adoption. We both know we will provide the same love and dedication to parenting your baby that we do to parenting Henry.

We each plan to take a parental leave when a new baby arrives. After this, we plan to hire an in-home caregiver, as we did with Henry until he started school. Since Elaine works at a school, she also has a very long summer vacation that allows her to be home.

Henry (age 3)
helping
"Bangbidang"
eat his cereal



Henry often speaks about his desire for a little brother or sister. Sometimes he pretends that a doll or stuffed animal is his sibling. Other days, he talks about his friends who have a brother or a sister, asking when he too can have one. We would love to be able to tell him that a brother or sister is joining our family.

An Introduction to Mike



Mike and Henry (age 4) after swimming

One of my greatest joys in being a parent is rediscovering many of the things that I loved to do as a boy. I grew up in suburban Philadelphia with my parents, brother, and sister. I have fond memories of being outside playing sports and other games with our friends and neighbors. Being a parent to Henry has rekindled the pleasure of playing all sorts of games, from catch to soccer to swings.



Henry (age 4) riding his bike

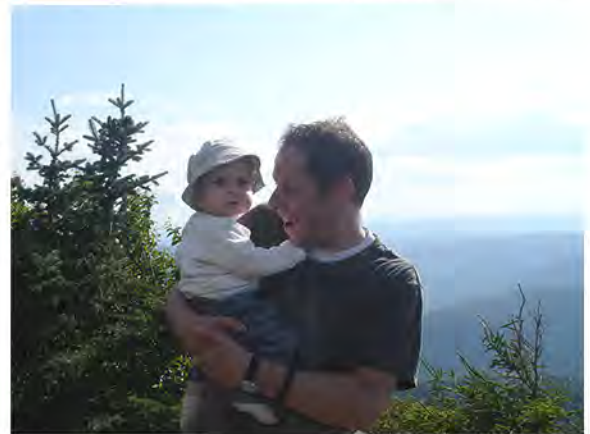
From childhood to adulthood, bike riding has always been a big part of my life. When I was younger, I used to cruise around my neighborhood. As an adult, I go on long rides. Now as a dad, I deeply enjoy riding with Henry to school in the morning and watching him learn to ride his two wheeler.

Mike & Henry
(age 4) on their
way to Henry's
preschool



I work as a geographer and statistician for a local government agency. My work brings together my passions for maps, math, and working with others. These interests were fostered by my parents. My parents not only instilled in me the value of education, but also taught me the importance of helping others and making the world a more fair and equal place.

I am incredibly fortunate to have married Elaine. She shares similar values, supports me in my endeavors, and makes me laugh. Every day, I feel blessed to have the good fortune of sharing my life with Henry and Elaine and to be surrounded by kind and generous friends and family.



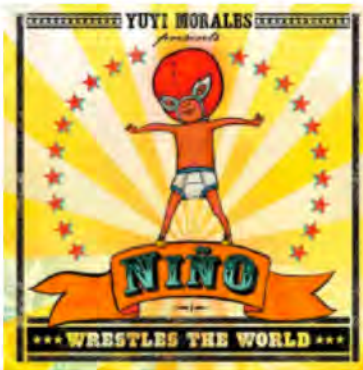
An Introduction to Elaine

When I was a child, I always loved to read. Reading is a passion that I have continued to enjoy into adulthood and my career as an elementary school librarian. One thing I love about my job is helping the children at my school learn to love books and reading. As a result, I spend a lot of time reading books out loud to class groups visiting the library.

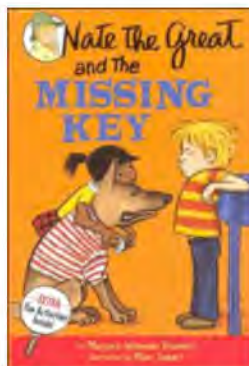


Elaine at the Botanical Gardens

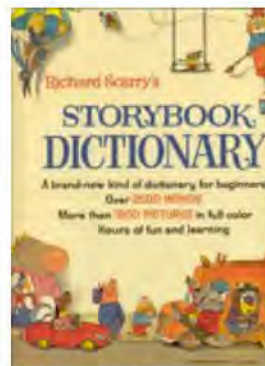
Sharing my love of books with Henry has been even more exciting. Each week, I bring home a new stack of library books for us to read together. Some of his current favorites are:



Niño Wrestles the World



Nate the Great



Richard Scarry's Storybook Dictionary



Amazing Grace

We read together every night before bed and often during the day as well.

I love to travel. One of my most amazing trips was when my friend Yesha invited me to travel to India with her to visit her family.

I am also an avid baker. Some of my favorite recipes are molasses cookies, homemade pizza, and, of course, cake. Each year, I make a different cake for Henry's birthday, and he gets to choose the recipe.



Elaine with her friend Yesha in India

I have two sisters, and am incredibly lucky to have had so much support and love from my parents throughout my life. Everyone is very excited about our plans to adopt!

Each day with Mike and Henry is filled with joy and laughter. Starting a family with Mike has been a true blessing because of all of his warmth and humor.



Chocolate frosting and chocolate cake for Henry's third birthday



Henry at his second birthday party. His grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins all joined us to celebrate

An Introduction to Henry



First day of kindergarten

Henry is a student at a nearby elementary school that has a dual language Spanish program. His teacher is bilingual and alternates between teaching entirely in English one day and Spanish the next day. The children who attend are a mix of those who speak only English at home, only Spanish at home, or some combination of both.

Henry loves going to school and comes home eager to show us what he learns. For example, he might sing for us *La Pequeña Araña* (The Itsy Bitsy Spider) or count in Spanish. Other times he tells us about what plants need in order to grow or explains the book his teacher read to him. We are very excited about how engaged Henry is with school and that he will become bilingual over the next few years.



Henry's teacher and classmates in his school's Halloween parade





Henry using a coping saw

Henry is also enrolled in an after school woodworking class. Each week, he spends time there learning the basics of tools, such as a hammer, a vice, and a coping saw. He's had a lot of fun making a spider, a Darth Vader action figure, and a ninja.

Henry has always liked to build things, and our home is usually filled with the latest of his structures. There might be a construction site, farm, or a subway system set up in our apartment. He has lots of legos, train tracks, and race tracks. We are lucky to have a beautiful wooden set of

blocks that Henry's grandfather made. Mike played with them as a child and so have many of Henry's cousins.



One of Henry's after school creations: a spider



Train tracks, race tracks, and tunnels built by Henry



At left, our friend Yesha showing Henry how to make paper butterflies

Since Mike loves to cycle, he has had a lot of fun introducing Henry to riding a bike. When Henry was 3 (at right), he rode without any pedals. He learned how to push the bike with his feet and balance it. Now he is very proud to be riding a regular 2-wheeler.



Henry is very excited about super heroes, Star Wars, and other imaginative characters. He loves running around the playground with his friends and pretending that he is Spider Man, Darth Maul, or a character he made up. We encourage this kind of play by making sure he has the materials to create different costumes.



Family Time

We are fortunate to be able to spend evenings together eating dinner. This family ritual is an important way for us to gather and talk about how our days were, weekend plans, and upcoming events.



Henry (18 months old) at a family dinner. We are working on improving his table manners!



At the Jersey Shore with Henry (8 months old)

To the right are Henry (age 3 1/2) and Mike while hiking in upstate New York. There was a shallow, gentle river that hikers could walk in to get to a waterfall.



Over the last few years, we have travelled to many new places, including Florida, Wyoming, Vermont, and upstate New York. Some of these trips have been with extended family, which has been an amazing opportunity to spend time with our parents, siblings, nieces, and nephews.



Boating with Mike's
family in Panama



Mike & Henry
(7 months)
picnicing



Elaine & Henry
(4 years old) in
Washington, DC

Holidays are an important part of our family. We celebrate both Jewish and Catholic holidays so we can incorporate traditions from both of our families. Holidays are a time we see parents,



siblings, nieces, and nephews. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Passover, and Easter are all holidays that we celebrate with our extended families. Henry clearly enjoys this time with family. Usually a few days after Christmas and Hanukkah are over, he starts asking, "When will it be Christmas again? When will it be Hanukkah again?!"

Henry (age 2) trying on some Christmas stockings



Henry (age 5) helping to light the Menorah

Extended Family

Henry was welcomed into our family by his grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins with boundless love. Our families look forward to sharing that love with another child. We have been so lucky to have their love and support throughout our lives. They are all looking forward to a new member of the family, when we are lucky enough to adopt.

Hiking in Wyoming
with Mike's parents



Thanksgiving with Mike's family. Henry loves all the attention he gets from his cousins. We are on the lower left.

We are so grateful for the energy and enthusiasm that they all bring to spending time with Henry. We are also very lucky that our siblings and parents live close enough that we can see them frequently. They have been a huge help in Henry's day-to-day care.



Henry with Amma in her garden



Henry with Pappa (Elaine's father)
after the Fourth of July parade

Henry playing
with his cousin
Michael Gary,
his Aunt Maura,
and Amma
(Elaine's mother)
on Easter





Henry with Grandpa and his cousin
Caroline on Thanksgiving



Henry with Mike on Christmas



Henry hunting for Easter eggs in Amma and Pappa's garden

Our Home Life

We love our home and all of the places in New York that we are able to visit on a regular basis, including the parks and playgrounds, the museums, and the beaches.

Some of Henry's favorite places to go are the Transit Museum, Prospect Park, and the Botanical Gardens.



Mike and Henry (age 5) sledding in a nearby park

Transit
Museum:
Henry
pumping
gas
& driving
a bus



Elaine and Henry at the boardwalk

We love the amazing diversity of people and families that live in our neighborhood. One of our goals as parents is to make sure that Henry grows up with friends and teachers of many races and ethnicities. We chose a preschool for Henry whose director is African American and an elementary school whose principal is Hispanic. Our neighborhood is home to families of all different races, cultures, and configurations. We feel strongly that a child of any race or ethnicity would be wholeheartedly welcomed by our families, friends, and neighbors.



Henry and Sofia playing
across the street from
their preschool



Henry with his friend Ansel (above and left). Mike and Elaine rented a vacation house with Ansel's mother this past summer. The boys spent their days building forts, exploring the woods, and swinging on the swing set. That summer was a very special time for both of our families.



Henry and Mike making pancakes
in our kitchen

We are fortunate to live
in a spacious home--two
floors of a townhouse.
On the lower floor is
our kitchen, dining room,
and living room.



Some houses in
our neighborhood



Our living room (above) and
dining room (right)





The bedrooms are upstairs (left and middle left). When Henry was first born, he slept in a cradle (below) right next to our bed. We plan to do the same with a new baby.



This playground (right) is around the corner from our home. Henry loves swinging there as well as running around on the jungle gym.





These gardens are up the street from our home. We come here frequently to play soccer and get some fresh air.



Henry (age 2) apple picking with Aunt Yesha



Henry (age four) with his friend Aidan at school



Henry at the Botanical
Children's Garden



Henry playing with his friend
Sofia after school



Henry playing with his friend Ansel around the corner from our home



Thank you for taking the time to learn more about our family and considering us as parents for your child. We are filled with a deep appreciation for how blessed we are as a family, but we have always dreamed of having another child. We have so much love to share with a new member of our family and promise to provide a home that is filled with love, laughter, and stability.

We have thought a lot about how to include you in your child's life and into our family. We welcome the opportunity to create an ongoing relationship with you and your family if you like. We imagine this relationship can take many forms, and we would work hard to ensure that your child cherishes these special relationships.



Henry drew this picture imagining himself sharing his blocks and paper airplanes with a new sibling

Thank you for learning about our family.

If you have questions about us, we would be happy to answer them. Please call us at 1-800-920-6490 or reach out to our adoption agency, Forever Families Through Adoption, toll free at 1-866-922-3678.

We wish you love, and we offer our support during this difficult time.

Warmly,

Mike Elaine Henry