



**Bernadette and Mike**

Hello! Thank you for taking the time to learn about us. We can only imagine how difficult a choice it is to place your child for adoption. We know you have got many choices in selecting a potential adoptive family, so, without further ado, this is us.

**About us as a couple and how we came to the decision to have a baby:**

Mike and Bernadette have been together as a couple for over 8 years, and married for almost 5 years. We each experienced the heartache of divorce in our first marriage, but we've learned from that experience and have a strong marriage as a result. We haven't always known that we wanted to have a child together; this decision has taken us years to contemplate. We believe that a person should not become a parent unless he/she is 100% certain of this decision, so it took us awhile to get to this point. Our marriage is very stable, we really do love each other more every day, we are a great team, we are very kind to each other, and we are best friends. In addition to this, we have reached a place in our relationship and in our lives where we are ready to share our love with another, and we know that we can offer a child a wonderful life, full of love, companionship, and support.

We are very financially secure. Mike's job affords him the luxury of sometimes working from home, and Bernadette's job has flexible hours, so spending time at home with a child would be easily accomplished. From a health standpoint, we are both very healthy, are both non-smokers, and do not suffer from any illness, disease, or disorder which would prevent us from living a full, long healthy life. From a fertility standpoint, things are less than ideal; Bernadette has had to have an ovary removed as a result of a benign tumor, and Mike has been diagnosed with a low sperm count. It breaks our hearts that we've been unable to conceive.

**About Mike specifically (from Bernadette's perspective):**

First, I'll give you the cold hard facts: Mike is 6'4", with dark hair and brown eyes (i.e. tall, dark and handsome!). He has a B.A. in English/Creative Writing and works for a computer software company. Although both of his parents are American, he was born in West Germany and has even lived in Egypt as a child. However, Mike has spent most of his time in Texas, and currently, his extended family all live in Texas as well. Mike's hobbies include cycling, hiking, reading, grilling, and computer-gaming.

Now, I'll give you the good stuff: In a word, Mike is awesome. He is an incredible person, he has made an incredible husband, and I know he will be an incredible father. He is the most genuine and loyal person I know, and he rivals my own father as being the best man that I know. Mike is extremely responsible, a great leader, and knows how to get things done. He's not the type of person who has an idea and just sits on it, but instead he does whatever is needed to get the job done.

In addition to being such a responsible person, he is also the most laid-back and fun-loving person I know. I have many nieces and nephews (described in more detail below), and they all love Mike. This past summer, Mike and I joined my brother, his wife, and two kids (Caleb and Callie) for one day of their

first trip to Disneyland. Mike was the one who “encouraged” us all to ride the scary rides, and Caleb and Callie said that this one day was their best day of the trip. He has a way to connect with kids and to make them feel like he’s one of them, while at the same time maintaining his authority as an adult. I’m not sure how he does this, but I see it all the time. This is how I know that he will make an awesome father, and why I am so excited to be on his “team” as a parent.

**About Bernadette specifically (from Mike’s perspective):**

Bernadette is simply the love of my life. She’s compassionate, loving, smart, beautiful, a wonderful friend and companion, and a great nurturer. She loves to help with animals in need, any animal, any time. She enjoys giving more than receiving. She’s great with our nieces and nephews, always ready to play a game or read them a story. I know she really misses working with children at MD Anderson Cancer Center, where she performed assessments for kids who were battling cancer. Right now she is volunteering with a local neuro-psychologist to design a program to help kids with learning problems, and I know she’ll be great at it. She loves being active, and being outdoors. She’s an avid runner, and has finished 10 marathons, including the Boston Marathon in 2011, something I’m very proud of her for doing (I couldn’t ever do that).



Bernadette and Mike on their honeymoon at the Grand Canyon

She’s vegetarian, loves the color pink, and is a super taster/smeller. She tastes and smells things in food I have no ability to detect. She loves candy and cupcakes, and picks out all my shirts (she has good taste). She’s a big John Cusack fan, and once made me buy a copy of “Valley Girl” (wasn’t really my thing, but she loves it for nostalgic reasons.). As far as being a vegetarian and raising a child is concerned, I myself am an omnivore, and enjoy a good steak. But Bernadette is really good at letting me eat what I want. So too will the child be permitted to choose what they want to eat.

She motivates and brings out the best in me. I love her with all my heart, and am so glad to have met her. She’s going make a great mom.

**About our extended family:**

As noted above, Mike’s extended family all live in Texas; he has one younger sister, who is married and has two girls. Bernadette is from a large family in Texas as well. She has 2 older brothers and 2 older sisters. They all have children, so the current count on nieces and nephews is 23 (15 nephews and 8 nieces), ranging in age from newborn to 29 years old. They all live in Texas, too, and we are all very



Mike with one of our nieces

close-knit and see each other often. Since moving to California, we have made lots of friends, many of whom have children as well. In fact, one of our friends has a 2-year-old son and just gave birth to a baby girl, and another friend will be giving birth to a third baby in the spring of 2012.

### **About our home and pets:**

Bernadette and Mike were fortunate to be able to move to Santa Barbara, California in 2010. Since we're still fairly new to Santa Barbara, we still find ourselves looking around and not fully believing that we live in such a beautiful part of the country. Our home is a 3 bedroom/ 2 bath townhome in a complex that has a pool, tennis court, and playground for all of the residents to use. We also have a very nice one-mile trail from our house to the beach, and we often go for walks there. There is also an amazing butterfly preserve near the beach, and there is a large park with soccer fields, baseball fields, basketball courts, and a playground about ½ mile from our home. You can also see the mountains from our house, and there are numerous hiking trails in the area. Bike trails also abound in our city, so we have bikes and often ride them together. We currently have two dogs and one cat; they are all rescues. The dogs are both Italian greyhounds; Joey is about 11 years old, and Dante is about 4 years old. Star is a dilute calico cat and is about 8 years old. We believe that animals can bring a lot of joy to a person's life, and we will teach our child to love and respect animals as we do.



Dante and Joey sun bathing

### **Anticipated parenting style:**

We believe that parents should lead their children by example, so we will teach our child the life lessons we have learned over the years:

Have fun and take pleasure in your life every day, but you must also be responsible and accountable for your actions.

Work hard for the things that you want most out of life, but also reward yourself for your efforts.

Family comes first and should be honored, enjoyed, and supported.

Acceptance of all people, despite their lifestyle or background, should be the rule rather than the exception, and respect for all living creatures should be a given.

An open mind is like an open door to many opportunities that you wouldn't have been exposed to otherwise.

And finally, you have the ability to be whatever you want, and you've got the love and support of two parents behind you all the way.

We feel that we practice these principles on a daily basis and will show our child how to practice them as well.

**Religious beliefs:**

Bernadette and Mike were both raised Catholic. Bernadette has maintained her affiliation with the Catholic Church and has a deep-felt relationship with God. Mike, however, is an agnostic. But this isn't to say he's disinterested in matters of spirit; in fact, he considers himself a very strong spiritual person. He believes in a strong moral and ethical code that governs his actions, and constantly seeks answers to life's myriad of questions. From a child rearing standpoint, we both have agreed that we would raise the child in the Catholic tradition, and when the time came, Mike would gradually expose the child to other world and religious viewpoints, so that by the time the child reached maturity, he/she could make an educated decision as to what he/she believed and why.

Thank you again so very much for considering us as potential parents for your child. We look forward to meeting you soon!

Mike and Bernadette

## Pictures!

We thought that there would be no better way for you to get to know us than to see us in action. Therefore, we've included several pictures that we've taken in recent years to give you some insight into our lives.



One year as a birthday present, Mike surprised Bernadette with a private visit with the giraffes at the Houston Zoo. Here, Mike was feeding a giraffe a piece of lettuce that he had in his own mouth. In the other picture, Bernadette is contemplating taking Miles (a baby giraffe) home with her.



One of our Italian Greyhounds, Dante



Our other Italian Greyhound, Joey.



Our beautiful cat, Star



Mike and his niece while she's trying to eat her cake (Mike is known to steal sweets from kids)



A trip to an Astros baseball game with two of our nieces.



Bernadette with a niece, in their matching t-shirts.



Face-painting at the Texas Renaissance Festival with nieces and nephew.





One year at a Christmas celebration, one of our nieces had some holiday elf stickers. We took the initiative of sticking them to our foreheads, so then all of the kids followed suit. We had a great time that day.



View of the beach from the bluffs, about a mile from our house