

Eric + Laurie
+ Vivian



Bjorn



Gatsby + Luna

We Love to Roller
Skate and Hike!

Hello!

Thank you so much for taking the time to learn about us and for considering us as adoptive parents for your child. If you choose to share your child's life with us, we promise to always surround them with love, fun, creativity, safety, and security. We will strive to empower and encourage your child, helping them to reach all of the goals and dreams you have for them as well as nurturing their goals and dreams as they develop and grow. Though we cannot make all of life easy for any of us, we will also nurture the strength to navigate life's hard times and we will be there every step of the way.

Strengthened by what we feel is courage on your part, we will do everything in our power to support your child now and every day in the future.

You will always be honored and respected in our household. Please know that we are wishing you peace and strength during this time.



Family Adventures

We love to explore. Whether it is close to home or traveling, we consider many things adventures and love to make discoveries. One weekend we were looking for a place to hike and found an entire park dedicated to an archaeological site where mastodons (the smaller version of woolly mammoths) were found in Missouri! We had no idea we had this in our state. Vivian's love of dinosaurs and all things prehistoric was really brought to life before our eyes and it was really beautiful to see how ancient families lived with these large, prehistoric animals. With us, your child will learn to explore and work to find the fun and magic in every day.



We look for fun, no matter what. This has been one of our biggest bonds since we first met as both of our families are funny. While there are many examples, some of which you'll read in these pages, one time, we were trying to figure out the square footage of a room to paint. As a math teacher, Laurie was positive Eric had this in the bag *UNTIL...* Eric couldn't find a tape measure, so he dropped to the ground with the dog bed under him, using his height to measure the length and width of the room and the dog bed as a sled to slide across the room. While Laurie was stunned at first, she was laughing hysterically by the end.

We support the ones we love! Whether siblings, in-laws, or friends - we stick together and help each other in good times and bad. We have converted rooms into bedrooms, driven hours, and even moved to ensure our families have the love and support they need. In 2015, we moved back to Laurie's hometown to help some family members who were having medical issues. Moving home meant Laurie could be there for her sister during her breast cancer battle and help her mom while aging.



About Laurie by Eric

Laurie is a loving, caring, and creative mom.

Vivian had a birthday at the beginning of the COVID lockdown. There was no way to have a party, so Laurie arranged to have friends and family members have a car parade down our street. She also hosted a virtual dance party for Vivian and her friends and made dance playlists of all their favorite songs, and the parents were so grateful for the activity with the kids cooped up inside. With Laurie, no need for your child will go unmet. Laurie will find a way to make sure everyone feels loved. Your child will always know that whatever they love and makes them feel happy, we'll support them and make things happen as a family.



Laurie is simply the funniest person I have ever met. One time, she was playing badminton with Eric's side of the family. When the birdie came her way, she struck it, but it lodged into the net of her racquet. Without hesitation, she threw her racquet-and-birdie combo over the net to get the birdie back to the other side! We all nearly passed out from laughter, though we weren't sure how to score it. Your child will learn to have a quick wit and sharp instincts while being honored for who they are.

Laurie lives a life of service. She volunteers at Vivian's school, leads Vivian's Girl Scout troop and dedicates time wherever she can be helpful. Your child will be involved and concerned with the world around them, learning from Laurie's example. Laurie just led the Girl Scouts in gathering supplies for Ukrainian refugees. She ensured that this idea came from the girls who wanted to make sure that everyone feels welcome to our community. The girls were very excited to be able to help a community that was truly in need. Your child will learn to be a leader by leading by example and with organized action and love.



About Eric

by Laurie

Eric is a really awesome, patient, and kind dad. He truly sees the good in every person which is what also makes him a great STEM teacher. Eric spent weeks teaching Vivian how to ride her bike. He started first by talking her through **being confident** and **believing** that she could do it. Viv went from dreading trying to ride to being so excited she could go on adventures with her friends.



Eric is super dedicated to being healthy and makes sure we are too. He jogs daily at 5:00 a.m. and plays Ultimate Frisbee weekly when our family schedule allows. Eric built a garden box with walls in the backyard so we can have fresh vegetables from our garden, but, the walls are to keep our dogs from sitting on our vegetables.

Eric is incredibly gentle and kind with our pets, but one relationship bears special mention. Two years ago Gatsby was diagnosed with diabetes. Eric did not hesitate when we learned Gatsby needed twice-daily injections. He immediately learned how to do it, and taught me. Every time Eric monitors Gatsby's blood glucose twice a day - he puts Gatsby on a special mat, tells him he is very patient and handsome, and then congratulates him on his good numbers. Your child will know that we all care for each other with meticulous detail, lots of love and gentle care.



Becoming a Family

We met at a New Year's Eve party and realized we had a lot in common; from big families to what we thought was important in the world. The party was at a house Laurie shared with several friends in television news. Throughout the night, Eric helped by moving furniture to create a dance floor, ensuring snacks were passed around, and even digging someone out of the snow in the driveway. Between those times we danced the night away. On our first date, we went to a local restaurant, and Eric dropped his napkin, and when he got up to get his napkin, he went down on one knee and acted like he was proposing - so **Laurie figured either he was super crazy or a lot of fun.**



Laughing has helped us a lot. The first time we bought a Christmas tree together, we were already laughing when we were trying to tie the tree to the roof of the car. We rolled the windows down to make it easier and tossed the rope through the car to make it faster. Only when we went to open the doors to leave did we realize **we had tied the doors shut.** The lot owner was laughing with/at us at this revelation and offered to cut the tree off. But, since it took forever there was no way we were starting over in the cold, **we just crawled into the car through the windows!**



We knew we wanted to have kids from the start and even discussed it on one of our first dates. **Eric's mom is adopted and is a massive influence in our lives.** Which has led us here. We were devastated when our first pregnancy ended in miscarriage. We were blessed when Vivian came into our lives a few years later. Shortly after Vivian was born, we returned to the city where Laurie is from to ensure we were close by to help family and to grow our support system too. Because we believe that love grows, we look forward to adding to our family through adoption. If your journey takes you to a place where you choose our family we are respectful of whatever level of openness you desire.



Vivian



Vivian loves reading and writing. One of her biggest loves of all has been reading the *Harry Potter* series and watching the movies. To support her passions, **we took her to visit Platform 9 3/4 to live out a favorite scene from the movie** and set up a writing drawer for her in her room where she keeps all of her notebooks, journals, pens and pencils for writing her original stories. She's come up with even more imaginative stories since her visit and keeps diving deeper in her research. Vivian also has a lot of art pads so she can draw her illustrations. She even made a Harry Potter-themed Candy Land-like board game that she taught her younger cousins to play. Your child will be supported in whatever they are passionate about and makes them excited for each day.

Growing up as **the youngest of 10 kids, Laurie knows how important older brothers and sisters are.** Her sister Ellen is 16 years older than her. Along with teaching her about good clothes and music, how to be a good party host, and make people feel welcome and cared for - Ellen also taught Laurie a lot about lifting people up, putting other people's needs before her own, being loving, empathetic and nurturing and being there for friends and family. One time while Laurie was away at school and had mono, Ellen traveled several hours and moved in with Laurie until she was well. She bought groceries, cleaned the apartment, rented movies, and ensured Laurie had everything she needed to get well. Laurie learned a lot about caring for people and being "all in" from her big sister.



- ### Big Sister List
- Be a leader.
 - Be honest.
 - Be there for him/her.
 - Play nicely with him/her.
 - Play soothing music for naptime.
 - Keep small objects away from the baby.
 - Help make breakfast, lunch and dinner.
 - Practice walking with the baby.
 - Teach the baby basketball.
 - Teach the baby ABCs.

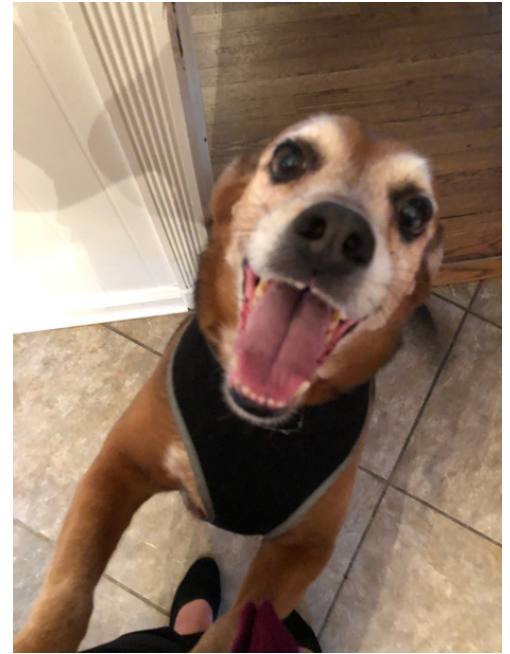
Love,
Vivian

Though Laurie taught Vivian to skate during the pandemic lockdown, we recently took her to a roller rink for the first time. She was nervous about whether or not she could keep up. Vivian did an awesome job skating! While Laurie was focused on not falling - **Vivian spent a lot of time stopping to help younger kids**, often going down on one knee to stop and get quickly to children **who had fallen.** After skating, Viv said she had lots of fun, but thought the guards should do a better job of looking for people who fell and helping them up, especially the little kids.

Whether in skating or day-to-day Vivian's first instinct is to look out for other people. She created the Big Sister List you see on this page so she can be a good example and has a good headstart on what to teach baby with a plan to keep baby safe.

Our Pets

Eric grew up with lots of pets while Laurie always wanted a dog growing up. She even spent many hours making brochures with Snoopy on every page, telling her parents how great she would be at caring for dogs. Laurie's parents gave in right after she turned 16. As adults, while Laurie was a television reporter, we always just "ended up" with dogs from stories Laurie covered on shelter overcrowding, or they showed up as strays on stories. Laurie found Gatsby running on the street and spent weeks trying to find his family. It turned out - we were his family. We rescued Luna from a local shelter sometime after we lost another older dog who had also been Gatsby's long-time companion.



Gatsby and Luna are very good friends and play together every day. **Both dogs are very kind and patient** with Vivian. They go with her everywhere in the backyard, playroom, play house and even the trampoline. One day, while Vivian and a friend were jumping, Luna joined them on the trampoline and has continued to make playing fetch on the trampoline one of her favorite games. Gatsby and Luna will show your child the same love, care and affection they share with whole family.

What Bjorn lacks in size he makes up for in personality. He loves running on his wheels and fits right into the family by **LOVING** snacks, and if an early morning meeting is too early in our home office, he will let you know by standing at the cage corner, looking at you and loudly moving his blocks.



For Fun



As a family, **we love to be crafty and creative.** For Vivian's birthday, she got a cool crafting book from her cousin. With inspiration from that book, we made this circus food craft one night from recyclables: paper bags, cotton balls, food coloring and tissue paper. On this night for dinner, we were so inspired by the craft we made an entire fair food dinner because our favorite fair had been canceled - so we decided to celebrate ourselves.

We really love the outdoors, especially for camping, hiking, and picnicking. On one recent hiking trip, Eric decided to take us **off the beaten path** into the back entrance of 11 Mile Canyon in Colorado. A cow from a neighboring ranch also decided to visit the canyon that day. Vivian still remembers **stopping on the road for a hiking cow that took its time moooving.**



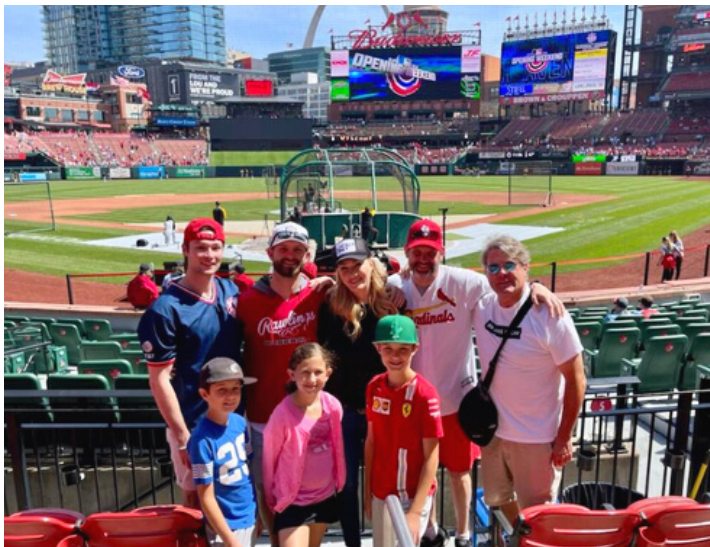
Because Laurie was a television reporter and now works as a social media strategist, **video has always been a big part of our lives.** As a family, we love to create stop-motion animations and fun videos. One of our favorite movies is when we made Vivian's stuffed animals dance in the hallway to "Boom Boom Pow" by the Black Eyed Peas with our lamp as a DJ. We love to have our own family dance parties so recreating it with party animals had us laughing the entire time we made it. Your child will always be encouraged to show their creativity and to find new ways to express themselves in a way they love and that ensures they are having fun!



Family

*If you choose us, your child will have one big sister, 15 aunts and uncles, and **22 cousins**.*

Our family works as a team. A few years ago Eric's hometown was hit by a major tornado. We had family members whose houses were badly damaged or in some cases destroyed. Because of the devastation of this tornado outbreak the people who lost just "things" were the lucky ones. We quickly came together as a family and went to work finding belongings, rebuilding fences, helping people move and cleaning up debris. Whatever the work, our families come together to make it happen and ensure people get the love and support they need. Your child will always know they are an important member of a strong family that works together to make things better for everyone involved.



Sometimes our **get-togethers** are a little more **spontaneous** like the weekend we realized many of us had no plans on a Saturday night and headed to a Cardinals baseball game and then went to Laurie's sister's house for a big buffet dinner afterward. The kids were running around playing flashlight tag and having a "big bubble" dance party!

Our family looks out for each other, no matter what. At a recent family gathering, Vivian and her cousin Ethan were in the middle of putting puppy dog patches on each other's eyes with face paint when her cousin Lola wanted to be held. Vivian stopped what she was doing to cuddle with Lola. Your child will always be a priority no matter what we're doing. There is always room for another person at the table or in the game. We make each other **the** priority, not just "a" priority.



Traditions

Our sister-in-law Corinne has been creating a beautiful **Easter Bunny Cake** for our families for decades. It is a **yearly tradition at Easter**, but it is also part of a bigger tradition of having homemade food for many of our big celebrations. For us showing up and showing up in style and creativity is love. But, the year we learned how the bunny cake was made (from just two cake rounds) and that the ears and the bow tie came from the same cake! Vivian loved to have that secret revealed! Now we can do it ourselves and pass on the tradition.



While we love and celebrate many holidays - **we go ALL OUT for Halloween**. Our street even shuts down and changes its name to **Trick or Treat Street**. Our family invites over many friends and their kids so they can have fun too. We make mummy dogs, mummy pizzas, chili and everyone brings something to share. We take turns taking the kids around and handing out candy. Many years we dress up in a family theme like Frozen, Moana or Harry Potter. This past year Vivian and her friends even handed out candy to the little kids before they went out themselves.

Every week, on Friday - we have pizza and a movie night! Sometimes this means watching a movie on the couch but, about a year ago we started getting creative; we got out our projector and screen, set up a picnic, and would watch **a double feature outside**. Every week we hand make our simple **pizzas on pita bread** or Naan and get salads and the other parts together **and snuggle in as a family**. This is our time before we have another family, school, or weekend obligation. For dessert, we walk down to the ice cream store five doors down from us. Once a neighbor child who lives two doors down scaled two fences to go through the backyards to come join the fun. We look forward to learning about your favorite traditions to include in our gatherings for your child.



Home Sweet Home

Our house is on a tree-lined street in Missouri. **We're close enough to the fun to have hot air balloons pass overhead** from a balloon race taking off from a nearby park. We love that our house is over 100 years old but completely modernized inside. We have many bunnies, squirrels, and birds in our yard and trees. We have a small garden where we grow herbs and vegetables. Our living room is our favorite place to hang out in the house because at the end of a long day it's where we call get to relax and be together and read or watch something. Recently we watched a squirrel steal the bucket from our squirrel picnic table on the window ledge and it was a 3-day mystery until we found it in the side yard.



Our neighborhood can serve up many surprises like block parties in the business district where they shut down the street for food booths, a band and dancing. Sometimes we get a surprise like when **this unicorn** and her dancing friends walked by the house during a holiday weekend and **stopped by for an impromptu magic show**. We were very surprised when the unicorn successfully guessed all of Vivian's cards and then my brother took a turn. We had so much fun that we boxed up the rest of our take-out Mexican dinner and drinks and gave them to this band of merrier travelers. Though you cannot see the two dancers and the emcee with the unicorn in this photo, they were all super grateful and so were we!

Our favorite part of our community is that people **truly care for each other and look out for each other** and work to keep the community beautiful, safe and exciting. Many of our streets have little libraries and our ice cream shop currently has special Harry Potter flavors and we are just steps or minutes away from a great meal or an awesome day in the park. We recently spent 12 hours camped out in a pop-up tent for Vivian's school picnic and ended the night with fireworks and our new goldfish, Bubbles. Your child will always be in the center of a warm community that welcomes them.



Our Weekdays



Eric is in the classroom teaching 6th, 7th, and 8th graders Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Eric also heads up his school's Robotics Club and Math Club and tutors his students who need extra math help. Eric is **off during the summers and home early on weekdays**, so will be available for many adventures with your child!

A former TV reporter, Laurie now puts her journalism skills to use heading up a human spaceflight and aerospace social media team. The home office also has a student desk for schoolwork. Every day, Laurie **works from home** with her officemate Bjorn the hamster. While he's a good coworker, Bjorn dislikes early morning phone meetings. Working from home has given our family a lot of **flexibility**. So Laurie can go to school programs, bring forgotten items, or go to doctor's visits whenever anyone needs to. Though Laurie occasionally travels for work, we often turn those travels into family vacations for the whole family - even the dogs head to the Airbnb.



Every night **we make and eat dinner** as a family and take the dogs for a walk. Recently, Vivian made dinner for the first time and we had pancakes. She thought it was only fair that the dogs also got pancakes, so she made the bunny buns pancakes we make for Easter. Your child will learn nothing is more important than our daily quality time together.

Thank You

What we hope you've seen in these pages is our sincere desire to give your child a home where they always feel supported and loved and where they can learn and have fun. Just like any family, we are not perfect. We've had wins and losses, ups and downs, joys and sorrows. But we always support each other and make it through together. We love each other for who we are and who we are becoming.

We are all in. Always.

We want you to feel that same love and support in your journey and to feel confident in your decision which we imagine is not an easy one.

Thank you, too, for the trust you are considering placing in us and know **we are open to whatever level of openness you are comfortable with.**

Thank You,
Eric and Laurie

