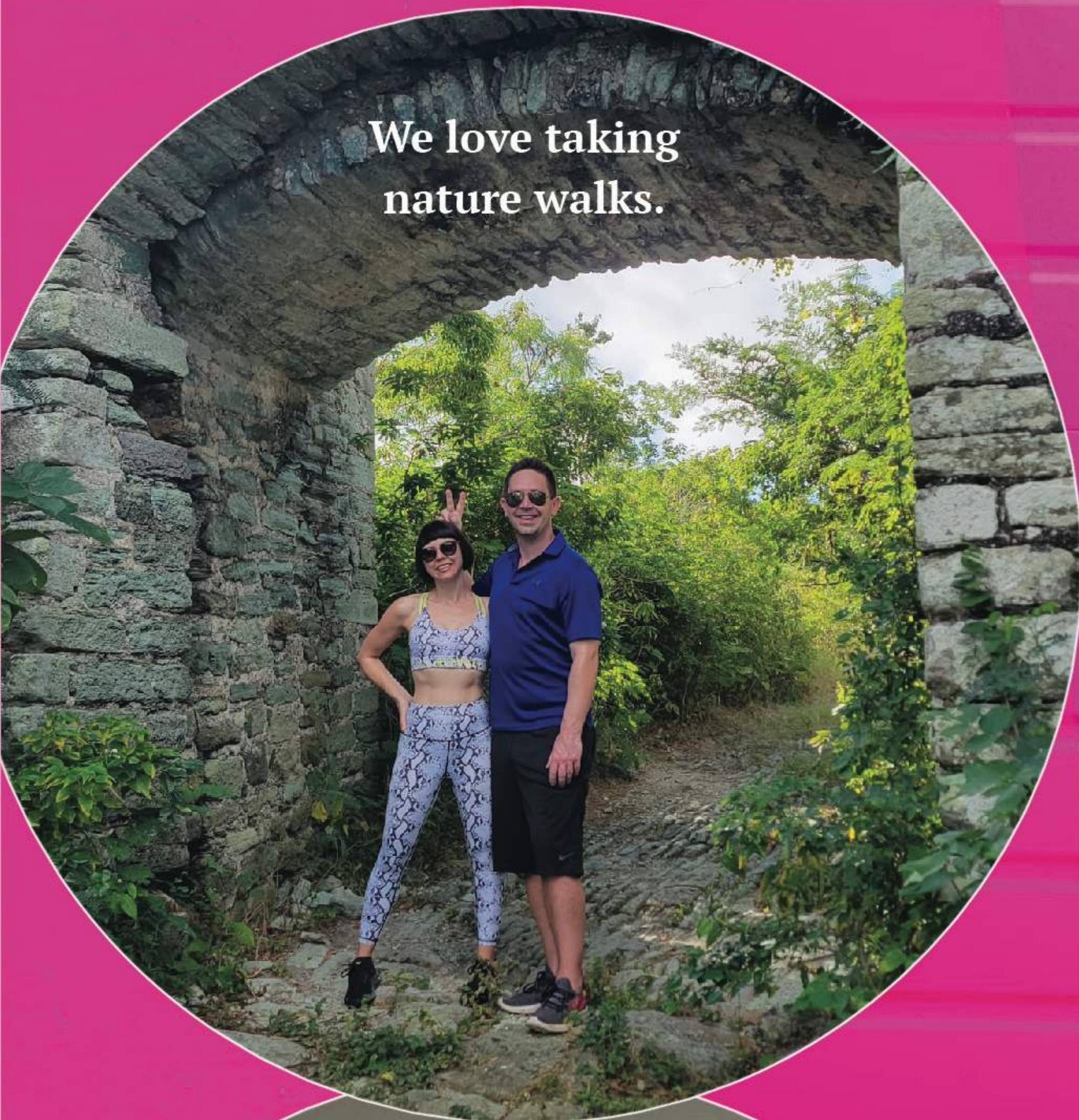
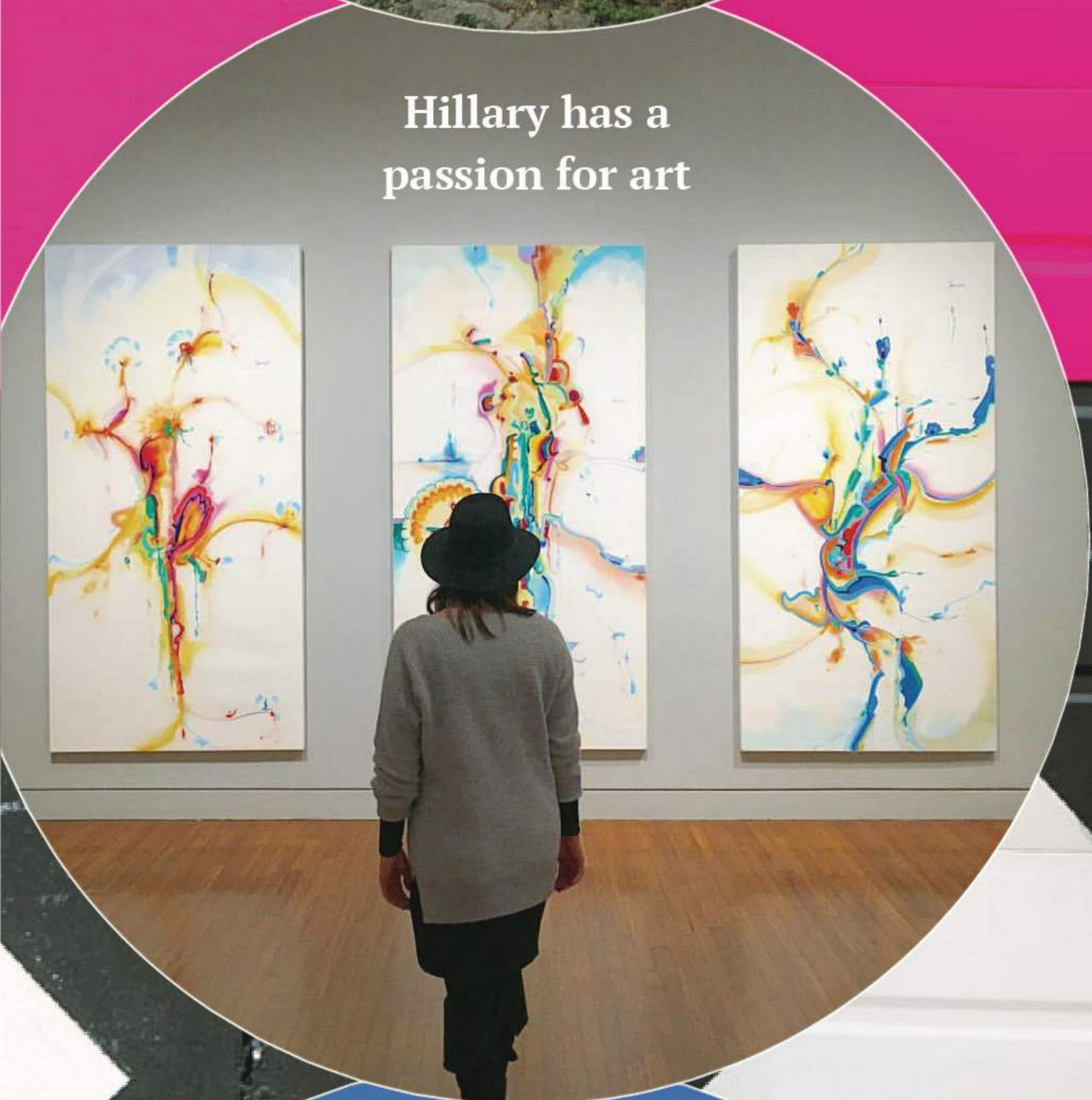


HILLARY & IAN

We love taking nature walks.



Hillary has a passion for art



Ian's "happy place" is playing hockey



& Stella

Hello

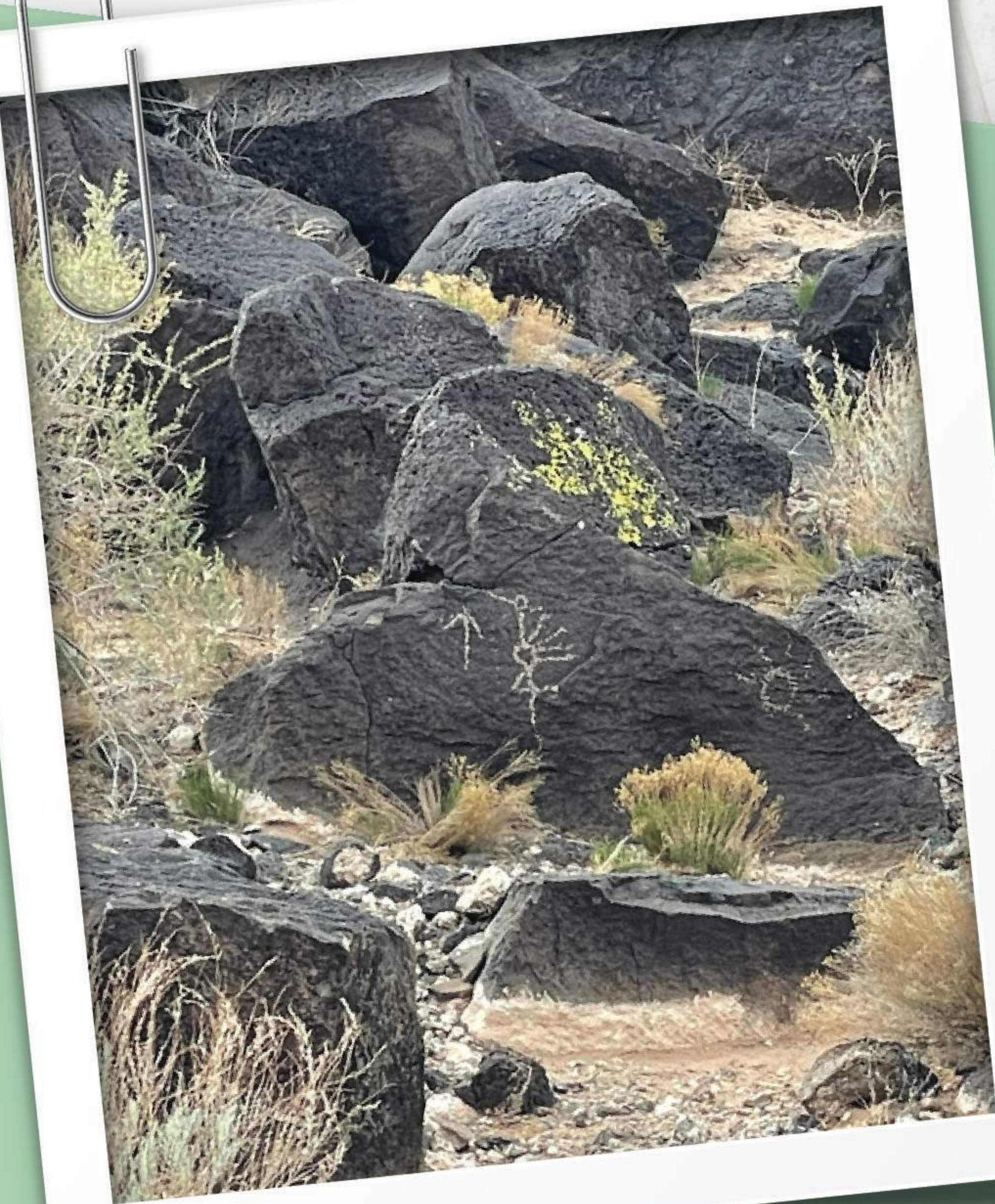
Thank you for the opportunity to share our lives with you. We can only imagine what you must be going through and what a difficult decision this must be.

If you choose us, your child will always be deeply loved and cared for. We will foster their talents and provide them with guidance to achieve their greatest potential. When the road ahead of them becomes challenging, we will uplift them and encourage them to persevere. We are grateful to you for taking the time to learn about our family.



About us

We love music. Recently, we attended a jazz fest and heard Zydeco music for the first time. We were blown away by the musician playing the washboard. Shortly after the incredible solo, the crowd began dancing and we began to dance like nobody was watching. Your child will be exposed to a variety of music and art.



We enjoy spending time in the outdoors.

One of the most magical experiences we had was while hiking in the New Mexico desert. We came across ancient rock carvings among the giant boulders and cacti. We learned that there are over 20,000 of these markings called petroglyphs. Hillary's favorite carvings were the reptiles because of their geometric shapes. At the end of our hike we were even lucky enough to spot a roadrunner who followed us all the way back to our car and then scampered away.

We love to experience new cultures through cuisine.

While visiting a fish market on a trip to Hawaii, Hillary ordered the Poke bowl, it was the freshest poke she had ever tasted. The fish had just been caught that morning and Hillary insisted that Ian try some. Ian was skeptical but he loved it! The next day Ian insisted we go back to the same fish market where he ordered his own Poke bowl. We sat outside on the bench and ate, making friends with some of the local fishermen that had just returned with a fresh catch from a morning on the water.



Meet HILLARY

Hillary is **artistic and loves to tie-dye** in the backyard. Recently Hillary tie-dyed some fabric and made a dress for herself. Ian loved the blue, inky pattern so much he asked for a matching shirt! Surprised but happy, Hillary dyed a shirt for Ian and we attended a wedding together in matching outfits! Everyone wanted to know how we got matching outfits and were so impressed when they found out Hillary made them herself!



15

Film



16

Film

Children adore Hillary because **she has a creative imagination**. When we went to brunch with our friends James and Rennee and their daughter Rosie, Hillary and Rosie played for hours with Rosie's tiny toy penguins at the table. Using napkins as magic carpets, and building houses out of a book and the salt and pepper shaker, the penguins had some grand adventures at brunch and Rosie asked for another playdate with Hillary the next week. Your child will be encouraged to see new possibilities and use their imagination.

15

15A

Hillary has always enjoyed **making things with her hands, especially costumes**. As a child, Hillary really wanted to be an eyeball one year for Halloween. Not surprisingly, this costume was impossible to find, so Hillary and her mom decided to make the costume together. They used a white sheet and painted the eye, cut the head and arm holes, then stuffed the sheet with balloons to make the shape round. The costume lost balloons throughout the day at school, but Hillary had the most unique costume. Today, Hillary uses her creativity for work, designing baby clothing and women's apparel.



16A



Meet IAN

Hockey has always been a big part of Ian's life and some of his closest friends today were his teammates growing up. Ian's passion for pond hockey was sparked when he traveled to Austria to play outdoors amongst the mountains with friends from his University hockey team. The cold, fresh mountain air and beautiful setting was invigorating, but when one of Ian's teammates tripped him up and he tumbled into a snowbank he regretted not wearing more layers than his t-shirt!



17

Film

SHE NEARLY DROWNED
HE SHOWED UP
SPLASHIN' AROUND
SUMMER SUN
SOMETHING'S BEGUN
BURN OH THOSE
SUMMER NIGHTS



Film

Ian loves singing, whether karaoke or showing his fun habit of making up new lyrics to classic songs. One of our family favorites is "Bekky's Owl", a rendition of "Jesse's Girl". It all started when Hillary's friend Bekky gave us a hand-made stuffed owl and Ian started singing to it. Ian is bold when it comes to karaoke and singing other peoples songs, but shy about singing his made up songs in front of others. The exception is his family, who share his love of silly songs, and Hillary, who often joins in with the family lyrics. Your child will grow up in a fun loving environment where they will be encouraged to be silly, laugh and sing.

17

36 ▶ 17A

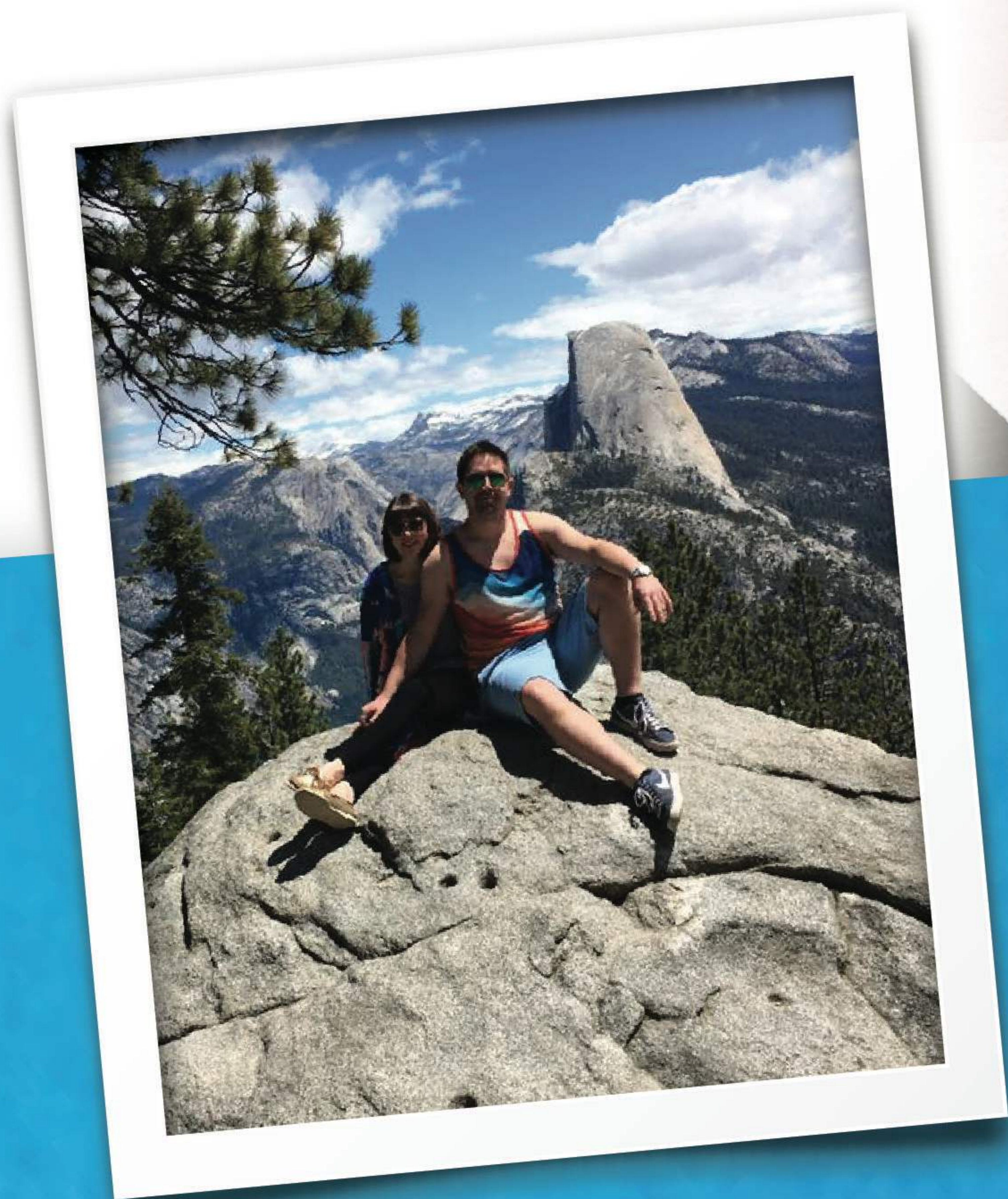
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Growing up living in different countries inspired a love of languages and of learning about other cultures in Ian. While living in Germany as a child, Ian and his dad visited a local castle during a Renaissance Fair. They watched the crowd roar in unison as the knights took turns rushing at each other on horseback at the joust! Ian's imagination kicked into high gear and when they got home he slayed the family dog for being a fire-breathing dragon.



Our Story

We met in Toronto at a mutual friend's holiday party and immediately connected. After talking for much of the party, Hillary was surprised that Ian didn't ask for her number. She was relieved to see Ian again at a birthday party a month later, and loved that he stayed for hours playing games with all of her closest friends. We bonded over a game of 20 questions where Ian was the only one at the party who could guess who Biggie Smalls was! At the end of the night Ian asked Hillary for a date.



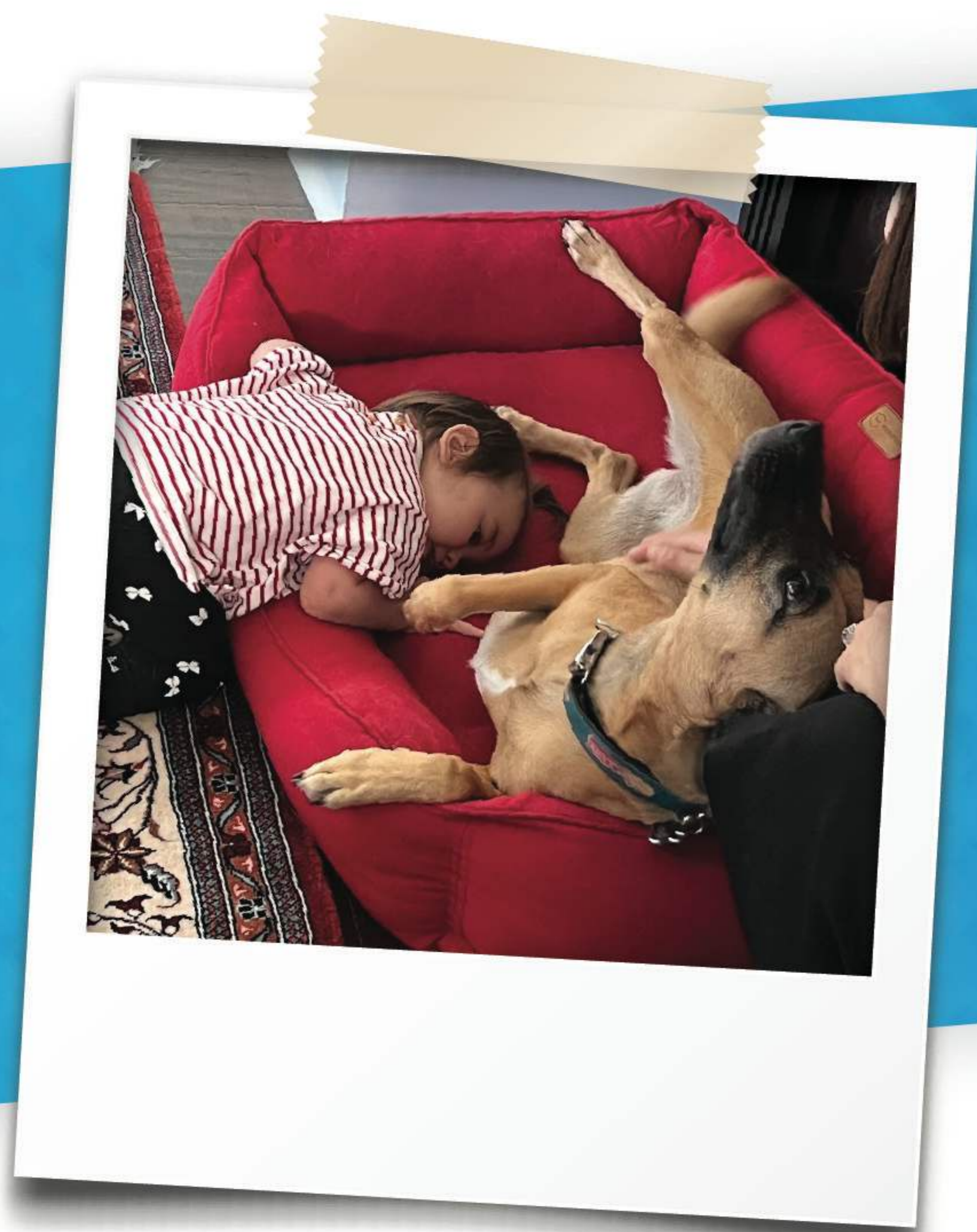
Two years into our relationship we had to move to different cities. Ian went to graduate school in Texas and Hillary got a job in Florida. It was really hard during those long flights, and long drives, but **our strong foundation and commitment to each other held us together.** When we FINALLY moved back in together almost five years ago, we decided to get married.

Early on in our relationship we knew we wanted to be parents but understood that a medical condition meant pregnancy might not be safe for Hillary or an unborn child. We often discussed adoption as a way of growing our family and realized **we are excited about becoming parents no matter how it happens.** Should you decide we are the parents lucky enough to join you on this journey, it would be our pleasure to maintain whatever level of open communication and contact you feel most comfortable with throughout your child's life.



Meet STELLA

Hi I'm Stella! I came to Ian and Hillary from the Bahamas four years ago. I had a rough start to life after hurricane Dorian ravaged my home and left me with nowhere to live. At first I was nervous about being rescued, but I quickly fell in love with my new home and family. My humans showed me how to be a polite dog, and what it means to be unconditionally loved. My humans originally thought they wanted a big boy dog because that is what Ian grew up with. Instead, they fell in love and rescued me, a snuggly little girl. **My humans were both so happy the day I came home, and were patient as I learned how to become braver.** Now they can't imagine what life would be like without me.



I love kids. Last year, my human neighbor friend Fallon decided to sneak out from his house next door to play chase with me. Luckily Fallon's grandpa saw what was happening, and caught Fallon in his escape, right as Hillary and Ian answered the front door! In the end, I got to play with Fallon in the yard and grandpa wasn't too upset about the great escape after all.

Snuggling is the best part of waking up. Hillary didn't think she could ever find a creature that loves cuddling as much as her, until she met me! At first, Ian had a firm rule that there were 'no dogs allowed on the furniture.' That quickly changed once he realized how soft and snuggly I am. Now **every morning begins with cuddles,** and it puts me in a good mood for the rest of the day.





HOME & NEIGHBORHOOD

We live in Louisiana on a beautiful tree lined street right across from a park, but **it's our wonderful neighbors that make our house a home.** Our favorite place to gather is the backyard where we barbecue for friends and family. We recently hosted the neighborhood 4th of July party and Ian made cheeseburgers with all the fixings. We listened to music on the loudspeaker and eventually the mic was brought out for karaoke. The song that everyone could get on board with was "Wannabe" by the *Spice Girls*. By the time the song ended everyone was singing along.



Our neighborhood is full of kids. We are close with our next door neighbors and their three kids Finlay (5), Falon (3), and Farrah (1). Every year we decorate for halloween with a graveyard and skeletons. A few years ago Fallon got really excited playing with Stella in the front yard and ripped all the gravestones out and pulled the skeleton hands from the ground while screaming! Fast forward, Finlay and Fallon had taken the bony hands with them and had been playing with them in the yard for months! Once the brothers' parents had discovered the hands, the boys were told to return them. This is how just a few months later we found the skeleton hands climbing over the backyard fence connecting our houses.



We value the diverse community our neighborhood brings together most of all. On our first mardi gras in the city we met all of our neighbors having a block party on the street. We found out that **one of our neighbors is a Mardi Gras Indian** and his costume is incredible! Every year he sews a new brightly colored, feather and hand-beaded costume. He explained that the hand-beading tradition is passed down through generations. At the end of the night, **he was generous enough to let Hillary put on part of the costume.** Growing up, your child will be surrounded by diverse role models.

Meet THE FAMILY

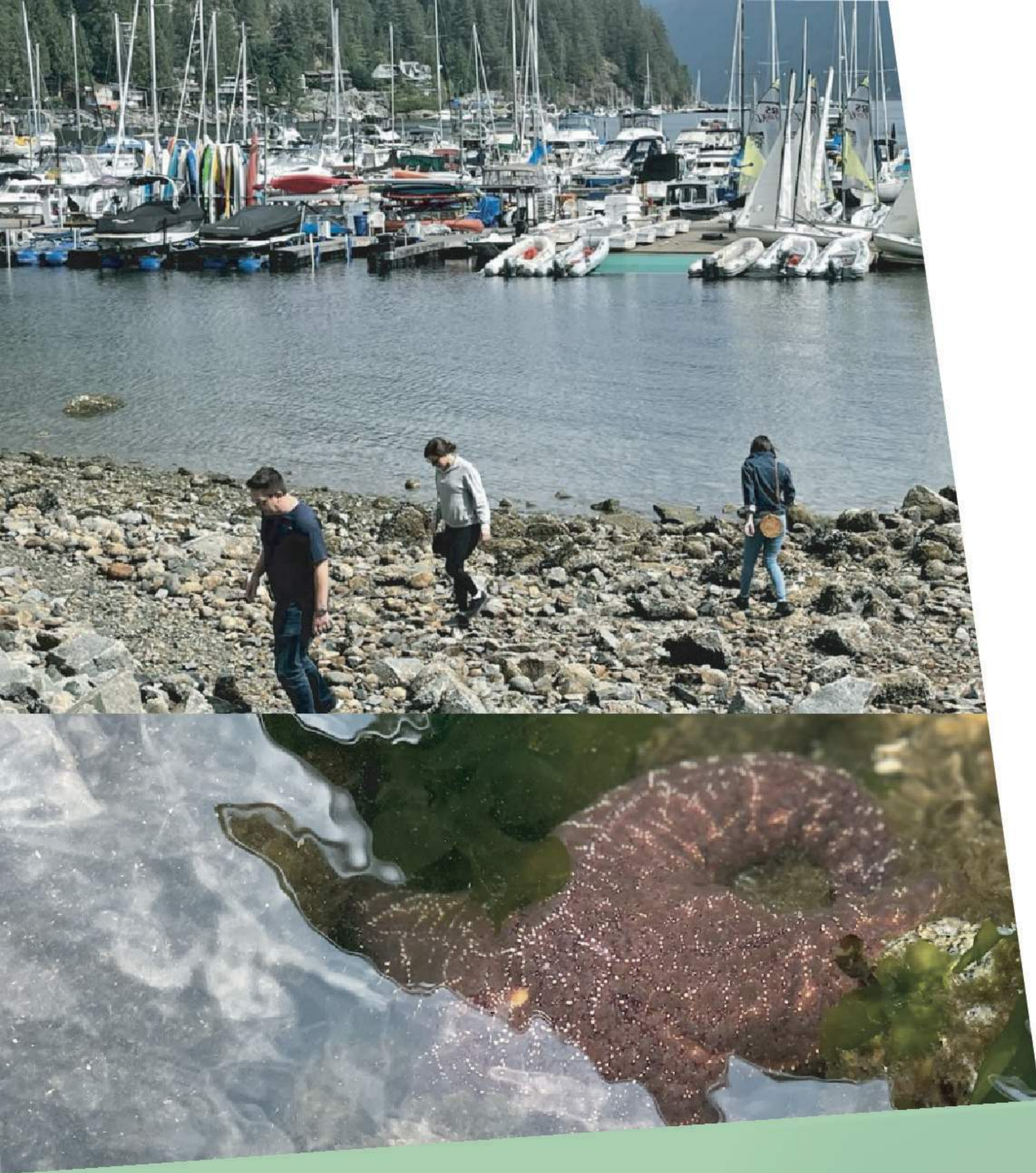
If you choose us, your baby will be the first grandchild in the family and have two dotting grandmas and six aunts and uncles.

Our family loves gathering for games around the dining table. It can often be very loud as everyone tries to explain the rules to uncle Nico's newest board game. Our new favorite game is *Mexican Train Dominoes* because the rules are simple and it is fun to play even when you don't win. One time when playing dominoes, Ian won the entire game in his first move! We all kept playing for five more games even though no one could recover after Ian's first round win.

We love spending time on the ocean together. Ian's family live part time in Antigua so for Ian and his mother's birthday one year we chartered a boat to a coral reef and went snorkeling. We saw so many beautiful fish while drifting above the coral habitat below. Our tour guide even dove down to get a conch shell off the bottom of the ocean for us. Your child will grow up spending time in Antigua snorkeling in the ocean.



Our family always supports one another. Every year on our annual road trip we stop in Cleveland and stay with Hillary's cousin, her husband and 3 children, Luca (7yrs), Karmina (3yrs), and Haya (2yrs). Last summer Karmina was so excited to have Hillary take her to gymnastics class because Hillary was also a gymnast when she was young. Even though older brother Luca and Hillary were there to support, Karmina got a bit scared since it was only her third week of class. Hillary took Karmina by the hand and led her to the bars explaining that in that exact moment, it was just her and the bars, and to forget about everything else. Karmina grabbed the bars and swung. The rest of the class was a breeze.



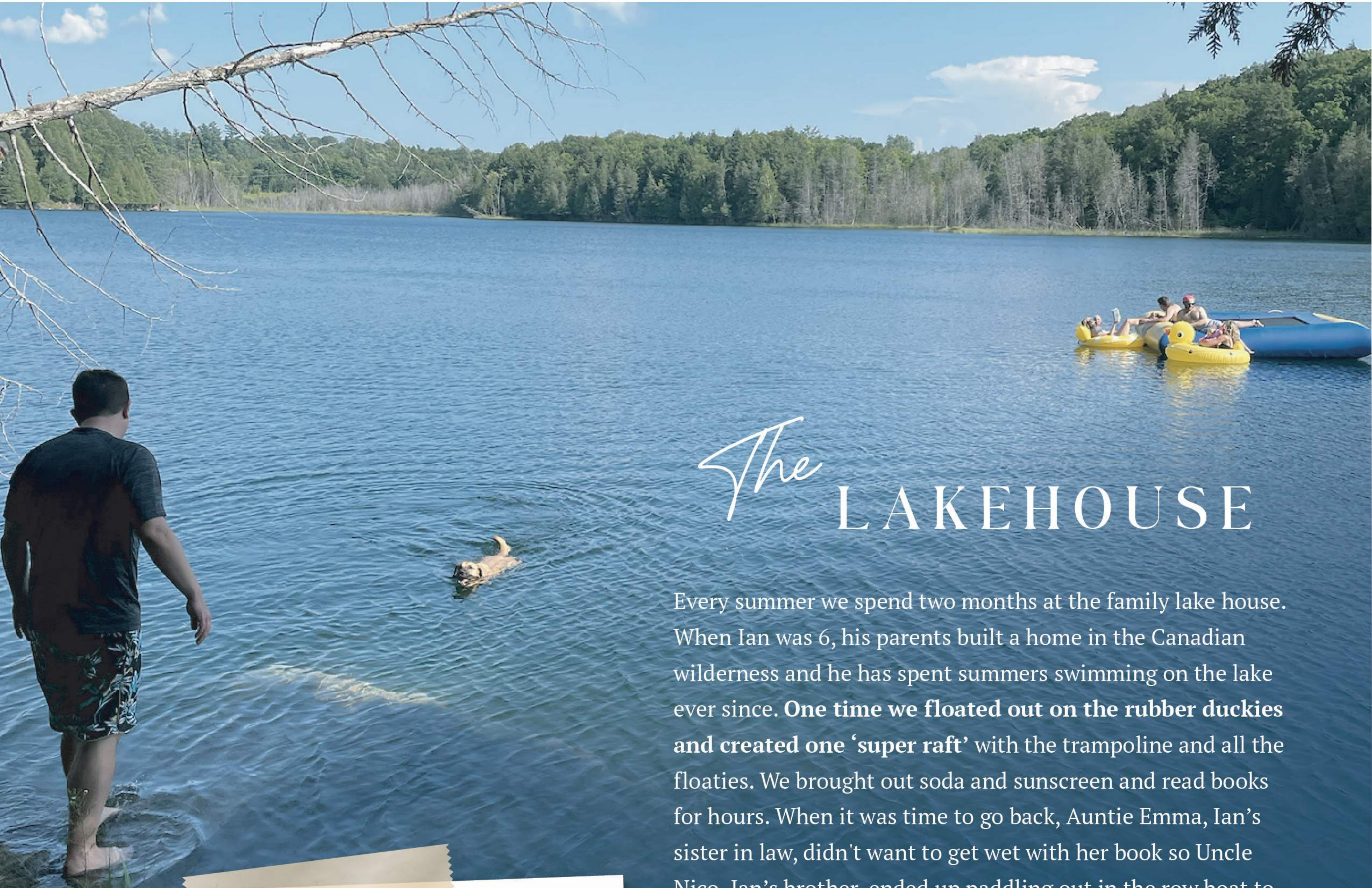
OUR TRADITIONS

Hillary's mother loves to be in nature and took Hillary and her sister camping when they were young. When we visit Hillary's mother and sister in B.C., **we keep up the tradition by taking long walks together.** Near Hillary's mother's house is a walking trail in the old growth forest by the edge of the ocean. Last summer while walking by the waters edge we discovered starfish on the rocks.

It is a tradition for Ian's mother to bake a pavlova dessert for birthdays. Every August there are three birthdays in one week in our family. One year, we all happened to be at the lake house at the same time and **Ian's mother insisted on making a pavlova for each birthday.** The whole house smelled like simmering berries and we ended up eating delicious pavlova for days. We look forward to learning about your favorite traditions to include in our gatherings for your child.



“International Ryan Day” is an annual tradition when we attend a local football game with Hillary's family. It is called that because of our brother-in-law Ryan's love of all things football. At last year's game we had a great time even though the team didn't win, and most memorably the walk home where it poured rain and we got absolutely soaked. We all laughed as we tried to “wait it out” under an awning while continuing to get drenched. Luckily it was warm, so we embraced the rain and walked home together in the downpour.



The LAKEHOUSE

Every summer we spend two months at the family lake house. When Ian was 6, his parents built a home in the Canadian wilderness and he has spent summers swimming on the lake ever since. **One time we floated out on the rubber dummies and created one 'super raft' with the trampoline and all the floaties.** We brought out soda and sunscreen and read books for hours. When it was time to go back, Auntie Emma, Ian's sister in law, didn't want to get wet with her book so Uncle Nico, Ian's brother, ended up paddling out in the row boat to tow her back to shore. If you choose us, your child will grow up learning to swim in Canadian freshwater lakes.



Sundowners is a lake tradition where the family heads out on the boat to catch the evening sun. One time, we were out for a ride when we realized the gas tank was almost empty. Luckily Nico took us almost all the way back before the gas ran out, but we were still 100ft from the dock! We were grateful we had prepared by keeping emergency paddles on board. **We all laughed as we slowly paddled back to shore.**



We love Skating

Winter at the lake is a snow dusted wonderland best explored on skates, skis, or snowshoe. One winter weekend we dug out a hockey rink on the lake with some of our friends. **We spent hours shoveling snow** and it got so cold that our eyelashes started to freeze from the vapor of our breath! We all rushed back to the house to warm up beside the roaring fire. Luckily, **the next day our rink was beautiful** and we all got to skate on it.



WEEKDAYS

We both **work from home** and Hillary is excited to be a **full time mom**. Currently, Hillary is a freelance designer for a baby apparel brand allowing her ample **flexibility** to take time away from work. Ian is a project developer for a large utility and works from his home office. Since our jobs both allow remote work, we are fortunate enough to spend several months a year at the lakehouse with family. Your child will always have a parent at home to help with homework, attend after school activities, or clean up a scraped knee.

On weekdays, we always eat dinner at the table and **catch up on our days**. Ian is the grillmaster and Hillary's specialty is a fresh arugula salad with raspberries, avocado and fresh mozzarella. Once while in the backyard barbecuing, we saw our neighbors Minh and Dianne over the fence. They had too much crab meat from a recent fishing trip so they handed us a **HUGE bowl of crab!** Changing our dinner plans on the fly, we repackaged the barbeque for another night and ate crab and salad. Your child will grow up with quality family time each day.



Every day after dinner we take a long walk through our beautiful neighborhood. On one walk, we heard music down the street and came upon a high school marching band practicing right in the middle of the street. People came out of their houses to listen, some of them even dancing, as the band marched by. **We joined along with everyone dancing behind the band** and it became a small parade!



Thank You

We want to thank you for taking the time to get to know us. We have so much respect for you and the decision you make for the wellbeing of your child. We can only imagine how difficult this process might be for you.

If you choose us, **we would love to maintain whatever level of contact and openness that you are comfortable with.** Our preference is to have an open and ongoing relationship with you throughout your child's life should that be what you want. We understand it takes time and trust to build that type of open relationship and believe the effort is worth the reward for everyone involved, especially your child.

It would be our pleasure to share the big milestones with you, like the first day of school and graduations. Or the small moments that make life so special, like touching grass for the first time or taking first steps.

You will always be spoken of highly in our household and your decision will be seen as selfless and courageous. Your child will know that the decision you made was so they could have the best opportunities and future. We will be forever grateful for the gift you have given us of becoming loving parents.

*All our love,
Jan + Hillary*

