

Ben and Jay



Jay (on the left) and Ben

Introduction

Hello! We are **Ben and Jay**. First and foremost, we want to thank you in advance for taking the time to read about us and considering us to be the adoptive parents of your child. We love children and should you choose us, we would make your child the center of our world.

We are humbled by your strength and bravery for considering an adoptive plan for your child. We know this is an important decision for you and want to provide you with as much information as possible about who we are so that you can make the best decision for your child.

How we met

We have been together for over thirteen years, almost eight of which we have been married. Fate brought us together then as we hope it has brought us to you now.



We met on a hot August night at a party of mutual friends where we both originally did not plan to go. Jay was finishing graduate school and had five final exams the next day. He was also welcoming his parents to New York for the first time the next day and was about to kick off a week of plans to show them all the sights. At the time of our meeting, Ben was singing professionally and had just returned to NY from a tour singing in cathedrals across small towns in England and had barely slept but said to himself, "Hey, maybe I'll meet 'Mr. Right' tonight?!", and rallied to the party.



We both said yes to a party we had not been planning to go to and it was love at first sight!

We both said yes to the invitations at the last minute given everything that was going on. It was love at first sight – we both thought we would meet many people that evening, but saw each other right when we got to the party, spent the whole night talking and have been inseparable ever since.

That bond is the foundation of our family. Family is the most important thing to us – both the families we were born into as well as the family that we have created together.



Our joined families! Family portrait from our wedding.

Our families are all about children so Ben started his career in education as a teacher and is now an assistant principal in a public K-8 school in our neighborhood. He comes from a family of teachers. Ben’s mother (Esther), father (Howard), sister (Elena), and cousin (Erica) are all teachers. Jay also comes from a family of teachers. His mother (Mila), grandmother, aunts and cousins are teachers as well. As you read about our upbringing, lives, and

how we celebrate holidays, you will learn how our lives revolve around family. In fact, when Ben discussed this potential adoption with his 98-year-old grandmother she said, “you have to do this because you have so much more love to give!”



Family trips and visits in New York, Baltimore, California, Czechia and Peru. We sometimes do vacations with both of our parents, or all of our siblings and it is a lot of fun as they all became close throughout the years.

Ben's growing up

Ben grew up in New York City, about a 10 minute walk from where we live right now. He was born in a family of five as the youngest of three kids. **He has a brother (Aaron), sister (Elena), mother (Esther) and father (Howard).**

Their household was very loving and loud. One of the reasons why it was so loud was not just all the sibling antics going on, but also the music. Ben has been singing since he could make a sound and was even a professional singer as a child.



Ben when he was a baby with his dad Howard and older brother Aaron. Most likely already trying to sing!

Growing up in a family of five in New York City was not always easy – space is at a premium in NYC, but it also had its pluses. Ben has memories of going to see the dinosaurs at the Natural History Museum with his family and biking around Central Park after getting some hard earned freedom in middle school. Ben’s parents were supportive of his choices and always encouraged him to pursue his passions. He was lucky to benefit from all of the great institutions in NYC and sang with a professional children’s chorus and eventually went to Juilliard to get his undergraduate degree. Ben’s mom and dad still live in the neighborhood, recently retired and love babysitting.



Ben’s parents Howard and Esther are welcoming Jay to the family after our wedding in Summer 2013.

After graduating Ben realized that although music was a passion, it was not what he wanted as a career and decided to devote his life to helping others as a special education teacher.

He got his masters degree in teaching students with disabilities from the City College of New York and taught in some of the most challenging places to teach in NYC - the South Bronx and Harlem. Those years teaching were when Ben realized that he needed to become a father one day. After succeeding as a teacher, he was promoted to become the assistant principal of the school where he taught and eventually went on to become special education training leader for teachers for multiple schools. Ben has learned so much about children and about patience through his experiences as a special education teacher.



Ben with his sister Elena and his brother Howard at a family gathering. Those always include food as we all like to eat and try new cuisines.

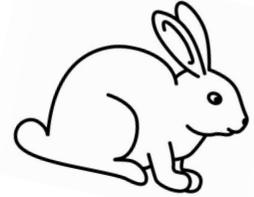
Ben's sister, Elena, lives and teaches in London after meeting her husband, Warwick, at a teacher's conference, and his brother, Aaron, just moved to Las

Vegas for work. Before that he and Ben lived in the same building and spent a lot of time together.

Jay 's growing up

Jay comes from a small farming village in the Czech Republic in Europe. **He grew up in a family house that his parents built themselves next to his grandparents' farm - a place that has strongly**

affected his childhood. He grew up helping tend to the farm, milking cows, driving tractors, and helping with the harvest. Farm life is family life.



Jay as a child walking around his grandparents' garden, probably in search of berries or his favourite sugar peas.

Jay's family also loves children and his mom, Mila, is an elementary school teacher. His dad, Jay (Senior), runs an electronic repair factory in a nearby

town where he and his younger sister Radka went to school. When Jay was in second grade, the Communist regime in the country fell which meant he was allowed to study English, his dad was able to start his own business and the family could - for the first time ever - travel to Western countries, specifically to Germany where Jay remembers getting his favorite toy - Lego - which was neither available in his home country nor affordable for his parents who were still on the low salaries in their country. Only later, Jay found out how hard his parents were saving up for the first box of Lego that months later he got for Christmas.

When Jay was 16, he received a scholarship to finish high school in the UK, where he made life-long friendships, learned how to play bagpipes and discovered he was really good at math and decision making, which later led him to the University of London and then Columbia University in New York City.



Jay and his parents at his graduation from Columbia University.

Back then it was harder to be in touch with family on long distance, but he always made sure they talked at least once a week. The whole family still remembers his tutorial on how to use email in the late 1990's, so that they could share with each other more of their daily lives. Jay never wanted to miss the most important moments at home - he always tried to come back for holidays, he helped his grandparents to make the tough decision of closing down their farm and moved back for a while when his sister lived abroad so that their parents would have at least one child nearby.



Jay, his mom Mila, dad Jay senior and his sister Radka at a lunch near their hometown.

Jay later moved from the Czech Republic to New York for his graduate studies, after which he joined an international consulting firm and travelled frequently for work. Since we got married Jay has worked in New York, and has a successful career in logistics and e-commerce.

Jay's sister Radka is a journalist and lives in the Czech Republic.

Our marriage and our little family

We share a love of music and were married in summer 2013 in NYC with many of our friends making music as part of the special day. We danced the night away with both of our families and all of our friends and their children.

Mr
&
Mr



On our wedding day!

Getting married was important to us because we wanted to be the closest family members to each other which is what happens after a couple gets married. We also want to raise children together and be devoted fathers.

Before starting our family, we enjoyed our time together experiencing all that New York, and the world has to offer! – going to concerts, museums, long

walks in Central Park and also travelling to over 40 countries together. We love sharing new experiences.



We have travelled to some really cool places together in Europe, Asia, Africa!

In the summer of 2018 we were fortunate to be able to become parents when Victor came into our family. We began to speak about having a child with our family in late 2016.

We assumed that we would adopt, but out of nowhere, we were offered eggs to create an embryo. This was a surprise and led us to have our first child through surrogacy with the help of Sarah who carried Victor to term as a surrogate (she is not genetically related to him). Victor is a loving, sweet, energetic little boy who will be a great big brother one day.



Jay, Ben and Radka at Met opera.

We love taking family vacations and often involve our parents and siblings. We spend at least part of the summer in Czech Republic visiting exploring the countryside, small towns and hiking. We have also had memorable vacations to the Carribean with Ben's parents, Howard and Esther.



Joined families trip with both of our parents to California! And a big family trip to Cuba with Ben's siblings and grandparents.





Ben's grandparents who we often visit in Baltimore.

Before Victor was born, we went on some great adventures to Japan and on safari in South Africa. We can't wait until our kids are old enough to share some of these adventures with them. We live in a very family friendly and diverse neighborhood. We have two fantastic parks just a few blocks from us.

Since Ben is the assistant principal of the local elementary/middle school we are very involved in our community. Jay currently works in New York office of an international food company. We have many friends and their children close to us in our neighborhood. Our good friends Ignacio and Mike just had a little girl, Sofia and our friend Samantha is raising her nephew, Haden. We often meet up at playgrounds between our houses. If you choose us to parent your child we can assure you that your child has a group of ready made friends (and a big brother) just waiting for them!



Ben, Victor, our friend Eva and her son Edik.

Jay's thoughts on Ben

Ben is a very warm and caring person who always assumes the best about others and has a very positive outlook. He is a very loyal and generous friend who stays in close touch with many friends from his high school and college whom we see regularly. He is extremely supportive and understanding in whatever I want to do, and helps me think through any difficult or challenging situations. He is very energetic and expressive, in some ways the opposite of me and we thus complement each other well. He is really good at home making and I love spending my life with him and our son.



Czech wedding tradition is to share a plate of soup with dumplings as a first meal as a married couple and feed each other. It gets messy, therefore the tablecloth is used instead of tissues :)

Ben's thoughts on Jay

Jay is a loving and supportive husband and father. He looks after those he is close with and will do anything he can to make sure all is right in their lives. He has helped me become my best self by always seeing possibilities beyond what I can see. Jay is a deep thinker and has quiet power that he uses to make the lives of those around him better. He is loyal, thoughtful and nostalgic allowing us to savor life's best moments.



NYE, Christmas, 4th of July, Passover celebrated with family and friends!

How we celebrate holidays



We love to celebrate holidays as a family. Thanksgiving is our favorite holiday because it brings all of our friends and family together. We usually host for about twenty members of our family and friends and make it a potluck. Everyone brings their favorite family meal. We usually cook the turkey and my mother, Esther, makes a big pot of black bean stew (a tradition in her family). Separately, we also serve Thanksgiving as part of Ben's school because we are keenly aware that the school celebration may be some kids' only celebration of Thanksgiving and we want to make it special for them.



Holidays are always a family affair!

Halloween is a big deal in our community. Many of the local streets are closed for traffic and there are local costume parades for kids, haunted houses and trick-or-treating. We can't wait to share this with our little ones someday!



Halloween is a big thing in our community!

We celebrate Christmas in Czech Republic with Jay's family. This is a time to gather in the living room for close family time - watching holiday movies and Czech christmas fairy tales as we stuff our faces with christmas cookies. On

Christmas Eve, Jay's dad prepares a local fish and his mother cooks it in two ways - one way is with butter and garlic and the other is fried. We also have a family tradition to get the biggest turkey that we can find - one year we had a 40 pound turkey for Christmas dinner! We barely ate a quarter of it on Christmas. We usually spend lots of time going around the local area visiting extended family and exchanging gifts with Jay's little cousins.



Christmas at Jay's parents!

We recently bought a home near the beach on Long Island. We were inspired by our friends who would invite us every 4th of July to celebrate with them. We love having a bon-fire with the community on the beach, singing songs, and roasting marshmallows and, of course, watching their neighbors light up the sky with beautiful fireworks. We love the hustle and bustle of all the holidays especially watching the kids make memories.



We have a great community of friends with children!

Our plan when our family expands

We have always wanted a big family and hope to make that happen through adoption. We love the energy of kids running around our home and the love that it brings out of us. Right now Our siblings do not have children, so Victor receives an abundance of attention from doting grandparents and aunts and uncles. We feel so lucky that Victor and a sibling will get all this special attention. Hopefully one day the children will have cousins to play and bond with too.



Visiting our friends with children in London.

We plan to raise our children in a stable home with strong values and love. We both have generous leave policies from our employers. Ben plans to take at least one year off when a new child arrives and Jay will take four months off before returning to work.

Depending on the situation, Ben would return to work after one year but has a flexible schedule by design. Ben decided to return to being an assistant principal because a job became available two blocks from our home and would allow him to spend as much time as possible with our kids including all school holidays and the summer when we plan to make many happy memories.



We want to make many happy memories for our children.

If Ben returns to work he will have the help of his parents who live within a ten minute walk from our home. Ben's parents will babysit and be a large and consistent part of our children's lives.



Ben's parents with Ben and Victor.

Thank you for considering us to be the adoptive parents of your child. We hope that this brochure has helped to answer some questions you might have about us, our family and our values and our life in New York. We would be happy to answer any questions you might have. We would love to learn about you and your dreams and aspirations for your child. Please feel free to call or text us at xxxxxxxxxx. You may also email us as xxxxxxxxxx.

If you should have any questions about us or the process, you may feel free to contact our attorney, Suzanne Nichols, at her toll free number: 800 255-1415. Suzanne is happy to answer any of your questions.

Whatever decision you make, we want you to know that we wish you peace and joy.

Sending love too.

Jay and Ben

